

**Attendance:**

Anne Bishop, Community Member  
Domenic Padula, Community Member  
Charlotte Paul, Glooscap Representative  
Alma Crnalic, Community Member  
Mattea Sexton, Community Member  
Lisa Bland, Community Member  
Johana Zuluaga, Consultant, Davis Pier  
Kevin Waters, WHRM Employee  
Vanessa Lake, WHRM Employee

**Regrets:**

Jamie Patterson, Community Member  
Jessie Drysdale, WHRM Employee  
Deanna Snair, WHRM Employee  
Chris Burns, WHRM Employee  
Mark Phillips, CAO  
Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor  
Jim Ivey, Councillor (Alternate)  
David Ferguson, RCMP Representative

- 1. Call to Order** – At 6:04pm, Kevin called the meeting to order. He acknowledged that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. West Hants further acknowledges the 50+ African Nova Scotian communities whose 400-year history have contributed to the province's culture, history, and legacies. We are all treaty people. He noted that when consultation began for this plan, they started by meeting with Glooscap First Nations Council. Their CAO commented that just acknowledging the land is only a small piece of the puzzle. The land offers the ability to work and to live, and the pieces to everything in the room. Kevin noted that as this is only a draft plan, the meeting is not being livestreamed. It is being recorded for the sake of the minutes. He reminded committee members that they will need to use the microphones so that Johana can hear them through Zoom.
- 2. Introductions** – As it was the first official meeting of this group, everyone went around the table to briefly introduce themselves. Everyone was excited to meet one another and get started.

- Kevin Waters is the Accessibility lead and current Equity lead for the municipality. He has taken over this role until a new HR Manager is hired.
- Mattea Sexton is the newly elected youth representative.
- Charlotte Paul is a representative from the Glooscap First Nation.
- Lisa Bland is a representative from one of the 52 historic Black communities in Nova Scotia.
- Domenic Padula is a returning member on his second term.
- Anne Bishop represents the 65+ population and belongs to the 2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors Network for Nova Scotia known as the Elderberries. She was the Chair of the previous committee composition.
- Alma Crnalic is a new community member with an extensive background in finance and Human Resources, as well as serving on a Diversity Committee with her previous employer.
- Vanessa Lake is the Planning Assistant with the municipality who is responsible for taking meeting minutes. They are also part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

**3. Draft ‘Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Strategy Plan’ Review** – Johana introduced herself. She is one of the consultants with Davis Pier who is working with the municipality to develop this strategy. Work began in mid-October with a tight timeline. She encouraged all members to provide feedback to help shape the final document. Kevin provided the background information that the Accessibility Committee had a 3-year plan that required an update. Anti-Racism and Hate was integrated into the updated plan. It is now a 10-year Equity Plan that will be updated every 3 years. He noted that the “tight timeline” was due to the Provincial government prescribing this plan for each municipality last year. It occurred during the municipal elections and as a result the process faced many challenges. Kevin congratulated everyone involved for the excellent work they’d done so far.

The Committee reviewed each page in detail. Overall, the draft is a great step forward. The Committee commended the work that had been done. They suggested wording changes, additions, deletions, and formatting changes, and shared personal accounts and insight. Discussion was held on where the root of the problem lies and how to best address it. There are systemic and structural elements that must be confronted at a higher level, but the responsibility also rests on each individual to learn and do better.

The section on racism and discrimination fell short of the Committee’s expectations. Several edits were requested and comments made, and it was decided that this section would be reworked and brought back to the Committee for further review. The Committee felt there was not enough tangible action or strong enough wording. These issues must not be understated or dismissed, and it needs to be acknowledged that racism and discrimination are experienced by residents in their daily lives. Lisa suggested using the 2022 RAD report as a basis.

**ACTION: A working group will meet on February 18, 2025, at 7:00pm to review a rewrite and workshop sections 3-5.**

The content of the draft is not released to the public. It will be available when it goes to Council for final approval. Some major discussion items included:

- using the term “equity-denied communities”
- including the homeless and drug users under the blanket term of “discrimination”
- further defining that blanket term of “discrimination”
- including poverty and insecurity in the discussion
- addressing and identifying the underlying issues of white supremacy
- encouraging public education and awareness
- using stronger wording so not to appear soft or dismissive
- emphasizing the urgency and realness in the present
- making training and orientation mandatory for staff and elected Council
- providing more funding opportunities to equity-denied groups
- having achievable targets or goals
- continued liaison and building trust with the RCMP
- determining and following through with consequences, and
- using plain and consistent language throughout the document.

Additional comments can be sent to Johana and Kevin. A form with the action items will be sent out to the Committee to gauge their opinions on the timelines of the items (ex. 1, 2 or 3 years).

- 4. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment** – The working group will meet on February 18, 2025, at 7:00-9:00pm to further workshop the Racism & Discrimination section. Meetings are usually scheduled for the first Monday of each month. Staff will reach out with more information when it is available. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.