

Diversity Committee

Meeting held October 20, 2020 via Zoom video conference

A meeting of the Diversity Committee is held this day commencing at 10:00 o'clock a.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Peter Ijeh, Chair
Councillor Ed Sleiman
Riham Al-Saadi
Lacy Carty
Sherrilyn Colley-Vegh
Shelley Evans
Yo Son Dah Nost Huff
Sungee John
Jamie Bell (arrives at 10:12 a.m.)
Khagendra Gautam

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Gayle Jones, Diversity/Accessibility Officer
Dana Cavers, Community Engagement & Project Coordinator
Katie Pavlovski, Coordinator Community Development
Neil MacEachrane, Windsor Police Services
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 10:02 o'clock p.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by S. Colley-Vegh, seconded by Councillor Sleiman,
That the minutes of the Diversity Committee of its meeting held September 29,
2020 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. Business Items

4.1 Letter from Solicitor General – Anti-Racism Initiatives

Councillor Sleiman notes that he is pleased that the Ministry of the Solicitor General is addressing anti-racism concerns.

Y. Huff suggests that colonization, intergenerational trauma, the Sixties Scoop, mental health and addictions be added to “indigenous training” noted in the letter from the Solicitor General.

Clerk’s Note: *Wikipedia states that “The Sixties Scoop refers to a practice that occurred in Canada of taking or “scooping up” Indigenous children from their families for placement in foster homes or adoption. Despite the reference to one decade, the Sixties Scoop began in the late 1950’s and persisted into the 1980’s. It is estimated that a total of 20,000 aboriginal children were taken from their families and fostered or adopted out to primarily white middle-class families.”*

Y. Huff suggests that the training be done by an indigenous person.

In response to a question asked by the Chair regarding which is appropriate - Indigenous or First Nations, Y. Huff responds the most appropriate is Indigenous which includes Inuit, First Nations and Metis.

The Chair expresses concern that the Inspector General has certain authorities with regards to listening to Police Services Board meetings which is somewhat of a “watch dog” type of authority.

Moved by S. John, seconded by Y. Huff,
That the letter dated October 2, 2020 from the Office of the Solicitor General regarding anti-racism initiatives **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

4.2 CQ 17-2020 – July 13, 2020 City Council Meeting

Councillor Costante asked for the following input and recommendations from Administration and the Diversity Committee at Council’s meeting held July 13, 2020:

“As such, I am seeking the input and recommendations of Administration and our Diversity Advisory Committee on the viability of:

1. Including community-led consultations on systemic racism, under Phase 2 of the City of Windsor Diversity and Inclusion Initiative.

2. Seeking the input of those in our Corporation and related entities and our community most affected by racism and discrimination, regarding barriers to hiring and advancement in our Corporation and related entities as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative.

3. Including recommendations and input regarding providing historical information and educational materials for City owned statues, buildings and streets named with racist histories as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, and further developing a plan for inclusive street and property naming practices in the future.”

R. Al-Saadi states that after reading Councillor Costante’s questions, it brought to mind the questions put forth by the Subcommittee and she views this as a starting point for addressing seeking input from the Corporation. She wonders if this is a good approach to begin consultation with the community. Once the data is acquired, she will do the analysis for the research report that will outline the Committee’s findings and recommendations.

S. John advises that point #1 in Councillor Costante’s CQ which refers to community-led consultations on system racism could be included as part of Phase 2 of the Diversity and Inclusion initiative.

In response to a question asked by S. John regarding if Council has reviewed the Workforce Census, G. Jones responds that this did go to Council which included a Council report, the Consultant’s report and all of the questions in the Census.

The Chair indicates that he received a number of calls from various groups which includes the Black Council who are asking for an independent race-based census of the city’s workforce. He adds that there is pressure from some groups to do another study.

S. John responds that the intent of the Black Council is not so much the research, but to have the city implement a system of collecting race-based data.

K. Gautam notes that the committee is working together to create a better community. We are trying to stop the problem of racism, to determine the root cause and to develop a proper procedure to address this issue.

The Chair recalls at the last meeting, Administration from the Human Resources Department provided a PowerPoint that outlined the hiring practices at the City of Windsor. He asks if the members are interested in reviewing this document to see if there are any areas of concern that could be addressed.

R. Al-Saadi suggests tackling the three points noted in Councillor Costante’s CQ 17-2020 and within that, can bring back what was identified in the presentation by Human

Resources regarding hiring practices in the City of Windsor. She adds that the root of racism is a difficult question to answer. It is a systemic process; there is systemic racism, systemic discrimination, something that after years and years becomes normalized. This becomes a practice and somehow we do not ever notice that this is actually an issue of systemic racism. She suggests that we start with the consultation and reach out to someone at the city level who is able to assist with the consultation. We need to start with direct questions first, then do a review and from that we can develop our recommendations.

4.3 Phase 2 of the Diversity & Inclusion Plan Subcommittee

R. Al-Saadi questions if the committee is interested in doing a final review of the questions for the community consultation survey.

G. Jones indicates that the survey and the questions must be approved by the Community Services and Parks Standing Committee and City Council before they can be circulated to the various groups and organizations. She asks if the committee is intending this survey to be a full community consultation under Phase 2 of the Diversity & Inclusion initiative as she recalls there were approximately a dozen questions that the subcommittee had reviewed. Early on, the Committee had noted potentially working with an organization like the Windsor Essex Immigration Partnership (WE LIP) to do some consultation. She indicates that are other communities with their WE LIP organization, Niagara is an example who have done an anti-racism survey in their community. She adds if Administration was putting out a community consultation for the initiative, more questions would be added. There is nothing that precludes the committee from sending a survey to the public, however, it must be understood there may be further consultations as focus groups may also be held.

The Chair requests that Administration provide the anti-racism survey questions sent to the Niagara community by their local WE LIP.

Councillor Sleiman refers to Councillor Costante's CQ 17-2020 and asks does it not cover all of the concerns put forth by the Committee?

The Chair remarks that one of the things we are looking at is consultation with the community to determine what the concerns are.

G. Jones advises that #1 in CQ-17-2020 states the following:
"Including community-led consultations on systemic racism, under Phase 2 of the City of Windsor and Inclusion Initiative." She adds that Councillor Sleiman is correct in that Phase 2 of the initiative will include community consultation. It's important that the recommendations of this group go out regarding that consultation. She recommends that a more full consultation be undertaken that includes more than the twelve questions and notes that consultations can be done on an on-going basis.

S. Colley-Vegh indicates that she thought the city was doing this consultation; that the committee would help with this consultation, but would not be doing a separate one apart from the city.

In response to a question asked by S. Colley-Vegh regarding a remark in a letter by the Black Council regarding employment and “increased participation” and what is meant by that, S. John responds her understanding from members of the Black Council is that the collection of race-based data would go beyond just the hiring representation of the city, but in terms of engagement, would enrich the community and city services.

G. Jones expresses concern that a letter from the Black Council is being discussed when the committee has not seen it.

The Chair explains that the letter in question was sent to the Members of Council.

G. Jones refers to #3 in CQ17-2020 which is as follows:

“Including recommendations and input providing historical information and educational materials for City owned statues, buildings and streets named with racist histories as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, and further developing a plan for inclusive street and property naming practices in the future.”

The Chair reports that discussion has taken place at the University of Windsor regarding renaming some of the buildings.

As it relates to the CQ, G. Jones states that this refers to city-owned streets, buildings, etc. She adds there are numerous policies and procedures in place relating to a name change which could potentially be tweaked to make them more inclusive. She refers to Bordeaux, France and adds that they have identified some streets that have racist backgrounds and have erected signage near the street corner with a QR code that when scanned provides an overview of the objectionable parts of the history. She notes this is an additional process that this Committee could support that would allow for further information for the public and for the City to be progressive in this regard.

The Chair notes that in speaking as a Black person in Windsor, he states there is a lot of history with names that have been identified and as it relates to street names in the City, the committee should support making changes.

K. Gautam states that we need a good understanding of things to be changed as this is a sensitive issue as some of these historical figures who are important to one group may not be important to another group.

The Chair advises that the Black community has a stake in the Windsor area and there are some things that are insulting and need to be addressed.

S. Colley-Vegh notes that she is very supportive of education and awareness. The education value seen in many comments by Irene Moore-Davis, one of our best historians, is that it's not so much about the past, as it is to inform the future. When you just change the past, you don't get a chance to educate about where we come from and where we are going. The key point of Councillor Costante's CQ 17-2020 is that he is talking about the future and to be more mindful. In terms of name changes to streets or buildings, you have to represent what the majority of the people want. These are city-owned and it is the city's decision. She is only comfortable in changing supporting education and changes for the future.

Moved by S. John, seconded by Councillor Sleiman,

That Councillor Costante's Council Question 17-2020 stated at City Council' at its meeting held July 13, 2020 requesting input and recommendations of the Diversity Committee on the viability of:

"1. Including community-led consultations on systemic racism, under Phase 2 of the City of Windsor Diversity and Inclusion Initiative.

2. Seeking the input of those in our Corporation and related entities and our community most affected by racism and discrimination, regarding barriers to hiring and advancement in our Corporation and related entities as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative.

3. Including recommendations and input regarding providing historical information and educational materials for City owned statues, buildings and streets named with racist histories as part of the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, and further developing a plan for inclusive street and property naming practices in the future."

BE SUPPORTED and further, to encourage City Council to have a thorough discussion on the points raised in CQ 17-2020.

Carried.

5. Other Business

Y. Huff states that to the best of her knowledge, and in reference to Dean Jacobs, historian Cultural Centre Walpole Island that the land recognition in the City of Windsor is of Three Fire Confederacy, Potawatomy, Odawa, and Ojibway. The territory is also recognized by the University of Windsor and CUPE.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the call of the Chair.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 12:00 o'clock p.m.

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR