



C June 9/25

Memo

File: 1420-20 ADEI

To: Angila Bains, Director of Legislative & Protective Services, Corporate Officer

From: Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

Date: May 20, 2025

Subject: **Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Reaffirming Our Commitment to the Values We Hold Dear in Saanich**

Following the initial discussion at the February 5, 2025 meeting, the Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee concluded their review of the current Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement at the May 7, 2025 meeting. During this meeting, members confirmed the title (Reaffirming Our Commitment to the Values We Hold Dear in Saanich) and provided feedback, which resulted in a motion that was put forward and carried.

“That the Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee recommends that Council endorse and release the following statement:

Reaffirming Our Commitment to the Values We Hold Dear in Saanich

Every Saanich Council and committee meeting opens with the District’s territorial acknowledgement: “We acknowledge that the District of Saanich lies within the territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples represented by the W̱ JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin), STÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), W̱SIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nations.” And the District’s diversity statement: “Saanich is committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community and we are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. We all share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.”

As efforts to erode equity and inclusion gain traction in other parts of the world, now is the time to affirm the District’s ongoing commitment to these words and to the values that underpin them. We have a duty to ensure our policies, programs, and public spaces reflect our shared values of respect, dignity, and opportunity for all.

Our ongoing work in accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) is not about compliance or optics. ADEI is about building a community where everyone has the chance to succeed without barriers, whether physical, systemic, or attitudinal. Accessibility ensures people of all abilities can navigate and participate in public life without obstacles. Diversity enriches our community, bringing new ideas, perspectives, and cultural

vibrancy. Equity ensures that resources and opportunities are distributed fairly, addressing historical and systemic injustices. Inclusion fosters a sense of belonging, empowering every individual to contribute to, and benefit from, the community's collective growth.

It's vital we continue to invest in programs that break down barriers, amplify marginalized voices, and create meaningful opportunities for all — modelling the kind of governance that prioritizes equity, reconciliation, and the well-being of every Saanich resident.

ADEI work is never truly complete. It requires ongoing efforts, uncomfortable conversations, reflection, and action. It demands courage and perseverance in the face of ignorance, bigotry, and hate. This work is not only necessary, it's transformative. Let's continue to build a Saanich that is accessible, diverse, equitable and inclusive - a source of inspiration and hope for everyone."

An excerpt of the draft minutes are attached for information.



Angela Hawkshaw
Clerk – Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair presented a draft of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement (on file) to the Committee, which resulted in the following motion:

MOVED by S. Mader and Seconded by S. Mazumder: “That the Accessibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee recommend that Council endorse and release the following statement and that it be called:

Reaffirming our commitment to the values we hold dear in Saanich

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RESULTS: Carried 10 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Bains, Dhillon, Irving, Keith, Kiyak, Mader, Mazumder, Phelps Bondaroff, Quan, Sharma

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: None