

Oshawa Community Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 25, 2023
Meeting Time: 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM
Location: Green Room, Arts Resource Centre
(45 Queen St, Oshawa, ON L1H 3Z3)

Members in Attendance: Shakonikhri:yosta Daniel Crosmas (Chair), Christine Goodwin (Vice-Chair), Mary Baddam, Matthew Davis, Lincoln Edwards, Davaun Francis, Sadie Goddard-Durant, Ayesha Khan, Fleursha Milfort, Mariia Pitolai, Pam Reines, Sara Romanchuk, Donald Shields.

Staff in Attendance: Stephanie Sinnott, Julie Maclsaac, Kaitlin Namek.

Regrets: Bev Fiddler.

Meeting Notes:

1. Member Meet & Greet

- Members were invited to attend an informal social gathering ahead of the regular meeting in order to reconnect following the summer break and welcome the new members of the committee.

2. Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

- Julie Maclsaac, Director of the City's Innovation and Transformation branch, opened the meeting with an acknowledgment that the City of Oshawa sits on land within the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississauga and Chippewa Anishinaabeg, and that the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee Nations, among many other Indigenous nations have utilized this territory for trade and commerce for time immemorial.
- Julie welcomed members to meeting and introduced Stephanie Sinnott, the City's Commissioner of Corporate & Finance Services.

3. Greetings from the City of Oshawa

- Stephanie offered greetings to CDEIC members from the City's leadership and welcomed the new members to the committee.
- Stephanie explained her role within the corporation and outlined some of her responsibilities at the City of Oshawa, including her position as City Treasurer.
- Members inquired about the City's budget process (how is the budget developed, which stakeholders are involved, etc.).
- Stephanie explained that the development of the 2023 budget is different from years prior because of the introduction of the Strong Mayor Powers.
- This year, the Mayor will propose the City's budget, rather than staff.
- Members commented that one measure of a municipality's commitment to DEI is the degree to which equity is embedded in the budget (ex. are there funds to support equity initiatives in departmental budgets across the corporation?) Members posed the question to Stephanie - how is DEI being considered in the 2024 budget?

- Stephanie explained that the work of advancing DEI initiatives within the City falls primarily to the Innovation & Transformation Branch and that there is budget allocated to support that branch and the work coming out of that office (such as the Indigenous relations, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Accessibility programs, the CDEIC, Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee, etc.).
- Members argued that this was insufficient and that it demonstrated a lack of commitment to equity across the corporation. Members suggested that equity considerations need to be embedded at a systemic level and part of the work of all departments, rather than confined to one branch. They argued that a more meaningful commitment to DEI would be demonstrated by a budget that includes funds for advancing equity in every department, branch, program, service, etc.
- Members suggested that the City is not doing enough to advance DEI in the community; there has been little change, and the advancements that have been made are performative.
- Members questioned was the impact of the CDEIC was on advancing DEI in the City and broader community. They expressed frustration that during the Special Council Meeting Accessibility and DEI members of Council did not seem very engaged (they asked few questions, didn't seem to acknowledge the recommendations, and provided no feedback following the presentation). Members questioned to what degree the work and input of the committee were valued by Council and the corporation.

4. Approval of Agenda

- The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

5. Approval of June Meeting Notes

- The June meeting notes were approved by unanimous consent.

6. Roundtable Introductions

- The DEI Officer welcomed members to the inaugural meeting of the CDEIC following the 2023 summer break. She thanked returning members for their continued commitment to the work of the committee and congratulated them on entering the second year of their term. She also welcomed the committee's four new members (Matthew Davis, Ayesha Khan, Fleursha Milfort, and Sara Romanchuk) to the CDEIC and to their first meeting.
- Members were asked to introduce themselves, share details the skills, experience and expertise they bring to the committee and what they hope to achieve in their time with the CDEIC.

7. Introduction to the City of Oshawa

- Due to time constraints, Julie asked whether members would be amenable to her delivering a truncated version of her presentation to the group. Members consented to proposal.
- Julie briefly outlined the division of powers between the orders of government and described the difference between single-tier and two-tier municipalities.

- Julie explained that the City of Oshawa is a two-tier municipality, meaning that governance is split between an upper-tier (Regional Municipality of Durham) and a lower-tier (the City of Oshawa) with some services being delivered by each.
- Julie identified which services were delivered by the Region of Durham and which services were delivered by the City of Oshawa.

8. CDEIC Orientation

- The DEI Officer, Katie Namek, delivered a brief orientation presentation to CDEIC members.
- Members took issue with the purpose of the CDEIC as stated in the Terms of Reference (to assist City staff in the implementation of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan).
- Members argued that this was an unattainable mandate, as the existing DEI Plan is not action-oriented/achievable.
- Members asked staff whether there were plans to create a new DEI Plan that has clear actions, timelines, and is measurable. Members also suggested that the City's DEI plan could be imbedded in the City's strategic plan, rather than a standalone document.
- Katie reviewed the "Group Norms" established by members earlier in the year. The members agreed to continue to operate via these norms without amendment.

9. Selection of 2024 Meeting Dates

- Members unanimously agreed to continue meet from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. on the final Wednesday of the month.
- Meetings will continue to be held monthly, with breaks in March, July, August and December.

10. Message from the Chair

- In an address to members, Shakonikhri:yosta Daniel Crosmas (Chair) announced that he would be resigning from the CDEIC effective at the end of the meeting.
- Members and staff expressed their thanks for his service and gratitude for the opportunity to have worked alongside him.

11. Announcements

- Katie announced that Chair elections would be held at the November meeting and outlined the process by which a Chair would be chosen.
- Katie shared that the City would be hosting a Flag Raising Ceremony to mark Transgender Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 14, 2023 at 11:00 A.M. and invited members to attend.

12. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 P.M.