

Oshawa Community Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: January 31, 2024
Meeting Time: 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Location: Committee Room, City Hall
(50 Centre St S, Oshawa, ON L1H 3Z7)

Members in Attendance: Ayesha Khan, Bev Fiddler, Christine Goodwin, Davaun Francis, Don Shields, Fleursha Milfort, Mariia Pitola, Matthew Davis, Pam Reines, Sara Romanchuk

Staff in Attendance: Amanda Banning, Darcy Andrews (Student) Julie MacIsaac

Regrets: Lincoln Edwards, Sadie Goddard-Durant

Meeting Notes:

1. Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

- Davaun welcomed the group and Julie delivered the City's land acknowledgement.

2. Agenda Approved

3. Meeting Norms

- Davaun reviewed the group norms established for meeting structure

4. City Updates

- Julie provided a brief update on Innovation & Transformation unit and responsibilities
- Darcy Andrews, student from Ontario Tech University was introduced to the committee
- Julie provided an update on Accessibility items:
 - Pilot program for portable StopGap ramps approved by City Council will launch this year
 - Nominations for accessibility awards for businesses or residents will launch next week
- Amanda Banning introduced herself, and provided an update on the following:
 - Indigenous Relations Advisor Role - Build relationships with Williams Treaties First Nations, Metis Council and urban Indigenous populations, advise the City on Indigenous initiatives and help decolonize the City of Oshawa
 - Land Acknowledgement Policy – Was approved by City Council and being rolled out. Amanda assisting with pronunciation and understanding.

- Renaming Bagot Street – A working group has formed, and conducting consultation within Indigenous communities.
- As part of the 100th Anniversary, the City will be hosting an Indigenous Cultural Celebration on June 1st.
- C.D.E.I.C. members asked if there were opportunities for them to be involved with the Centennial celebrations. Julie indicated that the Events team is open to having C.D.E.I.C. as a presence at various events.
- Julie gave an overview of the D.E.I. Workplan for 2024:
 - Four main focus areas: Internal Communication and Engagement, Policy and Program Related Work, External Engagement and Days of Significance
- There was a general conversation about making D.E.I. a priority internally and members expressed their desire to have D.E.I. built into the organization, strategic plans and driven from the leadership.
- There was a question about the follow up from the Strategic Plan session. Julie indicated that the second round of community engagement hasn't started, and that she recalled it was timed for February. Julie indicated that the consultants appreciated the feedback from the C.D.E.I.C. in December. Further updates will come in March.
- Members expressed concern about actions from the City and individual City representatives not aligning with the values of D.E.I.
- Members questioned why this committee isn't an Advisory Committee and recounted that other municipalities have disbanded their D.E.I. committees.
- Chair expressed to the committee that equity does not exist in the minds of many people because it is not their lived experience, and it's the role of the committee to get people's eyes to open a little bit. Next time they will open even more.
- Members expressed desire to define the committee's goals for 2024
- Members questioned the role of the committee and whether the members could speak on behalf of the committee. Julie referenced the Terms of Reference, and stated that the committee is there to provide with opinions, facts and lived experience expertise to staff on City programs and services. Julie also indicated that individuals cannot speak as representatives of the C.D.E.I.C. unless they are the chair of the C.D.E.I.C..

5. Brainstorm Feedback session

Julie posed a question to the Committee: **If the City were to create an Equity Award Program, what would it look like?**

Feedback was given:

- Need to consider whether the awards are anything beyond a pat on the back? The mechanism should support and bring recognition to those who are being exemplary

- If a City does not prioritize equity what does a diversity/equity award mean?
- There needs to be community engagement in the development
- The population should be able to add to the discourse on these awards, if there is controversy into how much they really matter then that should be showcased
- If put into place, these awards need to be really meaningful, not just given out to local politicians, however the award should also not be too niche or daunting, as then people will not see that they are good enough to be deserving of something like this
- The City could reach out to those who are nominated and have that conversation about how they see themselves as members of the community and if they feel they are deserving of an award, those who are nominated can provide a framework for future nominations
- The City of Toronto has an internal equity honour roll – which encourage employees to engage with equity in a more substantive manner. Maybe an internal mechanism is the first step and would make an external system easier
- Idea to decentralize the committee into smaller groups to interface with the community in a more personal way; being an overbearing committee makes the C.D.E.I.C. less approachable. The committee could form connections with institutions in the community
- Creating an award seems to be generally approved although the methodology and implementation needs to be done carefully, in Ontario there are not many other examples of awards like this being provided to the general public

6. Approval of November Meeting Notes

- Motion by Don Shields, Seconded - Bev Fiddler

7. Agenda Items for Consideration and Meeting Review

- Members took turns to comment on the meeting give opinions of agenda topics for next meeting

8. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 P.M.