



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes
Zoom Meeting
June 5, 2023
6:00 p.m.

<p><i>Attendance:</i></p> <p><u>Committee</u> Darius Sookram, Chair Nayani Nandakumar, Vice-Chair Satya Arora Edward Choi Madge Logan Jas Atwal Danielle Russell Mohamad Mtairek Claudette Rutherford Councillor Juanita Nathan Faiz Mohyuddin</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Jamal Kossy, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Specialist Hristina Giantsopoulos, Election and Committee Coordinator</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Sujane Kandasamy Hamza Sivanathan Suat Kenar</p> <p>Alicia Lauzon, York Regional Police</p>
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1. Chair's Opening Remark

The Race Relations Committee convened at 6:04 PM.
Chair, Darius Sookram provided welcoming remarks to the Committee and read the Land Acknowledgement.

2. Adoption of the June 5, 2023, agenda.

Moved by: Satya Arora
Seconded by: Jas Atwal

That the June 5, 2023 Race Relations Committee Meeting Agenda be adopted.

Carried

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

Moved by: Satya Arora

Seconded by: Mohamad Mtairek

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

Carried

4. Business Related to Previous Minutes

5. Incident of Anti Black Racism at George Brown College

The Committee discussed the recent City of Markham Director use of a racial slur and referenced the recent CBC article. The following thoughts and concerns on the matter were shared:

- The inappropriateness of the use of racial slurs for training purposes;
- That the CBC article was published prior to being shared with the RRC, or MP;
- The timing of this incident and the decrease in RRC meeting frequency;
- Concerns that the incident occurred during the implementation of the City's Diversity Action Plan, and Anti-Black Racism Strategy;
- That this is a difficult topic to discuss;
- An inquiry regarding current action by the City in relation to a support strategy for staff;
- An inquiry regarding current action by the City in relation to the staff member involved;
- That there be consideration for a public statement from the City to advise that the staff member is no longer with the City;
- That there be communication to advise of the incident and the steps taken to address the matter across York Region;
- Whether the staff member completed the mandatory diversity training;
- That the City policies be communicated to all staff; and,
- That the departure of one individual will not make the issue disappear and that all have to be vigilant to call out racism and be willing to speak out about it.

Jamal Kossy addressed the Committee and indicated that the senior staff member involved in the incident is no longer with the City and that the investigation is ongoing. He also indicated that the City's Executive Leadership Team is addressing the matter and that counselling sessions with Desiree Phillips have been conducted with staff. It was noted that there will be an equity audit of the People Services Department to evaluate discrimination, harassment, policies, and occurrences. The City has a policy in place that speaks to discrimination, but will have it reviewed as part of the equity audit.

The Committee drafted the following resolution to be forwarded to General Committee for consideration after these minutes are confirmed:

Moved By: Nayani Nandakumar

Seconded By: Satya Arora

Whereas the Race Relations Committee does not support racial slurs, including but not limited to the use of the “N-word”;

Whereas the use of racial slurs impedes the Black and racialized people from applying and or feeling safe;

Whereas the City has a duty to uphold and educate residents on community values;

Whereas the City implemented a Diversity Action Plan and Anti-Black Racism Strategy to work towards an inclusive community;

Be it resolved that the Race Relations Committee does not condone racism in our City, and communities;

Be it resolved that the City of Markham has a policy to reflect the importance of anti-racism;

Be it resolved that the RRC support swift action and communication when deplorable and racist acts occur;

Be it resolved that a clause be included in exit documents to ensure that Linked-In and similar networking sites are updated appropriately to reflect the employment status of the person;

Be it resolved that an Equity Audit be conducted by a third party to review evaluate instances of discrimination and harassment, as well as applicable policies;

Be it resolved that the City of Markham be transparent and accountable and implement Key Performance Indicators, for the Diversity Action Plan and Anti-Black Racism Strategy, and to provide regular reporting and feedback on the advancement of the action plans;

Carried

6. Committee and Sub-Committee Updates

Many Faces of Markham

The Committee discussed opportunities for improvement for next year and that there is a need for increased advertising across the City and communication with all the school boards in the fall to ensure that this important event is being made available to all. It was suggested that there be a rubric of evaluation criteria and categories for future events.

Staff thanked members for their assistance in evaluating the submissions and advised that Mayor’s certificates will be sent to all the winners.

7. Changes to the RRC Meeting Schedule

The resolution from the previous minutes will be forwarded to the GC agenda for June 20, 2023.

8. New Business/Other

- Election of New Chair and Vice Chair
 - Nominations: will be addressed at the next meeting.
- Open Floor
 - Consideration to obtain more diverse programming, including Indigenous programming in the future at the Markham Theatre to promote inclusivity;
 - Thinking about the broader community when reviewing issues;
 - Continued community reach out; and,
 - Appreciation for members and staff for contributions to meetings and initiatives.

Action Item: Staff to provide information on member terms and expiry dates.

9. Next Official Meeting Date: Monday September 11, 2023 at 6:00 PM

10. Adjournment

Moved By: Madge Logan

Seconded By: Edward Choi

That the Race Relations meeting adjourn at 7:57 PM.