



Joint Accessibility Advisory & Whitby Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee Minutes

October 2, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Present: Lynn Collins, Chair
Eva Guta
Liam Lacy
Adam Lamplugh
Rony Mathew
Michael Richards
Paul Scott
Robin Steed
Marta Swirydowicz
Anjali Thorve

Regrets: Larry Brual
Vanessa Drekmann
Magda Madsen
Jamil Qamar

Also Present: Councillor Shahid, Mayor's Designate
Erica Mittag, Staff Liaison, Manager, 55+ Recreation,
Accessibility and Diversity
Michele Cotton, Staff Liaison, Accessibility Coordinator
Emma Chester, Youth Council Member
Heather Ellis, Council and Committee Coordinator (Recording
Secretary)

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1. Call to Order
 2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest
There were no declarations of conflict of interest.
 3. Approval of Previous Minutes

Recommendation:

Moved by Paul Scott

That the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and Whitby Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee minutes of March 4, 2025 be approved.

Carried

4. General Business and Reports

4.1 Staff Liaison Updates

Michele Cotton provided an update regarding the Accessibility Advisory Committee's initiatives including hosting Sensory Rooms at Town Events, the Park Audit Tool, and the Accessibility Improvement Grants.

Erica Mittag advised that the Town of Whitby was collaborating with Durham Region on their community symposium, Together Against Hate. Ms. Mittag provided an update regarding the Whitby Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee initiatives and stated that the Committee established a working group for National Indigenous Veteran's Day planning.

4.2 Breakout Group Discussion

Re: Indigenous Awareness

Michele Cotton advised that the Committee would be divided into two breakout groups to facilitate discussion regarding Indigenous awareness. Ms. Cotton stated that each group would focus on the following discussion points:

1. The film, Inaakonigewin Andaadad Aki: Michi Saagiig Treaties: Defining Relationships between Peoples, says we are all treaty people. What do you think that means for how we create welcoming, accessible, and inclusive spaces in our community?
2. Colonial governments didn't always keep their promises in the treaties. How do you see the impacts of that history showing up today, especially for Indigenous people or people with disabilities? What can we do differently, so our programs and services don't repeat those same patterns of exclusion?

3. What could we learn from Indigenous ideas of balance and harmony that might make our work on accessibility and inclusion stronger?

Members of the Committee engaged in a brainstorming session and presented ideas regarding Indigenous awareness and inclusion which included:

- promoting consistent and fulsome education about the history of colonization and agreements with Indigenous peoples and how we move forward;
- gathering feedback from vulnerable populations and those who do not use social media;
- building trust and community through active engagement; and,
- reflecting on community and intergenerational trauma to learn from the past and develop education programs that include indigenous voices and works.

5. Council Update

Councillor Shahid provided an update regarding:

- the Region of Durham's Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program;
- the Town's 2026 Budget, including feedback from the June 2025 online public survey, and the exploration of new revenue sources to help keep taxes low; and,
- the Committee of the Whole presentation from the Durham Region Police Service Board regarding Community Safety in our Region.

6. Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 - 7:00 p.m.

7. Adjournment

Recommendation:

Moved by Eva Guta

That the meeting adjourn.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.