



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
May 6th, 2019

MINUTES

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| Attendance: <u>Committee</u> Andrew Yu, Chair Arul Rajasingam Harmony Law Maggie Quirt Nayani Nandakumar Sujane Kandasamy Isa Lee, <i>Councillor</i> <u>Guest</u> Alicia Lauzon, <i>York Regional Police</i> <u>Staff</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, <i>Diversity Specialist (dialed-in)</i> Anna Lee, <i>Committee Co-ordinator</i> | <u>Regrets</u> Devendra Mishra Edward Choi Faiz Mohyuddin Herleen Sayal Rina George-Alexander Sabat Ismail Surinder Razdan |
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:05PM without quorum and with Andrew Yu presiding as Chair.

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

- The Chair welcomed Councillor Isa Lee and Alicia Lauzon, from York Regional Police, to the meeting.

2. Race Relations Business

- **Many Faces of Markham, Saturday 27 April 2019: "EVERYONE WELCOME: Empowering Markham students as emerging champions in Equity"**
 - Councillor Isa Lee attended – it was her first time at the event and was able to understand the event and how it was organized.
 - The event went well, overall. There were lessons learned for next year that we can improve on. We can look into using City property for the next event (a Community Centre or Markham Civic Centre) as there will be more control in usage of the space.

The committee will also work to push out the materials earlier to schools, principals and teachers so they have time to incorporate it into their curriculum. This will also help in having more participation for a wider range of schools and students.

- There is a lot of value in running the awards show and ceremony for the younger students, with the presence of the Mayor and Councillors to celebrate with the students. This could be held on a weeknight, which would make it easier for parents and students to attend.
- We could hold a separate event for the older students that is more educational and challenging, where they can participate in discussions. This could be held in collaboration with the schools, principals, teachers, student councils/organizations and community organizations.
- There was a small alt-right group present at the event. The York Regional Police (YRP) were called to ensure peace and there was no disruption and it was resolved without incident. Thank you to members of the committee for being aware and vigilant and handling the situation calmly, quietly and in a professional manner.
- The committee will reach out to the City of Markham staff to inquire about the management plan for when these types of situations happen during public events. City of Markham staff have also asked committee members to reach out with any feedback.
- If event is held somewhere that has security present at the location, then we police presence may not be required. Being equipped with practical knowledge in these types of situations would be useful for future events.

- **Hate Crime Awareness and Prevention Training with YRP**

- Alicia Lauzon, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist of the York Regional Police is here to give us an update on the incident.
- The committee members did the right thing by calling the YRP for a peaceful resolution at the event.
- Alicia and Detective Mark Topping of the Hate Crime Unit of YRP have been made aware of the incident. The Chief's office has asked Alicia and Mark to assist and support the Race Relations Committee in giving hate crime awareness and prevention training.
- Statistics Canada has an annual report on reported hate crimes in Canada, which can be filtered for York Region, specifically. The Police Services Board is another source for statistics on hate crimes as it is in their public agenda. Mark can provide City of Markham reported hate crimes statistics. This would be beneficial to the committee as we can address it specifically for the City of Markham and advise the City of Markham.
- The rise in hate crimes can be seen negatively, but also, positively, in that the reporting of hate crimes has risen. Communities are more comfortable in talking with the police and there is less fear of reprisal. The Hate Crime Unit and diversity cultural resource officers are always fostering community engagement relationships to ensure the community is aware that there are diversity resource and hate crime officers available.
- The York Region Inclusion Charter has been endorsed by the City of Markham, which can be used as a message that hate crime will not be tolerated.
- Alicia will introduce Andrew and Mark and will work together to have Mark join the committee meeting in June. The committee would like to address specific and relevant issues that are arising in Markham, as well as the most effective resolutions.

- **Vision for the RRC going forward**

- We would like to have the entire committee working together, instead of having sub-committees work on events or ideas that arise, as sub-committee formations are not sustainable. With everyone in the committee participating we could work on less, but more substantial events and ideas. Having everyone involved in the whole process would also help breed a sense of involvement and ownership, as well as an ability to be stronger as a whole. We are rebooting the process with a clean slate and welcome all ideas to start anew. The vision is to help us move forward in becoming an effective committee that makes a difference in the community.
- The RRC would like to be able to follow-up on feedback and issues with the City of Markham and advise on resolutions and changes that can be made, to have actionable items. The committee needs to be part of the solution or it would be a great loss of opportunity.

3. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, June 3, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the Ontario Room.

4. Adjournment

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 8:50PM.