

Special Council Minutes
November 29, 2021 - 5:00 PM
Council Chambers/Virtual Meeting
Whitby Town Hall

Present: Mayor Mitchell
Councillor Drumm (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Leahy (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Lee (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Mulcahy (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Newman (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Roy (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Shahid (Participating Virtually)
Councillor Yamada (Participating Virtually)

Also Present: M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer
J. Romano, Commissioner of Community Services
R. Saunders, Commissioner of Planning and Development
D. Speed, Head of Operations & Fire Chief
F. Wong, Commissioner of Financial Services/Treasurer
S. Klein, Director of Strategic Initiatives
J. Long, Head of Organizational Effectiveness
C. Shorey, Associate Solicitor
H. Ellis, Executive Advisor to the Mayor
C. Harris, Town Clerk
K. Douglas, Legislative Specialist (Recording Secretary)

Regrets: None noted

1. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

1.1 There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

Moved By Councillor Drumm
Seconded By Councillor Newman

That Council move in-camera in accordance with Procedure By-law # 7462-18, Closed Meeting Policy G 040, and the Municipal Act, 2001, Section 239 (2) (e) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board,

and (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose.

Carried

2. Closed Session

2.1 Stephen D'Agostino, External Counsel

Re: To receive advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege regarding Interim Control By-laws # 7699-20 and # 7700-20 and matters before the Ontario Land Tribunal

This portion of the meeting was closed to the public. [Refer to the In Camera minutes of the meeting - Town Clerk has control and custody.]

3. Rising and Reporting

3.1 Motion to Rise

Moved By Councillor Newman
Seconded By Councillor Drumm

That Council rise from the closed portion of the meeting.

Carried

3.2 Reporting Out

Mayor Mitchell advised that during the closed portion of the meeting, Council received advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege and discussed litigation or potential litigation, including matters before the Ontario Land Tribunal.

4. Presentations

4.1 Melinda Munro and Julie Fraser, KJI Consulting Collective and J. Long, Head of Organizational Effectiveness

Re: The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism (IDEA) Project - Whitby's Journey to Inclusivity, Draft Report

J. Long, Head of Organizational Effectiveness, appeared before Council to introduce the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism (IDEA) Project. Ms. Long explained that the intent of the IDEA Project was to undertake a current state assessment of inclusion, diversity and equity within the Town and develop recommendations. She advised a draft

inclusivity report will be available on Connect Whitby, providing opportunity for community consultation.

Melinda Munro and Julie Fraser, KJI Consulting Collective, and IDEA Project Steering Committee Members appeared before Council and provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights of the presentation included:

- an overview of the draft Inclusivity Report;
- methods for obtaining information about the community and organization, including a review of Census Data, community surveys, focus groups, and policy and service reviews;
- the growing level of diversity in Whitby;
- a summary of survey results regarding experiences with discrimination as a member of the community and as an employee of the Town;
- survey results that indicate differing perspectives regarding discrimination;
- an overview of the five priorities for action steps that support inclusivity, diversity, equity and antiracism;
- a summary of the Service Review, which involved grouping Town services into eight programs, assessing best practices, and identifying opportunities for improvement;
- a summary of the Policy Review, which involved reviewing 63 policy or strategy documents for IDEA content and best practices to identify opportunities for improvement;
- recommendations to encourage the Town and stakeholders to transition to a proactive organization with respect to the IDEA principles;
- four structural elements of the recommended action items, including public commitment and accountability, continuous improvement, personal and attitudinal change, and systemic service improvements;
- connecting the Inclusivity Report action items to other Town priorities;
- an overview of the foundational and service recommendations of the Inclusivity Report; and,
- removing barriers to facilitate the IDEA project by dedicating sufficient Town resources.

A question and answer period ensued between Members of Council, Melinda Munro, Julie Fraser and IDEA Project Steering Committee Members regarding:

- the importance of addressing the percentage of survey respondents who indicated they experience discrimination;

- clarification regarding the survey responses from those that stated they had not experienced discrimination, and those that stated they have experienced discrimination either when accessing services from the Town or while working for the Town;
- clarification regarding the suggested actions steps for improving diversity and inclusion;
- potential reasons why some individuals may not respond to a diversity and inclusion survey or disclose their experiences with discrimination;
- examples of other municipalities that have undertaken similar initiatives; and,
- whether the Inclusivity Report recommendations are directed primarily towards the Town, and the role of other stakeholders including businesses and community members.

Justin Christie and Joel Linton, IDEA Project Steering Committee Members, appeared before Council to provide an overview of their lived experiences as Town staff. Highlights of their presentation included:

- the importance of the IDEA project for improving diversity and inclusion for marginalized communities, including the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities;
- the importance of implementing IDEA Project principles and action items;
- lived experiences working for the Town as individuals who identify as being part of marginalized communities; and,
- Council's responsibility for supporting an inclusive culture within the Town and community.

M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Office, appeared before Council to provide an overview of the Town's journey toward inclusivity through the Corporate Strategic Plan and "CARE" (Collaborative, Accountable, Respectful and Engaged) core values. Mr. Gaskell advised that the Town has implemented corporate learning for all staff to support diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism within the Town. He highlighted the People Strategy, Culture Plan, Accessibility Plan, and Age Friendly Plan. Mr. Gaskell noted Council's commitment to further eliminate racism and discriminations by joining the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. He thanked those who shared their feedback that helped inform the Inclusivity Report recommendations, and acknowledged the required resources to support the IDEA Project. Mr. Gaskell provided a brief overview of next steps in the project, including publication of the Draft Inclusivity Report on Connect Whitby and public consultation, followed by presentation of the final report in January 2022. Mr. Gaskell emphasized that the Town is committed to improving diversity and inclusion through ongoing learning and action steps.

5. Adjournment

5.1 Motion to Adjourn

Moved By Councillor Newman
Seconded By Councillor Drumm

That the meeting adjourn.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Christopher Harris, Town Clerk

Don Mitchell, Mayor