



Terms of Reference

Norwich Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

1. Name of Committee

The Committee shall be known as the Norwich Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

2. Nature of Committee

The purpose of this standing Committee is to provide advice to Township Council on matters related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Subject to any exceptions below, the Committee shall operate in accordance with the Township Policy for Boards and Committees of Council.

3. Mandate

The mandate for the Norwich DEI Advisory Committee will be to advise and make recommendations to Township Council, and to review policies to help ensure that the Township Council applies a diversity, equity and inclusion lens to its policies, services, programs and practices, including:

- Providing insight, advice, and recommendations to Township Council relating to the following:
 - identifying systemic barriers faced in accessing municipal services, information, programs and facilities;
 - identifying strategies for building connections and fostering a deeper sense of inclusion and belonging especially for marginalized groups in the Township;
 - proposing local municipal initiatives, services, and policies to meet changing needs of a diverse community;
- Providing recommendations on opportunities for education and awareness programs for Township Committees, Council and staff on anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion, in consultation with Township Council, the Township CAO, and within the budget allocated by Council.
- Liaise with organizations, community groups, and stakeholders, particularly those from marginalized groups including but not limited to BIPOC, and 2SLGBTQIA+ community members to facilitate discussions that promote broader understanding and engagement between residents of diverse backgrounds and abilities.

4. Objectives

The Norwich DEI Committee is responsible to advise and make recommendations to Council, and develop a DEI Strategy and Action Plan for recommendation to Council. Recognizing that the Township, in partnership with the other municipalities in Oxford County, has adopted a Community Safety and Well Bring Plan, the Committee will work in support of and in cooperation with the Safe and Well and Oxford Steering Committee and in particular their DEI Action Coalition.

5. General

The Committee shall operate in conformity with the provisions of the Municipal Act and Township by-laws. These Terms of Reference are to provide guidelines, rules, and regulations in concert with such and for items not specified in the Act or by-laws.

6. Membership/Composition

Appointments to the Committee will be made by Council. The DEI Committee shall be composed of the following members:

- Community Members - Minimum of 5 and Maximum of 8 members (Voting) appointed from the community
- Council Representation (Voting) - 2 members of Township Council

Selection Process:

Community Members will be selected through an application and interview process. All members shall be appointed by Council. An interview panel will include appointed Council members and a staff liaison. Recommendations from the panel shall be brought to Council for approval.

Committee members will have the skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute effectively to the committee's mandate. Committee members must be a Township resident, business owner or stakeholder/community organization representative who has an understanding of the impacts of racism and systemic discrimination on marginalized people and meet the following general qualifications:

- be familiar with overall community issues;
- have knowledge about diversity, equity and inclusion matters;
- be able to build meaningful relationships and connections within the community;
- have an interest in strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion in our community.

Council shall strive to ensure Committee membership reflects the diversity of the community with particular focus given to marginalized groups who have traditionally faced systemic discrimination including but not limited to BIPOC and people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+.

7. Additional Volunteers/Subcommittees

In order to achieve the Committee mandate and objectives and address specific issues within its mandate, the Committee may utilize additional volunteers and/or establish Subcommittees to provide input as required or when specific priority areas are being investigated.

Subcommittees shall have only the power to make recommendations to the Committee, and may not commit or bind the Committee in any manner without the prior approval of the Committee by resolution. All such volunteers and Subcommittee members shall be appointed by resolution of the Committee and shall report to the Committee. Appropriate agendas must be posted and minutes of any subcommittee must be maintained, provided to, and approved by the Committee.

8. Term of Office

Committee members will be appointed by Council resolution for a term concurrent to that of the appointing Council, but remain in office until their respective successors are appointed by Council. Members wishing to serve a subsequent term will submit an application in writing to staff indicating their interest to be reappointed for another term.

9. Vacancy

A position on the Committee becomes vacant if:

- such member ceases to be qualified
- a member is absent from Committee meetings for three consecutive regular meetings without reasonable cause. Upon a member failing to attend three consecutive regular meetings, the Committee shall send notice to the member and recommend to the Council that such member be removed.

Should a vacancy occur during a term, the Committee will recruit replacement members and recommend appointments to Council.

10. Support

Municipal staff will provide advice/information to the Committee on a request basis.

11. Officers

A Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary shall be elected by the Committee members at its first meeting each calendar year. The Committee may combine positions at its discretion. Council representatives will not be eligible to hold these positions.

The Chairperson is responsible for moderating the discussion at each meeting pursuant to the agenda. With the assistance of the Secretary, the Chair will prepare and distribute meeting agendas and minutes. The Vice-Chair will assume the role of the Chair in their absence. If circumstances warrant, the Chair and/or Vice-Chair will have the ability to devote some time between meetings to work with appropriate municipal staff and/or stakeholders as required.

The Secretary will prepare minutes for each meeting, assist the Chair in agenda preparation, and provide approved minutes to the Clerk's department for presentation to Council.

12. Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will establish a meeting schedule, setting the time and place for Committee meetings for the upcoming year at its inaugural meeting and each December following. The Committee will meet a minimum of 4 times annually. Special meetings may be held as determined necessary by the Committee. Notice of such meetings shall be posted with the Township Clerks Department.

13. Quorum

Attendance of a minimum of fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) of the appointed Committee members at any regular or special meeting shall constitute a quorum.

14. Rules of Procedure

The Board shall observe the rules of procedure outlined in the Township Procedural By-law, as far as applicable.

15. Open Meetings

All meetings shall be open to the Public, unless permitted to be closed in accordance with the Municipal Act. Any person(s) wishing to appear before the Committee as a deputation shall submit a request to the Committee Secretary advising of the topic or item to which they wish to speak prior to the meeting to ensure that the deputation is included on the agenda.

16. Minutes, Agendas & Resolutions

A formal agenda shall be prepared and minutes shall be kept of all Committee meetings, and will be forwarded to the Clerks Department for presentation to Council. Decisions and directions of the Committee shall be defined by resolution and reflected in the minutes.

Agendas and minutes will be in a format directed by Council policy.

17. Budget and Finances

The Committee shall submit any proposed budget to Council no later than the first Council meeting of February for consideration. All expenditures must be included in the approved budget, and Committee expenditures are subject to the Township procurement policies.

Board members will not receive remuneration, but may be reimbursed for approved expenses.

18. Annual Report

The Committee shall submit an Annual Report for the preceding year to Council respecting prior year activities, and plans for the upcoming year

19. Pecuniary Interest

The Municipal Conflict of Interest Act applies to the Committee and its members. If a member has a pecuniary interest in any matter and is, or will be present at a meeting at any time at which the matter is the subject of consideration, the member;

- shall at the commencement of the meeting orally disclose the interest and its general nature
- shall not, at any time, take part in the discussion of, or vote on, any question in respect to the matter; and
- shall leave the meeting and remain absent from it at any time during consideration of the matter.