



## **Burlington Inclusivity Advisory Committee Meeting**

### **Minutes**

Date: November 20, 2020  
Time: 9:00 am  
Location: Virtual

#### **1. Members Present:**

Rana Al Semaani (Acting Chair), Maroun Naser, Carrie Overholt, Jim Young, Heba Lamloum, Kumkum Bhandari

#### **2. Member Regrets:**

Jenna Bye, Mumba Litana, Ron Baliko, Girish Parekh

#### **3. Others Present:**

Councillor Angelo Bentivegna, Georgie Gartside (Clerk)

#### **4. Declarations of Interest:**

None.

#### **5. Approval of Minutes:**

5.1 The minutes from the meeting held September 10, 2020 were approved.

#### **6. Delegation(s):**

None.

#### **7. Regular Items:**

7.1 LaSalle Park plaque

The following background was shared with the committee:

- In June 2020, a resident reached out to the Mayor's office and Councillor Galbraith's office to ask about the plaque and raised concern about its contents, particularly in light of the Black Lives Matter movement. The plaque commemorates "the first white person to set foot on these shores" (photo attached).

- The plaque was erected in 1923 by the Wentworth Historical Society, when Aldershot was still in East Flamborough, several decades before Burlington assumed operational responsibility for the park.
- The plaque is in an inaccessible and low-traffic area of the park. For accessibility reasons, this is not an area where Burlington staff would recommend putting any new plaque or interpretive display.
- There is a provincial plaque in the parking lot near the North Shore Blvd East driveway entrance to LaSalle Park that also tells the story of the Sieur de La Salle (photo attached). The provincial plaque is in a more prominent area, provides greater detail, and uses more inclusive language.
- Staff at Burlington Museums, the city's Community Planning Department, and the city Parks and Open Space staff do not object to the removal of the 1923 plaque, including the boulder on which it is mounted.
- No decisions have been made. Discussions and coordination with the City of Hamilton is required.
- Heritage Burlington advisory committee was advised of the matter at their meeting on October 14, 2020 and passed the following motion: "Request staff to seek the opinion of the Burlington Inclusivity Advisory Committee and ensure the plaque is preserved and safely stored".

Committee members discussed the plaque and shared the following feedback:

- using the term "white" is not offensive language.
- there is no evidence that LaSalle was a bad person.
- it is important to preserve history and not try to change it.
- it's part of our heritage and schools teach about first explorers.
- the plaque is a beautiful piece of art.
- don't get the sense that any offence was meant by the wording.

The committee also discussed whether the wording should be changed by replacing the words "white man" with the word "explorer". Changing the plaque wouldn't be an option; however, the committee could recommend an additional plaque be added to explain that the wording of the original plaque isn't language we would use today. After discussion, the committee

agreed that the wording shouldn't be changed and an additional plaque should not be added to explain that this isn't language we would use today. The plaque is a part of our history. If adding an additional plaque was added in this location, it would probably also be necessary in many other locations to explain that this isn't wording we would use today.

**Motion:**

Moved by Rana - Recommend the LaSalle Park plaque remain in its current location to preserve the history in our community. **Motion Carried**

**Action:**

Georgie to share the minutes of this meeting with the Heritage Burlington Advisory Committee, Councillor Galbraith and the Mayor's Office and offer to have the concerned resident reach out to BIAC if they have questions about BIAC's position on the matter.

7.2 Halton Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter

City staff have been approached by Halton Equity and Diversity Roundtable to sign the attached Halton Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter. Staff will be bringing forward a report to the December 7, 2020 Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services Committee and asked if the committee has any issues with the City of Burlington signing the Charter.

The committee discussed the contents of the Charter and all were in support.

**Motions:**

1. Moved by Rana - Add the words "and minorities" to commitment #8 after the word "communities". **Motion failed.** Most members of the committee agreed that the word "marginalized" represented minorities and didn't feel the extra wording was necessary.
2. Moved by Jim - Endorse the City of Burlington signing the Halton Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter and send a letter to city staff outlining BIAC's support of the Charter. **Motion carried.**

**Action:**

Jim to draft a letter to city staff outlining BIAC's support of the Halton Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter.

**8. Other Business:**

**8.1 Joseph Brant Hospital Action Table for Diversity & Inclusion**

Rana is a member of the Joseph Brant Action Table for Diversity and Inclusion and said the committee has been meeting regularly. The next meeting takes place next week if anyone is interested in joining Rana at it or a future meeting.

**9. Adjournment: 10:02 a.m.**