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Clarington Diversity Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

May 8th, 2025, 7:00pm to 8:30 p.m.

Online via MS Teams

CDAC Members:

Tenzin Shomar
Rochelle Thomas
Koren Kassirer
Starlee DeGrace (until 7:31pm)
Councillor Anderson
Lauren Reyes-Grange
Ron Hooper
Vincent Wong
Pranay Gunti

Regrets:

Bev Neblett

Also Present:

Jeannette Whynot, Staff Liaison
Donnalee Smith (CLMA)

Meeting called to order at 7:13pm

1. Land Acknowledgement:

K. Kassirer shared a personalized land acknowledgment that included a heartfelt tribute to Red Dress Day and the late Andrieana Montgomery.

2. Declaration of interest

No declaration of interest by members.

3. Review and Approval of agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as presented

Moved by L. Reyes-Grange; seconded by R. Thomas

Carried

4. Review of March 13, 2025, meeting minutes

Moved by K. Kassirer; seconded by L. Reyes-Grange

That the minutes from April 10, 2025, for the CDAC meeting, be approved.

Carried

5. Together, We Are Clarington campaign video

The committee viewed the 'Together, We Are Clarington' video that will be launched to the community next month. The committee also reviewed the website landing page for the Together, We Are Clarington campaign. Both items were well received by the committee.

6. Symbols of Hate Discussion

The committee continued discussing symbols of hate. Some historical context for this subject was offered by Councillor Anderson, and former Councillor R. Hooper. By mutual agreement the committee agreed to continue discussing how to address symbols of hate in Clarington. L. Reyes-Grange, K. Kassirer and T. Shomar volunteered to conduct additional research on symbols of hate and report back with their findings at the next meeting. T. Shomar will determine how members can share their research.

7. Student Bursary Update

T. Shomar advised that the application portal for this year's Diversity Leadership Student Bursary is now available, though no applications have been submitted yet. Promotion through social media and the local high schools will continue throughout May.

T. Shomar initiated a discussion on the interest in offering a mentorship opportunity with members of Council for the bursary recipients. Councillor Anderson advised that most Council members are not full-time and have other full-time jobs. As such, have limited availability and are not able to commit to the time needed to be a mentor. Councillor Anderson suggested alternatives such as a one-time lunch or a meeting, instead of ongoing mentorship.

While acknowledging the challenge of members of Council availability, L. Reyes-Grange advocated for offering the mentorship opportunity, even if it meant adjusting the parameters. She suggested adjusting the mentorship from 12 to 6 months and shortening the time commitment from 1 hour to 30 minutes per month. While training is beneficial, L. Reyes-Grange advised that it could be optional or phased in overtime.

T. Shomar supported working towards offering mentorship in 2026, to allow for proper planning and training. He was supportive of reducing the frequency and length of mentorship meetings.

Next Steps:

L. Reyes-Grange will draft a mentorship summary outlining expectations and time commitments. Councillor Anderson will review and provide feedback on the updated mentorship request. The committee was advised that they will need to pass a formal motion that clearly outlines their request and that this request will be brought to Council for consideration through their meeting minutes. The goal is to offer this mentorship with the 2026 bursary program.

8. Council Update

Councillor Anderson advised that the South Bowmanville Recreation Centre (SBRC) recently held its groundbreaking ceremony. He also spoke briefly about plans to purchase land for a cricket pitch and events but was not able to provide additional details.

Councillor Anderson also spoke about a motion to investigate the feasibility of CCTV in downtown Bowmanville at the most recent General Government Committee meeting. He reiterated the proposal is in its very early stages and no decisions have been made about installing CCTV yet; Council has only directed staff to investigate the feasibility and implications.

Committee members discussed the pros and cons of CCTV. Some members shared concerns with this type of initiative, including potential to be used for racial profiling and the stigmatization of certain populations. Other members expressed support citing that these types of cameras are not actively monitored and are only checked if there's a need. R. Thomas noted that Toronto has used CCTV for many years, and their system typically only retains data for 72 hours, cameras are in public places in locations that do not infringe on private property and overall offer many benefits to public safety. R. Hooper also expressed this initiative is about public safety, not surveillance.

Councillor Anderson reiterated to the committee that no decisions have been made and that this project is in its very early stages.

Councillor Anderson advised that there is a public meeting taking place on May 12th regarding the Courtice waterfront development plan. Additionally, a new youth member and two organizations will be appointed to the CDAC at the Council meeting on May 26th.

9. IDEA Update:

New youth and organization members

Councillor Anderson addressed this during Council Update.

Community Events.

J. Whynot advised that the Municipality will be attending Durham Youth Pride on June 1st, and the Durham Pride Parade on June 7th. Additionally, the Bowmanville library

branch will be hosting Drag Queen Storytime on June 7th at 3:30pm. Members who are interested in supporting Clarington's presence at these Pride events should reach out to the staff liaison.

K. Kassirer advised that May is Jewish Heritage Month and she will participating in a Durham District School Board event on May 21st and is tentatively scheduled for an event at the Ajax library on May 27th. K. Kassirer would love to do something for Jewish Heritage Month in Clarington next year.

10. Other Business

V. Wong inquired about having Redemption House of Recovery speak at a future CDAC meeting. Vincent will reshare their contact information with T. Shomar and the staff liaison to facilitate scheduling.

R. Thomas expressed interest in supporting or organizing an event for Indigenous Veteran's Day. J. Whynot to inquire with other staff to determine if steps are already being taken to recognize this day.

R. Hooper thanked the community for their ongoing support after the Bowmanville fire.

J. Whynot inquired if members would like to have their June meeting in hybrid format. Several members indicated they are interested in attending in-person. Staff will check room availability and will send out a meeting invitation to everyone.

11. Adjournment

Moved by V. Wong; seconded by P. Gunti

That the DAC meeting be adjourned at 8:35 pm

Carried

Next meeting Thursday June 12, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. Hybrid format.