



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes

Zoom Meeting

February 7, 2022

6:00 p.m.

<i>Attendance:</i>	
<u>Committee</u>	<u>Regrets</u>
Darius Sookram, Chair Nayani Nandakumar, Vice Chair Edward Choi Sujane Kandasamy (<i>arrived at 6:57 pm</i>) Madge Logan Mohamad Mtairek Danielle Russell Faiz Mohyuddin Claudette Rutherford Hamza Sivanathan Councillor Isa Lee	Suat Kenar
<u>Guests</u>	
Michael Blackburn, Manager, Election Communications & Community Engagement Scott Chapman, Manager, Elections	
<u>Staff</u>	
Joanne Kinya Baker, Staff Liaison (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist) Mona Nazif, Staff Liaison (Senior Manager, Human Resources) Hristina Giantsopoulos, Election and Committee Coordinator	

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair, Darius Sookram, called the meeting to order at 6:09 PM and read the City of Markham Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.

2. Adoption of the February 7, 2022, agenda.

Moved by: Nayani Nandakumar

Seconded by: Madge Logan

Carried

That the February 10, 2022 Race Relations Committee Meeting Agenda be adopted.

3. Approval of the Minutes from January 10, 2022.

Moved by: Danielle Russell

Seconded by: Claudette Rutherford

That the January 10, 2022, Race Relations Committee Minutes be adopted.

Carried

4. Business Related to Previous Minutes:

There was discussion regarding Member recruitment and representation. It was suggested that the Committee continue to be over appointed by one and that membership remain at 14 to represent the City's diversity. Staff advised that a supporting business case will be provided at an upcoming meeting.

5. Many Faces of Markham

The 2022 Many Faces of Markham event will be postponed to 2023. This will allow time to gather input from the City's youth organizations, create a better event and solicit greater participation from the City's residents, community groups, and school boards. Recent consultation with the City's youth group identified Allyship, Your Markham, as the next theme. The Committee discussed the definition of allyship and that it may hold a different meaning to different people and that it may be difficult to identify as an ally as a black person dealing with racism. It was suggested that learning opportunities be provided for its understanding and to promote equity, inclusion and diversity.

The Many Faces of Markham Sub-Committee will provide regular updates on progress.

6. Race Relations Sub-Committee Update

The following Sub-Committees were created to facilitate enhanced discussions at future RRC meetings:

1. Communication Sub-Committee: to review best practices and review city communications.
2. Policy Sub-Committee: to review City policies, such as those related to street naming, the RRC Terms of Reference.
3. Many Faces of Markham: to liaise with City's youth groups, gather insights and create a stronger event for 2023.

The Staff Liaison will provide updates on the progress related to the update of the RRC TOR.

It was suggested that intersectionality between advisory committees be explored and that opportunities for RRC Members to attend other advisory committee meetings be explored.

7. Diversity Action Plan Update

The Staff Liaison advised that the data analysis is in early stages and that the initial findings will be beneficial to the RRC and Sub-Committees. The Diversity Action Plan Update report will be on an upcoming General Committee agenda.

8. Black History Month

The Staff Liaison advised that the City is making advancements in terms of black history in the form of inspirational stories from establish and new members of the community. Information on the City's Black History Month event was shared with the Committee:

Markham Celebrates Black History Month

Date: Wednesday, February 23, 2022

Time: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Electronic/Virtual

9. Presentation from Legislative Services on the 2022 Municipal Election

Joanne Kinya Baker, Staff Liaison (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist) introduced special guests and City staff members, Michael Blackburn, Manager, Election Communications & Community Engagement and Scott Chapman, Manager, Elections, who were in attendance to discuss the upcoming Municipal Election and respond to questions related to the 2022 Municipal Election presentation that was circulated in advance of the meeting. The presentation provided an overview of the current goals, guiding initiatives, election employment opportunities and solicited feedback from the Committee on their experiences from past elections and considerations for those in the future.

Mr. Chapman provided insights on creating an accessible and inclusive experience for all members of the community and the significance of recognizing the City's diversity and the impact it can have on governance.

The Committee thanked Mr. Chapman and Mr. Blackburn for attending the meeting, the information provided and the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

The following comments and questions were raised in relation to the presentation:

- That the experience from the last federal election was not positive and that there needs to be consideration to polling station locations, accessibility, mobility, and wait times for the City's upcoming municipal election;
- The availability of accessibility equipment at polling stations;
- The online voting system was convenient and easy to use and should also be easy to understand with a minimum number of keystrokes going forward;
- Language can be a barrier and voting information should be sent and made available to everyone in multiple formats and languages;

- There are inconsistencies regarding the welcoming of candidates to campaign at long term care facilities and condo-corporations and that there should be consideration to educate facility staff on appropriate and consistent policies;
- That security and the protection of confidentiality are very important and need to be preserved;
- An inquiry into Whether there is service training for online voting offered for someone who may have limited mobility or is restricted to their home;
- Election employment opportunities for youth are important and promote a sense of civic duty while participating in the democratic process;
- Whether there are anti-inclusion and anti-racism considerations in election planning;
- What is the approach taken to encourage voters to participate in exit surveys; and,
- The importance of creating a culture of respect for candidates and voters.

Staff noted that the City uses the vote anywhere model where eligible voters can attend any voting location and will be provided with a ballot with the contests that they are eligible to vote for in addition to bringing voting tabulators to long-term care facilities and senior residences. The City is doing a lot of work with respect to diversity training and the election team is looking forward to leveraging that in our training for all election workers, including students. Staff further noted that election administrations work to achieve the most inclusive, accessible and fair election that is available and meaningful to everyone and use all available tools to protect the democratic process.

10. Attendance Update

The Chair met with a few RRC Members regarding attendance records and looks forward to seeing all RRC Members at upcoming meetings.

11. Vacancy Recruitment

The Committee discussed the following in relation to the current RRC vacancy:

- That there be consideration to have Indigenous representation on the Committee and that if required, a case be presented for the appointment of a member of the City's Indigenous Community;
- The current member recruitment is an opportunity to fulfill the City's commitment with respect to Truth and Reconciliation as well as intentional allyship with the Indigenous Community;
- There was an inquiry related to community representation and if there are any communities that are under or not represented such as a member of the City's Pilipino community;
- The importance of diversity within the Committee and to other racialized groups also have representation, such as the Japanese, Korean and potentially other groups;
- That information on the City's demographics be obtained for future consideration to Committee representation and succession planning;

Staff indicated that there are opportunities to expand and promote representation within the Committee as part of the current recruitment

12. New Business/Other

The Chair advised of concerns regarding the City's street naming conventions, noting a recent meeting held during which staff provided an overview of the current process to Members of Council. It was suggested that the Race Relations Committee Policy Sub-Committee review the City's current process and provide recommendations for policy amendments, including the following:

- The application of an anti-racist lens in name selection;
- The prioritization of people who promote inclusivity of all members of the community;
- Specific criteria for naming suggestions such as: being a person of influence, have historical significance to the community, and, have made an innovative contribution to the City;
- A peer review of naming suggestions; and,
- The development of defined parameters in which selections are made.

The Chair thanked Members for their support of Committee initiatives and requested that the Staff Liaison provide information on the City's current street and building naming convention policy to the next meeting.

13. Next Official Meeting Date: Monday, March 7, 2022, at 6:00 PM

14. Adjournment

Moved By: Isa Lee

Seconded By: Edward Choi.

That the Race Relations meeting adjourn at 8:20 PM.