

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities Committee Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2025, 6:07pm – 8:12pm

Community Room, West Hants Sports Complex, 16 Centennial Dr, Windsor



West Hants

something inspiring awaits

Attendance:

Anne Bishop, Community Member, Co-Chair
Domenic Padula, Community Member, Co-Chair
Alma Crnalic, Community Member
Iza Rayworth, West Hants Pride Liaison
Mattea Sexton, Community Member
Karrie-Ann Wilkie, Health Board Representative
Jim Ivey, Councillor (Alternate)
Katie Rose, WHRM HR Manager
Chris Burns, WHRM Employee
Vanessa Lake, WHRM Employee
Kathy Johnston-Isenor, WHRM Employee
Tim Doyle, RCMP Representative (6:38pm)
Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor (6:55pm)

Regrets:

Lisa Bland, Community Member
Rayvonne Carrington, SPEC Advisory Member
Heather Kidd, West Hants Middle School Liaison
Donna MacMillan, Avon View High School Liaison
Ashley Connors, Avon View High School Liaison
Deanna Snair, WHRM Employee
Brielle Pyette, WHRM Employee
Mark Phillips, WHRM CAO

1) Call to Order

At 6:07pm, Domenic called the meeting to order.

2) Land Acknowledgement & Peoples Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This land was neither surrendered nor conquered. We are governed by the treaties of Peace and Friendship signed in 1726. We are all treaty people, and we all have responsibilities to this land and to each other. African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose history, legacies, and contributions have enriched this part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

We acknowledge the historic and ongoing racism against these communities, and we are committed to mending our relationships by listening, learning, and recognizing our wrongs.

3) Attendance

Quorum was achieved. Brielle Pyette sent regrets and Kathy Johnston-Isenor attended in her place. Regrets had also been received from Lisa Bland, Rayvonne Carrington, Heather Kidd, Donna MacMillan, Ashley Connors, Mark Phillips, and Deanna Snair. Councillor Leary-Pinch and Staff Sgt. Tim Doyle had prior engagements and arrived later in the meeting.

4) Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions

Domenic added the Evacuation of the Homeless to the agenda under New Business. The agenda was approved as amended by unanimous consent.

5) Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

6) Announcements

Anne congratulated the Avon River Days team for a spectacular festival. The events the Committee were involved with, the flag raising and film screening, went very well.

Anne and Domenic also shared that a new prospective member has applied and will need to be officially appointed by Council.

7) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Anne requested an amendment under item 9(a) Windsor Plains Community Meeting. The Committee had asked for Council to ask the Province for a land title project for the area like what they did for North Preston, and to re-examine the agricultural zoning in the area.

Moved by Anne Bishop and seconded by Mattea Sexton that the minutes of July 14, 2025, be approved as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

8) Ongoing Business

a) Strategic Actions: Sub-Committees

Alma reached out to various businesses and has compiled a list of 11 safe spaces within Windsor, Falmouth, and Hantsport. She has been doing most of this work online but hopes to start meeting with folks in-person. It was noted that one of the posts she made on Facebook received a concerning comment from what appeared to be MP Kody Blois. Anne had reached out to Kody's office, and they confirmed that the account was fake.

Some businesses were wary of Alma's questioning, and she wondered if there was a way to prove that she was a member of the Committee. Kathy mentioned that the Accessibility Advisory Committee was having a similar conversation about business cards, a committee email address, and/or an official letterhead. Anne will reach out to Michel Bourgeois, the Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, to discuss a way forward.

No other sub-committee had the opportunity to meet. Summer is a busy season.

b) Internal Education Session

Mattea's older sibling, Myles, is open to giving a presentation about being queer in West Hants. Iza offered to get the West Hants Pride Society involved for support and perhaps opening it up to a broader audience during one of their "Out Together" community events.

c) Response to Environmental Racism Report Panel Report letter

Councillor Ivey provided some more context. When the Province first announced they would be reconsidering uranium mining, Council sent a letter to the Province to ask about their intent. Council was awaiting a response on this matter when the Committee made the recommendation to request the Province release the Environmental Racism report. Council was going to wait until they received a response from the other matter before asking a new question, so not to confuse the issues; however, the Province never responded and announced they will be moving forward. The matter of the Environmental Racism report will be raised again at the September 9, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting.

While there is regulation that government documents can be requested through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act, this document is not public and therefore cannot be accessed through FOIPOP.

9) New Business

a) Committee Email, Business Cards, Etc.

This item was discussed previously and is tabled until Anne discusses further with Michel Bourgeois and staff. Vanessa noted that they had reached out to the West Hants IT Specialist, who said he was unable to create a group email with addresses outside the West Hants system. Kathy said a possibility would be for the email to go to a specific staff member to then forward, but how to coordinate a response is unclear.

b) Peace and Good Order By-law

The version of this document given to the Committee is still a draft and not publicly available, so the discussions will be summarized. Councillor Ivey provided history on the By-law and how it got to this point. Windsor and Hantsport both have Noise By-laws, and this was an attempt to create a uniform Noise By-law for the consolidated region. By-laws from neighbouring municipalities were used as reference. The first draft was leaked online and received tremendous public feedback. The document is now being re-written and will require a legal review.

Members felt the By-law was a step too far and would not hold up against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in court. There was the worry that the By-law would be used to disproportionately target marginalized individuals, particularly the homeless and mentally ill, who may violate the By-law by no fault of their own and have no means to pay the fines. It was recommended that while re-writing the document, staff consult with local community groups and organizations who represent those individuals. The wording of the By-law could be tightened up, so it is not so vague and to allow leeway for those with different circumstances. A preamble may be added at the beginning of the By-law to explain things in more detail. The Committee discussed the difference between using foul language (i.e. swearing) and hurtful language (i.e. slurs). The definition section could be expanded and these distinctions made.

The hope for the By-law is to be a foundation for the safe space the Municipality strives to be and empower residents to stand up for themselves and others. The intent is for the By-law to be enforced with discretion, to use the appropriate response based on the facts.

The Committee or Council representatives on the Committee may write a letter or submit a formal report to Council for their consideration. The two main points of discussion were the use of discriminatory language and the historic use of these By-laws to target marginalized groups.

c) Homeless Evacuation/Encampment

Domenic expressed his disappointment and frustration with the evacuation of the homeless encampment. He said they were given short notice to move and felt the location they were moved to was not adequately prepared and is too far from services. There has not been a porta-potty placed on the site yet, either. The decision to relocate these individuals was preventative based on the fire risk of their previous location and the current province-wide restrictions. The Municipality is collaborating with provincial organisations to provide them with porta-potties and water, and in the meantime, they are welcome to use the facilities at the West Hants Sports Complex. The Committee urged staff to do all they can for the sake of the people living there.

10) Adjournment/Next Meeting Date

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:12pm. The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2025, at 6:00pm. The Committee will be notified if there are any changes.