

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Communities Committee Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2026, 6:02pm-8:20pm

Council Chambers, 100 King Street, Windsor



West Hants

something inspiring awaits

Attendance:

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

Regrets:

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

1) Call to Order

At 6:02pm, Domenic called the meeting to order.

2) Acknowledgements

Domenic delivered the Land Acknowledgement and Peoples Acknowledgement.

3) Attendance, Introduction of New Members and Guests

Quorum was achieved. Anne shared that the school liaison members, Heather Kidd, Ashley Connors, and Donna MacMillan, are unable to make the monthly meetings due to heavy workloads and life commitments. They want to stay connected to the Committee, and suggested an annual meeting at the end of the school year to check in.

4) Approval of the Agenda, Including Additions or Deletions

Moved by Izzy Rayworth and seconded by Lisa Bland that the agenda be approved as circulated.
Motion carried unanimously.

Anne asked about the meeting being advertised online. Deanna explained that, per the Municipal Government Act (MGA), all meetings are to be advertised and open to the public. However, the meetings of this Committee are not livestreamed. Staff did not advertise the meetings previously but are doing so now to align with the MGA.

5) Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

6) Announcements

Brielle shared that WHRM has received an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility grant from Sport Nova Scotia for a sledge hockey program. The program begins this Sunday (January 18) at 8:00pm and will continue every Sunday for the next six weeks. All equipment will be provided, and all are welcome to come out and enjoy the game!

7) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Moved by Lisa Bland and seconded by Mattea Sexton that the minutes of November 10, 2025, be approved as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

8) Reviewing Guidelines for Respectful Discussion

The Committee reviewed the guidelines from the Meeting and Committee Procedural Policy. The guidelines do not have to be followed strictly, and the Committee may adopt a more relaxed version of the rules. Structure is still needed for decision making and motions.

The Committee discussed “respect,” what it means to everyone, and how to incorporate it into their work. The work of this Committee is important, but also very difficult, and people are very passionate about the subject matter. Disagreements are inevitable but must not be hostile. Lisa provided a summary of respectful conduct as described within the documents.

It was discussed having a flipchart or other visual medium available for quick reference during meetings, something easier to navigate than the lengthy documents.

9) Ongoing Business

a) Reports: Strategic Action Sub-Committees

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

Anne and Lisa are working on the strategic action regarding the naming of streets, etc. They are working on scoring street names based on urgency. Most concerns raised so far are from an emergency services standpoint. Some names are used multiple times throughout the region, for example, Underwood Road and Underwood Drive. They hope to have a more formal progress report and draft by-law prepared for an upcoming meeting.

Mattea and Domenic are working on creating a resource hub for the community. Mattea has compiled a 24-page glossary of terms and is reviewing it for accessibility and clarity. Domenic, with assistance from POSSE, is compiling a list of existing resources within WHRM. The hope is to have a dedicated page on the WHRM website. Staff are still working with their web developer and will find the best way to incorporate this information.

b) Peace and Good Order By-law

Staff noted that an outdated version had been circulated with the agenda. Copies of the most recent edition of the draft by-law were handed out. Anne read through the past minutes to provide a recap of the Committee's history with this by-law. The main concern is that the by-law may be used to disproportionately target marginalized groups, particularly the homeless or those struggling with mental illness. Policing behaviour within private homes was also a concern.

Under Definitions, it was recommended to remove "often" from 3.0(g), Loitering.

The Prohibitions and Interpretations section was discussed at length. The Committee recommended wording adjustments. The language in some places was vague and/or open to interpretation that may cause more harm than good. Some things are hard to define, while others have actual, legal definitions. Consistent wording should be used throughout the document. It was recommended that some items be removed entirely. Some items are already be addressed by other laws and may be unnecessary or even contradictory.

For Penalties and Enforcement, a proportional response level was suggested, including restorative justice options. Some individuals may not have the means to pay a fine, or the control over their actions, as in cases of mental illness or drug-induced episodes. For many of the items, context is an important factor, as well as the existing relationships between the community and the responding officer. The by-law should be written in such a way that the same protections and level of discretion apply even when enforced by a new officer without local knowledge.

For 6.7 of the Exemptions section, it was recommended that the use of firearms for legitimate agricultural purposes be listed (for example: dispatching a predator going after livestock) so it cannot be argued against. Some farms have existed within Growth Centres long before the Growth Centre designation was established.

Other suggestions included the addition of a guiding principle, to explain that this by-law is not intended to punish mental illness or homelessness, nor inhibit lawful assembly or protest. The Committee will submit their recommended amendments to Deanna, who will present them to Council as part of the Public Hearing in February.

11) New Business

There was no new business at this time.

12) Adjournment/Next Meeting Date

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 6:00pm on February 9, 2026, and will be held in the Council Chambers at 100 King Street, Windsor. A notice will be sent out if there are any changes.