

Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Electronic Meeting at 7pm

Attendance:

Haley Bateman, Chair
Liam Clarke-Coward (LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee Representative)
Vicki-Lynn Smith (Anti-Racism Advisory Committee Representative)
Nesrine Kandil
Emily Kovacs
Katherine Ramkhelawan
Nina Jain-Sheehan
Jingjing Ke
Trecia McLennon

Absent:

Essra Abdelsamed
Marcel Grimard
Sean Vanderklis

Guests:

Mayor Walter Sendzik, arrived at 7:18pm

Staff Liaison:

Melissa Wenzler, filling in for Shannon McHugh

1. Call meeting to order (Chair)

H. Bateman called the meeting to order at 7pm.

2. Recognition of Traditional Territories

H. Bateman acknowledged that the land on which the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee meets today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples. Acknowledging this is a reminder that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

3. Amendments to the Agenda

H. Bateman noted that former City Councillor, current Regional Councillor and victims' rights advocate, Sandie Bellows passed away this week and highlighted the work Ms. Bellows had done as a community leader.

4. Motion to approve the agenda

Moved by N. Jain-Sheehan

That the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee approve the October 12, 2021 agenda.

Carried

5. Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting

Moved by N. Kandil

That the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee adopt the minutes of the September 14, 2021 meeting.

Carried

6. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

7. Presentations (invited guests)

There were none.

8. Business arising from the minutes

As informed by S. McHugh, M. Wenzler updated the committee on two items:

- Draft Public Conduct Policy: The Clerk will be at the committee's December meeting to present.
- Work plan Item: Committee Recruitment. The Deputy Clerk is already working on an updated committee recruitment plan and intends to present to the committee in early 2022.

9. Business

a. 9.1 Workplan Items

i. Equity and Inclusion Training (T. McLennon, N. Kandil, J. Ke)

No updates were reported, the working group will give a recap at the next meeting.

ii. Friendly and Accessible Signage (N. Kandil, M. Grimard)

N. Kandil to review status of this request with the staff liaison. K. Ramkhelawan volunteered to work on this item as will N. Jain-Sheehan. N. Kandil will forward materials and focus on other items.

iii. Recognition Program

This item is currently with staff.

iv. Leadership Accord on Gender Diversity (H. Bateman, K. Ramkhelawan)

The committee looks forward to hearing the Clerk discuss the draft public conduct policy in December.

v. Equitable Recovery Plan (H. Bateman, E. Kovacs, L. Coward)

Currently waiting for feedback from other committees:

V.L. Smith informed the committee that ARAC deferred discussion of the item to their next meeting on October 19, 2021.

L. Coward informed the committee that LGBTQ2+ members would be sending feedback via email.

vi. Support for Newcomers (N. Kandil, E. Kovacs, T. McLennon)

E. Abdelsamed is also working on this item. E. Kovacs has put the members in touch with Folks Arts for available statistics. E. Kovacs informed the committee that the item needs further discussion and clarification at this moment.

b. 9.2 Harriet Tubman Statue

Mayor Sendzik was able to give the committee an update. He has spoken to Rochelle Bush to offer support and will follow up as the BME church community determines next steps. The Niagara Regional Police do not consider this incident a hate-motivated crime.

Committee members discussed the incident and a number of points were made, including:

- Even though it was not hate-motivated, those who have experienced racism could still be traumatized. The lack of intent does not inform impact.
- Support should be offered to those that were traumatized.
- The suspect is suffering from mental health and/or addiction issues and this shines a light on that issue as well.
- Those dealing with mental health and addiction issues are also discriminated against

c. 9.3 Private Watson Monument

H. Bateman updated the committee regarding the removal of the Private Watson monument from the grounds of City Hall. After discussion, the following motion was:

Moved by T. McLennon, seconded by V.L. Smith

That the EIAC draft a letter to Council as a whole, supporting the immediate removal of the Watson Statue, supporting the previously received letter from our colleagues on the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee. Included in the letter: reference to the understanding of all that Land Acknowledgment stands for; and the importance of funding social change with velocity and reaffirm Council's commitment Social Sustainability with the understanding that in doing so, we will see a shift toward a more inclusive, safe city through policy interventions, based on inclusive design charrettes, procurement and budgeting, philanthropy and our presence in our media and culture.

Carried unanimously

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday, November 09, 2021

11. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by N. Jain-Sheehan, seconded by J. Ke

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:22pm.