



Burlington Inclusivity Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes

Date: September 10, 2020
Time: 9:00 am
Location: Virtual

1. Members Present:

Rana Al Semaani (Chair), Maroun Naser, Jenna Bye, Carrie Overholt, Jim Young, Ron Baliko, Girish Parekh, Kumkum Bhandari (joined at 10:50 a.m.)

2. Member Regrets:

Heba Lamloum, Mumba Litana, Brent Hughes

3. Others Present:

Councillor Angelo Bentivegna, Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, Councillor Rory Nisan, Kevin Arjoon (City Clerk), Sue Evfremidis (Human Resources Manager), Georgie Gartside (Clerk)

4. Declarations of Interest:

None.

5. Approval of Minutes:

5.1 Minutes from the meeting held September 20, 2019 were approved.

5.2 Minutes from the meeting held November 15, 2019 were approved.

6. Delegation(s):

None.

7. Regular Items:

7.1 Proposed anti-racism commission

Mayor Meed Ward and Councillor Nisan shared the actions they have taken as a result of the wide-spread awareness around the treatment of black people, indigenous and people of colour. They have been attending

events, as well as speaking to various groups and individuals across Burlington and Halton to learn more about what the community is doing to combat racism and to ask what the city should do. It is clear that there is a lot of racism in Burlington/Halton from the stories that have been shared and Mayor Meed Ward and Councillor Nisan would like to find a way to house those conversations in a productive and respectful way. The idea of setting up something formal was discussed (e.g. a task force, workshop, commission, etc.).

The committee was asked for feedback on what the next steps should look like and what kind of involvement the committee would like to have?

Suggestions from the committee included:

- educate residents about what racism is and how we can overcome it.
- awareness about human rights as part of the education.
- engage youth and ensure their voices are heard.
- more diverse events and more diversity at existing events (e.g. diverse music at Sound of Music Festival).
- establish a sub-committee to look at the diversity of organizations with decision-making powers (city hall, police, etc.).

Mayor Meed Ward also asked for the committee's feedback about the naming of paths across the city. Currently, paths are named with a transportation lens. Should the city consider naming paths through an inclusivity lens? The committee was supportive of this.

ACTION: Committee members to provide any additional feedback by email to Georgie.

7.2 Committee review

Kevin Arjoon, City Clerk, shared that a first report has been drafted regarding the advisory committee review. The report will be presented to the Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk and Accountability Committee on Sept. 17. The report provides an overview of the public engagement undertaken in 2019, a list of definitions, and assumptions.

The Mayor's advisory committee review motion from April 20 created several action items that will continue into 2021. The items were grouped into three areas:

- "Just do it" items that will be completed and do not require council approval;
- Items that are larger and will take some time; and
- Future state items that have been placed in a parking lot.

Some of the items that can be actioned now under the "Just do it" group include:

- shifting the focus from citizen to resident to ensure the language we are using doesn't create a barrier to participation for non-Canadian citizens.
- increasing efforts to attract diverse residents by enhancing the recruitment strategy.
- increasing awareness around all the ways a resident can communicate directly with council.
- general awareness about the committee system and what the city does.
- a civics and education program for newcomers, students and adults.

Two policies will be created: a committee policy that clearly defines roles, committee structure, training, etc. and an appointment policy related to the application, interview and selection processes for residents applying to a committee,

Kevin asked for feedback from the committee about the future of the committee and its mandate, as well as member's experience with the appointment process?

Feedback received:

- recruitment process was fabulous, but some people might be intimidated by a four-person interview panel.
- committee's mandate needs to be very specific and committee needs clear direction.
- need specific rules about how meetings are run, how committees should work, and expectations.

ACTION: Committee members to send any additional feedback about the committee and appointment process to Georgie.

7.3 Update on diversity and inclusivity strategy for city employees

Sue Evfremidis, Human Resources Manager, shared that an [update report](#) was provided to the Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk and Accountability Committee meeting on July 9. Staff will be working with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion to develop a strategy for city employees. The project will begin in the next few weeks and will include census work through an employee survey, review of policies and practices, training for leaders and employees, analytical work and an implementation plan. The goal is to complete the work within the next year and a staff team will be created to assist in the process. Sue will look to this committee for feedback and will also provide updates the committee.

8. Other Business:

8.1 Indigeneity and Work Experiences

Rana attended the International Labor and Employment Relations Association 2020 Conference session on [Indigeneity and Work Experiences](#). Prof. Danielle Lamb from Ryerson University presented a Canadian study that discussed non-standard employment and indigenous earnings inequality in Canada. The study highlights the longstanding earning disadvantages experienced by many indigenous workers in Canada and the barriers, along with a recommendation on how to overcome it.

9. Adjournment: 11 a.m.