



The Corporation of the Municipality of Tweed Staff Report

Date: April 14, 2021 Council Meeting
Report to: Council
Report from: CAO/Treasurer
Department: Administration
Title: Inclusive Public Service Policy

PURPOSE:

For Council to start working on establishing a formal Inclusive Public Service Policy in line with the Government of Canada Diversity and Inclusion and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

BACKGROUND:

In 2017, the Government of Canada issued a report on “Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion” ([Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion - Canada.ca](#)). As noted within this document, “today’s public service spans many generations and has a growing diversity of individuals who have different views and expectations” and the Municipality of Tweed, to remain welcoming and inclusive. Although this paper was focusing on employment, the concepts are well translatable to the public services our Municipality provides.

In the report it was noted that the top 3 responses for factors contributing to inclusivity are:

1. Respect and civility;
2. Fairness in all aspects; and
3. Cultural awareness and sensitivity.

The report also identified that the top 3 barriers to inclusivity are:

1. Bias;
2. Discrimination; and
3. Harassment.

Also, on May 13, 2019, a letter was issued from the Ontario Human Rights Commission to municipalities on the harmful impact of Indigenous-themed sports logos (see attached). The Municipality has worked over the last two years at having the

Indigenous-themed sports logos removed from our facilities. We will be meeting with Tweed Minor Hockey Association to discuss their plan.

It is time for the Municipality to now take this further and establish an Inclusive Public Service Policy that addresses inclusivity and diversity in all aspects of public service. An Inclusive Public Service Policy should address inclusivity and diversity in provision of public services for all Ontario Human Rights Code protected grounds, including:

- Age
- Ancestry, colour, race
- Citizenship
- Ethnic origin
- Place of origin
- Creed
- Disability
- Family status
- Marital status (including single status)
- Gender identity, gender expression
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual orientation

OPTIONS:

1. Direct staff to reach out to Ontario municipalities to find examples of comparable policies across the Province to start the drafting of the Municipality of Tweed's policy and then further bring all examples to a Committee of the Whole day to discuss what should be included.
2. Hire consultant to draft a policy for Council's review and approval.
3. Investigate the possibility of working on creating a joint or common Inclusive Public Service policy for the region (Hastings County and lower tiers).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None

IMPACT:

Will provide for the Municipality to improve our welcoming atmosphere and reducing discrimination and barriers to inclusivity.

RECOMMENDATION:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive the Inclusive Public Service Policy report as presented;

AND FURTHER, that staff be directed to investigate the possibility of working on a joint or common Inclusive Public Service Policy for the Hastings County region;

AND FURTHER, that staff be directed to reach out to other Ontario municipalities to find examples of comparable policies.



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Letter to municipalities on the harmful impact of Indigenous-themed sports logos

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May 13, 2019

The OHRC wrote to 40 municipalities about the harmful impact of Indigenous-themed sports logos in city facilities.

Dear Mayor,

We are writing to urge all municipalities in Ontario to engage Indigenous communities about the use of Indigenous-themed logos and team names in their sports arenas.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) recently intervened in an Application before the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO) which alleged that the use and display of Indigenous-themed logos and team names in the City of Mississauga sports arenas was discriminatory.

The OHRC conducted extensive outreach with Indigenous peoples to learn more about the impact of this use, and heard directly from youth across the province through the Indigenous Youth Council of the Ontario Federation of Friendship Centres. We intervened in the case to amplify the perspectives and voices of Indigenous youth and to highlight the harmful impact of stereotypes on youth.

The OHRC reached a settlement with the City of Mississauga and the Applicant. In the settlement, the City of Mississauga committed to:

1. Remove from its sports facilities all Indigenous-themed mascots, symbols, names and imagery related to non-Indigenous sports organizations.
2. Develop a policy on the use of Indigenous images and themes at its sports facilities, in collaboration with different groups such as the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, the Peel Aboriginal Network, the Indigenous Youth Council of the Ontario Federation of Friendship Centres and Indigenous Sport and Wellness Ontario.
3. Supplement its Diversity and Inclusion training with expanded material addressing reconciliation and Indigenous peoples.

The OHRC is now contacting municipalities in Ontario to ask that they follow suit. This is in keeping with the OHRC's mandate to identify, prevent, and eliminate discrimination, and to promote human rights within the province using a range of powers under the Human Rights Code.

Harmful Impact of Stereotypes on Indigenous Youth

Sports are drivers of social inclusion; they bring communities together and help youth develop their self-esteem. We recognize that municipalities are committed to providing environments that promote healthy and active lifestyles in the most inclusive manner. To this end, the OHRC and municipalities have a shared goal of actively removing barriers to participation in sports for Indigenous youth.

The OHRC recognizes that the use of Indigenous-themed names and logos by sports teams has been a long-standing norm in our society. However, it is time to revisit these pervasive images.

One of the purposes of Ontario's Human Rights Code (Code) is the "creation of a climate of understanding and mutual respect for dignity and worth of each person so that each person feels a part of the community." As service providers, municipalities have obligations under the Code to provide a service environment free of discrimination. Human rights law has found that images and words that degrade people because of their ancestry, race, color and ethnic origin, among other grounds, violate the Code.

Derogatory images and words can have a significant impact on the ability of affected individuals and groups to participate and benefit equally in services such as participating as a member of a sports team or attending games as a spectator. There can also be broader social and psychological impacts on such individuals and groups, including how they are viewed and treated in their community.

The American Psychological Association is among over 100 professional organizations that have adopted formal resolutions recommending the immediate retirement of Indigenous-themed names and logos by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams and organizations. These resolutions are based on a growing body of empirical evidence that demonstrate the harmful effects of these images. The scientific literature shows that Indigenous-themed names and logos:

1. Misuse cultural practices and sacred spiritual symbols;
2. Deny Indigenous peoples control over social definitions of themselves;
3. Perpetuate stereotypes of Indigenous people;
4. Create hostile environments for students and others;
5. Negatively impact the psychological functioning of Indigenous people (decreased self-esteem and community worth).

This research is summarized in Appendix A, the expert report of Dr. Jesse A. Steinfeldt, a sports psychologist.

In 2015, the Honourable Murray Sinclair and Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) noted the profound impact that stereotypes in sports have on young Indigenous people.

The TRC Final Report documents the challenges Indigenous youth face in forming their identities and the important role of sports in developing self-esteem. One of the TRC's Calls to Action includes a call to ensure that sport policies and programs are inclusive of Indigenous peoples.

Additionally, the TRC calls for Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination to be integrated into civic institutions in a manner consistent with the principles norms and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Indigenous Youth Council of The Ontario Federation of Friendship Centres has stated: "For too long Indigenous peoples have been branded by communities other than our own... We are the ones who can best create images of identity for our people." Indigenous communities must have ownership over their own images.

Next Steps

In our strategic plan, the OHRC committed to using our mandate and powers to engage in sustained trusting relationships with Indigenous communities that are built on dignity and respect, and by working to advance

reconciliation and substantive equality.

The OHRC urges the [municipality] to take the first step in removing barriers to participation for Indigenous peoples by collaborating with diverse Indigenous communities to develop a policy on the use of Indigenous-themed logos and names in their sports facilities and arenas.

We have identified non-Indigenous sports organizations [team name] that use Indigenous-themed names and/or logos.

We believe that the City of Mississauga is taking important steps to show leadership and a commitment to reconciliation. The above-noted settlement sets a positive path forward for other municipalities to follow.

In keeping with the OHRC's commitment to public accountability and its duties in serving the people of Ontario, this letter and the response received may be made public.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Sincerely,

Renu Mandhane, B.A., J.D., LL.M.
Chief Commissioner
Ontario Human Rights Commission

[Attachments](#)

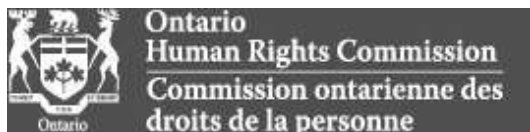
Attachments:

 [Appendix A - Dr. Steinfeldt Expert Report 2018](#)

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