



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025020

Date: March 17, 2025

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sharon Bristol Director, Community Living

DATE: March 17, 2025

SUBJECT: Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (AIDE) Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

ORIGIN: The Town of Amherst has been undergoing a systematic review of its committees of council to determine future feasibility and human resource capabilities.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA 47 (1) The council shall make decisions in the exercise of its powers and duties by resolution, by policy or by by-law.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to March 24, 2025 regular meeting of Council approval of the new Terms of Reference for the combined Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee, and further forward the Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, the Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, and the Inclusion Diversity and Equity Committee Terms of Reference for repeal.

BACKGROUND: Municipalities and other prescribed public sector bodies through the Accessibility Act of Nova Scotia 2017 and the Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022 are required to develop and/or update their strategic plans by April 1, 2025. The Town of Amherst approved an Accessibility Strategic Plan in 2022 and the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan in 2023. Both plans are required to be updated and approved by Council and forwarded to the Province by April 1, 2025. Throughout this process it became known that we could combine our two committees as long as we were in keeping with requirements set out under the Accessibility Act. The combined committee would continue to advise Council on all matters of Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity. In November 2024, Amherst Town Council made a motion to combine these committees. As a result of this, a new terms of reference is required and the previous ones repealed. Council also passed a motion to dissolve the Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee, therefore it is being recommended that the Terms of Reference for this Committee also be repealed.

DISCUSSION: Staff met with the respective committees in January and early February to update them on the formation of the new combined committee. This had previously been discussed with them at a joint workshop last May. Since that time staff have been working on a process to combine the committees in an effort to keep the integrity of the mission of each. Also, the committees were supportive on the new requirements for a joint plan.





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The committees and the public have been involved in the community outreach to gather information to formulate the new AIDE Strategic Plan, its goals and objectives. The existing Strategic Plans were reviewed, successes articulated and advice given on what is still required. Combining these committees with a new terms of reference will allow more collaboration amongst committee members and allow for discussion on a broader range of topics for underserved and underrepresented groups especially when intersectionality is prevalent..

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: The community, through the AIDE Advisory Committee, will have continued input into the development of policy and procedures related to accessibility and inclusion, diversity and equity.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: None relating to the approval of the Terms of Reference.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Continued engagement with our community at large to ensure everyone has input into AIDE practises conducted in the town.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1 Send back to committee for further assessment
- 2 Defer to next month

ATTACHMENTS: New Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
Inclusion Diversity and Equity Committee Terms of Reference
Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Report prepared by: Sharon Bristol
Report and Financial approved by:

