



First published
Kitchener Citizen
"Notes from City Hall"
May 2021

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On the record

Every month, the Kitchener Citizen publishes "Notes from City Hall" which Kitchener City Councillors can use to communicate with residents.

In addition to highlighting upcoming community events, I often use this as an opportunity to present my position or invite discussion about issues that pertain to citizens.

Here is one that I think bears repeating.

Speaking of 'diversity, equity and inclusion,' I attended the Annual Celebration of Capacity Canada a few weeks ago.

It is an organization I have only recently become aware of. They provide professional supports to not-for-profit organizations; everything from leadership skills to governance and knowledge sharing.

What most impacted me was a joint panel with Nneka Allen and Mide Akerewasi. Nneka critically examined the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion mantra we have all bought into.

She pointed out that diversity is little more than statistics, which often result in tokenism. So for example, "we" look at how many black people or indigenous people "we" employ or are on a committee etc. and then "we" try to recruit more to even out the numbers.

Regarding inclusion, she stated that it is based on existing power dynamics that result in assimilation. Her argument is that the "we" who are in fact white people seek ways to include black people or people of colour into our whiteness.

Her summary argument was that the only way to achieve social justice is to achieve equity. I leave this for you to ponder.

Mide invites us to listen, reflect, advocate and to be an ally.

As a society I believe "we" can do better. I will continue to check my privilege and whiteness and try to do better. I invite you to do the same.

Stay healthy!