

June 17, 2021

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Consideration from:  
INCLUSIVITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MEMO TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Colleen Hutt, Acting Town Clerk

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The Inclusivity Committee, at their meeting of June 14, 2021, recommended and approved the following for consideration by Council:

**Item 8.1 Focus Groups**

- 1.1 that the Progress Report: NOTL Inclusivity Focus Groups, Results and Recommendations, dated June 14, 2021, be forwarded to Council for consideration.

**Item 8.2 Rainbow Intersection & Park Benches**

- 1.2 That in honour of Pride Month and support of the Town's 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, a Progress Pride rainbow crosswalk be created in the Heritage District of Niagara-on-the-Lake in consultation with the Town's Municipal Heritage Committee and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, and,

That the Town consider painting a selection of existing park benches (or purchase new ones), and have one in every community, outside of the Heritage District, in Progress Pride Flag colours, and,

That the Town solicit volunteers from the community to undertake the painting of benches, but,

That the cost of benches, paint, and any other required materials be charged to the Town's operating Parks budget in 2021, and,

That the installation of a rainbow crosswalk be forwarded to the Audit & Finance Committee for consideration in the 2022 Capital Budget, subject to location and design requirements, and,

That both initiatives be implemented as efficiently as possible.

**Item 8.3 Ryerson Park - renaming**

- 1.3 That, in recognition of the past and present trauma and injustice inflicted on Indigenous people by the Residential School System, of which Egerton Ryerson was an architect, and in support of Truth and Reconciliation, the Inclusivity Committee supports the Town initiative to investigate the origins of Ryerson Park's name, and,

That, if it is confirmed that the Park was named in honour of Egerton Ryerson, the Inclusivity Committee supports renaming the Park, and,

That the Committee urges the Town to invite public input into selecting the new name and to extend that invitation expressly to the Niagara Regional Native Centre, and,

That the Town consider using the name change as an opportunity to educate by including an informative plaque/sign to accompany the Park's new signage, acknowledging the former name and explaining why it was changed, and,

That this initiative be implemented as efficiently as possible.

The following is attached:

- Appendix I - June 14, 2021 Minutes
- Appendix II - Progress Report: Results and Recommendations



## INCLUSIVITY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday June 14, 2021

10:00 AM

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor John Wiens, Members: Co-Chair Niki Walker, Co-Chair, Kiera Sangster, George Webber, Sandra Gruosso, Jamie Knight

### **REGRETS:**

Richard Mell

### **STAFF:**

Colleen Hutt  
Marilena Basilone

Acting Town Clerk  
Administrative Assistant

### **OTHERS:**

#### **1. Call to Order**

Co-Chair Niki Walker called the meeting to order at 10:00 am, followed by a reading of a land acknowledgment.

#### **2. Adoption of Agenda**

Moved by George that Jordan Williams from LAHAVA Media make a presentation and be added to the agenda.

#### **APPROVED, AS AMENDED.**

Moved by Niki Walker that the agenda be adopted, as amended.

#### **APPROVED.**

#### **3. Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared at this time.

#### **4. Previous Minutes**

Moved by Kiera Sangster that the Inclusivity Committee minutes of April 12, 2021 be adopted.

## **APPROVED.**

### **5. Presentations**

#### **5.1 Jordan Williams - LGBTQ2S**

The Committee welcomed Jordan Williams from LAHAVA Media. Jordan thanked the committee for the work they are doing. Jordan provided stats on the LGBTQ2S and the economical growth the community brings to tourism. He encouraged the committee not to only use the survey as a resource for recommendations being made by the committee.

### **6. Announcements**

There were no announcements made at this time.

### **7. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence at this time.

### **8. Business**

#### **8.1 Focus Groups - Update and Recommendations**

The Committee discussed the final revisions to the report and the options for forwarding to Council.

Moved by Kiera Sangster that the Progress Report: NOTL Inclusivity Focus Groups, Results and Recommendations, dated June 14, 2021 be forwarded to Council for consideration.

The Committee voted all in favour of this motion.

## **APPROVED**

#### **8.2 Rainbow Intersection & Park Benches**

The Committee discussed painting a Rainbow Intersection & Park Benches to a high traffic area within the Town of Niagara on the Lake to honour Pride Month and support the Town's 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.

Moved by Kiera Sangster that in honour of Pride Month and support of the Town's 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, a Progress Pride rainbow crosswalk be created in the Heritage District of Niagara-on-the-Lake in consultation with the Town's Municipal Heritage Committee and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, and,

That the Town consider painting a selection of existing park benches (or purchase new ones), and have one in every community, outside of the Heritage District, in Progress Pride Flag colours, and,

That the Town solicit volunteers from the community to undertake the painting of benches, but,

That the cost of benches, paint, and any other required materials be charged to the Town's operating Parks budget in 2021, and,

That the installation of a rainbow crosswalk be forwarded to the Audit & Finance Committee for consideration in the 2022 Capital Budget, subject to location and design requirements, and,

That both initiatives be implemented as efficiently as possible.

The Committee voted all in favour of this motion.

## **APPROVED.**

### **8.3 Ryerson Park- Renaming**

The Committee feels strongly that the renaming of Ryerson Park should be considered if confirmed that the Park was named in honour of Egerton Ryerson.

Moved by George Webber, that, in recognition of the past and present trauma and injustice inflicted on Indigenous people by the Residential School System, of which Egerton Ryerson was an architect, and in support of Truth and Reconciliation, the Inclusivity Committee supports the Town initiative to investigate the origins of Ryerson Park's name, and,

That, if it is confirmed that the Park was named in honour of Egerton Ryerson, the Inclusivity Committee supports renaming the Park, and,

That the Committee urges the Town to invite public input into selecting the new name and to extend that invitation expressly to the Niagara Regional Native Centre, and,

That the Town consider using the name change as an opportunity to educate by including an informative plaque/sign to accompany the Park's new signage, acknowledging the former name and explaining why it was changed, and,

That this initiative be implemented as efficiently as possible.

The Committee voted all in favour of this motion.

## **APPROVED.**

### **9. New Business**

There was no New Business at this time.

**10. Next Meeting Date**

July 12, 2021

**11. Adjournment**

Moved by Kiera Sangster that the meeting be adjourned.

**APPROVED.**

**ADJOURNMENT: 11:05 AM**

**PROGRESS REPORT:  
NOTL INCLUSIVITY FOCUS GROUPS  
RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
JUNE 14, 2021**

Prepared by the NOTL Inclusivity Committee:

Sandra Gruosso

Jamie Knight

Richard Mell

Kiera Sangster

Niki Walker

George Webber

Councillor John Wiens

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## **FOCUS GROUPS: OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

Earlier this year, the Inclusivity Committee conducted a public survey with the intent of gathering information that would allow it to develop meaningful, well-defined priorities and provide informed guidance to Town Council and staff, with the ultimate goal of making NOTL a more inclusive and welcoming community.

The data presented in the survey report provided an important factual foundation for the Committee; however, to develop a deeper understanding of the issues, the committee recognized that it needed to understand “why” people responded in the way they did. To this end, the committee conducted focus groups led by trained facilitators to discuss survey respondents’ experiences, ideas, and views more deeply.

To date, the Committee has hosted discussions on the following topics:

- Racism
- 2SLGBTQQIA+
- Improving inclusivity of the Shaw Community

The Committee is currently developing other focus groups with key stakeholders on the topics of accessibility and seasonal farm workers. It is also involved with the Young Adults Focus Group organized by the Lord Mayor, which met on June 1, 2021.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

A number of themes, objectives, and recommendations emerged across the focus groups held to date. The following key findings reflect overlap among the discussions:

- Talk without action is pointless
- Clear objectives and goals must be set
- Racism and other forms of discrimination is real and is everyone’s problem to address; we cannot pretend it doesn’t exist here
- People want to do better, be better, but are unsure of what to do, and how to begin
- Education and outreach are required to help people recognize their blind spots, build empathy and understanding
- Local organizations are looking for ways to work together with the Inclusivity Committee and the Town to make NOTL more inclusive
- Colonial focus on Town history excludes or at least diminishes Indigenous history and the present Indigenous community
- Businesses play an important role in how welcome and included people feel in the community
- Socioeconomic barriers exist, and so does socioeconomic discrimination
- Consultation with and input from individuals and organizations representing marginalized groups who are impacted by these recommendations / actions is imperative.

## **PROBLEMS TO ADDRESS**

- Microaggressions and other day-to-day manifestations of racism happen in NOTL on a regular basis; many are unintentional, but the results are harmful to those on the receiving end; overt racism in the form of racial profiling is also happening. For example: assumptions that people who are not white do not live here and are not “from here”.
- “Other”-ing / “outsider”-ing BIPOC residents and visitors; resentment over shared public spaces

- Lack of diversity / representation on committees, Council, Town staff
- Exclusionary outcomes of bylaws
- Lack of respect for and recognition of Shaw artists and employees, seasonal workers, as residents and consumers; they are integral parts of the economy
- Lack of affordable housing and public transportation
- Nowhere for people to express / report incidents of discrimination
- Lack of resources for 2SLGBTQ+ community, especially young people

## **RECOMMENDED SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (within 1-2 months)**

### **Committee:**

1. The Inclusivity Committee will explore ways to boost outreach via other organizations and institutions, including the Town's communication channels, Chamber of Commerce and BIAs, the Ambassador program, library, museum, media, and community groups. The Committee will develop a list of objectives, possible programs, and steps to implement.
2. The Committee will explore educational options on a variety of topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion ("DEI"), including developing a more interactive Committee page on the Town's Join the Conversation website, with links to digital resources; writing articles for local newspaper(s); and organizing live events (Covid permitting) such as panels, town halls, and discussion groups. The Committee will promote use of these channels to share information and resources with, from, and about other local groups and institutions to help residents connect.
3. The Committee will develop an inclusive calendar, with events to recognize and honour: Black History Month (Feb), Asian Heritage Month and Jewish Heritage Month (May), Pride Month and National Indigenous History Month (June), Women's History Month (Oct), among others. The Committee will explore ways the Town can work with community institutions and organizations to boost awareness and participation.

### **Council:**

4. The Committee recommends that Council should clearly define and plainly state what DEI means to and for NOTL; Council should define and implement clear benchmarks for progress towards DEI.
5. The Committee recommends that Council require a Land Acknowledgment to be prominently displayed on the Town website; display printed Land Acknowledgement in all Town properties; explore adding Six Nations flag to Town Hall, which may require an additional flagpole.

## **RECOMMENDED MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS (within the next 6 months)**

### **Committee:**

1. The Committee will explore possibilities for recognizing Indigenous history and contributions in Town, as well as possibilities for building a closer relationship between the Niagara Regional Native Centre, the Town, and local institutions (e.g., museum, library), and draft report with recommended actions.

#### **Council:**

1. The Committee recommends that the Town implement or reinforce DEI training / education, including Indigenous awareness training, for staff and Council; the Regional Committee (which includes participation from the NOTL Inclusivity Committee) is currently exploring training possibilities and programs, and the Committee will keep Council apprised of its findings.
2. The Committee urges Council and staff to apply a DEI lens to Town policies, procedures, and practices, including hiring and bylaws (existing and proposed). The Committee is available to review possible exclusionary impacts of bylaws under consideration.
3. The Committee encourages Council to foster diversity on Council and committees by encouraging candidates who are BIPOC, 2SLGBTQQIA+, female, young adults, and/or people with disabilities to run for Council and to apply for committees; Council should consider allowing non-permanent residents to sit on committees.
4. Council should have staff review Town publications, such as the *Community Guide*, to ensure they are diverse and inclusive in their representations.
5. Council should explore (or continue to explore) options for increasing affordable housing.
6. Council should raise awareness of NRT OnDemand and consider ways to improve it and make transit within region more integrated/seamless.

#### **Long-term actions (within 7-18 months)**

#### **Council:**

1. The Committee recommends that Council explore different ways to encourage / incentivise local businesses to educate their employees on DEI and build it into their culture, working in cooperation and consultation with the Chamber / BIAs. The Committee will follow up on this idea with the Chamber / BIAs and explore what role the Town could play, if any, and keep Council apprised of developments.
2. The Committee recommends that Council consider creating a forum for residents and visitors to report incidents of discrimination and harassment in public spaces and institutions. This may need to be explored in conjunction with local cultural institutions and possibly business organizations to determine the scope of such a forum and execution of an accompanying policy and procedures; the Committee will undertake this exploration if Council agrees. *The Committee fully recognizes that any such forum requires considerable thought, including a review of any precedents; it should not be used to promote divisiveness, or to waste time and resources on relatively trivial matters that should be resolved without a formal process. This will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis.*

#### **NEXT STEPS**

The Committee will begin action on its short-term objectives immediately, and requests that Council consider the remaining recommendations and return feedback, directives, and requests for more information to the Committee and Town staff (as required and appropriate) as soon as possible.