

TITLE: ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (AIDE) ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SECTION: EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS
POLICY NO: 10350-30

APPROVAL DATE: _____ **CAO Signature:** _____

1.0 BACKGROUND

Under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act (NSAA) and the Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act (2022) the Town of Amherst is required to appoint a Committee on matters of Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity to provide input on accessibility and equity matters within the Town of Amherst.

2.0 PURPOSE

The Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Advisory Committee (AIDE Advisory Committee) assists Town Council in fulfilling its responsibilities relating to identifying, preventing and eliminating barriers to people with disabilities, underserved and underrepresented populations and to address systemic hate, inequity and racism in municipal programs, services, initiatives and facilities. The AIDE Advisory Committee plays a pivotal role in helping the Town of Amherst become a barrier-free community while ensuring obligations under *An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia* (2017) and the *Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022* are met, and to assist in creating a community of equity, inclusion and wellbeing for all.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 The definitions in the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act / Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022 will supersede any and all definitions in this policy.

3.2 Barrier means anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation in society of person with disabilities, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

3.3 Council means the Town Council for the Town of Amherst.

3.4 Disability includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full participation in society.

3.5 Hate means provocation, hostility or intolerance by means of threats, harassment, abuse, incitement or intimidation motivated by the actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, disability or sexual orientation of any person.

3.6 Racism means the discrimination or antagonism by, or the prejudice of, an individual, community or institution against a person or people based on the person's or people's membership or perceived membership in a racial or ethnic group, and having the power to carry out that discrimination, antagonism or prejudice through institutional policies and practices that shape cultural beliefs and values of a society.

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4.0 ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (AIDE) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

4.1 Role

The AIDE Advisory Committee shall:

4.1.1 Advise Council on the preparation, implementation, and effectiveness of its AIDE Plan. In accordance with the two Acts. The plan must include:

- i. A report on measures the municipality has taken and intends to take to identify, remove and prevent barriers;
- ii. Information on procedures the municipality has in place to assess any proposed policies, programs, practices, and services and/or any proposed enactments or by-laws for their impact on equity and accessibility for people; and
- iii. Any other prescribed information.

4.1.2 Review and update its AIDE plan at least every three years, in accordance with the Acts.

4.1.3 Consult with the community on accessibility and equity in the town of Amherst.

4.1.4 Advise Council on the impact of Town of Amherst policies, programs, and services on people of equity deserving groups and those with disabilities.

4.1.5 Review and monitor existing and proposed Town of Amherst by-laws to promote full participation of equity deserving groups and people with disabilities, in accordance with the Acts.

4.1.6 Identify and advise on the accessibility of existing and proposed municipal services, facilities and infrastructure.

4.1.7 Advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the Town's AIDE Plan.

4.1.8 Receive and review information from Council and its committees, and make recommendations, as requested.

4.1.9 Monitor federal and provincial government directives and regulations.

4.2 Membership

4.1.10 In accordance with the Act, at least half of the Committee membership must be people with disabilities or represent organizations that represent people with disabilities with preference for the former.

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4.1.11 All members must adhere to and abide by the NS Code of Ethics Policy.

4.1.12 When making appointments to the Committee, Council will give consideration to representation from different sectors of the community including equity deserving groups.

4.1.13 Appointees shall possess knowledge and understanding of equity and accessibility related issues and services currently being provided by the community.

4.1.14 The Committee shall have up to 10 voting members that includes:

- 2 Town of Amherst Council members as appointed by Council
- 7 community members as appointed by Council
- 1 Amherst Youth Town Council (AYTC) member as appointed by Council

Town of Amherst staff will be non-voting members.

4.3 Terms of Appointment

4.3.1 The initial appointments will be for one-year terms, with further appointments made for up to two years to ensure knowledge is retained on the Committee

4.3.2 AYTC members may be appointed for one or two-year terms.

4.3.2 The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected by the Committee at the first meeting annually.

5. OTHER

5.1 The Committee shall meet at least quarterly but may meet more frequently as required.

5.2 Meetings of the committee shall be open to the public; however, they are subject to the provision of Section 22 of the Municipal Government Act with respect to closed session meetings.

5.3 The Committee provides open avenues of communication to stakeholders and Council.

5.4 The Committee may establish Working Groups to explore specific issues related to the accessibility plan and/or to other responsibilities. Members of the Working Groups may consist of additional community members.

5.5 Meeting shall convene at 4:00 p.m. on the day selected, unless otherwise specified.

5.6 The Committee and its members shall follow the rules of order as set out in the Town of Amherst Proceedings of Council Policy #10350-24.

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6. TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

The Committee will review its Term of Reference annually and make any recommendations to Council as the Committee deems appropriate.

7. REFERENCES

- 7.1 Bill No. 59 – Accessibility Act, Chapter 2 of the Act of 2017.
- 7.2 Nova Scotia Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director, Community Living	Adhere to the Strategic Plan, make recommendations to Council when required. Review Terms of Reference annually.
CAO	Appoint non-voting staff members to the Committee
Council	Appoint Council, AYTC and citizen members to the Committee, consider recommendations from the Committee.
Clerk	Schedule meetings, advertise for citizen members.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
New Policy	Clerk, LeBlanc	Council	

Minutes reference date: