



**African Nova Scotian Community
Strategy Committee**
Meeting Minutes
March 7th, 2025

A meeting of the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee of the Town of Truro was held on Friday, March 7th, 2025, at 12:00pm at the Douglas Street Recreation Centre.

Present: Councillor I. McGrath, A. Paris, N. Jackson, N. Gray, and B. Borden.

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

Regrets: A. Grant, W. Talbot, J. Collins and M. Yiridoe

Approval of the Agenda

On motion of A. Paris and N. Jackson the agenda was approved as circulated.

Approval of the Minutes

The Committee reviewed the circulated minutes from the January 24th, 2025, meeting.

N. Gray requested that M. Burgess create a section in the minutes where action items can be put for easy access.

Strategic Plan Framework

N. Gray, N. Gillis and A. Paris met to review the Committee's Strategic Plan Framework. N. Gray explained that when the Committee created the Strategic Plan N. Gillis's position wasn't in existence.

N. Gray recommended that a letter go to council to inform them that the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee's Strategic Plan would be extended to the end of March 2027.

It was agreed that N. Gray draft a letter to be sent to Council informing them that the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee's Strategic Plan would be extended to the end of March 2027.

EDIA Coordinator Position

N. Gray explained that the Committee needed to figure out how to work best with N. Gillis' position and maximize the relationship to its greatest potential. It was agreed that at a future meeting the Committee would review its Terms of Reference.

On motion of N. Gray and N. Jackson the Committee agreed that the Terms of Reference be updated to include the Town's Equity Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator as an ex-officio Committee Member. Motion carried.

The Committee agreed to add Terms of Reference Review to the agenda for the April meeting.

N. Gillis agreed to review the Committee's Terms of Reference prior to the next meeting in regards to her position.

M. Dolter explained that N. Gillis and the Town's HR Manager would be working together to better the Town's hiring process in regards to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

Truro Police Accusation

N. Gray stated that members of the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee were put in an awkward position as they were not aware of the Truro Police Accusation prior to it going public.

N. Gray stated that value of the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee needed to be reevaluated.

M. Dolter explained that it being a Truro Police Service matter makes it a unique situation.

M. Dolter explained that in the future in this type of situation the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee would be contacted immediately.

N. Jackson echoed N. Grays comments that Committee Community members were put in a tough place as they were not contacted about the situation and were blindsided.

N. Gray explained that the Communications posted should have been vetted through the Committee, confirming the valued partnership between the Town of Truro and the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee.

N. Gray questioned why have Advisory Committees if they aren't used to their potential.

N. Jackson stated that a HR issue related to race becomes a community issue.

N. Gray explained that once a situation reaches the media / public the Committee needs to be involved, and an emergency meeting needs to be called to make the Committee aware of the situation and get their input.

A. Paris stated that Town staff need to appreciate the lived experience of the local African Nova Scotian Community and historic systemic racism.

A. Paris explained that there is always room for growth and that there is a reluctance to change, but this Committee needs to push for change. A. Paris stated that training for all levels of staff would be a great place to start the change.

It was agreed that N. Gray would present to Department heads at a future Senior Staff meeting.

M. Dolter stated that he would be investigating inviting Reverend Lennett Anderson and some local Community members make a presentation to all Town staff at the Marigold to kick off some staff training.

N. Gray explained that the individual impacted by the events involving Truro Police felt nothing was done.

N. Gray stated that the person that brings the issue forward needs to know what the resolution is from that issue before they go back into their place of work.

Updates

ANSA Update

A. Paris explained that ANSA was exploring different communication tool options across the province. Especially a means for communication when they quickly need to get the word out.

A. Paris stated that the full ANSA team would be hosting a community gathering in Truro on Tuesday, March 18th from 6:30pm – 8:00pm as part of their Strategic Planning Process.

No. 2 Construction Battalion Athletic Facility Update

A. Paris explained that a letter should be sent to Minister Grosse to attend the official opening of No. 2 Construction Battalion Athletic Facility sooner rather than later as the event is currently scheduled on Emancipation Day and the Minister gets invited to a large amount of events on that day.

N. Jackson stated that it would be meaningful to have a service on Remembrance Day at the new No. 2 Construction Battalion Monument. It was questioned whether an event before or after the local Legion's Remembrance Day Service would be appropriate. It was agreed to investigate whether ANSA or the Black Cultural Centre could help support the event.

M. Burgess agreed to check with the Truro Legion Poppy Chair on the proper timing of the new event.

Budget Update

M. Dolter explained that the Committee's Budget request for \$25,000 including the \$5,000 increase was put forward to Council for budget deliberations.

African Heritage Month

The Committee was in agreement that the events hosted during African Heritage Month 2025 went well.

It was agreed by the Committee that a sub-committee for African Heritage Month 2026 should be created in the near future.

B. Borden stated that the Committee should continue to help support the Concrete Garden Art Group as they were newly formed and could use ongoing support as they continue to grow.

It was agreed that the Concrete Garden should be connected with the Truro Art Society and the Marigold Cultural Centre as those groups are great resources for artisans.

N. Jackson stated that Paula and Wayne Headley had an art show coming up in the near future at the Marigold Cultural Centre.

Women's History Project Update

M. Dolter explained that members of the Women's Historical Society had requested a tentative unveiling date of May 23rd, 2025.

M. Dolter stated that the site may not be completely ready by the requested date.

B. Borden explained that Valerie Fitzgerald from CBC had called him to get some additional information on the Women's History Project for International Women's Day.

African Nova Scotian Historic Landmarks and Recognition Update

N. Jackson stated that there were some additional names for Colchester Officers that needed to be included on the No. 2 Construction Battalion Monument. N. Jackson agreed to send along the additional names to M. Burgess.

N. Jackson explained that he was looking to do an unveiling of the new name of the George Jones Fire Station in early May.

Committee Terms of Reference re: Attendance and Membership

M. Burgess explained that J. Collins would be seeking a new CEA member to replace her on the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee as she was finding it difficult to attend meetings on top of her other responsibilities.

B. Borden explained that he had an individual interested in attending the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee meetings and joining the Committee.

It was agreed that B. Borden would invite T. Drummond to attend the next meeting.

The Committee agreed to schedule a half-day session to review the Committee's terms of reference.

Questions or Items from Members

Regional Anti-Racism Plan

N. Gillis explained that The Truro-Colchester region (including Truro, Bible Hill, Stewiacke, and Colchester) is collaborating on a Regional Equity and Anti-Racism Plan. As part of this initiative, our consultant, Waking the unConscious (WtC), will be visiting in person to conduct outreach and engagement for the plan. N. Gillis stated that she would like to have the consultant meet with the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee to have an open discussion to hear our perspectives on equity and anti-racism within the Town, which will help inform the development of the plan.

N. Gillis agreed to set up a meeting with the consultant, Waking the unConscious (WtC) and the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee.

Truro Fire Service Targeted Hiring

M. Dolter stated that the Truro Fire Service would be completing some targeted hiring over the next couple years.

N. Jackson questioned if there would be funding opportunities available to help with tuition for applicants. M. Dolter stated that it might be an option, but it had not been discussed yet.

AAFC Greenhouse Funding Announcement

M. Dolter explained that a funding announcement from the Province of Nova Scotia took place on March 6th regarding the Greenhouse for Stan 'Chook' Maxwell Park.

Junior Civil Engineering Position

M. Dolter explained that the Town of Truro would be putting out a job advertisement in the next few months for a Junior Civil Engineer with the department of Engineering and Public Works.

Next Meeting Date

It was agreed that the next meeting of the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee would take place April 4th from 12:00pm – 1:30pm.

Action Item Summary

- N. Gray requested that M. Burgess create a section in the minutes where action items can be put for easy access.
- It was agreed that N. Gray draft a letter to be sent to Council informing them that the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee's Strategic Plan would be extended to the end of March 2027.
- The Committee agreed to add Terms of Reference Review to the agenda for the April meeting.
- N. Gillis agreed to review the Committee's Terms of Reference prior to the next meeting in regards to her position.
- It was agreed that N. Gray would present to Department heads at a future Senior Staff meeting.
- M. Burgess agreed to check with the Truro Legion Poppy Chair on the proper timing of a potential Remembrance Day Event at the No. 2 Construction Battalion Monument.
- It was agreed that B. Borden would invite T. Drummond to attend the next meeting.
- N. Gillis agreed to set up a meeting with the consultant, Waking the unConscious (WtC) and the African Nova Scotian Community Strategy Committee.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by N. Gray.