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Strategic Direction of the Commission

The Commission endeavours to provide a timely, cost-effective and non-adversarial process for evaluating and authorizing new and innovative materials, systems and building designs for use in Ontario. In doing so, the Commission has earned a reputation as an effective, useful and quality service provider within the construction industry. The Commission does, however, face certain challenges. To address these challenges and to improve its ongoing operations and client service delivery, the Commission plans to continue with the following initiatives in the coming years.

Review of Existing Authorizations

The Commission launched an initiative to manage and keep current all existing authorizations.

The first exercise involved an attempt to contact each holder of an authorization, dating back to 1976, to determine whether the authorization holder’s contact information on file with the Commission is up-to-date. Also, as part of this exercise, authorization holders were asked whether they still manufactured the innovative product, system, or building design detailed in the authorization, and whether the Commission’s information relative to this product was current.

The second initiative related to the review of existing authorizations for redundancy with other approvals for innovative products, such as Rulings of the Minister, as they relate to Evaluation Reports from the Canadian Construction Material Centre.

A third review was performed to update the existing authorizations to current Commission’s policies as well as to determine whether the existing authorizations require updating to current codes and standards, as they are set out in the 2012 Building Code.

In 2008 the Commission adopted an “Expiration Policy”, which would see an authorization expire five years after its date of approval. Updating to current Commission’s policies included adding an expiration date to existing authorizations, as well as substituting the existing General Terms and Conditions with the recently revised July 2017 General Terms and Conditions.

Further, with the release of each new Building Code, the Commission will need to review its existing authorizations in an effort to eliminate authorizations that may no longer be required. The Commission believes that this is a necessary exercise to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the inventory of authorizations as reflected on the web-page. The Commission believes that the public needs to feel confident that the information in authorizations is current and accurate.

Recommendations to the Minister

The Commission continually reviews its existing authorizations to determine whether there is a need to make recommendations to the Minister regarding changes to the Building Code and/or whether there is additional need for revocation of authorizations based on the current edition of the Building Code.

On September 28, 2017, the Chair of the Commission wrote to the Minister in regard to the application fee set by the *Building Code Act, 1992* for authorizations. The Commission suggested that it may be appropriate for the Ministry to re-evaluate the \$11,000 fee that will come into effect in January 2018.

The Commission indicated a concern that the application fee may be implicated in recent reductions in the number of applications for authorizations and could have ramifications for business and innovation.

Time to Decisions/Authorizations

Following receipt of an Application, the Commission aims to make a decision or issue an Authorization within 120 days of the initial consideration by the Commission. This time frame is an accurate reflection of the average time frame the Commission requires to evaluate applications.

Some decisions on applications may be made quickly because there are already existing authorizations for similar technologies, which may be used to guide consideration of subsequent applications. New and innovative technologies may require longer approval times because references need to be checked, additional testing is sometimes required, missing information may need to be supplied, etc.

The Commission strives to be transparent in their process with respect to the evaluation of an application and to improve documentation of the evaluation process.

The Commission continues to monitor and review its processes for making decisions to determine if there are efficiencies that can be achieved.

Succession Planning

As part of succession planning, the Commission believes it is necessary to have a longer period of overlap between sitting members and newly appointed members than has been afforded in the past. Ideally an overlap of nine months would allow for knowledge transfer from existing members to newly appointed members and permit new members to be mentored.

At the end of November 2016, and beginning of December 2016, seven new members were appointed to the Commission. While these new appointments enable the Commission to continue to operate, it is still appropriate to try and stagger the terms of appointment for Commission so that Orders in Council expire in smaller groups. This will allow for newly appointed members to be mentored by experienced members, and supports knowledge maintenance within the Commission.

In addition to ensuring an adequate number of members, the Commission must also work at maintaining the knowledge base of its membership so it is important for the Commission to continue to solicit new members with expertise that reflects the full spectrum of technical disciplines (e.g. plumbing, mechanical systems, on-site sewage systems, etc.). As described in the Memorandum of Understanding, the role of the Chair includes keeping the Minister informed of upcoming appointment vacancies and providing recommendations for appointments and/or reappointments to the Commission.

Ontario’s Gender Diversity Targets

In June 2016, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced new gender diversity targets to ensure more women have the opportunity to reach top leadership positions at provincial agencies and other government organizations. The Ontario government has set a target that, by 2019, women should make up at least 40% of all appointments to every provincial agency, board and commission.

With seven new appointments, the Commission currently consists of 11 members.

As of November 30, 2017, two (20%) of the 11 Commission members are female. This is significantly less than the government’s 2019 target for 40% female representation.

Past experience indicates that, in order to provide the Commission with a sufficiently diverse range of experience, a membership of 15 is optimal.

Assuming Commission membership is set at 15, a female membership threshold of six must be achieved by 2019 in order to meet the government’s 40% objective. Opportunities exist to achieve the 40% target for female representation on the Commission because the Commission will be seeking further appointments. Presently, there is a strategy in place that would increase the percentage of female representation on the Commission.

To assist in achieving the government’s objective, staff plan to network with leading professionals to identify potentially qualified female members and encourage qualified candidates, to apply for any future appointment opportunities utilizing the internal communications channels of organizations such as the:

- Ontario Society of Professional Engineers
- Professional Engineers of Ontario
- Ontario Network of Women in Engineering
- Canadian Association of Women in Construction
- Ontario Building Officials Association, and
- Ontario Association of Architects

Annual Survey of Clients

The Commission intends to continue its independent survey which assists the Commission in determining satisfaction with levels of service delivery.

Green Initiatives

The Commission will work with the Ministry to examine viable means to reduce the environmental impact of services provided.