



Township of Southgate
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Township of Southgate Council Member Notice of Motion

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 17th, 2023

FOR: April 5th, 2023

TO: Council

FROM: Councillor Monica Singh Soares

RE: Notice of Motion regarding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee of Council (EDI) via 5-year Strategic Plan in the Community Action Plan (CAP)

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that Council direct staff to bring back a report regarding the development of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee of Council and draft Terms of Reference with a mandate to provide guidance in equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives within the Township of Southgate via implementation in the upcoming Community Action Plan (CAP).

Comments:

A council committee for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is vital for the Township of Southgate for several reasons. Establishing such a committee can contribute to a more cohesive, harmonious, and thriving community. Some key reasons for creating an EDI committee in Southgate include:

Reflecting community values:

WHEREAS Southgate is home to a growing number of residents from diverse backgrounds with different perspectives, values, and experiences. The population growth increase from 2019 to 2023 has been exponential and unprecedented. Establishing an EDI committee ensures that these voices are represented, and that the township's decisions and policies align with the community's values.

Strengthening community relations:

WHEREAS by fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment, the EDI committee can promote a sense of belonging, encourage civic engagement, and improve relations between various community groups, leading to a more connected and collaborative township.

Addressing disparities:

WHEREAS an EDI committee can identify and address existing disparities in areas such as education, employment, housing, and public services within the township. By working to eliminate barriers and promote equal opportunities, the committee can contribute to closing socioeconomic gaps and fostering social mobility.

Enhancing local government representation:

WHEREAS the committee can advocate for increased diversity within the local government, ensuring that elected officials and decision-makers accurately represent the township's demographics. This can lead to better communication, trust, and engagement between community members and their leaders.

Supporting economic development:

WHEREAS by promoting an inclusive and equitable community, the EDI committee can attract new businesses, investments, and talents to Southgate. A diverse workforce can contribute to innovation, creativity, and overall economic growth.

Celebrating cultural richness:

WHEREAS the EDI committee can work to celebrate and promote the cultural diversity within Southgate by organizing events, programs, and initiatives that encourage cultural exchange, understanding, and appreciation. This can foster a more tolerant, respectful, and vibrant community.

Enhancing accessibility:

WHEREAS the committee can advocate for improvements in accessibility to public spaces, facilities, and services for people with disabilities, ensuring that all residents can fully participate in and benefit from the township's offerings.

Ensuring compliance with laws and regulations:

WHEREAS many jurisdictions have laws and regulations in place to ensure equal opportunity and prevent discrimination. An EDI committee can help Southgate comply with these requirements and uphold its ethical responsibility to treat all residents fairly and equitably.

Encouraging community dialogue:

WHEREAS by creating a platform for open dialogue on issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion, the EDI committee can help raise awareness, foster understanding, and promote positive change within the township.

Community Action Plan (CAP):

WHEREAS the CAP 5-year plan from 2019-2023 will be ending and therefore embarking on another 5-year strategic planning consultation and community engagement process. The current CAP does not make mention of Equity,

Diversity, and Inclusion and going forward, it is imperative that EDI be included as one of the "Major Goals". **Please Note:** Analysis of the current 5-year (2019-2023) CAP shows there is no mention of the words "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion". It must be emphasised that there is a need to incorporate these critical elements for the betterment of the community.

Township of Southgate Staff efforts:

WHEREAS Township of Southgate staff have started to the beginnings for Equity Diversity, and Inclusion internally, there is great momentum to implement a 5-year strategy beginning with a EDI committee. Implementing a 5-year EDI strategy will capitalize on the foundation, optimize and support staff efforts in this very important work.

Imperative Representation:

WHEREAS historically, the Township of Southgate for the first time has had people of colour, both of which are women on council. To this point, this is a prime example of intersectionality many can identify with which also falls under EDI. Further, a more widespread analysis show that Southgate is one of the first municipalities in Grey County to have women of color on the council which speaks to the growing need for an EDI Committee of Council and representation in the 5-year CAP. In addition, almost half of the council is made up of women. The Township of Southgate is making history in a good way and adopting an EDI Committee of Council and 5-year strategic plan within the CAP would be the direct and organic next step in natural progression towards a bright future of representation to the point Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

Summary

A 5-year Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy for the Township of Southgate can be structured in several phases within the 5-year CAP, with specific goals and initiatives designed to promote an inclusive and equitable community. Here's a suggested roadmap:

Year 1: Assessment and Awareness

Year 2: Planning and Policy Development

Year 3: Implementation and Capacity Building

Year 4: Evaluation and Adaptation

Year 5: Sustainability and Expansion

Purpose:

The purpose of the EDI Committee is to advise and support the Township of Southgate in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion within the community, ensuring that all residents have equal access to opportunities, services, and resources, and fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment.

Scope:

The EDI Committee's scope includes the development and implementation of policies, programs, initiatives, and recommendations that address issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Township of Southgate. This encompasses areas such as education, employment, housing, public services, accessibility, cultural awareness, and community engagement.

Responsibilities:

The EDI Committee is responsible for the following tasks:

Developing a comprehensive 5-year EDI strategy for the Township of Southgate, including goals, objectives, and measurable targets.

Advising the Township on the development and implementation of policies and procedures that support equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Identifying and addressing barriers to equal access and opportunities within the community.

Monitoring and evaluating the progress and effectiveness of EDI initiatives.

Providing recommendations for improvements and adjustments to the EDI strategy, based on evaluation findings and community feedback.

Collaborating with local organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and community groups to support and promote EDI initiatives.

Raising awareness and fostering community dialogue on issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Organizing and participating in events, workshops, and seminars that promote cultural awareness, understanding, and appreciation.

Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations related to equal opportunity, accessibility, and non-discrimination.

Preparing and presenting reports and updates to the Township Council, as required.

Best Regards,
Monica Singh Soares,
Councillor Township of Southgate