## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Coalition

## October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Oxford County Administration Building (Room 129)

### Minutes

Members in Attendance:	Joanna Mitchell, Patricia Marshal, Tami Murray (virtually), Pauline Janke
Regrets:	Shawn Simpson (OPP), Heidi Becks (Woodstock Police), Kashif Afsar Siddiqui
Staff Support:	Ayesha Sahid (Oxford County – staff support), Julie Middleton (South-West Oxford – staff support)

## 1. Call the Meeting to Order (5:30 p.m.)

Chair Julie Middleton called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. and a quorum was present. Tami Murray joined the meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams.

## 2. Committee Member Check-In

Members of the Committee took a few moments to share how they are feeling going into the meeting tonight, and if there is anything going on that may impact them personally. The intent of this portion of the agenda is to give each member space to share if there is anything weighing on their minds.

Discussion took place regarding disappointment in the decision made by Woodstock Council in relation to the proposed consumption and treatment services site in Woodstock. Discussion also took place regarding a potential statement or position from the Committee in relation to recent local protests – it was questioned if there is a way that municipalities may, by by-law, ensure safety of those around and that are witness to these protests (i.e., 1 Million March for Children, 2SLGBTQIA+ community).

# 3. Approval of the Agenda of Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

Resolution No. 1	Moved By Joanna Mitchell Seconded By Patricia Marshall
	RESOLVED that the DEI Action Coalition approve the agenda for the October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2023 meeting.

**DISPOTISION: Motion Carried** 

## 4. Approval of the Minutes of Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Resolution No. 2 Moved By Joanna Mitchell Seconded By Patricia Marshall

RESOLVED that the minutes of September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting of the DEI Action Coalition be approved as presented.

DISPOTISION: Motion Carried

It was noted that Joanna's name was misspelled.

### 5. Business Arising from the Minutes

i. Final DEI Action Coalition Terms of Reference

Minor changes were suggested to ensure that "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" appears in the same order consistently throughout the document.

ii. <u>Community Agreement Samples (attached - for discussion, input and consideration)</u>

The Committee reviewed and expressed support for the content in the samples that were shared with the Committee for discussion. Pauline will prepare a draft community agreement for the Committee to review in more detail at the next meeting. Members of the Committee shared the following comments:

- There is a need to ensure that voices that do not make up the majority are heard, and that space is made for this as part of the committee's business and work.
- Pauline will circulate a draft in advance of the next meeting to allow committee members to provide private comments, suggestions for edits in advance of the next review.
- "Cancel Culture" was discussed and it was noted that when something is said as a result of lack of education or experience that this be used as a teaching moment rather than a personal attack.
- Tami Murray will share Oxford Pride's code of conduct with the committee as well.
- iii. Inclusion Charter Samples (links provided below for discussion, input and consideration)

- Perth County Inclusion Charter
- York Region Inclusion Charter
- Peel Region Inclusion Charter
- <u>Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities</u>

Discussion took place among the Committee regarding the development of an Inclusion Charter for Oxford County. The following comments were shared and discussed:

- It was suggested that the Inclusion Charter be focused on what is required under the Human Rights Code. Education in this regard is required and encouraged – there is not a good understanding locally with respect to what is required and what Diversity, Equity and Inclusion actually is.
- Need to show reconciliation efforts include and recognize The Seven Grandfather Teachings in the Inclusion Charter. This is to inform and educate.
- The document needs to be user friendly, understandable and give guidance and direction moving forward in terms of how we behave and look a past oppressing practices.
- The Committee agreed that sufficient community consultation has taken place through the development of the Safe and Well Oxford Plan and that we now need to focus on bringing people together and have conversations about DEI locally.
- Once the plan is finalized, it will be presented to County Council and area municipalities for approval and support.
- The Inclusion Charter should include recommendations with respect to how organizations can be more inclusive, and show leadership and solidarity with marginalized communities. The demographics in Oxford County are changing.
- Discussion took place regarding the coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. The Committee agree that they may look at this in more detail in the future; however, right now they want to focus on the development of an Inclusion Charter, public education and awareness.
- The Committee discussed what the response and repercussions will be if leaders and individuals are not adhering to the requirements of the Charter. This will require further discussion in relation to expectations, goals and objectives of the Charter. Consideration of an annual report to show support for the Charter.
- Ayesha Sajid will prepare a draft based on the samples reviewed, comments from the Committee and existing data in relation to demographics within the community. She will bring forward a draft to the November 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Discussion took place about possible DEI certification for local businesses. The Committee agreed that at this stage the target

audience is local leadership at the municipal level (County and lower tiers). The Committee requires buy-in and support at this level first.

### iv. <u>Human Rights Commission – Policy Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</u> (sample internal policy)

The Committee would like to consider a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy in the future. They agree that the requirements and law of the Human Rights Code needs to be embedded in the Inclusion Charter for Oxford.

### v. New Oxford County Proclamations and Flag Protocol

The Committee reviewed the amended policy and shared the following comments:

- Disappointment that flag raisings are limited to only one week. It was discussed that this will allow support for more groups.
- This is an opportunity for local leadership to show their leadership and support for and solidarity with marginalized communities.
- Should a similar policy be adopted by lower tier municipalities, the decision may be that of local Mayors or Council as a whole. Delegating the decision to the Head of Council, provided the flag raising aligns with the goals and objectives of the organization's Strategic Plan, addresses barriers associated with bringing forward requests on time for flag raising ceremonies.
- The Committee discussed that flag raisings should be considered and included as part of the Inclusion Charter for Oxford County including support for specific marginalized groups and minorities locally. This will help to provide consistency across the County and address some of the conflict that exists locally.
- Discussion took place regarding organized relation and the history of control associated with this. More discussion will need to take place about this as a competing human right. Supporting one is not to take away from the other – it is about allowing space for both to exist. Discomfort is not an infringement of an individual's human right. Community learning needs to take place. A person's right to exist is not minimized by allowing someone else to exist.
- Anything that is discriminatory in nature should not be permitted. It was suggested that this was the historical motivation behind some policies that state that the organization will not fly any special interest flags.

### *vi.* Oxford County Data – demographics

Report on Experiences of Discrimination in Oxford County.pdf (welcometooxford.ca) was shared with the committee as information. The Committee provided the following comments:

- Discussion took place regarding the need to address anti-black racism this is not currently represented well and should be part of the Inclusion Charter. Those of African and Indigenous decent experience racism at a higher rate that those that have lighter skin.
- Discrimination still exists locally in health care and social service support locally – these things need to be looked at. Policies surrounding supportive and geared-to-income housing is set up in a way to keep people from being able to prosper and to keep individuals oppressed (i.e., requirements in relation to limited savings). Family structures are not all the same anymore and people are living in different settings to get by right now. Supportive housing policies and requirement need to be looked at.
- There are further issues with access to technology for support not everyone has access to this however processes have been digitized to be more efficient and require less resources. Some children face the same challenges in schools.

### 6. Next Steps

- i. Public Education/Awareness
  - i. County of Oxford DEI webpage content (for discussion, input and consideration)
    - What messaging do we want to include?
    - What is missing?
    - Resources for local business?
    - Training opportunity resources?

Sample: <u>City of Stratford – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</u>

Ayesha will be working through the DEI Action Plan and is currently working with County communications staff to develop content for the County's DEI webpage.

- ii. <u>Training Opportunities</u>
  - What opportunities to do you know exist locally?
  - What topic recommendations do you have?
  - Do you have contact information for local training opportunities that can be shared?

It was discussed that the Human Rights Commission offers in-person training opportunities. It was questioned if this training is mandatory – the AODA requires human rights training with respect to the duty to accommodate. There was discussion about including this in the Inclusion Charter for the County.

The Committee discussed that leaders in the community need to hear form people in grass roots organizations that are doing the work – it may be valuable to hear them talk about what they do, the barriers they face and people in leadership position can support and move the community forward. A possible DEI Summit was discussed for local leaders and senior staff. Training that incorporates people's lived experiences can be very impactful and allows people to connect on a personal level. There is a need to do this in a way that does not cause people to surface unhealed trauma and put this on display. This needs to be done with empathy and a focus on stories of those that have overcome trauma and shown resilience.

- iii. Five Goals/Priorities for 2024 Brainstorming for future discussion/input:
  - Education and awareness for general public;
  - Training for local leaders and staff;
  - Advocacy;
  - Dissemination of Information (media campaigns);
  - Solidarity with marginalized communities; and
  - Protests regulate by by-law? What can we do to protect youth in the community?

### 7. Next Meeting Date

Proposed: Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

- To discuss annual update to area municipalities;
- To meet again in January, 2024.

### 8. Committee Member Check-out

It was suggested that the Committee begins each meeting with a land acknowledgement and a statement of reconciliation. Patricia Marshall will prepare this for the Committee.

### 9. Adjournment (7:30 p.m.)

Resolution No. 3

Moved By Pauline Janke Seconded By Patricia Marshall RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 7:44 p.m. to meeting again at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup>.

DISPOTISION: Motion Carried