

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Yasmyn Belle Accessibility & EDI/Coordinator Legislative Services Division ybelle@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	January 16, 2023		
Report No.:	Legislative Services-084-23		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Black History Month Proclamation

RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS, On December 14, 1995, Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, requested and received the unanimous agreement of the House of Commons on her motion to declare February Black History Month in Canada; and

WHEREAS, Diversity and inclusion are priorities of this Council and we have committed to working with our residents to eradicate racism in all its forms and to promote the Town of Cobourg approved EDI Strategy, and United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #11, to be a community that is inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council endorses the opportunity for the community to celebrate and honor the significant contributions that both past and present Black Canadians have made in Canada and Cobourg; and

FURTHER THAT Council officially proclaims the month of February 2023 as Black History Month in the Town of Cobourg.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

Cobourg is leading Northumberland County in equitable, diverse, and inclusive best practices. Being one of the only municipalities with a 2022-2026 EDI Strategic Plan, it is important to remain progressive in celebrating and acknowledging the diverse identities that exist in the community. Proclaiming February as Black

History Month solidifies our continued efforts to promote and highlight inclusion and diversity within the Town of Coburg.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The proclamation of Black History Month would open doors for a variety of learning opportunities and celebrations for the Town of Cobourg residents. The Accessibility and EDI Coordinator is already actively working on initiatives around the community and county that will invite residents to critically think and learn about Canadian Black History, acknowledge and celebrate Cobourg BIPOC leaders, business owners and youth and admire Black art, music, and literature.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this proclamation and endorsement of community events directly aligns with our 2022-2026 EDI strategic plan efforts as well as our commitment to the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. Both initiatives require benchmarks such as:

- Goal #3 to engage our diverse communities in a meaningful way in the 2022-2026 EDI Strategic Plan
- Common Commitment #9 to challenge discrimination and promoting diversity and equal opportunities in education and other forms of learning in the Canadian Commission of UNESCO for the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities
- Common Commitment #10 to promote the respect, knowledge and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Indigenous and racialized communities in the cultural fabric of the community

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

Although there is no official legislation around anti-racism or EDI initiatives, it is imperative that Cobourg continues to align with work and initiatives that foster inclusion within the community. Additionally, by joining the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, one of the Town of Cobourg's duties is to report on inclusive initiatives, policies, and trainings, on a yearly basis.

Regarding the official proclamation request, The Flag Raising and Proclamation Policy (LED-ADM21) the Town issues flag raisings and proclamations to recognize individuals, events, organizations, and community groups of significance to the town. A flag raising or a proclamation can recognize a day/week/month approved by Council.

5. BACKGROUND

The 2021 Census reported that 225 residents self-identified as black. Additionally, between 2016 and 2021, 195 people immigrated to Canada and now reside in Cobourg.

Ensuring that the Town of Cobourg provides opportunities for residents to feel represented, participate in celebrations and learn about each other's personal

history is crucial in ensuring that the diversity in Cobourg is being met with care and pride.

6. ANALYSIS

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives aim to impact the community on various levels including policy, internal training, and community engagement, to impact and accelerate systemic change. After careful consideration of Cobourg's demographic, the following initiatives and events are in the planning phase to take place during the month of February 2023:

- I. Council and Staff Anti-Racism Training
- II. Black Excellence in Cobourg/Northumberland Social Media Campaign
- III. Canadian Changemaker Spotlight: Artist Robert Small
- IV. Celebrating Black Art & Literature through community space installations (ex. Coburg Library & the AGN)

These events and initiatives will be implemented through community volunteers, Council endorsement and partner organizations in collaboration with the Accessibility and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

Black History Month initiatives have already been pre-approved for funding through the 2022 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion budget line including the funding of Anti-Racism training for Council, Directors, Managers, and front-line full-time staff.

8. CONCLUSION

The overarching goal of the EDI Strategic Plan is to demonstrate an improving organization performance which aligns with inclusionary/diversity principles with a specific emphasis on racism, discrimination, exclusion, and intolerance.

Recognition days/weeks/months like Black History Month are a useful vessel in emphasizing the consistent work done within the community.

Report Approval Details

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Attachments:	
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Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Jan 13, 2023 - 9:08 AM