



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes
Zoom Meeting
March 6, 2023
6:00 p.m.

<i>Attendance:</i>	
<u>Committee</u> Nayani Nandakumar, Acting Chair Satya Arora Edward Choi Madge Logan Jas Atwal Danielle Russell Hamza Sivanathan Suat Kenar Mohamad Mtairek Councillor Isa Lee Councillor Juanita Nathan	<u>Regrets</u> Darius Sookram Faiz Mohyuddin Sujane Kandasamy Claudette Rutherford Alicia Lauzon, York Regional Police Jamaal Kossy, Staff Liaison (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist)
<u>Staff</u> Jessica Ketwaroo-Green, Staff Liaison (Diversity Equity and Inclusion Specialist) Hristina Giantsopoulos, Election and Committee Coordinator	

1. Chair's Opening Remark

The Race Relations Committee meeting convened at 6:07 PM, with Nayani Nandakumar presided as Acting Chair in Darius Sookram's absence. She began with a reading of the Land Acknowledgement.

Nayani read a letter from Darius that recognized Councillor Lee's contributions to the Committee. Councillor Lee's term has expired and Councillor Juanita Nathan has been newly appointed to the RRC.

2. Adoption of the March 6, 2023, agenda.

Moved by: Satya Arora
Seconded by: Madge Logan

That the March 6, 2023 Race Relations Committee Meeting Agenda be adopted.

3. Approval of the Minutes from February 6, 2023.

Moved by: Satya Arora

Seconded by: Jas Atwal

That the February 6, 2023, Race Relations Committee Minutes be adopted.

4. Business Related to Previous Minutes

There was no business related to the previous minutes.

5. Committee and Sub-Committee Updates

▪ *Many Faces of Markham*

○ Communication Package

The Sub-Committee was tasked with the following action items:

- Review and provide comments to staff regarding the communication package; provide text for the City website posting and to provide information in relation to the contest submission rules; and,
- Staff from corporate communication will assist with forwarding and publishing the content.

6. Changes to the RRC Meeting Schedule

The Acting Chair read a written submission from Darius Sookram that expressed his opposition to the revised meeting frequency.

The Committee discussed their disappointment with the updated quarterly meeting frequency (from monthly) and the way in which it was communicated to Members. The Committee expressed concerns with the progress of initiatives such as Many Faces of Markham, Diversity Action Plan and Anti-Black Racism Action Plan in the future and would like to challenge the veracity of this change that impedes the valuable Committee work from progressing especially at this time of racism and discrimination in the community and that this is in contradiction to previous messages of the significance of community consultation, feedback, and interaction.

The Committee discussed that Members are volunteers and that resources and budget should not be a factor in decreasing meeting frequency as members are volunteers and volunteer their time. It was suggested that RRC Members contact their local ward Councillor, write a collective letter to Council and craft a motion that conveys the Committee's concerns.

Staff indicated that there is direction from the Province to download more responsibilities to municipalities which impacts the amount of resources available to citizen advisory committee's. Staff further indicated that an open letter and deputations that speak to the work the Committee has accomplished in the term may strengthen the point to revert to monthly meetings.

The Committee briefly discussed a new name for the RRC that is more reflective of the current work and addresses disparities in the community.

The Committee provided the following recommendation for Council's consideration.

Moved By Edward Choi
Seconded By Satya Arora

Whereas the Race Relation Committee plays an important role in the implementation of the Diversity Action Plan and the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan as well as amplifying community voices and that the RRC does not agree with the change in frequency of meetings from monthly to quarterly;

Be it resolved that the RRC respectfully requests that the meeting frequency be reverted back to monthly.

Carried

7. New Business/Other

▪ ***Succession planning – terms of Members***

Election for Chair and Vice-Chair is to take place at the September 2023 meeting.
Review of Committee Member terms and recruitment

▪ ***Committee Engagement***

The Committee suggested that members contact their local ward councillors to express concerns about the recent changes to meeting schedule.

▪ ***Community Awareness***

The Committee raised awareness to Deputy Mayor Michael Chan's open letters about what he feels are anti-Chinese and racist information leaks out of CSIS and that these issues continue to be present.

8. Next Official Meeting Date: Monday June 5, at 6:00 PM

9. Adjournment

Moved By: Danielle Russel
Seconded By: Satya Arora

That the Race Relations meeting adjourn at 8:03 PM.

Carried