

Regional Council Decision - National Remembrance of the 100th Anniversary of the Enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in Canada

On June 29, 2023 Regional Council resolved the following:

WHEREAS the enactment of the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act, was a significant event in Canadian history that left a profound impact on the Chinese-Canadian community; and

WHEREAS the Chinese Exclusion Act was a piece of legislation that effectively prohibited Chinese immigration to Canada for more than 2 decades; and

WHEREAS the Chinese Exclusion Act imposed a head tax on Chinese immigrants who were already in Canada; and

WHEREAS during the 24 years (until 1947) when the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed by the Canadian Government, it was estimated that less than 100 Chinese immigrants were accepted into Canada and existing Chinese immigrants were unable to bring their spouses and children to Canada; and

WHEREAS the Chinese-Canadian was the only ethnic group that was barred from entry based solely on their country of origin in Canadian history; and

WHEREAS the Chinese Exclusion Act legally sanctioned racial discrimination and perpetuated systemic racism against Chinese Canadians, setting a clear example of discrimination on the basis of race and was a product of the prevailing xenophobic attitudes of the time; and

WHEREAS notwithstanding these significant hardships and negative impacts the Chinese Exclusion Act has had on generations of Chinese Canadians, Chinese Canadian community is proud of the immense contributions in making Canada a great nation as it is; and

WHEREAS this year's 100th Anniversary of the Enactment of this Act provides an important opportunity to remember the injustices that were inflicted upon the Chinese Canadian community; and

WHEREAS York Region is one of the fastest growing and most diverse communities in Canada, with people of Chinese descent accounting for more than 20% of York Region's total population; and

WHEREAS York Region and York Regional Council are committed to building welcoming and diverse communities where all dimensions of diversity are celebrated and where everyone can develop to their full

potential, participate freely in society and live with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination; and

WHEREAS York Region celebrates its growing and diverse population as a source of strength, vitality and economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS on behalf of the Honourable Senator Yuen Pau Woo and the Honourable Senator Victor Oh, in partnership of with Action! Chinese Canadians Together (ACCT) Foundation organized a National Remembrance event on June 23, 2023, 3:00-5:00 p.m. ET in the Senate of Canada Chamber;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That York Region publicly share Action! Chinese Canadas Together Foundation's livestream link and encourage residents and community groups to set up local viewing events to provide citizens the opportunity to mark this centenary event, by helping to educate our community, especially the younger generation, about the history, and to encourage them to reflect on our past, acknowledge the harm that was done, and work towards a more just and equitable future for all Canadians; and
2. That other community groups be encouraged to participate by hosting their own livestreaming events; and
3. That the Clerk forward a copy of this Resolution to all local municipalities, MPs & MPPs; and
4. That Corporate Communications promote this event through York Region's corporate communications channels, as appropriate; and
5. That these recommendations be ratified by Council on June 29, 2023.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor (he/him) | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services
Department

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