

# Social Sustainability Pillar Committee

## Minutes

**Thursday, August 04, 2022**

**Electronic Meeting at 4:30 p.m.**

### **Attendance:**

Councillor Bill Phillips, Chair  
Councillor Greg Miller  
Phil Cristi, Director of Community, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Deb Pearce, Vice Chair, LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee  
Gail Riihimaki, Chair, Older Adults Advisory Committee  
Jim Richardson, Chair, Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee  
Michelle Sanders, Co-Chair Accessibility Advisory Committee  
Saleh Waziruddin, Chair, Anti-Racism Advisory Committee  
Trecia McLennon, Chair Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

### **Absent:**

Councillor Sal Sorrento  
Jeanette Pillitteri, Director of Corporate Support Services  
Karen Doyle, Town and Gown (staff liaison)  
Megan Detlor, Accessibility (staff liaison)

### **Guests:**

Andrea Connelly-Miele, Community and Events Coordinator ~ left at 4:57 p.m.  
Sasha Spiteri, Assistance City Solicitor I

### **Staff Liaison:**

Anika Forde, Manager of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Eric Lamothe, Recreation Master Plan  
Koby Vanyo, Older Adults Advisory ~ left at 5:00 p.m.  
Leanne Kurek, Social Pillar

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1. **Call meeting to order (Chair, Bill Phillips)**  
4:33 p.m.

2. **Recognition of Traditional Territories**  
Chair Phillips acknowledged that the land on which the Social Sustainability 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**

None

4. **Motion to approve the agenda**

That the Social Sustainability Committee adopt the agenda as presented.

**Moved by:** J. Richardson

**Carried**

5. **Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting**

Motion to adopt the Social Sustainability Committee minutes June 28, 2022.

**Moved by:** M. Sanders

**Carried**

6. **Declarations of Interest**

Michelle Sanders – item 9.1 (associated with one of the organizations that has applied for the waiving of fees)

7. **Presentations (invited guests)**

None

8. **Business arising from the minutes**

None

9. **Business**

a. **9.1 Review waiving of fees applications**

**Moved by:** J. Richardson

M. Sanders previously declared a conflict of interest for Item 9.1 and did not participate in the discussion or vote on the item.

i. Andrea Connelly-Miele presented the applicants

**Motion to decline the request for waiving of fees**

*That the Social Sustainability Committee decline to waive \$899.33 for the Merritton Lions Club Parade and Carnival*

**Carried**

**Motion to approve the request for waiving of fees**

**Moved by:** D. Pearce

*That the Social Sustainability Committee approve the waiving of the following fees:*

*\$175.20 for Matter of Black/ BlackOwned905 Emancipation Day.*

*\$80.42 for the Fitzgerald Neighbours Community Garage Sale.*

*\$217.74 for the Hike for Hospice.*

*\$260.29 for the Niagara Regional Native Centre Summer Picnic Series.*

*\$1035.66 for the St. Catharines Rotary Rib Fest.*

*\$175.20 for the Terry Fox Run.*

*\$179.44 for the NHS World Hepatitis Day.*

*\$175.20 for the Superhero Run in support of the Niagara Children's Centre.*

**Carried**

**b. 9.2 Older Adults Advisory Committee – Annual Report**

**i. Work plan (Appendix 1)**

**Moved by:** G. Riihimaki

That the Social Sustainability Committee receives the annual report and presentation from the Older Adults Committee.

**Carried**

**c. 9.3 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Action Plan  
Resolution**

**Moved by:** S. Waziruddin

- i. Resolution from Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, July 19, 2022 (Appendix 2)

That the Social Sustainability Committee endorses the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee's Resolution in Support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and requests that City Council approve the resolution as attached in Appendix 2.

**Carried**

**d. 9.4 Resolution on upcoming Jeff Dunham performance at the Meridian Centre**

- i. Resolution from Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, May 18, 2022, amended June 15, 2022 (Appendix 3)

Chair Phillips states that the Social Sustainability Committee will go into Closed Session pursuant to By-Law No. 2015-212, Simplified Meeting Procedures, Section 11.1 (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose; and (e), litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board regarding the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee's resolution on the upcoming Jeff Dunham performance at the Meridian Centre.

**Moved by:** J. Richardson

That the Social Sustainability Committee move to closed session for the reasons noted by the Chair.

**Carried**

That the Social Sustainability Committee moved to Closed Session at 5:08 p.m. and returned at 5:58 p.m.

Phil Cristi, Director of Community, Recreation and Cultural Services, providing an overview of the City's R-Zone Policy.

**Moved by:** T. McLennon

That the Social Sustainability Committee refer the resolution, attached as Appendix 3, to City Council and recommend that City Council request ASM Global consider cancelling the performance and;

That going forward City staff look at creating guiding principles for future performances at all city facilities with input from equity seeking groups and/or advisory committees.

**Carried**

**e. 9.5 Resolution on the Niagara Regional Police Service's #StopHateNiagara Campaign**

- i. Resolution from the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, July 19, 2022 (Appendix 4)

**Moved by:** S. Waziruddin

That the Staff Liaison for the Social Sustainability Committee forward the Niagara Regional Police Service's Stop Hate Niagara Campaign to City staff, staff at St. Catharines Transit and staff at the St. Catharines Library to request further promotion.

**Carried**

**f. 9.6 Proposal for a Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism / Discrimination Policy**

- i. Policy from Anti-Racism Advisory Committee April 27, 2022 (Appendix 5)

**Moved by:** T. McLennon

That the Social Sustainability Committee refer the Proposal for Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism/Discrimination Policy to City staff as background information for staff to develop a City of St. Catharines Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism/ Discrimination policy in line with the overarching work being done to develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion roadmap and strategy.

**Carried**

**g. 9.7 Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee work plan**

- i. Chair McLennon provided a verbal update on the working groups and work plan for the committee

**Moved by:** T. McLennon

That the Social Sustainability Committee receive the presentation from the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

**Carried**

**10. Date of next meeting**

Thursday, November 03, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

**11. Motion to Adjourn**

**Moved by:** M. Sanders

That the Social Sustainability Committee be adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

**Carried**

**Report from:** Advisory Committee on Older Adults

**Report to:** Social Sustainability Committee

**Date of Report:** August 2022

## **2021 Work Plan**

### **Priority Items**

#### **Complete Needs Assessment**

**Description:**

To better understand the strengths, areas of concern and priorities for older adults in the City of St. Catharines through the completion of a needs assessment.

**Strategic Alignment:**

Overall, this work plan item supports building and supporting strong, inclusive neighbourhoods that provide high quality of life for residents of all ages.

**Involvement with other Advisory Committees / Public:**

Accessibility Advisory Committee

**Project Risks:**

- The committee may be unable to access resources for completion of a survey.

**Status Update:**

An application was submitted to the Seniors Community Grant Program to support the work of a Needs Assessment. Funding was not granted. The committee quickly pivoted to an alternate plan of completing the Needs Assessment without external funding. Information from other reports (previous work completed by the Age-Friendly Niagara Council, Living in Niagara Report, previous Older Adults Work Plan, World Health Organization Age Friendly Cities Guide, etc.) identified key themes and priorities. The committee also reviewed a number of Older Adult Needs Assessments from other communities. A draft tool was created for use in St. Catharines. An application was submitted to Inclusive Communities to fund an Ageing Strategy and Action Plan development. Should the grant application be successful, the committee will work collaboratively with consultants with the work the committee has already completed forming a strong foundation.

The Committee has also supported the work of the Age-Friendly Niagara Council survey that will identify broad key priorities for Niagara's Older Adults. Committee members have disseminated the survey amongst our contacts to ensure that the voice of St. Catharines Older Adults is fully represented. This effort was further supported by the Mayor through social media.

## **Improve Communications with All Residents**

### **Description:**

Communication with all residents, particularly older adults is so important, but it can be challenging, given the complexity of some subjects and the wide range of information available and needed by residents on City services and programs. Improved communications will achieve higher consumer satisfaction levels.

### **Strategic Alignment:**

Social Sustainability. This item aligns with the goals of striving for the highest quality of life for all citizens and connecting people, places and neighbourhoods.

### **Involvement with other Advisory Committees / Public:**

Likely alignment with Accessibility and possible alignment with all advisory committees and City departments on communications strategies and implementation with the public

### **Project Risks:**

- Application of existing human resources through awareness-raising education on best practices for effective communications
- Possible budget implications if any operational or capital improvements are required

### **Status:**

The committee has requested a meeting with a member of the City of St. Catharines' Communication Team to better understand the City's communication strategy and age friendly principles currently in place as well as the vision for the future, and to establish a relationship to be able to work collaboratively to best meet the needs of older adults in St. Catharines. This meeting has not been scheduled due to staffing issues.

The committee met with the Co-Chair met of the Accessibility Advisory Committee to better understand the work on accessibility and [lovestc.ca](http://lovestc.ca) from an Age Friendly perspective.

## **Promote Age-Friendly Principles and Practices across all City Functions**



**Description:**

Understanding and acting on the needs of various age groups is a challenge for complex organizations with multiple services and programs. Applying an “age-friendly lens” can help make the City more responsive to meeting the needs of residents and achieve higher consumer satisfaction levels.

**Strategic Alignment:**

Social Sustainability and Compassionate City objectives

**Involvement with other Advisory Committees / Public:**

Likely alignment with Accessibility and Youth Task Force and possible alignment with all advisory committees and City departments with strategies and implementation of interactions with the public

**Project Risks:**

- Application of existing human resources through awareness-raising education on best practices for age-friendly organizations
- Possible budget implications if any operational or capital improvements are required

**Status Update:**

The Older Adults Advisory Committee has completed the following activities to promote an Age Friendly community in St. Catharines.

- James Street development/civic square concept. A submission was made to staff and the Social Sustainability Committee related to the James Street development/civic square concept supporting the creation of an age friendly, enhanced outdoor, pedestrian place on James Street, from Church to King.
- Repurposing of the YMCA. A submission was made to staff and the Social Sustainability Committee for a progressive intergenerational space reflective of a modern community that would align social, recreational, fitness and cultural needs of people of all ages with age-friendly community principles similar to those in other communities (Niagara-on-the Lake, Pelham, West Lincoln, etc.).
- Niagara Age Friendly Virtual Exhibit. At the request of the committee, the City of St. Catharines provided a financial contribution to the Niagara Age Friendly virtual exhibit at the International Federation on Aging Conference. The Conference was held both virtually and in person in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and was a resounding success. Through the contributions by the City of St. Catharines, other municipalities in Niagara and corporate sponsors, our virtual exhibit was comprised of a professionally created video as well as a brochure with the theme of Niagara’s Empowered Older Adults. The brochure was distributed to the 1200 delegates in attendance and a number of copies have

also been distributed to the municipalities, including St. Catharines, for sharing with their residents. The exhibit prompted inquiries from all over the world.

- Regional Transit. A submission was made to Moving Transit Forward. The recommendation of designating older adults as a key stakeholder and member of the planned Advisory committee for Regional Transportation was adopted. Older adults could be represented by a designated committee member from the Niagara Older Adults Alliance. Two members from our committee sit on the Niagara Older Adults Alliance.
- Celebration of Seniors Month. Seniors' month was celebrated with a flag raising ceremony at the Dunlop Drive Older Adults Centre with the opening of the art installation and community garden. A flag with the Age-Friendly logo was raised by Councillor Phillips and the chair of this committee, and a second flag was also raised at City Hall.
- Brock University Research. Committee members were participants in a study by Brock University researchers. Study findings were presented recently in a session entitled "Who volunteers these days anyway? Lessons learned from lifelong volunteers in the Age-friendly Niagara movement."
- Equitable Recovery Subcommittee. As an equity seeking population, the older adult lens was provided on the Equitable Recovery report through membership on this subcommittee.
- Let's Chat Benches. A grant submission has been made for the installation of new benches and the addition of signage to existing benches designating them as "Let's Chat" benches. "Let's Chat" benches have been implemented throughout the world, including the Niagara Region, as a measure to combat loneliness. The "Let's Chat" signage helps to break down the invisible wall between strangers who might be sitting side by side but are uncertain about starting a conversation.
- Niagara Older Adults Alliance. The St. Catharines Older Adults Advisory Committee has two committee members on the Niagara Older Adults Alliance. The Alliance represents more than 100 volunteers who serve on local municipal advisory committees across Niagara, to advocate for the interests of older people and age-friendly actions in their communities. The Alliance meets regularly to share information and align planning and action.
- Advisory Committees. Recommendations have been made to city staff related to future Advisory Committees and committee membership that could optimize their ability to meet work plan goals and objectives.

**St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee Resolution on Truth and Reconciliation  
Commission Action Plan**

July 19, 2022

WHEREAS the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) Calls to Action are from 2015; and

WHEREAS the City of St. Catharines relations with Indigenous Peoples should be nation-to-nation relations; and

WHEREAS the UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) received royal assent on June 21, 2021, and so is an international legal obligation for all levels of governments;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council develop an action plan to fulfill the municipal parts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to actions with a time frame; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council implement an education plan for staff about legal obligations under the UNDRIP and about Indigenous rights; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council renounce the Doctrine of Discovery.

## **St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee Resolution on Jeff Dunham Performance**

May 18, 2022, amended June 15, 2022

WHEREAS Jeff Dunham is scheduled to perform at the Meridian Centre; and

WHEREAS the City of St. Catharines has an R-Zone policy which is a “zero-tolerance” policy in favor of “respect for others” and “safe and welcoming spaces for everyone” on City properties including specifically the Meridian Centre, and applies to “anyone in the building or on the property”, specifically listing “Racism” as a prohibited behavior; and

WHEREAS Jeff Dunham's performance includes characters based on racist stereotypes such as, among others, a bearded puppet “Achmed the dead terrorist,” a Black puppet “P.I.M.P. (Playa In a Management Profession),” a Latino puppet “José Jalepeño;” and

WHEREAS G.L.A.A.D (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) has issued “strong concern” about homophobia and racism in Jeff Dunham's performance; and

WHEREAS the South African Advertising Standards Authority has banned at least one of the characters, “Achmed the dead terrorist,” for Islamophobia, rejecting Jeff Dunham's defense that the puppet was not a Muslim despite, as noted by the Authority, the puppet having an Arabic name which is one of the names of Muhammad;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee advises City Council to cancel, or bring about the cancellation of, the upcoming performance by Jeff Dunham on City property as it would be in violation of the City's R-Zone Policy; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee advises City Council to forward their cancellation decision to the other Canadian cities on this tour, which are all holding the performance on city-owned properties, and to encourage them to cancel the performance in their cities as well

**St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee Resolution(s) on NRPS #StopHateNiagara Campaign**

July 19, 2022

WHEREAS the Niagara Regional Police Service has a #StopHateNiagara campaign informing residents on how to recognize and report hate crimes and hate incidents; and

WHEREAS there are currently insufficient printed copies of campaign information cards for wider distribution and there are no plans for distribution on transit vehicles and in libraries and other municipal public buildings

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee suggests to the relevant departments to print and distribute the NRPS campaign information cards on transit vehicles and in libraries and other municipal public buildings; **OR alternatively**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends to City Council to direct the staff of the relevant departments to print and distribute the NRPS campaign information cards on transit vehicles and in libraries and other municipal public buildings

## St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee Proposal on Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism/Discrimination Policy

April 27, 2022

Adopted from City of Niagara Falls Policy HR-2021-09 400.44 (October, 2021)

## **Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism/Discrimination Policy**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

The City of St. Catharines is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace where all employees participate fully and contribute to the development of programs and services that meet the needs and expectations of our community. We strive to create an inclusive culture in which differences are recognized and valued. The City is dedicated to ensuring respectful and equitable service delivery and employment practices. This policy articulates the City's commitment to further enhance and develop diversity, equality, and inclusion in the workplace.

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

**Corporation** – refers to The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines.

**Discrimination** – Treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them or denying them a privilege, benefit, or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, gender, family status, disability, or other personal characteristics.

**Diversity** – The concept of diversity includes acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing the differences along the various dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender expression and gender identity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, physical and invisible disabilities, creed, amongst many other dimensions. It is exploring these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

**Equity** – The rights of the individual to an equitable share of the goods and services in society. Equality of treatment will not guarantee equal results, creating equal results sometimes requires treating people differently from each other. Focusing on the results instead of treatment is the concept of equity.

**Inclusion** – Acknowledging and valuing people's differences to enrich social planning, decision making, and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive municipality, we each have a sense of belonging, acceptance, and are recognized as valued and contributing members of the society. Real inclusion takes place when those already included in the mainstream learn from those that are historically and currently excluded and then work together to initiate change.

**Privilege** – Unearned power, benefits, advantages, access, and/or opportunities that exist for members of the dominant group(s) in society. Can also refer to the relative privilege of one group compared to another group.

**Systemic barriers** – Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of, social, economic and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional, but are built into the way society works. Existing policies, practices, and procedures, as well as assumptions and stereotypes, reinforce them.

**Systemic oppression(s)** – Systemic use of power to disempower, marginalize, silence, or otherwise subordinate one social group or category, often in order to further empower and/or privilege the oppressor.

### **3. APPLICATION**

This policy shall apply to members of council, all levels of management/administration, all employees, students, volunteers, interns, visitors, and vendors on record. Members of the public, visitors to City facilities, or individuals conducting business with the City are expected to refrain from harassment and discrimination against City employees. Further, employment-related incidents that occur beyond the normal workplace, on social media, and or outside of working hours may also be captured by this policy.

Employees found in contravention of this Corporate Policy may be subject to discipline by the Corporation, up to and including termination, and may be personally subject to other civil or criminal liabilities.

### **4. PURPOSE**

When we understand and accept diversity, we remove barriers and achieve very important benefits. Through encouraging the active, equitable, and full participation of every person, we are drawing on the diverse life experiences and points of view of our fellow employees and citizens. This leads to more innovative and creative solutions.

Additionally, when we promote the City of St. Catharines as a diverse and inclusive city and workplace that is welcoming of all people, the city is more competitive in the global marketplace and more attractive as a destination for visitors, new residents, and new employees. Further, when we respect, value, and nurture diversity as an exciting and integral part of our collective experience and identity, we can strengthen and create a safe, healthy, and vibrant community. In order to enjoy the benefits of a diverse community, we need to address barriers that impede equal participation, work toward the elimination of bias, prejudice, and discrimination (which can be intentional, unintentional or systemic), and promote diversity and foster inclusion in an equitable manner.

### **5. OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

The City of St. Catharines (including its agencies, boards, commissions, and advisory committees) plays a significant role in leadership and education in the community. As such, the Corporation is committed to the following:

5.1 Ensuring all employees, customers and volunteers of the City will be treated with dignity and respect.

5.2 The City will identify, prevent, and remove barriers to services, programs, and opportunities.

5.3 The City of St. Catharines facilities aim to be safe, welcoming, and inclusive for diverse staff and members of the community.

5.4 The City will create an inclusive organizational culture where diverse employees feel valued for their knowledge and skills.

5.5 Principles of equity and inclusion will be embedded in the City's education, training, and

professional development for staff.

5.6 Promoting the Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism/Discrimination Policy, both internally and for the community at large in the City of St. Catharines.

5.7 Ensuring setting standards for compliance to the policy internally at the organizational level.

5.8 Ensuring external organizations and individuals have access to this policy.

5.9 Encouraging and recognizing excellence in corporate and community citizenship in the areas of diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

5.10 Encouraging public and private organizations to respect and adhere to the objectives of this policy.

## **6. GUIDELINES**

The City of St. Catharines has specific policies in place to prevent any discrimination based on the protected grounds in any employment, stakeholder, or external personnel matter. As such, the City is dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion within the workplace.

All administrative actions regarding hiring, compensation, promotion, benefits, job assignments, transfers, lay-offs, return from lay-offs, company sponsored programs or events, etc. will be taken without regard to race, ethnic origin, creed, disability, ancestry, citizenship, sex, marital status, place of origin, colour, sexual orientation, family status, gender identity, and/or gender expression. Further, the City will ensure accommodations are made for individuals who require them as per the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Individuals are encouraged to advise management of any required accommodations that are necessary.

The City of St. Catharines is dedicated to recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce. Through valuing a diverse and inclusive workforce, the City is committed to hiring practices that are fair and equitable. Administration will always hire the most qualified candidate for a position. In addition, the City will ensure the search and hiring process is fair, equitable, and that the appropriate qualifications of each candidate are the only criteria upon which a hiring or promotion decision is made.