

Diversity Related Advisory Committees

DEI Advisory Committee | August 24, 2021

Cassandra Ogunniyi,
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Program Manager
Niagara Region

Agenda

- Background
- Committee Options
 - Decision point – advice from the Advisory Committee on the best approach to engage with two communities

Background

- On February 17, 2021 Regional Council considered the TOR for the DEIAC
- At that meeting, a delegation requested that Council create Advisory Committees for Anti-Racism and 2SLGBTQQIA+
- The following motion was passed
 - That in consultation with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, staff **BE DIRECTED** to report back to Council on progress and any additional resources required to establish and launch an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and a 2SLGBTQQIA+ Advisory Committee by September 30, 2021

Background cont.

- Staff is seeking advice from the Advisory Committee on how the Region should engage and consult with these communities and whether there are other models that should be considered beyond an Advisory Committee of Council
- Role of Advisory Committees
 - Provide Advice to Council and staff with respect to reducing barriers to Regional programs and services;
 - Engage with community members and relevant organizations
 - Promote the concerns and voices of lived experience
 - Provide recommendations on the creation and revision of policy, strategy and procedures at Niagara Region
 - Support education and collaborate on opportunities for inclusion of communities in Niagara

Context – Other Committees in Niagara

- Niagara Region
 - Accessibility Advisory Committee
 - Women's Advisory Committee
 - DEIAC
 - Youth
- St. Catharines – 5 Committees
- Niagara Falls – 3 Committees
- Fort Erie – 3 Committees
- Port Colborne – 3 Committees
- Pelham – 2 Committees
- Welland – 2 Committees

Considerations

- Timeline – Takes about six months to set up a committee, from getting the Terms of Reference approved until the first meeting
- The current term of Council is ending August 2022
- Currently have one full time staff and 1.5 interns dedicated to this work, and a minimal budget
- Coordination – no guiding policy or procedure at the moment, the more Committees the more challenging coordination becomes
- Region does not currently have a consistent policy on honoraria or reimbursement of expenses of committee members which may be a barrier to recruitment for some committees

Option A – Traditional Advisory Committees

- Two additional Regional Advisory Committees are created that report to Corporate Services Committees and are set up in a similar way to the DEIAC
- Recommended membership of 7-9 community members including 1 Regional Councillor (1 member to be part of the DEIAC)
- The community members recommended for appointment to the 2SLGBTQQIA+/Anti-Racism Advisory Committee should come from diverse backgrounds. An intersectional approach should be taken to ensure representation by community members with:
 - A history of working to advance equity for the 2SLGBTQQIA+/Black and/or Indigenous community
 - Experience in considering broader and structural interests of the 2SLGBTQQIA+/Black and Indigenous community
 - Representing vulnerable individuals who have experienced the impacts of discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, and/or sexual orientation/racism

Option A – Cont.

- Pros
 - Formal processes and staff support. Official recognition
 - Community groups perceive that have their voices are heard by Council
- Cons
 - Takes approx. 6 months to start (this term of Council ends Aug 2022)
 - Resources required - At least two staff liaisons, Clerks staff support for agendas, minutes, and execution of meetings
 - Additional financial support (Honourarium, transit, child care, etc.) (\$2500-5000 per committee)
 - Formality may stifle discussion and innovation
 - Formal Committee means more processes, slower timelines

Option B – DEI Working Groups

- Two (or more) Working Groups are formed in the interim under the DEI Advisory Committee
- The Working Groups must include at least one DEI Committee member and can include any additional community members
- Less formal, report back to DEIAC
- DEIAC representative responsible for agendas and minutes
- Less structured and more informal than Option A
- Staff support is more informal

Option B – Cont.

- Pros
 - Could start right away
 - More flexibility in group members
 - Minimal financial support required
- Cons
 - The groups would have to report through the DEIAC which may lengthen the time between recommendations and reporting to Council
 - Risk of Community members not feeling like they have an equal voice to other equity seeking groups who currently have representation on Advisory Committees

Option C – Community Committees

- The DEAIC works with existing Community Committees or works to establish or strengthen Community Committees
- The Region would provide funding through a grant
- These Committees would have their own work plans and areas of focus. Recommendations to Council would flow through the DEAIC

Option C – Cont.

- Pros
 - Could be immediate for Committees that exist already (i.e. Niagara Anti-Racism Association, OUTniagara 2SLGBTQQIA+ Regional Committee)
 - Opportunity to build or support community capacity
 - More flexibility in terms of finances, more options to apply for external funding
- Cons
 - Risk of Community members not feeling like they have an equal voice
 - Some ground work may be necessary to set up, if existing groups are not representative, may take a few months to establish

Other municipalities

- Option A: Hamilton – 8 Regional Committees, 10 Regional staff
- Option B: London – 1 Regional Committee, 5 working groups, 1 Leadership Table, 7 Regional staff
- Option C: Waterloo – 1 Regional Committee, Wellbeing Waterloo has 9 groups, 4 Regional staff

Discussion/Decision

- Options
- Finances
- Decision point – advice on best approach to engage with two communities

Thank you!

Questions can be sent to:

cassandra.ogunniyi@niagararegion.ca

905-980-6000 Ext. 3226

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Manager
Corporate Strategy and Innovation Division
Office of the CAO