

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
November 14, 2024
7:00 pm Launchit

Attendance: Mayor Dave Turton, Deputy Mayor Jean Anderson, Caitlin Hall, Jokelee Vanderkop, Heather Gray, Ahmad Almohammad, Jessica Rowden, Kerry Ammerman, Stefan Von Muhlenen, Brittany Reis and Alicia Becker

Staff Present: Belinda Wick-Graham, Director, Economic & Community Development and Gordon Duff, Treasurer

Regrets: Peggy Raftis, Therese Boertien, Mabel Amapali, Peyton McBeth and Sarah Bowers-Peter

Special Guest: Stephen Martin, Church on the Street

1. Call to Order at 7:04 by Wick-Graham

Wick-Graham welcomed everyone to the meeting and roundtable introductions were made.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 Minutes of June 5, 2024, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

MOTION

Moved by: Jessica Rowden Seconded by: Heather Gray

THAT the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee approve the minutes of the June 5, 2024, meeting.

CARRIED.

3. Roundtable Discussion

3.1 Guest Speaker: Stephen Martin

Wick-Graham welcomed and introduced Stephen Martin, brother of former Committee member Michael Martin from Church on the Street. Stephen discussed his experience working in rural and urban areas across Ontario and Canada operating “out of the cold” emergency shelter programs. Typically, the shelters opened at 6:30 pm – 8:00 am providing a hot dinner, warm place to sleep and a breakfast. He noted the importance of providing social service supports and stressed that there is a better chance of being successful if you can assist your homeless population in their home communities and that the faster you can get them help the better the chances of their success. A large part of the shelter system is building relationships.

The Committee thanked Mr. Martin for sharing his experiences and asked Mayor Turton to request someone from the County of Wellington Social Services to be a future guest speaker to share what the County is doing to address homelessness in our rural communities.

3.2 DEI Committee Chair

Wick-Graham noted that a Committee Chair will need to be elected by the membership at an upcoming meeting. As per the terms of reference this position will be elected at least once per Council term but no more than annually. Anyone interested was encouraged to reach out to Wick-Graham for more information.

3.3 2025 Guest Speaker Ideas

Wick-Graham noted that the DEI meetings typically begin with a half-hour guest speaker before the Committee dives into the work. The Committee began to develop a list of potential speakers/topics which includes:

- Dr.Terry & Krista Fisk, Gord Blyth and JoAnne Caughill - Settlement of Newcomers
- Rachel Marks, Executive Director of SPARC – Accessibility
- Tiffany Fagen, Team Lead - The Grove Youth Hubs
- Cory Bilyea, Journalist – Indigenous Issues

The Committee was encouraged to continue to think of speaker ideas and bring them to the next meeting.

3.4 Review of 2023/2024 Activities and Plans for 2025

Wick-Graham reviewed the activities that the DEI Committee hosted in 2023/2024, and the Strategic and Cultural Plans which has actions for the DEI Committee to work on in the coming years. Committee members requested to receive copies of the previous minutes for that they could be up to date on past work. Wick-Graham will send to the Committee. The Committee began to brainstorm ideas for 2025. Some initial ideas included:

- Offer pantry drop-off location in Harriston for anyone wanting to donate to the Clifford pantry. Becker offered to deliver to Clifford.
- Clothing Swap – to remove the stigma, make it a fun event noting the numerous benefits of re-using clothing and possibly having seminars as part of it.
- Creation of a Best Practice Guide and training for DEI – to help community groups/businesses. It would provide small ideas and considerations for groups.
- Conduct an Audit – ask what's missing

Wick-Graham noted that working groups would be needed to assist with the various projects and if members were interested in certain initiatives to reach out.

3.5 2025 Events

Events already planned for 2025 include:

Black Heritage Month – February 15th at the Harriston Library featuring Tracy Cain. Duff is the lead at this event and anyone else interested in supporting the event is welcome. Help is needed to set up and take down.

Pride in the Park – June 8th 12 pm – 4 pm at the Palmerston Lions Heritage Park. The Minto Pride working group will be coordinating.

Solidarity Event – “Standing United Against Hate” previously held in June – Does the Committee want to continue this event?

4. Adjournment at 8:55 pm

Next meeting December 12, 2024, at 7:00 pm