

Oshawa Community Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023
Meeting Time: 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.
Location: **Green Room, Arts Resource Centre**
(Arts Resource Centre - 45 Queen St, Oshawa, ON L1H 3Z3)

Present: Shakonikhri:yosta Daniel Crosmas (chair), Mary Baddam, Uzma Danish, Lincoln Edwards, Beverly Fiddler, Davaun Francis, Christine Goodwin, Donald Igbokwe, Mariia Pitolai, Donald Shields.

Staff: Julie MacIsaac, Katie Namek, Susan Kordalewski, Laura Iantomasi, Aili Oberson.

Agenda:

1. Welcome & Land Acknowledgement

- CDEIC Chair, Shakonikhri:yosta Daniel Crosmas, welcomed those in attendance and delivered the City's land acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

- The agenda was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of November Meeting Notes

- Notes from the November meeting of the CDEIC were approved unanimously.

4. Presentations: City of Oshawa Centennial Planning

- City Staff, Laura Iantomasi and Susan Kordalewski, presented on the events and initiatives being planned by the City to mark Oshawa's centennial anniversary in 2024.
- Members asked whether there would be specific recognition of the diverse cultural groups and communities that have contributed to Oshawa's history and culture.
- Members also expressed a need to acknowledge and celebrate the history, culture and contributions of Indigenous nations in this area (before and after contact with settlers).
- City staff explained that planning for the Centennial is being done in collaboration with community. Community organizations and residents are represented in the membership of the Centennial Planning Committee.
- CDEIC members asked whether there was people living with disabilities were represented on the Centennial Planning Committee.
- At present, there is no individuals or organizations specifically representing the interests of people living with disabilities on the planning committee.
- Members detailed some of the barrier that people with disabilities face in accessing activities of this kind. It was recommended that the City use of sign language interpreters for public speeches and that the needs of people using mobility devices be considered when choosing event locations.

- City staff indicated that they plan to do significant community outreach, and will actively seek feedback from equity-deserving communities, as well as residents and community organizations.
- The City also plans to launch a Centennial Community Grant Program to support the development of community-led programming to mark the centennial.
- CDEIC members commented grassroots or unincorporated groups are often excluded from these kinds of granting programs and encouraged City staff to consider how they could reduce barriers to their participation.
- Members inquired about how Centennial events and programs would be marketed and evaluated.
- City staff outlined a multi-faceted marketing strategy for Centennial programming, including the use of social media, web, billboards, newspaper ads, posters, etc.
- Members suggested that programming could also be promoted by social media influencers.
- Staff also presented on a separate initiative that will coincide with the City's centennial anniversary. The City is working with community to build a large-scale "Oshawa" sign similar to the "Toronto" sign located in Nathan Phillips Square and in other municipalities.
- It was suggested that the a medicine wheel be used as the "O" as of way of acknowledging and honouring Indigenous history and heritage.

5. Presentation: P.R.C.L. Needs Assessment

- A presentation on the ongoing Parks, Recreation, Culture and Libraries Needs Assessment was delivered by Aili Oberson.
- Members outlined the successes and barriers faced by people living with disabilities in accessing facilities, programs and services.
- When asked about how welcoming City facilities were to residents of diverse backgrounds, members provided feedback about the use of security at parks and City facilities. Members shared their own negative experiences, and commented on the treatment of unsheltered communities by security guards.
- Members asserted that vulnerable populations such as unsheltered communities, people living in poverty, and people living with mental health problems should be centered in conversations about these facilities. They argued that public facilities are lifeline for unsheltered people and the only place some residents can access phones, washrooms, computers, or get out of the cold in the winter.
- Members suggested that facilities also have onsite social workers or other solutions to working with vulnerable populations that are not based solely on enforcement.
- Members also commented on the challenges faced by seniors and other populations in accessing City programs and services because registration is only online. Members suggested that strategies to reduce these barriers be considered such as reserving spaces to allow people to register in-person, or adding more sessions/spaces for programs.
- Members suggested that the City should work more collaboratively with community organizations and people with lived experience of marginalization.

These groups could provide a more nuanced and holistic approach to the development of programming and help to reduce barriers for equity-deserving groups.

6. City Update

- The DEI Officer informed members of the CDEIC about the opening of the new Ed Broadbent Park in south Oshawa and shared information about upcoming events for Black History Month.
- The DEI Officer also provided an update on CDEIC membership, which has fallen to 10 members.
- The DEI Officer asked members whether they would consider reviewing two applications that had been received to join the committee. Members agreed to review the applications at the February meeting and to discuss next steps.

7. Open Discussion/Additional Agenda Items

- No additional items were discussed and the meeting was adjourned.