

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2025 - 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, 100 King Street, Windsor, NS



1. Call to Order

At 6:03 pm the meeting was called to order.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Community member and Co-Chair, Domenic Padula delivered the Land Acknowledgement and Peoples Acknowledgement.

3. Attendance, introduction of new members and guests

Quorum was achieved.

Attendance:

Domenic Padula, Community Member, Co-Chair	Karrie-Ann Wilkie, Health Board Representative
Anne Bishop, Community Member, Co-Chair	Jess West, Community Member
Izzy Rayworth, Community Member	Lisa Bland, Community Member
Mattea Sexton, Community Member	Mark Phillips, WHRM CAO
Deanna Snair, WHRM Employee	Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor
Brielle Pyette, WHRM Employee	

Regrets:

Ed Nugent, RCMP Representative	Katie Rose, WHRM HR Manager
Vanessa Lake, WHRM Employee	Kathy Johnston-Isenor, WHRM Employee
Chris Burns, WHRM Employee	Heather Kidd, West Hants Middle School Liaison
Donna MacMillan, Avon View High School Liaison	Ashley Connors, Avon View High School Liaison
Rayvonne Carrington, SPEC Advisory Member	

CAO Phillips will inquire with Staff Sergeant Nugent to ensure he is aware of upcoming meetings.

4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions

As there were no changes proposed, the agenda was accepted as presented.

5. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest – None

6. Announcements

Anne announced the fourth edition of *Becoming an Ally* has been released this month! A launch event will take place on December 2, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Windsor

Public Library, in collaboration with POSSE (Peer Outreach Support Services and Education). Invitations were extended to the committee to attend, celebrate the release of this new edition, and help spread the word. Refreshments will be served, and all were welcome to attend. Anne has a copy of the book for all the committee members.

Lisa announced a new role that she has accepted on a part time basis while continuing her education. The African Nova Scotian Community Engagement Specialist was part of the African Nova Scotian Research Ethics Project, a SSHRC funded project. Lisa will proactively engage with African Nova Scotian communities, foster ongoing communication, and manage outreach related project finances. This role involves planning research roundtables and a conference, organizing community events, and facilitating community-based research governance. It is hoped that through this process an ownership agreement will emerge where African Nova Scotia's retain ownership of their data.

7. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

As there were no changes proposed the minutes were accepted as presented.

8. Community building: Where did your name come from?

This exercise was introduced as a way to foster connection and understanding among committee members. Given the nature of discussions on the Committee, there was often an "us vs. them" feeling between community members and staff/Council. To help break the ice and build rapport, the committee participated in a group exercise where each member shared the origin and meaning of their name. This activity encouraged personal storytelling and helped create a more inclusive and collaborative atmosphere.

9. Further thoughts from October meeting

There was no further discussion on this matter.

10. Ongoing Business

a) Reports: Strategic Action sub-committees

Some of the sub-committees met at 5:00pm prior to the main meeting.

Lisa advised some progress has been made as they met with Tracy Babineau and now have an inventory of all roads within the Municipality, including information on ownership (whether they were municipally owned, privately owned or provincially owned). It was emphasized that this exercise was not intended to identify problematic names but rather to focus on names that may pose a safety concern due to duplication across the region. The work also aimed to support the development of benchmarking policies that could be applied, if approved by Council, when naming new roads. As part of this process, Kings County shared information about their policies, which can be used to support the development of a guiding policy. They also noted that they maintain a reserve preferred list of names, which was shared with developers and can be utilized when a new road is constructed and requires naming.

The next action was to meet with Glooscap First Nation and Sipekne'katik First Nation to inform them of the work being done and extend an invitation to be involved in the process. The intention was to have something to present to Council and communicated to the public about a Road Naming Policy and the process.

It was noted that WHRM staff, Chris Burns previously advised he would be attending a webinar about Nova Scotia Geographic Naming Process for Municipal Staff and would share any notes/information obtained from this session.

CAO Phillips also noted that timing was good as Council is in the process of a Municipal Planning Review for the entire region. There was value in having a member of the committee speak/present at a Planning and Heritage Advisory Committee meeting once the committee has completed their work plan.

Domenic reported that some progress has been made, as he was able to access a list of services that support and promote diversity, based on a 2019 document. Work continues on this initiative.

Mattea expressed the need to connect with staff regarding the creation of a calendar and will reach out to Katie to discuss further. It was suggested that once the calendar was completed, including a hyperlink for each day would be beneficial, allowing people to access more information about the significance of each day. Additionally, it was emphasized that having a framework for developing the calendar was important to ensure it was inclusive and organized, rather than having all information added without structure.

Action #14 - The committee discussed the intent and goals of this priority. It was understood that the committee was not directly responsible for implementation but recognized a role in advocacy and information sharing to raise awareness within the community. It was considered important for the community to understand the history behind reconciliation and to take meaningful steps toward decolonization. Activities such as the Blanket Exercise, documentary screenings, and the Water Walk were highlighted as valuable experiences that help individuals gain a deeper understanding.

b) Creation of unified budget

The committee discussed their goals for the next budget cycle and put forward considerations for the 2026/27 budget.

Approximately \$20,000 in proposed project ideas and funding was suggested. The breakdown included:

- Mileage for committee members to complete Historic Plaque reviews (\$300)
- Signage replacement/renaming costs (\$2000-3000)
- Emancipation Day events (\$1000)
- Meals for Community consultation (\$1500) – 2 events
- BBQ Community events (\$1500)
- Swag items (pronoun buttons, pins, rubber bands, stickers) - (\$200-\$400)

- Diversity Festival – line item in the budget to bring diversity to WHRM. Create a revenue stream to bring more diverse groups, opportunities, food, etc. to West Hants. (\$7000)
- Truth and Reconciliation Day celebration – host a public Blanket Exercise (\$3000)
- Update Flags to be more representative of Diverse populations in West Hants (\$500)
- Investing in making Council chambers more inclusive and welcoming – hire a mural artist, use the Sports Complex as an inspiration (\$5,000)
- Learning opportunities (speakers and honourarium's (\$1000)
- Business cards and information brochures (\$1000)
- Meeting refreshments (\$1200)
- Create a Diversity inspired bursary (\$1000)
- Expand on educational pieces and programming to include people with lived experiences (\$2000). Add more diverse speakers and programs, i.e. Drumming, dancing, recipe sharing/cooking diverse foods

c) New membership application

There was little discussion, as it was felt that the matter had been resolved.

d) Committee email and business card

Work continues on this item. WHRM staff will follow up with IT on the matter.

e) Environmental Racism Panel

The request to Council to send an advocacy letter requesting the release of this document was approved. The letter will be sent.

f) Peace and Good Order By-law

The committee discussed in great detail and expressed frustration and disappointment in the lack of consultation regarding the proposed by-law. Members voiced deep concern that the by-law disproportionately targets marginalized individuals, particularly those who are homeless or living with mental illness, who may unintentionally violate the by-law and lack the means to pay fines. A substantial discussion took place, similar to the previous discussion held at the August meeting, and the committee felt that the proposed measures could further marginalize vulnerable populations rather than support them. Members emphasized the need for more inclusive consultation, consideration of alternative approaches, and the implementation of supportive measures that address underlying issues rather than penalize those already at risk. In the end, the consensus was that the committee would recommend to Council, through a formal excerpt, that the Public Hearing be further postponed until February 2026. This delay would allow the committee to conduct a thorough review of the document and propose amendments for Council's consideration. Anne will gather input from committee members to formalize a report (including a link to the August meeting minutes to better understand the discussion and concern from the committee) to Council regarding the postponement of the Public Hearing.

The committee plans to review the document in detail at the next meeting with the hopes of having a completed review and amended document to present to Council for consideration.

A suggestion was made that it may be valuable to hold a workshop or training on municipal government processes, to provide committees with a better understanding of the different levels of government, their responsibilities, and how various processes work.

MOVED BY LISA BLAND AND IZA RAYWORTH THAT THE DIVERSE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS COUNCIL PAUSES THE PEACE AND GOOD ORDER BY-LAW RCOPG-001 PUBLIC HEARING TO ALLOW APPROPRIATE REVIEW WITH THE DIVERSE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE. MOTION CARRIED

g) Shelter funding and provision of affordable housing

The request to Council to send an advocacy letter was approved resulting in the letter being sent on Friday.

Co-chair Padula stepped down from the chair. Co-Chair Bishop assumed the chair for this part of the discussion. The discussion turned to the lack of support for a warming centre. Even if one were established through another community organization and funded by the Province (which was not guaranteed), it would likely not be operational until January. It was noted individuals experiencing face significant health risks or exposure to extreme cold without timely support. Committee members emphasized this initiative was not solely a provincial responsibility, it was everyone's responsibility to support one another. Those experiencing homelessness must be seen as human beings.

It was suggested funds could be found in the reserve account, even if the centre were only open during evening hours. Mr. Padula expressed he felt the Municipality was a last line in an attempt to create a meaningful solution that was previously not supported.

The committee discussed examples and references that could be used to support the request and highlight the experiences of those who are unhoused, including personal stories.

The committee were advised Council had sent a letter to the Province requesting that they take ownership and responsibility for operating and funding a warming centre. Council has also allocated a space and assumed responsibility for all costs associated with operating it, including heating, water, electricity, cleaning supplies, snow removal, and staff for weekly cleaning.

There was much support from the committee to request that Council allocate the funds to operate a warming centre while the discussion takes place with the Province. The committee will share their suggestions/thoughts with Anne who will summarize and send to staff to complete the excerpt that will be presented to Council for consideration. It was suggested the June letter previously sent to Council could be reviewed or attached to the report as well.

**MOVED BY DOMENIC PADULA AND SECONDED BY LISA BLAND
THAT THE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDS COUNCIL ALLOCATE \$60,000 TOWARDS FUNDING
AND OPENING A WARMING CENTRE FOR THE 2025/26 WINTER.
MOTION CARRIED**

h) Communication with Township of Windsor re sharing meeting space at 100 King St.
This issue was deemed resolved.

i) Changes to Council Chamber space
The changes to date were appreciated.

j) Request to Province for a Windsor Plains land title project like that in the Prestons, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon, Lincolnville and Sunnyville.

This discussion arose from the presentation from Sheldon States with respect to the lack of clarity around land titles in Three Mile Plains. The Province has a project through the Equity and Anti-racism office. The initiative strives to address historical systemic racism by helping residents in communities like North Preston, East Preston, Cherry Brook/Lake Loon, Lincolnville, and Sunnyville get clear title to their land.

The initial phase of the program was being rolled out in the North Preston, East Preston, Cherry Brook/Lake Loon, Lincolnville, and Sunnyville areas, with plans to expand to other areas within Nova Scotia. It was suggested that one of the committee's educational sessions include a presentation from someone working on this project, providing an update on its progress, timeline, and ensuring that West Hants was included. There was also value seen in expanding the session to include members of Council, staff, and the community. Ideally, the session could be held in Three Mile Plains, with refreshments provided.

9. Equity Lead

CAO Philips advised that Katie Rose was the Equity Lead for the committee. Katie will need to be registered as the Equity Lead.

CAO Phillips advised Priority 23.1 has yet to begin. The timeline for this initiative was 2025-2028.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm. The next meeting was scheduled for December 8, 2025 at 6 pm at 100 King Street.