

The Corporation of Haldimand County
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 16, 2022 - 11:30am
Haldimand County Grand Room / Virtual

Present: Cathy Case, Committee Sponsor
Megan Jamieson, Staff Liaison
Chantelle Seguin, Recording Secretary
Rabiya Azeez, Representative of Accessibility Advisory Committee
Bailey Gardien, Representative of Youth Advisory
Donna Jenkins, Representative of the Senior Advisory Committee
Harsit Patel, Council appointee
Anita Gombos Hill, Council appointee
Gayatri Bousfield, Council appointee

Regrets: Arif Majid, Council appointee

Agenda:

- Introduce ourselves and get to know our new team
- Review the terms of reference
- Discuss our vision and goals and how we can work together with a dedicated focus on diversity, equity and inclusion in Haldimand County
- Review tasks assigned to the committee
- Prepare for next steps

Introductions

We discussed the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee coming into existence based on the need for an organizational-wide effort towards making progress on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

As introductions were being shared as well as the members visions and hopes of what this committee will focus on and accomplish this year, the following themes were noted:

- Equality, multicultural harmony, equitable distribution of resources, focus on inclusion
- Comfort and welcoming for newcomers
- Retention of youth
- Acknowledgement and relationship building with indigenous population
- Anti-racism, anti-stigma
- Access to needs, including transportation
- Data driven decisions and priority setting
- Community based feedback

Terms of Reference

Megan reviewed the ‘appointment for this committee is based on a term of Council’, therefore by technical standards, we are a committee for this year. Any extension or re-appointment for the following term will be at the discretion of the new Council. We will be looking for recommendations as the election approaches and can have discussions on how the *Terms of Reference* are actually working and what we might recommend to Council for future terms.

Visions and Goals

Many of the Committee members observations and thoughts on what they feel are of utmost importance at this time were also concerns brought forward in the 2019 Social Services & Health Assessment as shared by Gayatri. It was discussed that rather than viewing the issues and challenges above as *needing to be solved*, we could begin with reaching out to those involved in the assessment and ask “what has been done since the results revealed and highlighted these issues?” Furthermore, a good starting point may be to reach out to our contacts in other committees who have common themes on their radar, and ask “what their stumbling blocks have been on certain issues?” And ultimately, “how can we help?”

In addition to tackling the issues above, the other purpose of this committee is to be an advisor when there are projects taking place in the County (Corporate projects or Community focused) where the committee will provide their valuable opinions and feedback from a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion view and standpoint.

Tasks Assigned:

- (1) Seeking participation at Stakeholders meeting relating to the County’s Community Recreation Strategies survey. In absence of a designated chair, a representative from the team will attend to take part in that discussion and share this information with the committee at the next regular meeting.

Action: Harsit will be attending this meeting.

- (2) In order to come up with a realistic, impactful, and manageable agenda for this year, Megan has asked that the committee put a focused list together of 3-4 *tangible ‘Action Items’*. It would then be beneficial to schedule a strategic sessions where we go through them and put priority to this with a ‘work plan’ to determine what we each think might be achievable this year.

Action: All committee members to give thought and bring to next regular meeting

- (3) Council is seeking a *“Land Acknowledgement statement” with recommendations from the committee as to message, use and method*. This is meant as a focused first step in recognizing the local history of our municipality and surrounding area, and in showing respect for the Indigenous people who have lived and worked here both historically and today. This recommended wording should be appropriate to our specific region. The committee requested that Megan reach out to a personal contact who may be able to assist in a consulting role.

Action: Megan to investigate consultation opportunities. Committee members to do research and come prepared next meeting with recommendations with the intent of producing a first draft.

- (4) Megan shared that the current Haldimand County Vacancy Postings (our current language) is quite simple and states only that “we are an equal opportunity employer and that accommodation is available where needed” and our goal is to make this message more welcoming and inclusive as well as to promote that we are an inclusive employer and that we want diversity in our workplace. Staff are seeking recommendations on what the committee would be looking for in a job advertisement.

Action: to be discussed at our next meeting.

Meeting Logistics:

- (a) The committee is tasked with giving some thought on nomination of another member to be a Chair or Vice Chair of our Committee or if they may be interested in that role and either way, to send this information to Chantelle via email. A TOP priority of our next meeting will be to put these nominations to a vote in order to select the individuals who will manage the meetings going forward.

Megan explained her role as ‘Staff Liaison’ as being a resource to provide perspective on what the County is doing and providing staff insight to the committees work. The community members who volunteered for this role are empowered to drive what the important factors are, making recommendations and moving this committee in the direction needed. The Chair and Vice Chair will be key roles in navigating that vision.

- (b) *Meeting Schedule:* After discussion with the committee, a decision was reached to meet monthly for the next 6 months (every 3rd Thursday of the month with alternating times to meet everyone’s scheduling preference).

The following dates were proposed:

April 21 - 7:30-9:00pm
May 19 - Time TBD
June 16 - Time TBD
July 21 - Time TBD
August 18 - Time TBD
September 15 - Time TBD

The committee will reconvene on April 21st at Haldimand County’s Administrative building in the Haldimand Room from 7:30pm-9:00pm. Prior to this meeting, Chantelle will send out the Agenda, Minutes and any nominations for Chair/Vice Chair for consideration.

Meeting adjourned at 11am.