

MINUTES
ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
September 3, 2025, at 5:00 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Teale Phelps Bondaroff (Chair), Manjit Bains (via Teams), Susan Mader (via Teams), Tony Kiyak (via Teams) and Sierra Irving (Via Teams, 6:00 p.m.)

Regrets: Laurie-Anne Keith, Swapna Mazumder, Caroline Quan, and Rishi Sharma

Staff: Dale Samsonoff, HR Manager, Planning & Programs; Mais Hajajj, HR Consultant – Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager, Community Services; Sarah Faria, Community Programmer II (Events, Volunteers & Film); and Sharon Froud, Deputy Corporate Officer

As quorum was not present at the start of the meeting, the Committee proceeded informally for information and discussion purposes only.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair provided the following updates:

- September 9 Town Hall Meeting: The Chair encouraged members to attend.
- Youth Advisory Council: Work continues on establishing in partnership with local schools.
- Committee Applications and Recognition Event: Applications to serve on committees will open in early October. A Committee Recognition Event is scheduled for November 20, 2025, with location details to be confirmed.
- Menstrual Equity: The Chair formed a subcommittee with the Cowichan Valley Regional District to develop guidelines for municipalities.
- “Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification in BC Buildings” and “Adopting European Elevator Standards to Improve Accessibility and Affordability” Resolutions: They will be considered at the UBCM convention; an update will be provided at the next meeting.
- Access to Family Doctors: The Chair provided a brief update on local advocacy efforts, including the formation of an ad hoc committee to encourage residents to sign up on HealthLink BC and ongoing advocacy for new clinics in Saanich.

HIDDEN DISABILITIES SUNFLOWER PROGRAM

Presentation: Clare Kumar, Canadian Representative, Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program

C. Kumar provided a presentation on the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative — an international awareness program that allows individuals with non-visible disabilities to discreetly indicate they may require additional assistance, understanding, or patience (PowerPoint on file).

The subscription fee for membership is \$2,940 CAD plus taxes/year, with additional costs for branded materials (sunflower lanyards, pins, and signage). Participating organizations are expected to train at least 80% of staff in Sunflower awareness and provide materials free of charge to residents upon request.

Committee Discussion:

- Members expressed support for the program and appreciation for the presentation.
- Discussion included potential phased implementation (e.g., internal staff launch before public launch) and the possibility of piloting through specific facilities such as recreation centres.

- Questions were raised regarding the percentage of staff trained (the intent is to increase the likelihood that the resident wearing the sunflower lanyard/pin will be supported or recognized).

The PowerPoint and accompanying report from the Chair will be circulated to members for further discussion at the October meeting.

Quorum was achieved at 5:36 p.m. with the arrival of S. Irving; however, no formal business was conducted at that time. At 5:47 p.m., T. Kiyak left the meeting, resulting in a loss of quorum.

SUMMER EVENTS UPDATE

Verbal Presentation: C. Caravaca and S. Faria, Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Staff provided an update noting the following:

- Accessibility considerations for events include cultural, physical, and financial accessibility. The intent is that all community members and families feel welcome to attend.
- Cultural accessibility includes ensuring visible representation among stage presenters and participants. At the Strawberry Festival, this included local vendors who were new to the country.
- Physical accessibility measures include maintaining clear pathways, covering cables and cords, keeping amplified sound at a moderate level, providing ASL interpreters on stage, accessible portable toilets, and posting accessibility information on the website (e.g., parking, surfaces). Additional features include allergen-friendly food options, free shuttles, and bicycle valets.
- Financial accessibility includes ensuring community events remain free to attend and that affordability is taken into account when planning food options.
- Event accessibility guides are often designed for indoor settings; staff are developing a checklist that better reflects outdoor event considerations.
- Committee members thanked staff for their continued focus on inclusive community events and encouraged sharing accessibility successes more broadly.
- A committee member noted that care should be taken when using symbols to ensure they are easily understood and accessible to all attendees.

At 6:16 p.m., quorum was re-established with the return of T. Kiyak and was maintained for the remainder of the meeting.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by M. Bains and Seconded by S. Irving: “That the Minutes of the Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting held May 7, 2025 and June 4, 2025, be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 5 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Phelps Bondaroff, Bains, Mader, Kiyak, Irving

OPPOSED: None

ADEI ACTION LIST

The Action List was reviewed, updated, and will be circulated with the October agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from M. Bains the meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for October 1, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER