



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
March 2, 2020

MINUTES

<p><u>Attendance:</u></p> <p><u>Committee</u></p> <p>Andrew Yu, Chair</p> <p>Darius Sookrum</p> <p>Edward Choi</p> <p>Faiz Mohyuddin</p> <p>Hamza Sivanathan</p> <p>Mohamad Mtairek</p> <p>Nayani Nandakumar</p> <p>Councillor Isa Lee</p> <p><u>Guest</u></p> <p>Alicia Lauzon, <i>Equity & Inclusion Specialist,</i> <i>York Regional Police</i></p> <p><u>Staff</u></p> <p>Anna Lee, <i>Committee Coordinator</i></p>	<p><u>Regrets</u></p> <p>Arul Rajasingam</p> <p>Devendra Mishra</p> <p>Herleen Sayal</p> <p>Surinder Razdan</p> <p>Sabat Ismail</p> <p>Suat Kenar</p> <p>Sujane Kandasamy</p> <p>Harmony Law</p> <p>Cheryl McConney-Wilson, <i>Diversity Specialist</i></p>
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:00 PM with Andrew Yu presiding as Chair.

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

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

2. Adoption of the Agenda

No changes or additions.

Moved by Darius Sookrum

Seconded by Councillor Isa Lee

Carried

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting of the Markham Race Relations Committee held on February 3, 2020.

Moved by Nayani Nandakumar

Seconded by Mohamad Mtairek

Carried

4. Markham Human Resources Update

- RRC Terms of Reference approval is on the General Council's June meeting agenda.

5. Race Relations Business

- **Many Faces of Markham**

- A meeting with City Staff will be held on March 12th, 2020 at 1:30PM. If you are interested in attending the meeting, please advise Andrew Yu, and he will ensure you are on the list of attendees.
- Judging of submissions will be held at the Markham Civic Centre on March 15th, 2020 at 1PM in the Canada room. The rehearsal of performances will be at the Markham Civic Centre in the Council Chambers on March 28th, 2020 at 9:30AM. Depending on the number of performance submissions, an audition may be held, if not, as well as a rehearsal. Performances are to be 10minutes or under and the event can accommodate up to 5 performances. We ask that the RRC members all attend to assist with the judging of submissions and to watch the performance rehearsals. RRC is also open to recommendations for other performing groups and asking members to spread the word. The Many Faces of Markham marketing package can be used when explaining the event.
- City Staff is working with the RRC with this event but there is no dedicated full time person on this, many City Staff members are doing assisting as part of their regular work duties, which results in requiring a longer timeline for submissions. The submission deadline due date is March 13th, 2020. This was the ideal chosen date, working back from the event date, to ensure there was time to create all the materials and procedures and projecting the time City Staff would need to be ready for the event date. Based on previous events, the submissions are usually entered towards the deadline date, this year being March 13th, 2020 as submitters take as much time to ensure best quality of work.
- The event will be held on April 19th, 2020 in the Council Chambers as it allows for maximum and optimal seating and performances. The event will begin with Indigenous storytelling, followed by the Mayor or another Councillor giving opening remarks. Performances will be held between awards to ensure there is maximum audience exposure and awards will be presented starting from the youngest children – kindergarteners. RRC members available the day of the event are asked to volunteer for this event.
- This event will be held on the same day as the York Regional Police (YRP) International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination event, which is also the last event the Chief of Police will be attending. The Many Faces of Markham will begin in the early afternoon, about 1PM and the YRP event begins at 11AM, allowing councillors and the community to attend both events.
- This event may be postponed due to the Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), but the event will be held as long as the City of Markham continues to hold public events. The RRC will not postpone or cancel the event on its own accord but based on decisions made by the City of Markham. City Staff will communicate to the RRC if public events are cancelled as they will be made aware that RRC will not cancel or postpone on our own volition. RRC will ask City Staff for possible available dates in case the event is postponed. We will ask those that are not feeling well not to attend and to follow the advice of Public Health to wash hands frequently and avoid touching faces, as well as ensure that the space for the event is sanitary.

- **2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)**

- There is a lot of media around this illness, causing fear, even when half a million people a year pass away due to influenza.
- The RRC is witnessing stigmatizations and underlying xenophobia surrounding Coronavirus and would like to address thoughts about this situation.
- Councillor Isa Lee spoke with the Mayor after the Asialicious press conference and let him know that the RRC lends support to these initiatives and the Mayor expressed appreciation for the support and that the support sends an important message to the City Council. Exposure and media of businesses that are affected by the Coronavirus is needed to fight the stigmatization and panic
- Public Health and hospitals are doing all they can to be prepared for outbreaks and to contain the virus and are continuously monitoring the situation.
- There needs to be a wider discussion of what this current experience is teaching us about the City of Markham, today and what can be done to improve and shape the City of Markham regarding race relations. This discussion needs to be held with other groups and organization in the community to facilitate a forum that supports the community as a whole.
- The RRC would like the City Council to know about our thoughts on this event as it is important that we express our sentiment and pass a motion.

Motion to recommend Markham City Council take appropriate action to ensure that Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) does not become an excuse for expression of xenophobia against identifiable racial and cultural groups of the City of Markham.

Be it resolved that the RRC recommends that Markham City Council take appropriate action to ensure that Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) does not become an excuse for expression of xenophobia against identifiable racial and cultural groups of the City of Markham.

Moved by Darius Sookrum
Seconded Faiz Mohyuddin

Carried

6. New Business

None.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, April 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the Ontario Room.

8. Adjournment

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Moved by Faiz Mohyuddin
Seconded by Edward Choi

Carried