



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Zoom Meeting

Monday, September 14, 2020

6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

<p><u>Attendance:</u></p> <p><u>Committee</u> Andrew Yu, Chair Darius Sookrum Edward Choi Nayani Nandakumar Faiz Mohyuddin Mohamad Mtairek Sujane Kandasamy Suat Kenar Councillor Isa Lee</p> <p><u>Guests</u> Mary Anne Chambers, Special Advisor on Anti-Black Racism Alicia Lauzon, York Regional Police</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Laura Gold,, Committee Coordinator Mona Nazif, Staff Liaison (Senior Manager, Human Resources)</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Devendra Mishra Surinder Razdan Hamza Sivanathan</p>
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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.

The Chair advised that Harmony Law and Sabat Ismail have resigned from the Race Relations Committee.

The Committee recognized Harmony Law and Sabat Ismail's contributions to the Committee, and thanked them for their service.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Darrius Sookram

Seconded by Councillor Isa Lee

That the September 14, 2020 Race Relations Committee Agenda be approved as presented.

Carried

3. Approval of Minutes from June 6, 2020 Meeting

Moved by Darius Sookram

Seconded by Sujane Kandasamy

That the Minutes of the June 29, 2020 Race Relations Committee meeting be approved as presented.

Carried

5. Business Referred from City Council – Correspondence from Marty Molengraaf

Andrew Yu, Chair welcomed Minister Marty Molengraaf, Unionville Presbyterian Church to the Committee.

Minister Molengraaf spoke to the letter he sent on behalf of the Church to the Premiers of Ontario encouraging them to recognize that systemic racism in Canada exists. The letter was presented to Markham Council on July 14, 2020 and was referred to the Race Relations Committee for its consideration.

Committee thanked Minister Molengraaf for the letter, and supported the essence and sentiment of the letter. It encouraged the Unionville Presbyterian Church to participate in the City's public consultation on Markham's Diversity Action Plan, which was created in 2010 and is scheduled to be updated. Minister Molengraaf advised that the Church would be honoured to be part of the consultation.

There was a brief discussion on the importance of allowing racialized groups to speak on their own behalf rather than allowing others to speak for them. Also, on the need for measurable outcomes against systemic racism in Canada in addition to the recognition that it exists.

In response to the letter, Committee provided Council with the following direction:

Moved by Darius Sookram

Seconded by Edward Choi

- 1) Whereas the Race Relations Committee acknowledges systemic racism in Markham and in Canada, as described by Minister Marty Molengraaf on behalf of the Unionville Prebystarian Church; and,
- 2) That the Race Relations Committee encourages Council to:
 - Move forward to survey and solicit the opinion of Markham's communities on measures to dismantle systemic racism; and,
 - Update the Diversity Action Plan towards furthering inclusion in Markham.

Carried

4. Guest: Mary Anne Chambers, Special Advisor on Anti Black Racism

Committee congratulated Mary Anne Chambers on being appointed as the City's Special Advisor on Anti-Black Racism.

Mary Anne Chambers spoke briefly about her background, and experience living in Markham.

Ms. Chambers discussed the following with the Committee:

- The Terms of Reference of the Committee;
- The process undertaken to appoint new members to the Committee;
- How the Committee consults stakeholders and who it consults;
- The Committee's recommendations to Council and how they are handled;
- Ensuring that actions taken to combat systemic racism in Markham, and in Canada continue to lead to outcomes;
- The role of City Staff versus the role of the Committee in regards to combating systemic racism in Markham;
- The amount of autonomy the City provides the Committee in its activities (i.e. are they permitted to make a statement);
- Considering having a representative from the Markham African Caribbean Canadian Association serve on the Committee;
- The importance of listening to the views and experiences of both new and long-term immigrants living in Markham when consulting the public on the City's Diversity Action Plan;

- The need to update some of the terminology in the Diversity Action Plan (i.e. “visible minorities” is a term that is no longer used, and the term new immigrants is used too frequently);
- Events the Committee has run: the Many Faces of Markham Event and Human Rights Day.

Mary Anne Chambers requested a copy of the Race Relation Committee’s Terms of Reference with the understanding that it is in the process of being updated.

7. City or Markham Human Resources Update

Mona Nazif provided the following Human Resources Update:

Diversity Action Plan

The City will be updating its Diversity Action Plan. The plan was created 10 years ago and is due to be updated (the plan was intended to be a 10-year plan), as the context with respect to diversity has changed over time. The plan will be updated to reflect Markham’s current environment. The public will be engaged in this process, including Markham’s Black Community. A project plan with timelines will be created. Consultation with the Black community will be one of the first priorities of the refresh of the plan. The City’s senior management is committed to this project, and have requested that it be completed in a timely manner.

Training

Human Resources Staff have received permission to proceed with training on Anti-Black Racism for City Staff this fall. The City is currently working with the vendor to replace the American content with Canadian content. The City will also be providing City Staff with training on unconscious bias.

Equity Audit

Vendors have been approached in regards to conducting an Equity Audit for the City of Markham.

The Committee was asked to forward Mona Nazif the contact information of any vendors or groups that have knowledge of Black Communities that could help with the community consultation.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on a date to be determined.

10. Adjournment

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 8:00 PM.