

February 7, 2018

**Presentation to SPC on Community and Protective Services  
Community Representation Framework**



My name is Leslie Evans, Executive Director with the Federation of Calgary Communities. We are the support organization for the 152 community associations located across Calgary but also to resident associations and about 70 community based non-profits.

The Federation of Calgary Communities, along with Kelli Taylor from Tuscany Community Association and Sander Jansen from Cliff Bungalow-Mission, has been actively engaged in the Community Representation Framework since December 2016.

Representation has long been an issue, but the concept of “representation” is ever evasive. Since the beginning of this taskforce “representation” remains undefined. We all know we want more inclusive and reflective community processes but yet we are building a model without really understanding our own failings, our gaps or better yet, our own successes.

Staff assigned to the Community Representative Framework have spent a great deal of time researching models of community building from cities across North America that are unequal, different and not at all as unique as our volunteer led, run and operated community association movement. Our committee at first began by criticizing and stereotyping our worst community association examples and sadly, we never came around to celebrate and learn from our best.

As a task force we share common ground. We all want a strong process that can be relied on, for reflective community feedback. I know my members want to be taken seriously and most importantly want a voice that is heard especially on issues that affect their communities. Most are ready for change, but are hoping that change for them is reciprocated by changes to City and Industry as well.

The report before you is reflective of our hard and challenging work as a task force; however, I would like to add a few points of clarification:

- First, The Federation can say that we support the three areas of focus identified as key pieces of work that are critical to answer, if positive change is to occur.
- Second, while we have supported the notion of a “forum” approach as part of a solution, we have advocated that the Community Associations maintain a key and central role in providing feedback,

Suite 110, 720 – 28<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Calgary, Alberta T2A 6R3

T 403.244.4111

F 403.244.4129

E [fcc@calgarycommunities.com](mailto:fcc@calgarycommunities.com)

[calgarycommunities.com](http://calgarycommunities.com)



at a local geographic level, on planning applications. There are some issues that don't make sense to take to a "district" when they affect just one community. We need to find a way to acknowledge the experience and dedication within our existing network, so that we don't lose key stakeholders that can provide very relevant information about community context and character.

- Thirdly, in terms of the details of the schematic presented, I have to say, my first official view of this model was Friday afternoon when I downloaded it from the City committee website. While I recognize this as a first draft, it is concerning to suggest only "simple land use amendments" will go directly to community organized groups. Further, to suggest these won't need engagement is very short sighted. I realize that on page 3 of Item #7.1 it states that many questions remain about this potential model including scope of issues, geographic area and such. We should not lose focus on how important these questions are to residents and to community associations.
- This brings me to my final point, engagement. To be inclusive and representative, I believe that community engagement needs to be broad. All community associations, BIA's and Resident Associations need an opportunity to have a say. The engagement process proposed at our last task force meeting fell short as did the timeline. If council wants our community volunteers and other organizations to support a new way of doing things, they need to allow for the time and resources to properly consult affected parties. The process must not just inform them but ask them for input and then consider, evaluate and incorporate the feedback into the framework.

Sander, Kelli and I have done our part but we can't speak for our members. It is time for them to have their say.

In closing, I know our work on the Community Representation Framework is a work in progress. I hope in the end we will be able to answer: "How have we improved representation across our city? Was there a cost benefit? In doing this work, did we build upon the unparalleled community association movement in Calgary?"

I look forward to continuing on with the Community Representation Task Force as a champion for our community associations and to help answer the many important questions going forward.

Leslie Evans,  
Executive Director

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Calgary, Alberta T2A 6R3

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E [fcc@calgarycommunities.com](mailto:fcc@calgarycommunities.com)

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