



## **RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM**

**Canada Room, Markham Civic Centre  
September 18, 2017**

### **MINUTES**

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| <b>Attendance:</b>   |  |
| <u>Committee</u><br>Astra Josie Rose, Chair<br>Andrew Yu, Vice Chair<br>Bobbie France<br>Rina George-Alexander<br>Faiz Mohyuddin<br>Maggie Quirt | <u>Regrets</u><br>Osman Akhtar<br>Edward Choi (teleconference)<br>Salman Hasan<br>Sujane Kandasamy<br>Aamer Mohammed<br>David Quintero<br>Surinder Razdan<br>Herleen Sayal<br>Sara Siddiqui<br>Alicia Lauzon<br>Councillor Logan Kanapathi |
| <u>Council</u><br>Regional Councillor Joe Li   |  |
| <u>Staff</u><br>Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity<br>Specialist<br>Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator                                     |  |

The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:10 PM with Astra Josie Rose presiding as Chair.

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

Chair Astra Josie Rose hoped that members had enjoyed the summer and welcomed them to the meeting.

#### **2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda**

The agenda was accepted as distributed.

#### **3. Approval of the Minutes**

As there was no quorum, adoption of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

#### **4. Markham Human Resources Update**

Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, advised that York Region has created a Diversity and Inclusions draft charter; it will be something that all municipalities in York Region will subscribe to, to some extent. She requested Committee members review the Charter and by the next meeting provide comments on concepts that might be added.

Cheryl McConney-Wilson referenced recent anti-black and anti-Semitic graffiti discovered at three different schools in Markham and advised that UNESCO would like to conduct workshops on the topic of anti-radicalization. It is felt that this does not connect with the appropriate groups; however Ms. McConney-Wilson will forward the material to Committee members when it is received. UNESCO will be encouraged to forward the material to youth groups. It was noted that many groups, such as school boards and York Region Police, are also working to resolve this problem.

Cheryl McConney-Wilson reported that the City of Markham is developing an Indigenous acknowledgement to acknowledge City presence on Indigenous lands and to indicate respect for Indigenous peoples, their spiritual beliefs, cultural heritage and connections with the land. It is challenging to identify the right groupings of Indigenous peoples and Markham is checking with other municipalities for wording of acknowledgements being used. A voluntary exercise for staff was well received, so it will be extended to all staff.

Cheryl McConney-Wilson advised about these other events:

- A city tour has been planned on October 20, 2017 for new immigrants
- A Pow Wow event to celebrate the Anishnaabe way of life will take place September 23-24, 2017
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee has partnered with the Markham Museum and will hold its Accessibility Fair on September 23-24, 2017.

#### **5. Update on Committee Terms of Reference**

It was reported that Laura Gold and Cheryl McConney-Wilson have drafted updated terms of reference for the Committee; review by senior City of Markham administrators is in progress.

Cheryl McConney-Wilson reported that she has booked the Civic Centre for December 9, 2017 in case the Committee wishes to plan an event to recognize Human Rights Day (December 10).

Cheryl McConney-Wilson left the meeting at 7:45 pm.

#### **6. Race Relations Business**

##### **A) Race Relations Committee Work Plan**

Chair Astra Josie Rose distributed and reviewed a draft Committee work plan with the following action items:

- Anti-Hate Crime initiatives – the Committee could partner with other groups such as York Region Police, Police Community Advisory Council, and Georgina Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee; Astra Josie Rose will forward details of a proposed anti-hate crime walk when available.

- Community Chats – it was recommended that the Committee partner with York Region Police and also engage community members. Regional Councillor Joe Li endorsed the plan. Maggie Quirt and Rina George-Alexander volunteered to serve on this subcommittee.
- York Region Police police checks – it was reported that Committee members reviewed the presentation and found it very technical and at times, difficult to understand. It was felt that it should be more youth-friendly. YRP is willing to work with the Committee to improve it. It was recommended that this could be the focus of a second community chat. Chair Astra Josie Rose will send an email requesting members to volunteer for this subcommittee.
- Open House - Sara Siddiqui is planning this event entitled “Race Relations – *Living as One Community (Equity and Unity)*. It may be held in mid-November, or could be planned for December 9 to take advantage of the reservation that day at the Civic Centre. Chair Astra Josie Rose will follow up with Sara Siddiqui.
- Awards - It was reported that December 10 (Human Rights Day) is being considered as a potential date for the ceremony to give community awards for activities taken to promote race relations in the community. March 21 (International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) might also be an opportunity to promote the awards and lead up to the Many Faces of Markham event.
- Many Faces of Markham - It was reported that the Committee has been asked by the Mayor’s office and school boards to bring back the Many Faces of Markham (MFOM) event. The Committee will host the event in partnership with school boards, Youth for Human Rights, and other community partners. The theme will be Unity (inclusion, equity and diversity); it was suggested that there be a focus on youth. Chair Astra Josie Rose and Rina George-Alexander will co-chair the sub-committee. Maggie Quirt will provide planning information from previous MFOM events. Chair Astra Josie Rose will call a meeting of the sub-committee very soon so that planning may begin.

## **7. New Business**

- It was reported that Herleen Sayal has resigned from the Committee.
- Maggie Quirt reported that indigenous students from Eabametoong, an Ojibway First Nation located 360 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, are attending high school in Markham. It was suggested that the Committee consider supporting a campaign to build a high school in Eabametoong in recognition of the emerging partnership between Markham and that community.

## **8. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, October 2, 2017 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

## **9. Adjournment**

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 9:00 PM.