



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM

**Canada Room, Markham Civic Centre
January 16, 2017**

MINUTES

Attendance: <u>Committee</u> Astra Josie Rose, Chair Maggie Quirt, Vice Chair Osman Akhtar Amer Mohammed Sarah Siddiqui Andrew Yu Bobbie France <u>Staff</u> Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator	<u>Regrets</u> Regional Councillor Joe Li Councillor Logan Kanapathi Rina George-Alexander Salman Hasan Herleen Sayal Alicia Lauzon, York Region Police Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist
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1. CHAIRS OPENING REMARKS

The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:15 pm with Astra Josie Rose presiding as Chair.

2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Election of the Chair and Vice Chair
- Markham Federal By-Election
- Public Engagement

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 5, 2016

Moved by Osman Akhtar

Seconded by Andrew Yu

That the December 5, 2016, Markham Race Relations Committee be approved as presented.

CARRIED

4. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

The Chair provided the Human Resources Update on behalf of the Diversity Specialist who was unable to attend the meeting. The update included the following:

a. Markham African Caribbean Canadian Association

The Committee was invited to attend the Markham African Caribbean Canadian Association celebration being held January 21, 2017 at the Flato Markham Theatre.

b. York Region Police

The Committee was asked if they would like to have a booth at the York Region Police event to end racial discrimination being held on Sunday, April 2, 2017. If the Committee decides to have a booth, Members would be required to staff the booth.

c. Communication Materials

The Committee discussed getting a banner and promotional materials to use at events. The banner would have the City's logo and the Race Relation Committee's name on it. The Committee would likely use its budget to purchase these items. Staff will ask Corporate Communication about this and report back on this at the next meeting.

5. RACE RELATIONS BUSINESS

a. Many Faces of Markham – Youth Conference

The Chair provided an update on the planning and undertaking of the Many Faces of Markham-Youth Conference, which is scheduled to be held on April 29, 2017, at Markham Civic Centre. The event is being held in partnership with L.I.G.H.T, a youth organization. The Committee's role is to mentor not drive the youth in the planning and undertaking of the conference. The following was discussed at the meeting:

Name of the Conference and Target Audience

L.I.G.H.T asked that the conference be called VVV (Vision via Voices) and suggested that the target audience be 50 to 100 youth between the ages of 14 and 18 years of age from any school. The Committee was fine with the name, but suggested that Regional Councillor Joe Li and Councillor Logan Kanapathi should also approve the name.

Breakout Sessions

All meeting rooms at Civic Centre have been booked so that three breakout sessions can be held on equity and equality, mental health, and homelessness.

Budget for the Event

The tentative budget for the event was set at \$2,400 to cover the cost of lunch, bus tickets, venue rental, and prizes. This amount can be adjusted if the venue is provided free of charge.

Lunch

Lunch will be about 20 minutes and wraps will be provided for lunch. It was suggested that more time may be needed for lunch.

Prizes

Prizes will only be given to the top three winners of the Many Faces of Markham competition. The rest of the participants will receive a certificate from the Mayor's Office.

Registration

All participants will be requested to pre-register for the conference. Registration will be done through Evite or possibly through the Contact Centre. The Clerk will inquire about the Contact Centre overseeing registration to the conference.

Student Volunteers

Student volunteers helping with the undertaking of the conference will be able to get their volunteer hours signed.

Vendors in the Great Hall

The Sub-Committee is looking at having vendors like Kids Help Phone and Bell Canada in the Great Hall.

Youth Aboriginal Speaker

The Sub-Committee is looking at having a youth aboriginal speaker come and speak about clean water. A Member suggested focusing the entire conference next year on aboriginal people, as many Markham youth have had little interaction with aboriginal people. It was noted that there may also be a possibility to get involved with an aboriginal event the City plans to host.

Transit to the Conference

The Sub-Committee is looking into providing students with bus tickets to get to the conference.

Next Steps

The Sub-Committee will report back with more conference details at the next meeting.

b. Chai Chats

The Chair reported that the Chai Chats will now be held at the library or at a welcome centre rather than at a coffee shop. The chats are to provide residents with an opportunity to come out and talk about racial issues in their communities. It was suggested that the logistics of the event be worked out and that the event be referred to as community engagement instead of Chai Chats.

c. Racial profiling

The Chair asked if the Committee would like to have the Police come and provide a workshop on carding. The workshop would include information on what carding is and on what your rights are. The Committee suggested asking L.I.G.H.T if it would like hold the workshop as part of the youth conference. It was also suggested that the workshop could be held as a separate event.

d. Highway of Heroes

Amer Mohammed spoke about a project he is working on with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillor Don Hamilton. The project is part of a nationwide 8 ½ million dollar campaign, and involves planting over 200,000 trees along the highway 401. The project is to educate the public and new immigrants on Canada's fallen soldiers. The Race Relations Committee could play a role in the project. A Member suggested looking at the stories of fallen soldiers from diverse backgrounds as part of the project. Further discussion on the matter was deferred to the next meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Information sharing

There was no discussion on this agenda item.

b. Federal By-Election

A Member suggested that committee conduct with respect to elections be added to the committee orientation. The orientation will be provided at the next meeting when the new members start.

c. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair

The Clerk suggested the Chair and Vice-Chair be elected in April after the new members have attended a few meetings.

d. Community Engagement

A Committee Member suggested building relationships with cultural organizations in Markham. This would include possibly attending their meetings and having a presence at their events, as well as hosting an open house at the City to explain what we do. The Chair will email Sarah Siddiqui a list of cultural organizations in Markham.

e. Syrian Refugees

The Committee discussed partnering with a group called Paint a Smile to hold an event for Syrian refugee children. The group tries to bring smiles to children's faces through art, as most of these children were born during war. A sub-committee could be formed to organize the event. Further discussion on the matter was deferred to the next meeting until more research on the event has been done.

f. Community Award

The Committee briefly discussed holding community awards for activities taken to promote race relations in the community. The awards ceremony will possibly be held in the fall as part of another diversity event.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 9:02 pm.