

TOWN OF AMHERST
Inclusion Diversity & Equity Committee Meeting
Minutes

Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Councillor Hal Davidson, Chair
Councillor Leon Landry, Vice Chair
Corey Hunter-Chiasson, Citizen Representative
Echo Metzger, Citizen Representative
Jolene Gouchie, Citizen Representative
Tammy Gero, Citizen Representative
Victoria Vance, Citizen Representative

Staff Present Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
Mallory Klooster, Community Well-Being Manager
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk
Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Moved By Tammy Gero

Seconded By Corey Hunter-Chiasson

That the agenda of the February 28, 2024 Inclusion Diversity and Equity Committee meeting be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried

1.3 Acceptance of Minutes - January 17, 2024

The Chair called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the January 17, 2024 meeting of the Inclusion Diversity and Equity Committee were accepted as included in the agenda package.

Councillor Davidson introduced Kiahna Brennan from the Amherst Youth Town Council who is sitting as a non voting member for now until she is approved to join the committee.

2. Discussion Items

2.1 Strategic Plan Review - Bristol

Sharon Bristol discussed the Strategic Plan Review. The topic was Goal 2 "Become a Municipality that works to the fulfillment of human rights". She went over the Action Steps and asked the committee for feedback.

Corey Hunter-Chiasson mentioned that the Executive Director with the Cumberland Homelessness Association started a series of Director meetings which happens once a month. There are several local organizations that are represented there. Corey suggests that someone from Community Living attend these meetings to make connections. Sharon Bristol said she will reach out to Ashley Legere to be included in these meetings.

Councillor Davidson has reached out to the Chairs of the other social equity committees to collaborate in a joint workshop.

2.2 Territorial Land Acknowledgment - Bristol

Sharon Bristol discussed the Territorial Land Acknowledgment, and asked if and how the Committee would like it to see it updated.

Councillor Landry asked about the term Indigenous Blacks and where it originated from, he was wondering why the term African Nova Scotians.

Tammy Gero said the term came from the Territorial Land Acknowledgment that Guysborough uses which is what she used when proposing ours to this Committee last time it was reviewed.

Jolene Gouchie said the term means original first settlers. Jolene suggests that the committee could hold a workshop to update the Territorial Land Acknowledgement to make it more customized to Amherst.

Sharon Bristol said that some Territorial Land Acknowledgments that she has heard included language of reconciliation and that could be added to ours as well.

Corey Hunter-Chiasson suggested creating a two-step workshop plan and work with local agencies. We can learn from them and their history and then we can tackle to update the Territorial Land Acknowledgment.

Councillor Davidson said we could contact the African Nova Scotian Association.

Corey Hunter-Chiasson suggested that the committee could reach out to Indigenous elders for input as well.

2.3 Internal Policy Review - Klooster

Mallory Klooster discussed the Attendance Administration Policy and asked the Committee for any feedback and suggestions.

Moved By Jolene Gouchie

Seconded By Victoria Vance

That the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee recommend to Council that the Town of Amherst Attendance Administration Policy be repealed, and further that staff create a new policy through more of a supportive lens.

Motion Carried

2.4 Mi'kmaw'ki Indigenous Allyship Toolkit - Klooster

Mallory Klooster reviewed the Mi'kmaw'ki Indigenous Allyship Toolkit included in the agenda package and how it could be added to Inclusion, Diversity and Equity training.

**Moved By Councillor Landry
Seconded By Jolene Gouchie**

That the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee direct the CAO to request staff bring back a report to this Committee with consultation with HRM to adopt the Mi'kmaw'ki Indigenous Allyship Toolkit and have it included with the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity training.

Motion Carried

2.5 Inclusive Language - Klooster

Mallory Klooster reviewed the Inclusive Language in the Workplace report included in the agenda package. Sharon Bristol suggested that the Committee hold a workshop to help develop a Town of Amherst guidelines. Sharon will email the committee to see who wants to participate in the workshop.

Councillor Landry said these guidelines should be incorporated into Inclusion, Diversity and Equity training.

Corey Hunter-Chiasson and Victoria Vance left the meeting at 7:15 P.M.

2.6 Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Training - Klooster

Mallory Klooster reviewed her memo regarding Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Training including newly identified local and non local training as well as some that have been pre-recorded.

Councillor Landry would like see some training dealing with Neurodiversity.

Councillor Davidson would like for this training to include the Mi'kmaw'ki Indigenous Allyship toolkit and Inclusive Language.

Sharon Bristol would like to create a working group to develop this more and suggested perhaps including it as part of annual performance reviews. The Committee agreed that items 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 should be combined for a workshop opportunity.

Councillor Davidson suggested that we invite the Human Resources Director to this working group.

2.7 2024 Acadian Festival - Bristol

Sharon Bristol reviewed the Acadian Festival memo included as part of the agenda package. She spoke to the event being held in Clare, NS from July 27 to August 3, 2024 noting the traffic of people that will be passing through Amherst. Planning for this year's festival is currently underway, if anyone is interested in assisting with the Acadian Festival, please contact Councillor Landry. More details will be provided once they are available.

3. Presentations

3.1 Amherst Highlands History - Chair Davidson

It being African Heritage month, Councillor Davidson presented a brief history of the Amherst Highlands. Information item only; no direction given or further action required.

4. Next Meeting Date

Sharon Bristol will send out a poll later to determine the next meeting date.

5. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting.

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Councillor Hal Davidson
Chair