

Oshawa Community Diversity Equity & Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: Monday, September 29, 2025

Meeting Time: 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Location: City Hall Committee Room, 50 Centre St S, Oshawa, ON L1H 3Z7

Present: Saumya Bhasin, Maria Chinelli, Nadea Clarke, Elle de Lyon, Christine Goodwin, Ayesha Khan, Ariela Kong, Leah Norman, Jacob Powless, Pam Reines (Chair), Lee Rosen, Donald Shields

Regrets: Sadie Goddard-Durant, Fleursha Milfort, Kweku Winful

Staff: Vanessa Abban, Amanda Banning, Enez Perkins, Sana Kohistani

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome

- P. Reines welcomed members to the first meeting of the year.

2. Land Acknowledgement

- L. Norman read the City of Oshawa's land acknowledgement.

3. African Ancestral Acknowledgement

- P. Reines read the African Ancestral Acknowledgement.

4. Approval of Agenda

- P. Reines moved to approve the agenda. Members agreed.

5. Introductions

- New members were welcome to the committee, including Saumya Bhasin, Elle de Lyon, Jacob Powless, and Lee Rosen.

6. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

- Members watched two short clips to in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

7. City Update

- V. Abban and A. Banning provided an update on the City's recent D.E.I and reconciliation initiatives.
- A summary of key updates includes:

- Sana Kohistani was the successful applicant for the new Diversity, Equity and Reconciliation Coordinator position with the City. She started the role in September.
- The City will be conducting an Employee Demographic Census from October 1st to October 10th to support development of a new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Anti-Racism Strategy in 2026.
- Many initiatives have been implemented to commemorate the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, including:
 - Orange Ribbon memorials present at various city facilities, Bawaajigewin Aboriginal Community Circle, and Durham District School Board locations.
 - Hosted a staff learning initiative at the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, programming for Culture Days, including a film screening of “Becoming a Family”, and collaborated on a Big Drum Healing Circle.
- City staff are developing a GIS mapping filter to identify Indigenous landmarks across the city.

8. D.E.I Champions Awards

- Council has approved the establishment of the DEI Champions Awards program, which aims to celebrate community members and organizations contributing positively to diversity, equity, inclusion, and reconciliation in Oshawa.
- The criteria, scoring, and nomination process will be finalized by the Committee by the end of November.
- Members provided the following feedback on the program:
 - The nomination process should be kept simple and accessible for all community members.
 - There was strong emphasis on creating a meaningful and well-planned celebration for award recipients, particularly for the Youth Champion category, to ensure the event highlights community leadership and inspires others to take part in DEI initiatives.
 - The award language should be clear, inclusive, and reflective of Oshawa’s community values.

- It was confirmed that the CDEIC will serve as the selection jury, with final recommendations submitted to Economic Development and then forwarded to Council for approval.
- Four sub-groups were convened and will review each of the award streams to provide input on the nomination process and eligibility and scoring criteria.
 - Community Champion stream – J. Powless, N. Clarke, D. Shields
 - Youth Champion – L. Norman, A. Khan, L. Rosen
 - Business Champion – S. Bhasin, M. Chinelli, P. Reines
 - Organization Champion – E. De Lyon, C. Goodwin, A. Kong

9. CDEIC Work Plan

- The main function of the C.D.E.I.C. is to support the city's work, however, there may be some additional initiatives that the Committee works on or recommends.
- Members discussed opportunities to make the Committee's work more visible and impactful in the community.
- It was noted that the outcomes of the DEI Forum should be incorporated into the next work plan to strengthen alignment with community needs and priorities.
- L. Norman requested access to last year's work plan for reference.
- L. Norman, S. Bhasin, and J. Robson volunteered to assist with finalizing the D.E.I. Forum Report.
- The Committee discussed ideas for future initiatives, including an expanded Disability Pride Month event that is arts-based, features a guest speaker, and promotes visibility and inclusion for underrepresented communities.
- Members will be invited to provide input at the next meeting after reviewing the D.E.I. Forum Report and previous year's workplan.

10. Adjournment

- Members agreed to adjourn the meeting.

The next meeting is October 28, 2025, 7:00PM – 9:00PM.