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Report To: General Government Committee

From: Truth and Reconciliation Staff Committee

Date: May 9, 2022

Re: Update from Truth and Reconciliation Staff Committee

Background

On July 5, 2021, through Resolution #GG-424-21, Council directed staff to “examine the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s 94 Calls to Action, in consultation with our relevant Advisory Committees, and members of our Indigenous community, and report back to Council by early 2022 to identify recommendations that the Municipality could undertake to move forward with reconciliation.”

A Truth and Reconciliation Staff Committee (TRSC) was formed with representatives from various departments. The Committee is made up of staff who currently engage or have experience engaging with our Indigenous communities, and those who work in areas that could inform and support the various themes identified in the Calls to Action. Councillor Margaret Zwart also expressed an interest in participating and joined the Committee.

The TRSC began work in October 2021 with an initial focus on learning about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)’s work, conducting an overview of the Calls to Action and participating in education opportunities to have a better understanding of the issues.

Initial Process

Initially, the Committee reviewed the TRC’s Calls to Action, identifying any work and initiatives (such as offering training for staff and Council and recognizing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) that are currently being undertaken as a corporation that support the Calls to Action. Committee members also connected with other municipalities across Canada who have done similar work to learn best practices and share resources.

In reviewing the Calls to Action, Committee members examined the items that were aimed at different levels of government with a focus on items directed at a local level. The Committee examined what the Municipality could implement to further some of the Calls to Action and what staff resources and community support were available to assist.

Consultation

A large part of the work will include consultation with our Indigenous communities. It is vital that we meet with the various Indigenous communities to understand their needs and priorities to ensure their rights and interests are included in any recommended strategy or action plan. We need to move forward collaboratively to ensure that our work rebuilds trust and fosters inclusive and transparent relationships focused on learning from past mistakes and building a future by taking real actions that demonstrate real change. A working group of the TRSC has been formed to focus on consultation.

Orange Crosswalk

In September 2021, Council directed staff to investigate an Orange Crosswalk representing awareness of Indigenous Communities (Resolution #JC-019-21). The idea came from multiple Clarington residents. Since then, staff consulted with Clarington's Diversity Advisory Committee who expressed support for a public recognition for our Indigenous communities, like a crosswalk. The Diversity Advisory Committee recommended further consultation with our local Indigenous community to identify the best way to show recognition and support.

Through discussions with colleagues in other Durham Region municipalities, staff learned that many other municipalities are looking to consult on similar initiatives. To be respectful of the Indigenous community's capacity, a joint consultation request on behalf of four of the lakeshore municipalities is being coordinated through the Region of Durham's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Unit.

Next Steps

The work being undertaken by the TRSC, in consultation with our Indigenous communities, is a transformational journey and part of an ongoing process of learning and rebuilding relationships. This will take time as we embark on this journey, considering the number of municipalities looking to consult with Indigenous communities. Meaningful consultation and relationship building is a long process, one that the TRSC is committed to. The staff committee will provide Council with incremental updates on our ongoing work and seek Council approval when decisions are needed.

Since this work is starting conversations and prompting staff across Departments to find ways to incorporate reconciliation into the programs and services we provide, Council may receive additional updates about service delivery or program changes as these occur.

Thank you, on behalf of the Truth and Reconciliation Staff Committee:

Erica Mittag, Community Development Coordinator
Sarah Allin, Planner II – Heritage
Andrew Johnson, Landscape Architect
Faye Langmaid, Manager, Special Projects
Justin MacLean, Advisor, Corporate Policy and Strategic Initiatives
Basia Radomski, Corporate Communications Officer
Melissa Redden, Deputy Director, Clarington Public Library, Museums, & Archives
Shelagh Staunton, Records Information & Legislative Projects Coordinator
Jessica Ward, Communications Coordinator
Amanda Welsh, Councillors' Office Assistant
Councillor Margaret Zwart, Councillor Ward 4