

MINUTES
ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
March 05, 2025, at 5:00 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Phelps Bondaroff, Sean Dhillon, Sierra Irving, Laurie-Anne Keith, Susan Mader, Swapna Mazumder, Caroline Quan and Rishi Sharma
Regrets: Manjit Bains and Tony Kiyak
Staff: Carroll Porter, Senior Manager, Human Resources; Mais Hajaj, HR Consultant - Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Colton Whittaker, Committee Clerk

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by S. Mader and Seconded by L. Keith: “That the Minutes of the Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting held February 5, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

The following was noted during committee discussion:

- The time stamp on the bottom of the minutes should be 5:00 p.m. not 5:30 p.m.

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Keith, Mader, Mazumder, Quan, Dhillon, Irving, Sharma, Phelps Bondaroff

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair made the following comments:

- The motion made at the February 5, 2025, meeting will be brought forward for Council’s consideration at a future meeting. The date has not yet been finalized (Report on file).

MOVED by S. Mader and Seconded by R. Sharma: “That the Agenda be amended to switch items B3 and B2.”

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Keith, Mader, Mazumder, Quan, Irving, Sharma, Phelps Bondaroff

OPPOSED: None

ADEI STRATEGIC REPORT AND ACTION FRAMEWORK CHECK-IN

The Consultant for Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion gave an update on the ADEI Strategic Report and Action Framework. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- The report was well received by Council.
- Some tracked performance initiatives include the number of employees who attended training, total training hours, completed projects, and accessibility improvements across various buildings.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training is not mandatory for staff or managers, but participation is encouraged. Attendance rates remain high, with 675 employees having completed DEI training. Consideration could be given to making DEI training mandatory during the hiring process.
- Approximately 40% of the DEI initiatives are community-focused. Hosting DEI training for the public could be explored.

ADEI ACTION LIST

The Committee reviewed the ADEI Action List, and the following was noted:

- The Union of British Columbia's Municipalities (UBCM) resolutions are due in June and motions are required at the April meeting.
- A presentation from the Rick Hansen Foundation is planned for a future meeting.
- The exploration of expanding and recruiting youth perspectives could be considered.
- Exploring incentives to encourage family doctors, physician assistants, and community clinics to establish their practices in Saanich is an important initiative, though operational expenses remain a concern.
- Preventive health clinics can help reduce future strains on the healthcare system. Parks and Recreation could offer information on current programs available at recreation centers, although this may not fall under the Terms of Reference for the committee.
- Provincial representation on accessibility strategies could assist in providing insight.
- Community services could provide a presentation on upcoming events.
- Reviewing the flag and recognition policy could be considered for future discussion.
- Offering free condoms alongside the free menstrual products in Saanich recreation centres could be considered.
- Provincial regulations on pets in buildings could be a future topic consideration.
- Consideration could be given to reviewing the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) in relation to accessibility. Saanich is working to improve wheelchair access and overall accessibility on roads.
- Diverse and inclusive language procedures are currently found in the DEI Strategic Report and Action Framework. Efforts to enhance these actions are ongoing. International Mother Tongue Day could be included in municipal recognition days.
- Ensure digital and closed captioning services function properly during meetings.
- Tracking iPad usage at customer-facing counters may provide valuable insights.
- Enhance awareness of sensory break rooms and consider offering sensory kits with headphones to improve accessibility.
- Consider offering P.O. boxes to individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk, providing a secure and private alternative to shelter addresses. Consideration could be given to invite the Alliance to End Homelessness in the Capital Region to present.
- Sunflower lanyards indicate that neuro diverse individuals or others may need extra time to process information. These could be used in Saanich facilities as a clear visual cue, eliminating the need for verbal explanation.
- Including accessible wayfinding information could be added to the website.

- The Engineering Department works with the Rick Hansen Foundation to assess building accessibility, with certifications valid for five years. In 2023, three buildings were reviewed, and this year, the Municipal Hall will be assessed.
- A level crossing walkway from Gateway Village to the Municipal Hall could be explored.
- Town Hall meetings offer a new public engagement opportunity and could be made more accessible through recordings, transcription, and closed captioning. Hosting one at University of Victoria (UVic) could also provide access for students. Larger spaces for wheelchairs or individuals who need to be closer to hear are important for accessibility.
- Youth recreational programming and facilities could be reviewed to incorporate physical changes in buildings, ensuring all neuro diverse individuals are included.
- Scent-free environment signage in public spaces would be appreciated.
- A review could be conducted of the new parking policies once they are finalized.
- A future presentation on the plan for a Saanich Equity Office could be scheduled as details are finalized. The addition of a social planner is a consideration.
- The People, Pets, and Parks Strategy could be considered for a future presentation.
- Intergenerational Connectivity is a topic that could be explored.
- The Capital Regional District (CRD) is working on a project to widen trails to improve accessibility.
- Engagement and information about Men's Sheds Canada and programming for older men could be valuable topics for discussion.
- Resources could be compiled to support conflict resolution between neighbours.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from S. Dhillon the meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK