

Oshawa Community Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee (C.D.E.I.C.)

Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Location: City Hall Committee Room, 50 Centre St. S., Oshawa, ON

Present: Saumya Bhasin, Donald Shields, Sadie Goddard-Durant, Lee Rosen, David Mandziuk, Pam Reines (Chair), Ariela Kong, Leah Norman, Nadea Clarke, Christine Goodwin

Regrets: Elle de Lyon, Maria Chinelli, Jacob Powless, Ayesha Khan, Kweku Winful

Staff Present: Vanessa Abban, Enez Perkins

1. Welcome

- Chair P. Reines called the meeting to order.

2. Land Acknowledgement

- V. Abban delivered the City of Oshawa's Land Acknowledgement.

3. African Ancestral Acknowledgement

- V. Abban delivered the African Ancestral Acknowledgement.

4. Approval of Agenda

- Moved by Christine.
Carried.

5. City Update (7:06 p.m.)

- The City hosted a flag raising for Black History Month on February 3rd. Invites went to community to encourage participation in the flag raising.
- Discussion highlights:
 - Consideration to schedule future flag raisings later in the afternoon to improve attendance.
 - Pride Parade participation discussed (short "march" format).
 - Emancipation Day flag raising noted.
- D.E.I. Awards outreach efforts ongoing. A recommendation was made to include outreach to the Oshawa Animal Society.

- A proposal was made by N. Clarke to host a screening of a documentary about Honourable Jean Augustine.
- Discussion highlights:
 - Another film to potentially screen is *CASTE*.
 - Members noted interest in establishing quarterly community movie screenings focused on equity themes.
- Action item: The city update will be shared with members to access links to the Community Awards Program and Region's Thriving Communities Fund.

6. Council Engagement

- Members had a discussion regarding the value of informal/social gatherings with Council to strengthen rapport and relationship-building.
- The Municipal Act outlines specific rules that set limitations on how the C.D.E.I.C. can engage with Council outside of formal Council meetings.
- Members discussed exploring informal engagement opportunities open to broader community participation, such as inviting Councillors to Black History month or Asian/ South Asian Heritage month events, etc.
- Staff recommended that C.D.E.I.C. could put forward a recommendation for a city D.E.I. initiative through a staff report.
- A decision was made to defer discussion of a formal D.E.I. initiative to go to Council to the next meeting to give members reflect on potential options.

7. D.E.I. Forum

- V. Abban shared a draft agenda and outline for the second D.E.I. forum. The forum will build on recommendations identified from the first forum and develop actionable steps for implementation.
- Discussion highlights:
 - Community spotlight segment (organizations highlighting local impact).
 - The first forum ran over time and felt rushed, so it is important to keep the upcoming forum agenda focused with time built in for flexibility.
 - A segment of the forum could be about how D.E.I. initiatives are measured. This could be done through the keynote speaker or a workshop format.
 - Printed resources could be shared to provide information instead of taking additional time with presentations, for example community spotlights.
 - Lunch should not be too late in the schedule. Aim for 12 p.m. or earlier.
 - Explore examples of municipalities where D.E.I. has been effectively implemented (Ajax noted as a potential example).
 - Identify key audiences within Oshawa and develop targeted engagement strategies.

- Revisit previous C.D.E.I.C. work to strengthen the business case for DEI.
- Members agreed to host the forum on April 25th.
- Action items:
 - V. Abban will confirm booking of the leisure room at Delpark.
 - V. Abban will develop and circulate a draft invitation list for input.
 - Members will propose themes and keynote/workshop ideas.
 - A sub-group will be convened to finalize agenda on March 10th from 8 – 9 p.m.
 - V. Abban will reschedule the April C.D.E.I.C. meeting to April 21st to provide an additional touchpoint opportunity before the forum.

8. Anti-Hate Training for Front-Line Staff

- A. Kong and S. Goddard-Durant provided a summary of the Region's Together Against Hate campaign and anti-hate reporting tool.
- The City of Oshawa is working to roll out anti-hate training to front line staff to complement the roll out of the Region's campaign and reporting tool.
- Members were asked for feedback and recommendations to inform an anti-hate training program. Discussion highlights:
 - Facilitators for consideration: Culture Ally, Rania El Mugammar
 - Consider visible accountability measures (e.g., inclusive community badge) to demonstrate training impact.
 - S. Bhasin identified that she may have recommendations to share.
 - There are expertise withing the committee that may be leveraged to design a training program.

9. D.E.I. in City Events

- The City has begun planning for the Peony Festival (June 6-7) and Canada Day (July 1) celebrations. Members were asked for input to support D.E.I. in these events.
- Discussion highlights:
 - Members were asked to provide recommendations about vendors or performers who may be engaged for city events.
 - Accessible parking is available for the Peony Festival, but it can be difficult to access.
 - There is limited seating availability at the Peony Festival, which can be difficult for people who cannot stand for periods of time.
 - Canada Day activities are often hosted on grass, which can create mobility barriers for wheelchair users. Potentially explore accessible pathways and designated seating areas.

- Members discussed the importance of embedding D.E.I. in all parts of the event planning process, beginning to end, and not just in specific feedback being sought.
- Staff will relay the committee's feedback to the events team.

10. Adjournment

- Members agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 24, 2026 – 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., TBC