

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Diverse and Inclusive Communities Committee Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2024 - 6:00 p.m.
NS Works Community Board Room



Attendance

Anne Bishop, Community Member
Domenic Padula, Community Member
Jamie Patterson, Community Member
Jenna Warren, Community Member
David Ferguson, RCMP Rep
Mark Phillips, CAO
Kevin Waters, WHRM Employee
Deanna Snair, WHRM Employee
Sarah Taylor, WHRM Employee
Vanessa Lake, WHRM Employee

Regrets:

Abraham Zebian, Mayor
Shartelle Lyon, SPEC Advisory Member
Ian Shaw, Community Member
Ripley Brown-Fogarty, Community Member
Sarah Brothers, Community Member
Jessie Drysdale, WHRM Employee
Chris Burns, WHRM Employee
Jim Ivey, Councillor, District 11
Andrea Parker, Community Health Board Rep

1. At 6:00pm, the meeting did not have quorum. The committee waited but did not achieve quorum. No motions or decisions could be made at this meeting.
2. At 6:10pm, Chair Domenic Padula opened the floor to further workshop the Committee's ideas for projects and actions as identified from their planning meeting in February. The Committee reviewed each category, answered questions, provided further information, and added to and amended the list for discussion at the next meeting.
 - Mark Phillips discussed the communication strategy behind ongoing projects. The Municipality may be the "horsepower," but the Committee is the driving force. The methods, tools, and messages used have a great impact on the result. Mark highlighted *equity* as the focus. The messaging should be simple, not academic, and may make people uncomfortable, but not offend them. Using different perspectives and providing opportunities for self-identification are extremely valuable.

- Kevin Waters explained the Anti-racism and Hate Plan would be a work plan. It will set objectives to be completed, which can be assigned by the Committee. The plan is to be updated every few years. Domenic asked where the current plan can be found, and Deanna Snair provided the link from the WHRM website. The accessibility of the website was also discussed. The workplan is for both the community and internal staff.
- For the item “Programming for Youth” item, Kevin requested the age range be changed to “12-18 years.”
- Mark discussed the approach to enforcement. He suggested a friendly and educational approach rather than immediate punishment. Domenic added that punishment often does not help people learn.
- Community-led projects are largely out of the hands of the Committee, but the Committee will be updated and informed of these projects and events. It was suggested that WHRM connect groups with resources, and both the Municipality and Committee visually show their support. Events should be accessible, welcoming, and safe spaces.
- For events and projects, Domenic said that The POSSE Project is willing to use their large window as advertising space, to promote both special events and monthly celebrations.
- It was suggested to promote and hold events from around the world. Different types of games and activities, and food. With many newcomers, and those with family outside of Canada, building a sense of belonging and connection within the community is important.
- Different languages on the WHRM banners and banners for different celebrations.
- Education that shows, rather than just tells, is most effective. Jenna gave an example about a Violence Against Women workshop and explained that the men who were asked how they could help women were more receptive than the men who felt they were being vilified, which only made them angry.
- Include integration and interaction for a better connection.
- The goal of rainbow crosswalks has June (Pride month) as a due date, so the Committee would like this pursued. Kevin added that June is also accessibility awareness month.
- Having a physical sign in the community with events and other information listed would be extremely valuable. Not everyone uses social media, or even the internet.
- The Committee emphasized the need to not only focus on the Windsor area.
- Accessible Housing and the treatment/perception of unhoused individuals was discussed. Education and awareness are important for this topic, too. How the community engages and communicates with these individuals is important for them to feel safe, welcomed, and seen. The “lens” with which they are viewed should be one of humanity, and compassion.
- Ways to participate in the school curriculum and engage youth was discussed. Changing the curriculum is beyond the Committee, but the Committee being aware of the current school environment would be important. Domenic suggested donating books of diverse topics and cultures to waiting rooms (dentists, etc.) so children can learn and have a chance to see themselves represented in public spaces.
- Representation, self-identification, and self-realization were emphasized.
- Budget was briefly discussed, but no decisions could be made.
- The Committee may have a seat at the table when WHRM is speaking to groups about events.

- Regularly include diverse individuals, groups, and ideas, but don't make a show of it.
- Promotion of the Committee's events and projects so the community is not caught off guard, to better prevent or brace for any backlash.
- Domenic can reach out to the Chair of the Hantsport 2SLGBTQIA+ Committee.
- Mark Phillips suggested creating a chart for the topics discussed where priority, primary and secondary ownership, actions, etc. can be listed for easier view.

3. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment – Monday, April 15, 2024, at 6:00pm, with a back-up date of Monday, April 22, 2024, identified. The meeting will be held at the Nova Scotia Works Community Board Room. The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.