

WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Communities Committee
February 9, 2026 - 6:00 p.m. AMENDED 2026-02-09
Windsor Council Chambers, 100 King St, Windsor, NS

Agenda is subject to change due to additions that may not be able to be reflected until after the meeting



1. Call to Order
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Attendance (Introductions of new members and/or guests if applicable)
4. Approval of the Agenda, including additions or deletions
5. Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest
6. Announcements
7. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
- ~~8. Reviewing guidelines for respectful discussion – What makes you feel safe?~~
- ~~9. Presentation by Discussion with the Mayor~~
10. Community building: What do you see as the primary role of the committee?
11. Ongoing Business
 - ~~a) Review of the Equity, Anti-Racism and Accessibility Plan – of the 2025 actions, which are under way, which are not?~~
 - b) Peace and Good Order By-Law RCOPG-001 **Update**
 - c) Shelter funding and provisions of affordable housing – update and reminder about Strategic Action #23
 - d) Budget
12. New Business
 - a) African Heritage Month virtual event (Lisa)
 - b) Request from Community Development/Recreation – Festivals (Kathy)
 - ~~c) Update on AMANS grant (Katie)~~
 - ~~d) Consultation with the Windsor Township Business Association on event plans (Katie)~~
13. Next Meeting Date / Adjournment

Attendance:

Anne Bishop, Community Member, Co-Chair
Domenic Padula, Community Member, Co-Chair
Lisa Bland, Community Member
Izzy Rayworth, Community Member
Jess West, Community Member
Ed Nugent, RCMP
Jim Ivey, WHRM Councillor
Mark Phillips, WHRM CAO
Vanessa Lake, WHRM Employee
Kathy Johnston-Isenor, WHRM Employee
Deanna Snair, WHRM Employee

Regrets:

Mattea Sexton, Community Member
Karrie-Ann Wilkie, Health Board Representative
Kayla Leary-Pinch, Councillor
Katie Rose, WHRM HR Manager
Brielle Pyette, WHRM Employee
Heather Kidd, West Hants Middle School Liaison
Donna MacMillan, Avon View High School Liaison
Ashley Connors, Avon View High School Liaison
Rayvonne Carrington, SPEC Advisory Member

Guests:

Abraham Zebian, WHRM Mayor
Chrystal Remme, WHRM Councillor
Debbie Francis, WHRM Councillor

1) Call to Order

At 6:03pm, Anne called the meeting to order.

2) Acknowledgements

Anne delivered the Land Acknowledgement and Peoples Acknowledgement.

3) Attendance, Introduction of New Members and Guests

Quorum was achieved. Councillor Leary-Pinch sent regrets and Councillor Ivey attended as her alternate. Brielle Pyette sent regrets and Kathy Johnston-Isenor attended as her alternate. Mattea Sexton and Katie Rose had sent regrets.

Mayor Zebian was in attendance. Councillors Remme and Francis were in the audience. Those who had not met introduced themselves.

4) Approval of the Agenda, Including Additions or Deletions

Lisa's announcement was moved under New Business as item 12a. A discussion with Community Development/Recreation about Festivals was added under New Business as item 12b. Item 8, reviewing the guidelines, was postponed until the next meeting. Item 11a, review of the equity plan, was postponed until the next meeting. Item 10, the discussion with the Mayor, was moved up to item 9, and would be an open discussion rather than a presentation. Katie's updates under New Business will be provided at the next meeting.

Moved by Domenic Padula and seconded by Jess West that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

5) Declaration(s) of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

6) Announcements

Izzy Rayworth shared that she was accepted into the astrophysics program at St. Mary's University. Congratulations, Izzy!

Kathy Johnston-Isenor shared that, in partnership with the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education (AVRCE), WHRM will be hosting an international expo to honour and share the wonderful, diverse cultures of the valley's 135 international students. It will be on Heritage Day, Monday, February 16, 2026, at the Windsor Community Centre, beginning at 1:00pm.

Parks and recreation also have a needs assessment survey available, for both the public and non-profit organizations. There will be upcoming public engagement sessions as well. The information is available on municipality's Facebook pages. Kathy will also share the information via email.

7) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Moved by Domenic Padula and seconded by Izzy Rayworth that the minutes of January 12, 2026, be approved as circulated. Motion carried unanimously.

9) Discussion with the Mayor

The Committee had an open discussion with the Mayor about respectful and safe dialogue. This conversation stemmed from an email in November regarding the warming centre, and the hateful comments that stemmed from a social media post. Everyone—Councillors, Staff, Committee Members—should be cognizant of what they say and the words they use, and how they direct themselves as a representative of the Committee and/or the municipality.

Discussion points included, but were not limited to:

- Respecting Council’s decision. Councillors must consider things from various angles, and a vote against shouldn’t be taken as an offense.
- The words you use matter. Consider them carefully. Harm may not be intended, but it can still occur. It is important to acknowledge when harm is done and apologize.
- The importance of advocacy.
- Some people speak structurally. There is a distinction between “the municipality” as a colonial structure, and “the municipality” as individuals. There are good people trying to make good change within the system.
- There is a distinction between speaking as a representative of the Committee and as a private citizen.
- Acknowledging the municipality as a colonial structure along with the Land Acknowledgement.
- Staff and Council are here as partners, to work together with the Committee to make the changes we need in our communities.
- Social media may make things look bleak and that not many things have changed, but social media is not the only determinate. Real people in the community show that change has been made and things are heading in the right direction.

- Posts on social media can take on lives of their own because you cannot control what happens in the comment section.

At 6:43pm, Mayor Zebian and Councillor Francis left for another engagement.

10) Community building: What do you see as the primary role of the committee?

Anne reviewed the mandate and purpose of the Committee as laid out in the terms of reference. The mandate was originally written in 2023, before the equity plan was in place. Some of the language may need to be adjusted to reflect the plan.

Anne asked the Committee how they view the mandate and how they interpret it, and what everyone views as the Committee's main role. The Committee went around the table describing what they consider the most important aspects of their work. This will help narrow down the Committee's goals to take tangible steps towards a more inclusive West Hants. Many felt that attitudes have changed drastically over the past few years and expressed hope that change will continue in a positive direction. Discussion points included, but were not limited to:

- Leading by example
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Connection and collaboration with the RCMP
- Supporting and collaborating with outside organizations
- Advocacy
- What is our vision for the community?
- Resource-sharing with other groups
- "Nothing about us without us"
- Economic equality as the foundation. Attitudes are changing, but economic disparity is growing.

11) Ongoing Business

b) Peace and Good Order By-law RCOPG-001 Update

The Committee's amendments were presented to Council at the January 27, 2026, meeting. Council accepted all amendments and expressed their appreciation for the Committee taking the time to review it so thoroughly. The Public Hearing will be held on February 24, 2026.

c) Shelter Funding and Provisions of Affordable Housing

The Committee will write a report to Council recommending they begin work on strategic action #23 from the Equity Plan, “conduct meaningful engagement with people with lived or living experience to assist in building out supports for people impacted by homelessness.”

d) Budget

Due to the late hour, this item was deferred until the next meeting.

11) New Business

a) African Heritage Month virtual event (Lisa Bland)

Lisa Bland and Sivanah Burgess are hosting a virtual event on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. This will be a panel discussion on local African Nova Scotian heritage, art, and legacy. This discussion will focus on the valuable contributions by African Nova Scotians to the Windsor Plains and West Hants area, including sharing local poetry, art, and inspiring a month-long celebration of Black joy. All are welcome. Lisa will provide a registration link.

b) Request from Community Development/Recreation – Festivals (Kathy Johnston-Isenor)

The Community Development/Recreation Department want to add to the events and celebrations hosted by the municipality and are looking for input from the Committee. What celebrations would they like to see, and what is the desired scale of each celebration? A Facebook post, a recreation program, or a community event, etc. Kathy would like to plan these events in collaboration with the Committee. Also by collaborating, costs can be shared.

The Committee would like to see events for Treaty Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and suggested consulting with Glooscap on how to best celebrate them.

12) Adjournment/Next Meeting Date

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:58pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 6:00pm on March 9, 2026, and will be held in the Council Chambers at 100 King Street, Windsor. A notice will be sent out if there are any changes.