

## **Local sit-in to call for greater diversity on Hamilton Police Services Board**

**By Lisa Polewski**

**900 CHML**

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A group of frustrated citizens will be gathering at city hall to call for more diversity on Hamilton's police services board.

Advocates for marginalized communities are holding what they're calling a "representation matters" sit-in during the 1 p.m. meeting on Thursday.

Organizers say qualified candidates from diverse communities were overlooked when a recent vacancy on the board was filled. Council appointed retired Zip Signs president Fred Bennink to the position.

Cameron Kroetsch, who ran as a municipal candidate in Ward 2 in the recent election, told CHML's Bill Kelly that it was a huge "missed opportunity" for city council.

"This was a chance for the city to do something positive with respect to policing and underrepresented and marginalized communities," said Kroetsch, "to have someone there with a voice at the table who could provide input that, I think, has been missing for a long time.

Kroetsch said the sit-in isn't a criticism of Bennink, but rather a criticism of the selection process and how it needs to be reviewed and updated to reflect the city's commitment to implementing an 'equity, diversity and inclusion' (EDI) lens.

Council voted in favour of developing an action plan for implementing an EDI lens on all city decisions at a meeting in February.

Supporters are urged to show up to Thursday's board meeting with signs, placards and banners.

"The goal is to have a peaceful protest for people to come out and just let council know, let the Hamilton Police Services Board know, that people aren't happy with the decision that was made," said Kroetsch.

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