

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

Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 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, Elle de Lyon, Christine Goodwin, Maria Chinelli, Kweku Winful

Regrets: Jacob Powless, Ayesha Khan

Staff Present: Vanessa Abban, Sana Kohistani

Meeting Notes

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 P. Reines.
Carried.

5. City Update

- Stronger Together Event
 - The recent "*Stronger Together: Celebrating Our Cultures*" event received strong attendance and positive feedback.
 - Committee members expressed interest in hosting the event again.
- City of Oshawa Internal DEI Strategy
 - Engagement efforts have achieved approximately 80% participation.
 - Feedback will inform the City's internal D.E.I. Strategy, focusing on applying a D.E.I. lens across operations.

- Further updates will be shared as work progresses.
- Black History Month (BHM) & Related Events
 - Flag Raising & Proclamation: February 5 at 11:00 a.m., City Hall.
 - Featuring steel pan performance and spoken word by Elle de Lyon.
 - Regional BHM Event: “Together We Rise” hosted in Ajax (February 3, 5:40–8:00 p.m., registration required).
 - Robert McLaughlin Gallery (R.M.G.) hosting Eko Nimako’s African Kingdoms LEGO exhibit on February 27.
 - Trent University Durham hosting Healing & Community (February 23, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.), including panel, drumming, and refreshments.
 - Additional community events will be shared via the City website.
 - Proposal discussed for a South African dance event at R.M.G. (tentatively February 21, 2–4 p.m.). V. Abban to follow up with R.M.G.
 - Partnership discussions ongoing with Durham Region.
- Forestry Master Plan Engagement
 - In-person engagement session scheduled for March 24.
 - Staff and C.D.E.I.C. members invited to represent public perspectives.
 - Some concern noted regarding Tuesday scheduling.
- Strengthening Relationship with City Council
 - Discussion regarding building stronger, less formal engagement opportunities between C.D.E.I.C. and City Council.
 - Concern raised about limited interaction outside annual reporting.
 - Suggestion to draft a letter inviting Council to meet with the Committee in a more collaborative format.
 - Discussion emphasized clarifying the Committee’s intentions and desired outcomes.
 - P. Reines, L. Norman, and N. Clarke offered to draft a letter of invitation.
 - Staff to review feasibility of inviting Council.
- Disability Pride Month (July)
 - Staff, C. Goodwin, and Autism Homebase (Bowmanville) have been exploring partnership opportunities for Disability Pride Month.
 - Interest in speaker events and community booths highlighting services for families and young adults, tentatively scheduled for June 17 from 5 – 8 p.m.
 - Possible youth engagement through Trent University.
 - Staff to explore connections with Community Living and other local organizations.

6. D.E.I. Forum – Next Steps & 2026 Planning

- V. Abban presented the DEI Forum report and led discussion on next steps.

- Discussion highlights:
 - Members agreed recommendations are strong but broad; preference expressed for translating them into a clear workplan.
 - Staff will coordinate logistics of the forum; C.D.E.I.C. to provide direction and priorities.
 - Interest in reviewing recommendations to identify focus areas aligned with the 2026 workplan.
- Forum Planning Considerations
 - Tentative timing: Early May 2026 (avoid May 10 – Mother’s Day).
 - Increase outreach and marketing efforts.
- Formal invitations suggested for major Oshawa employers:
 - Lakeridge Health
 - Ontario Power Generation
 - General Motors
 - Ontario Tech University
 - Durham Region
 - Durham District School Board (D.D.S.B.)
 - Durham Catholic District School Board (D.C.D.S.B.)
 - Explore engaging Durham College students.
- Suggested themes: emerging trends such as A.I., cybersecurity, E.V. technologies (through a D.E.I. lens).
- Post-it board or survey to identify potential partners and interested participants.

7. D.E.I. Awards

- DEI Awards will be amalgamated into the new Oshawa Community Awards program.
- Council has approved the new structure.
- Awards will include a Special Council meeting and reception.
- Launch anticipated February/March.
- Amalgamation expected to increase exposure.
- Adjudication Committee – Volunteers:
 - P. Reines
 - D. Mandziuk
 - C. Goodwin
 - N. Clarke
 - L. Rosen
 - L. Norman

8. Upcoming Events

- Back Door Mission Working Party

- Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21)
 - B.I.W.C. event at Local 222 Union Hall.
- Local 222 International Women’s Day Brunch (March 1).
- May – Asian & South Asian Heritage Month
 - Positive feedback from last year’s event at the Arts Resource Centre (ARC).
 - Interest in repeating and expanding event.
 - Ideas discussed:
 - “Passport” food experience (stickers from different cultures)
 - Fashion show or cultural displays
 - Arts and crafts market
 - Educational workshops highlighting Asian contributions to Canada
 - Oshawa food tour
 - Staff calligraphy workshop
 - Staff to lead coordination; C.D.E.I.C. to provide input.
 - Staff to consult communities regarding preferred programming.
 - Consideration of scheduling conflicts and blackout dates.
- June – Pride Month
 - Participation in Pride Durham march (continuing from last year).
- July – Disability Pride Month (July 17)
 - Collaboration with Autism Homepage under development.
- City Artist & Band Call-Out
 - Application deadline February 1.
 - Concern raised regarding lack of diversity in performers.
 - V. Abban to circulate promotional materials.

9. Adjournment

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

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 – 7:00 PM – 9:00 p.m., City Hall Committee Room