



Confronting Systemic Racism

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Definitions

- “Systemic discrimination can be described as patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate disadvantage for racialized persons.” *Ontario Human Rights Commission*
- “Institutional racism (also known as systemic racism) is a form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues.” *Wikipedia*

Brief History

- Community action usually triggered by a hot button event.
- Community feeling under valued & contributions not recognized.
- Systemic discrimination impacts quality of life.

The Process

- Series of meetings between African Nova Scotian community and Town Council.
- Opportunity for council to listen and learn community concerns.
- Community presentation to Town Council.
- Council approved a motion to jointly work with community to address issues.

Proposed Motion

Be it resolved that the Town of Truro works collaboratively with the African Nova Scotian community in Truro to enhance our relationship through historical recognition of their contribution to the community, improved communications to open dialogue on other community concerns, and to support the community as it seeks justice and development through the provincial and federal governments.

Developing the Action Plan

- Town will work with the African Nova Scotian community through a Special Committee of Council.
- Council will appoint members of the Diversity Committee to the Special Committee.
- The African Nova Scotian community will select community representatives that it sees as appropriate.
- Committee will have an equal number of members from the community and from Council.

Developing the Action Plan

- The Chair will be a qualified, independent person appointed with agreement of both the Town and African Nova Scotian community.
- Council will consult with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission to add clarity & define scope.
- The Special Committee will work with the community to establish Terms of Reference, milestones and objectives based on the approved scope.
- Chair of the Special Committee will then brief Council on the way forward.

Desired Outcome

A multi-faceted action plan that will help to guide the Town and community to find solutions.

Self-Evident Truths

- This will not come without participation, co-operation, willingness and patience from everyone concerned.
- We recognize that some of the issues can be painful and complex, but we will not succeed without speaking the truth, education, understanding, dialogue and awareness.

Progress to Date

- ✓ Town has identified its committee reps.
- ✓ Several joint meetings have been held.
- ✓ African Nova Scotian Affairs has provided consultation to develop the Terms of Reference.
- ✓ Draft Terms of Reference have been finalized.
- ✓ Community wants to present Terms of Reference to members prior to selection of reps.
- ✓ Several achievable initiatives have been identified.
- ✓ Selection committee for community rep selection has been formed.

Next Steps

- African Nova Scotian community meeting – update, buy-in.
- Pick low hanging fruit.