



## RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Zoom Meeting

May 3, 2021

6:00 p.m.

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### MINUTES

<b><i>Attendance:</i></b>	
<u>Committee</u>	<u>Regrets</u>
Darius Sookram, Chair Nayani Nandakumar, Vice Chair Claudette Rutherford Danielle Russell Edward Choi Madge Logan Suat Kenar Sujane Kandasamy (arrived at 6:07 PM) Tamarie Warner Faiz Mohyuddin (arrived at 7:07 PM) Councillor Isa Lee (arrived at 6:10 PM)	Hamza Sivanathan Mohamad Mtairek
<u>Guests</u>	
Alicia Lauzon, York Regional Police (YRP) Andrew Yu, Past Chair (departed 6:18 PM)	
<u>Staff</u>	
Mona Nazif, Staff Liaison (Senior Manager, Human Resources) Victoria Hamilton, Committee Clerk, PT	

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

Chair Darius Sookram called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM and read the City of Markham Indigenous Land Acknowledgement. He welcomed Committee Members and Alicia Lauzon from YRP.

## **2. Adoption of Agenda**

The next official meeting date was amended to June 7, 2021.

**Moved by** Madge Logan

**Seconded by** Tamarie Warner

That the May 3, 2021 Race Relations meeting Agenda be adopted, as amended.

Carried

## **3. Approval of Minutes from April 12, 2021 Meeting**

**Moved by** Madge Logan

**Seconded by** Nayani Nandakumar

That the April 12, 2021 Race Relations Committee Minutes be adopted.

Carried

## **4. Committee Recognition for Andrew Yu**

Darius Sookram, expressed appreciation for Andrew Yu's years of service on the Race Relations Committee, and for serving as Chair. Andrew Yu was recognized for his dedication, professionalism and efforts to advance race relations in the City of Markham.

Edward Choi noted that, as Chair, Andrew pushed forward the Many Faces of Markham event, and acknowledged his hard work behind the scenes to make connections with the community and members of council on behalf of the Committee.

Staff noted that even during debates, Andrew always remained professional and calm.

Andrew Yu thanked the Committee for sharing his mindset of giving back to the community and striving to make the City of Markham equitable for everyone. He expressed his support and confidence in the Committee to continue furthering these efforts with passion.

## **5. Brainstorm Session**

The following Mandate for the Race Relations Committee was established:

- The role of the Race Relations Committee is to support the City's work and encourage positive race relations within the City of Markham, by providing advice to Members of Council focused on cultural inclusivity and anti-racism within Markham.

The following Values for the Race Relations Committee were established:

- Markham
- Inclusion
- Equity
- Welcoming place for everyone
- Knowledge-based
- Race relations → Critical race theory (ensuring this is our focus)
- Critical thinking

- Intersectionality (beyond culture, including gender, economics, sex, religion, income, sexuality, disability etc.)
- History of groups in Markham
- Race as a social construct
- Everyone has voice
- Support and advocacy for everyone
- Economic and social as tools for support
- Amplifying meaningful narratives (intentional democracy)
- Visibility
- Accessible
- Understanding systemic issues
- Policy
- Representation
- Allyship

A Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted, with input from all Committee members. Only strengths, weaknesses and opportunities were identified.

#### Strengths

- Dialogue with council
- Advisement
- Diversity of the committee
- Openness
- YRP
- Markham (staff)
- Connect to council - deputation
- History of Many Faces of Markham

#### Weakness

- Need to have all voices represented (Indigenous)
- Visibility (of the committee)
- Social media and outreach
- Solidarity (to support all anti-racism)
- Education and training
- Demonstration with Black Lives Matter
- Supporting youth
- Partnerships with groups
- Grassroots

#### Opportunities

- Education and training (Capacity building is very important)
- E-learning / making sure we take time to learn
- Partnerships (with post-secondary, other committees, other groups)
- Events
- Policy
- Bring outside tools, resources, issues
- Robust partnerships with businesses and stakeholders
- Educate council on issues that are important
- Templating work so that it is useable
- Measurable outcomes

- Resource hub sharing
- Visibility via social media (possibly branch off)

The Committee decided against establishing sub-committees at this time.

Methods for operationalizing the opportunities and setting goals and measurable targets would be part of the future focus.

## 6. Anti-Racism Resolution

The proposed Anti-Racism Resolution was reviewed.

Staff highlighted the role of a municipality within the regional 2-tier system and noted that the City of Markham, as a lower tier municipality, does not have the services to support victims of crime or racism, but can raise awareness of the issue. ([Appendix -Link to Google Doc with Anti-Racism Resolution and References](#))

The Committee made the following friendly amendments to the resolutions:

Be it resolved that the City of Markham raise awareness and **direct to resources** for supporting victims of anti-Asian racism in Markham

Be it resolved that the City of Markham raise awareness and **direct to resources** for supporting victims of anti-Black racism in Markham

**Moved by** Nayani Nandakumar

**Seconded by** Danielle Russell

That the Anti-Racism Resolution be accepted, as amended.

Carried

## Anti-Racism Resolution

Whereas the City of Markham is one of the most diverse cities in Canada; and,

Whereas the City of Markham has supported a Diversity Action Plan that states we seek to be a city where everyone is free from discrimination, racism, stereotyping, systemic racism and prejudice; and,

Whereas the City of Markham is a signatory of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities; and,

Whereas racism is not a political issue, but it is a humanitarian issue; and,

Whereas the City of Markham, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Regional Councillors, and Councillors have spoken out against racism in the past; and,  
Whereas the City of Markham is a guardian of the public interest and its residents recognize the importance of human rights; and,

Whereas Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, have faced racism in Canada; and,

Whereas COVID-19 has been racially associated with Asians to discriminate, judge, and inflict hate incidents and hate crimes; and,

Whereas the murder of George Floyd in the United States of America has sparked conversations regarding social injustices for Black people in society; and,

Whereas the City of Markham recognize the importance of Indigenous culture and has signed a historic agreement of Cultural Collaboration with Eabametoong First Nation; and,

Whereas the Race Relations Committee is responsible for advising the Mayor, Council and the City of Markham on issues pertaining to racism and ethno-cultural equity; and,

Whereas #StopAsianHate and #BlackLivesMatter have been trending topics across Canada that reflect systemic issues and hate crimes against racialized groups; and,

Whereas other municipalities have promoted anti-racism content on their websites, social media, press releases, newspapers, digital media and other forms of communications,

Therefore be it resolved that the City of Markham:

1. Raise awareness and direct to resources for the support of victims of anti-Asian racism in Markham; and,
2. Raise awareness and direct to resources for the support of victims of anti-Black racism in Markham; and,
3. Use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and its website to promote anti-racist content, such as but not limited to: racial inclusion, implicit bias, unconscious bias, prejudice, White privilege, cultural racism, bystander intervention and ally-ship; and,
4. Host online anti-racist and inclusion workshops for residents to attend; and,
5. Designate a portion of the website for resources for people who are a victim of hate incidents and hate crimes; and further,
6. Host a diversity roundtable to discuss racism, diversity, and inclusion in partnership with the Race Relations Committee.

## **7. City Updates**

### Many Faces of Markham

The deadline for submissions was extended to May 7<sup>th</sup> due to COVID-19. To date, 137 submissions were received, the majority from elementary school students and more submissions are expected. Last year, there were approximately 200 submissions.

The review period was discussed, and it was decided to extend the review period through the weekend, to be May 25 – 30, 2021. Staff outlined how voting was conducted in the past and advised that the scoring criteria would be sent to the Committee within the next week.

The division of submissions by subject was discussed. Members were invited to take leadership roles in reviewing subjects they had more experience with.

#### RFP for Diversity Action Plan Update

Staff advised that once submissions were received, an internal review would take place, then the Staff recommendation would be made. The Committee would be kept apprised of the status.

Danielle Russell inquired whether a company's past involvement with the community would be taken into consideration. Staff advised that the criteria and scoring could not be altered as it was included in the RFP, however the criteria included lived Black experience as an asset for the anti-Black racism deliverable of the RFP.

#### Mapping Community Assets

Staff planned to circulate a spreadsheet for Committee members to contribute the names and details of community organizations for consultation regarding the Diversity Action Plan.

Alicia Lauzon, YRP, noted that Staff could request a list of places of worship from YRP.

Darius Sookram, Chair, advised that a list of social organizations within a geographical space could be obtained. Further details would be provided after the meeting.

#### York Region Weekly Vaccination Progress

In response to Staff, the Committee confirmed that they wished to continue receiving the weekly vaccination progress updates.

### **8. Related to Previous Minutes (April 12, 2021)**

There was no further discussion from the previous minutes.

### **9. New Business**

There was no new business discussed.

### **10. Next official meeting date: June 7, 2021**

### **11. Adjournment**

**Moved By** Danielle Russell

**Seconded By** Edward Choi

That the Race Relations meeting adjourn at 7:47 PM.

Carried