



**African Nova Scotian Community
Strategy Committee**
Meeting Minutes
January 10th, 2025

A meeting of the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee of the Town of Truro was held on Friday, January 10th, 2025, at 12:00pm at the Douglas Street Recreation Centre.

Present: Councillor W. Talbot, A. Paris, B. Borden, N. Jackson, and N. Gray.

In attendance: CAO M. Dolter, N. Gillis, A. Grant, and M. Burgess

Regrets: Councillor I. McGrath, J. Collins and M. Yiridoe

Approval of the Agenda

W. Talbot requested that Viola Desmond Play at Neptune be added to the agenda under the African Heritage Month section on the agenda.

W. Talbot also requested that APEX be added to the agenda under the Questions or Items from Members section of the agenda.

N. Jackson requested that Zion Baptist Cemetery Project be added to the agenda under the Questions or Items from Members section of the agenda.

On motion of W. Talbot and A. Paris the agenda was approved as amended.

Approval of the Minutes

The Committee reviewed the circulated minutes from November 29th, 2024, meeting.

Co-Chair Position

N. Gray agreed to continue with the co-chair position until a new co-chair was appointed.

A. Paris agreed to help support the co-chairs in whatever capacity is needed.

N. Gray suggested that we send a notice out to the Community requesting applications of interest for volunteer citizen committee members. It was agreed that M. Burgess would make arrangements with the CAO's executive assistant to put out the request for volunteer citizen committee members for the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Coordinator Position

N. Gray agreed to meet with the town's EDIA Coordinator, N. Gillis, to discuss how the work of the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee and N. Gillis's efforts could mutually benefit one another. Following the meeting N. Gray agreed to bring the information back to the Committee.

Following the meeting with N. Gray and N. Gillis the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee agreed to meet without N. Gillis to discuss her role in the Committee and its Strategic Plan.

N. Jackson questioned whether Colchester County was involved with N. Gillis' position. A. Grant explained that the County was not involved in the joint EDIA position with the Village of Bible Hill. However, A. Grant explained that the Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy would be a regional approach that would include Colchester County.

N. Gillis stated that she noticed no one from the Village of Bible Hill was on the Town's African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee and noted that she was going to discuss it with the Village in the near future.

African Heritage Month 2025

N. Jackson stated that J. Clyke had scheduled a bus trip to the Neptune Theatre for a viewing of the Viola Desmond Story 'Controlled Damage' on February 1st which would impact timing for the Town's African Heritage Month Kickoff.

N. Jackson explained that he had polled the senior's social attendees, and they recommended a 7:00pm start time for the African Heritage Month Kickoff on February 1st. This timing would allow participants to attend both the Neptune Theatre event as well as the Town's African Heritage Month Kickoff.

The Committee agreed on a 7:00pm start time for the Town's African Heritage Month Kickoff taking place on February 1st at the Truro Fire Hall.

B. Borden explained that he had been in touch with L. Mullings from Cobequid Education Centre (CEC) to request student involvement for the African Heritage Month Kickoff.

B. Borden stated that he had secured the NSCC Truro Art Gallery for the Concrete Garden, a group of local African Nova Scotian artists, to display their artwork for six weeks starting in February.

N. Jackson stated that the Marigold Cultural Centre had been booked on February 8th from 3:00pm – 5:00pm for another evening of sharing Community Stories.

N. Jackson stated that he hoped to get the members of the Concrete Garden in touch with Marshall at the Marigold Cultural Centre for the George Elliott Clarke event.

N. Jackson and B. Borden had reached out to some Community Members regarding what they would like to see for African Heritage Month. They stated that they had not received much feedback regarding the subject.

N. Jackson explained that he would reach out to Brenda Mentis to check in with the elders in the Community regarding their attendance for the Viola Desmond story at the Neptune Theatre 'Controlled Damage'. N. Jackson also explained that he wanted to ensure that the bus was full, and all the tickets were used. N. Jackson stated that if the bus was not full, he would check with local youth to fill the seats.

The Committee agreed that Jude Clyde would be the perfect keynote speaker for the African Heritage Month Kickoff.

N. Jackson agreed to ask J. Clyde to be the keynote speaker for the Town of Truro's African Heritage Month Kickoff.

N. Jackson agreed to contact Joyce Smithers to discuss African Heritage Month and her concerns from 2024.

N. Jackson suggested that a dance portion be added to the end of the African Heritage Month Kickoff from 8:00pm – 10:00pm.

N. Jackson and B. Borden agreed to discuss this option with the Community to see if there was any interest.

N. Jackson stated that Jude Clyde had invited Reverend Lennett Anderson to speak at the February Seniors Session. N. Jackson explained that he had intended to host an event at the Truro Fire Hall to honour George Jones and his involvement with the Truro Fire Brigade.

N. Jackson stated that he would touch base with J. Clyde to see if he would be interested in combining the two above events to create a dynamic Elders Luncheon for African Heritage Month. N. Jackson stated that the event would take place on February 13th as that was the anniversary date of the first meeting of the Truro Fire Brigade held by George Jones.

N. Jackson explained that he had presented to Council regarding the George Jones project.

M. Dolter explained that the intention was approved, but the budget was not approved / confirmed as it was contingent on additional funding.

N. Jackson stated that challenge coins had been ordered to be given out that included Truro Fire Service on one side and George Jones on the other. N. Jackson explained that educational banners were in the process of being created that could be used at the Truro Fire Hall, presentations, as well as at the Nova Scotia Firefighters Museum.

N. Jackson explained that a plaque for the Firehall would come at a later date.

N. Jackson stated that Truro Volunteer Fire Brigade Members were interested in renaming the building the George Jones Memorial Fire Hall.

M. Dolter explained that the decision on the renaming of a building would need to be made by Council. M. Dolter agreed to add this matter to the February Public Council Meeting as a request for decision from Council.

N. Jackson explained that the George Jones Event would be taking place on February 13th and would include the unveiling of the challenge coins, revealing of the educational banners, and hopefully the unveiling of the hall name change mockup, if approved by Council.

The Committee discussed the request for funding from the Marigold Cultural Centre for the George Elliot Clarke Event.

W. Talbot explained that the Town of Truro supports the Marigold Cultural Centre annually.

B. Borden voiced that he thought the Committee should support the event as it supports a demographic we do not normally reach.

M. Dolter informed the Committee that the Town had received funding in the amount of \$10,000 from the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs for the Seniors Sessions.

N. Jackson questioned when the money needed to be spent by.

A. Paris confirmed that the funding needed to be spent by the end of June 2025.

Juniper Street Development – Committees Role

M. Dolter informed the Committee that the Juniper Street development had been withdrawn by the developer.

N. Gray questioned how the Committee could support the local African Nova Scotian Community when developments affect their community. She also questioned how the Community voices their opinions and gives their input on developments.

W. Talbot stated that he intended to invite the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity to give a presentation to Council at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

A. Paris explained that the ANSA Land Titles Committee was expected to grow to other communities outside of Halifax.

W. Talbot stated that he would be making a request at the January Council meeting to consider the rezoning of the community.

A. Paris explained that he recently met with J. Fox and C. Connolly regarding having a member of the African Nova Scotian Community on the Truro Planning Advisory Committee. It would be intended that this Committee member would bring the information back to the Community.

M. Dolter mentioned that J. Fox was investigating creating a Community Committee that would help review development applications.

On motion of N. Jackson and B. Borden the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee recommended that town council support a change in zoning that would acknowledge and better protect the heritage and integrity of the historic African Nova Scotian Community known as 'The Island'/West Prince Street.

It was agreed that a letter containing the motion would be sent to the Town CAO's Executive Assistant to be discussed at the January Council meeting to support W. Talbot's rezoning request.

Updates

Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA) Update

A. Paris explained that he didn't have an ANSA Update as all projects were discussed during the African Heritage Month section of the agenda.

Budget

M. Dolter reviewed the budget with the Committee. He noted that the Diversity Advisory Committee G/L and the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee G/L were combined so he would confirm the account expenses and bring back the remaining amounts for each Committee to the next meeting.

At a quick glance:

Diversity Advisory Committee Budget - \$10,000 (\$6,000 spent with \$4,000 remaining)

African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee Budget - \$20,000 (\$9,000 spent with \$11,000 remaining).

N. Jackson agreed to bring back a budget for his events to the next meeting to see what budgetary funds were needed / available for additional African Heritage Month events.

No. 2 Construction Battalion Update

A. Grant explained that there were currently 13 entries for the Community Naming Contest.

A. Paris confirmed that the contest had been passed along to the African Nova Scotian Student Support Workers.

Women's History Project Update

M. Dolter explained that the \$40,000 concrete bases for the project had been installed.

M. Dolter stated that the installation of the panels would be taking place in the spring, with the goal of an early May unveiling.

M. Dolter explained that the Women's Historical Society would be paying for the lights and fencing at the Ford Street location for the panel installation / park update.

M. Dolter explained that the panels would be installed in the Spring and the area would be landscaped around that time as well.

Questions or Items from Members

Zion Cemetery Project

N. Jackson explained that Joanne Hunt from the Colchester Historeum had been working on the unmarked grave project at the Truro Cemetery.

N. Jackson stated that the Zion Baptist United Church had previously owned that portion of the cemetery.

N. Jackson explained that between 1889 and 1950 there were to date 259 unmarked graves found through J. Hunts research.

N. Jackson stated that J. Hunt had expressed some concern as she heard that the Zion Baptist United Church was no longer in control of that section of the cemetery, and she was worried that the Cemetery may try to make use of that section as it is unmarked and they may not be aware of the large number of unmarked graves.

It was agreed by the Committee that it needed to be verified who owned that section of the cemetery. N. Jackson agreed to check in with the Truro Cemetery Corporation.

It was agreed that this item be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Apex

W. Talbot explained that there would be a private screening of ‘Apex: The Black Masters’ taking place on January 30th at the Cineplex in Truro. W. Talbot stated that the viewing was already sold out.

N. Jackson stated that ‘Apex: The Black Masters’ would premiere CBC Gem in February.

Next Meeting Date

It was agreed that the Committee would meet again on January 24th from 12:00pm – 1:30pm to ensure African Heritage Month Plans were complete.

Adjournment

On motion of B. Borden, the meeting was adjourned.