



**CHRISTINA BENTY**

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP SOLUTIONS

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District of Lake Country Mayor, Council, Staff and Committee Members,

It was an immense pleasure to meet you all and spend an afternoon working with you. Thank you for your lively and willing engagement as we wrestled with the historical practices and changing needs of your committee structure. There was plenty of good will around the table and a desire to explore how to best serve the citizens of Lake Country. Your existing committee structure has served you well in the past. However, you have acknowledged that attraction, retention, quorum, orientation, communication, a sense of purpose and relevancy, unclear expectations, role confusion and limited resources have brought you to a place of investigative inquiry around the future of your committees. You are in a transitional phase. What got you to this place is not what will get you to the next level. You must build a scaffolding so that you have an intentionally designed and sustainable committee structure.

**Committee Members:** Your participation was invaluable. I trust that you heard a deep appreciation for your volunteer efforts from both Staff and Council. In addition to your contributions, it was critical that you bear witness to what Council is grappling with. You will benefit from clarity and intentionality from your elected Council.

**Staff:** Your input and your contributions to the dialogue were most helpful. Your next steps are to mine for clarity from Council.

**Council:** This initial step was designed to set your review process up for success. Structural work is an ongoing journey and not a destination. There are no boxes to tick but there are foundations to build. I recommend that you move towards an optimal yet customized committee structure. Review all your committees individually and provide a clear and coherent rationale for their existence.

### **Optimal Committee Structure**

**Created by Council for Council:** Council, it is your job to determine the intention of each and every Committee. You determine which committees and which design (standing, select, advisory) will best serve your mandate and the citizens of DLC. It is also your job to populate those committees and assign tasks. Invite people who you think might bring a diverse perspective. Council, you deal with the purpose and the people, and Staff will deal the logistical processes.

**Clear mandate and Terms of Reference (TOR):** Council, identify and prioritize the areas of focus for each of your Committees. Leave no stone (TOR) unturned. Whittle down your existing TOR and simplify each into a few clear concise statements. For example, consider changing your

Access and Age Friendly Committee from an Advisory to a Select Committee. Create TOR with a beginning date, specific tasks and an end date. **Regarding your Water Services Advisory Committee, remove the language around legislative requirements in the TOR.** The Committee is not responsible for the health and safety of water quality, the staff are. Since water is a core mandate of any local government, council ought to be referring policies, rates etc. related to water issues to the Committee. Not the other way around.

**Committee work reflects Council's strategic priorities and other DLC guiding documents such as the OCP:** Council represents the public and their aspirations by way of a plethora of guiding documents. Committee work ought to reflect those valuable, costly, publicly vetted and strategically focused processes. For example, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee is doing great work and yet the Recreation Master Plan has not been adopted yet. This ought to be the other way around. Best practices require Council to populate the TOR with your strategic priorities and key guiding documents.

**Staff support:** Council, you are responsible for the allocation of resources (outside of the technical and statutory requirements). Given the reality of limited resources for all local governments, ensure that Staff time is used wisely. Do not hold meetings for the sake of meetings or stray outside of the mandate of the Committee by self populating the agendas. This will set the Committees and the organization up for success.

**Reports are provided to the Council through the Committee Chair:** Communication between Council and the committees has been identified as an issue and needs to be improved. The role of the Committee Chair is to update all of Council on a quarterly basis. The role of the Council liaison is to reflect the will of Council at committee meetings, share pertinent information and provide a rationale for Council's decisions.

**Committee members receive an orientation:** This ensure that Committee members have a basic knowledge of the legislative environment that local governments operate within and the limited resources that constrains implementation or execution.

**Council, know when to compost your Committees.** That is sound leadership. Do not maintain a committee for sentimental reasons such as 'we have always done it this way'. Perpetual existence for the sake of existence underserves your organization and your community.

**Celebrate Success!!!** You have expressed that you are grateful for the work they do. The best way to demonstrate that is to set them up for success and then acknowledge a job well done.

Thank you for the opportunity to delve into the complex world of board processes and organizational structures with you. I trust that our time together was valuable to you and that our dialogue will provide you with a framework for taking the next right step.

Sincerely, Christina Benty