



## RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Zoom Meeting

June 8, 2020

6:30 p.m.

### MINUTES

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                   |
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| <p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p><u>Committee</u></p> <p>Andrew Yu, Chair</p> <p>Darius Sookrum</p> <p>Edward Choi</p> <p>Hamza Sivanathan</p> <p>Suat Kenar</p> <p>Mohamad Mtairek</p> <p>Sujane Kandasamy</p> <p>Sabat Ismail</p> <p>Nayani Nandakumar</p> <p>Councillor Isa Lee</p> | <p><u>Regrets</u></p> <p>Devendra Mishra</p> <p>Herleen Sayal</p> <p>Surinder Razdan</p> <p>Harmony Law</p> <p>Faiz Mohyuddin</p> |
| <p><u>Guest</u></p> <p>Alicia Lauzon, Equity &amp; Inclusion Specialist,<br/>York Regional Police</p>                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><u>Staff</u></p> <p>Laura Gold,, Committee Coordinator</p> <p>Mona Nazif, Staff Liaison (Senior Manager,<br/>Human Resources)</p>                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                   |

The Race Relations Committee convened at 6:30 PM with Andrew Yu presiding as Chair.

#### **1. Chair's Opening Remarks**

Andrew Yu began the meeting by reading the City of Markham Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.

Committee recognized Arul Rajasingam's contribution to the Race Relations Committee and his life. It took a moment of silence to mourn his loss.

#### **2. Adoption of Agenda**

Moved by Nayani Nandakumar

Seconded by Edward Choi

That the June 8, 2020 Race Relations Committee Agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

### **3. Approval of Minutes from March 2, 2020 Meeting**

Moved by Darius Sookram

Seconded by Suat Kenar

The Minutes of the March 2, 2020 Race Relations Committee meeting were approved as presented.

Carried

### **4. Race Relations Business**

#### **A. City of Markham's Response to Anti-Black Racism**

Committee discussed the City's response to the recent Anti-Black Racism events. It respectfully expressed its disappointment with the City's response, and with the amount of time it took to provide a response.

Some of its suggestions for improvements included:

- Ensure City communication protocols lead to desired outcomes;
- Retweet/re-share/repost other organizations' relevant messaging regarding Anti-Black Racism (i.e. York Region District School Board, and other municipalities);
- Be actively and visibly involved in the discussion around Anti-Black Racism;
- Educate the public on the issue on Facebook or other social media by posting a relevant picture and a few sentences about the issue;
- Support Markham's Black community, even if it is not personal to you;
- Consult Black community groups such as Markham African Caribbean Canadian Association, and applicable religious groups on the Anti-Black Racism issues;
- Speak to the issue and not around the issue;
- Post the City's response on Instagram.

Mona Nazif advised that the City's protocols do not support political posts to be posted on its social media, and that the social media of elected officials is separate from the City's social media.

The Committee wanted to work with the City to improve its social media / communications policy to ensure it is supporting all of Markham's communities, suggesting this can be done in a neutral way. For example, the City is supporting the LGBT community when it posts on its social media information about Pride Week. It asked that Markham's Black community and other Markham communities be supported in a similar way.

Committee worked on a motion to Council on Anti-Black Racism. It passed the motion in principle, as it was still contemplating some of the wording. Some of the the wording it was still deciding on included:

- Clarifying the meaning of emotional control;

- Whether the bullets in clause 4 should include both racism in general and Anti- Black Racism specifically.

A Member also suggested that protesting should be included in the resolution.

Moved by Edward Chiu

Seconded by Darius Sookram

The Race Relations Committee endorsed the following resolution in principle:

The Race Relations Committee (RRC) of the City of Markham appreciates and supports the Statement from Mayor Frank Scarpitti on June 3, 2020 titled "When enough is not enough".

The RRC agrees with the Mayor's assertion that "We can always do more", and provides the following advice to assist the City in accomplishing this objective:

1. We recommend that the Mayor and Council ensure Markham Bylaw Enforcement officers reflect the diversity in proportion to the population that it represents, and that all Markham Bylaw Enforcement officers receive adequate training in Anti Racism, including Anti-Black Racism, bias-free enforcement, conflict de-escalation, cultural sensitivity and emotional control; and,

2. We recommend that the Mayor and Regional Councillors advocate the following before York Region Council and the York Region Police Services Board: that Regional Council and YRPSB ensure York Regional Police officers reflect the diversity in proportion to the population that it represents, and that all York Regional Police officers receive ongoing training in Anti-Black Racism, bias-free –policing service, conflict de-escalation, cultural sensitivity and emotional control; and,

3. We recommend that the Mayor and Regional Councillors advocate before York Region Council that York Region Public Health collect race-based public health data (including on COVID-19 cases), and report on public health concerns that disproportionately impact racialized groups; and further,

4. We recommend that the City of Markham initiate a professionally researched "Made-for-Markham" study on Racism, including Anti-Black Racism that identifies specific policy solutions within the City's jurisdiction towards eliminating Racism, including Anti-Black Racism here. Using Markham's Diversity Action Plan "Everyone Welcome" and the Inclusion Charter as foundation, through community consultation in safe spaces, this study's scope should include:

- Measures to support Black employment and employment security.

- Measures to support Black entrepreneurs and Black-owned businesses

- Measures to ensure an equitable experience while obtaining housing by members of the Black community, both in rental and in homeownership

- Programs that address the specific recreational needs of Black students and Black senior citizens
- Measures to support food security.
- Public education programs on Anti-Black Racism
- Other actions within City Council's mandate that address and stand against Anti-Black Racism

We believe the above recommendations represent steps that would, as stated by the Mayor, "create a new reality for the Black community, and create an environment that is free of racism and full of respect for one another".

Carried

### **B. Many Faces of Markham**

Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator, reviewed the Many Faces of Markham contest results. The Committee was pleased with the virtual judging of the submissions and the virtual organization of the submissions. They inquired about creating a virtual gallery of the winning submissions, or posting them on the City's social media.

Staff advised that they will seek legal advice on whether the winning submission can be posted on the City's website or on social media, and will report back to the Committee.

### **5. Next Official Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on September 14, 2020.

### **6. Adjournment**

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 8:27 PM.