



**RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM**  
**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre**  
**November 7, 2016**

**MINUTES**

<p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p><u>Committee</u> Astra Josie Rose, Chair Maggie Quirt, Vice Chair Osman Akhtar Bobbie France Rina George-Alexander Herleen Sayal Sarah Siddiqui Andrew Yu</p> <p><u>Council</u> Councillor Logan Kanapathi Regional Councillor Joe Li</p> <p><u>Guest</u> Alicia Lauzon, York Region Police</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Moises Calo Salman Hasan Grace Permaul Amer Mohammed Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist</p>
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:05 PM with Astra Josie Rose presiding as Chair.

**1. Chair's Opening Remarks**

Chair Astra Josie Rose welcomed members to the meeting.

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

The agenda was accepted as distributed with one addition:

- Recruitment of Committee members

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

It was

Moved by           Andrew Yu  
Seconded by       Maggie Quirt

That the minutes of the Markham Race Relations Committee meetings held on September 12, 2016 be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

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

Chair Astra Josie Rose reported on behalf of Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, that:

- It is hoped that a member of the Committee would be willing to speak at the Black History month ceremony to be held on January 31. Bobbie France volunteered to do this.
- University of Toronto Professor Jordan Peterson refuses to use non binary pronouns. There is concern that this matter may affect the black community; this matter will be included in Markham's training related to gender neutral issues.
- A Syrian Refugee forum is scheduled for November 8, 2016.
- Ms. McConney-Wilson will soon meet with York Region staff to share information about Markham's initiatives and training related to diversity. She asked that Committee members let her know of initiatives they feel that the committee has done well.

### **5. Race Relations Business**

#### **A) Meeting with Mayor Scarpitti**

Chair Astra Josie Rose and Vice Chair Maggie Quirt reported that their meeting with Mayor Scarpitti was productive and they were encouraged from getting affirmation for views and initiatives. Mayor Scarpitti encouraged the Race Relations Committee to do more. Chair Astra Josie Rose distributed and reviewed notes from the meeting relating to history of the Committee and Mayor Scarpitti's goals moving forward. Mayor Scarpitti encouraged the Committee to be mindful of why things are going well and apply them to other jurisdictions. It was suggested that the Race Relations Committee may want to shift its focus so that it works on issues, and the Mayor would like to be informed about the issues. They also discussed the issue of signs which don't include English; Markham does not have a bylaw requiring English to be on signs. Bobbie France will investigate whether signs need to include an official language of Canada.

#### **B) Steps Moving Forward**

At the October 2016 meeting, Committee members brainstormed ways to move forward. Herleen Sayal reported that it was felt that, if the Committee had too many focuses, it would lose momentum. It was suggested that the Committee focus on one theme, but possibly conduct three events supporting that theme. This might drive the momentum of the group and the commitment of individuals. For the coming year, racialized youth was chosen as the theme. A list of proposed 2016-17 activities (Race Relations Many Faces of Markham conference, Race Relations Community Awards, and "Chai Chats"/Community Information Sessions) to support this theme was distributed and reviewed.

**C) Many Faces of Markham – Youth Conference**

Herleen Sayal reviewed the first activity, a re-envisioned version of the Many Faces of Markham (MFOM) event to be called the L.I.G.H.T. Change Starts Today Conference. This activity would see the Committee partner with L.I.G.H.T., a York region social justice organization of 45 racially diverse high school students working to empower and motivate youth to become involved in issues affecting the community and the world. It was suggested that the Committee support L.I.G.H.T. in delivering its first conference to raise awareness among York Region high school students about the ways in which racism impacts feminism, LGBTQ, mental health, disabilities, environmental issues and homelessness. The Committee could provide coaching, and connections in regards to the logistics of the event.

The Committee discussed the L.I.G.H.T. plans for the conference, the Committee's proposed role, and the role of MFOM. Committee members wondered whether:

- This conference is MFOM, and will it keep the MFOM name?
- Is this an endorsement of L.I.G.H.T.?
- Could the Committee encourage involvement from more Markham youth groups?
- What other ways the Committee might reach out to and advocate for youth?
- If this is the first event, what process will the Committee have for selecting events in the future?

The Committee discussed promotion of the event; many wanted to see any promotion of the event feature the Committee's name first. Councillor Kanapathi recognized the importance of this youth event to highlight the issues that are impacting the youth in Markham and volunteered to help.

The Committee recognized that more discussion would be needed to resolve all questions but agreed to support in principle the collaboration with L.I.G.H.T..

It was

Moved by Herleen Sayal  
Seconded by Andrew Yu

That the Markham Race Relations Committee collaboration with L.I.G.H.T. to host a youth conference in the City of Markham be approved in principle.

CARRIED  
9 in favour, 1 abstention

**D) Race Relations Committee (RRC) Award**

Chair Astra Josie Rose reviewed a second proposed activity – the creation of an award to honour a Markham resident or community group using inclusion and equity to bring about ethno-cultural harmony and peace. She had conducted research on similar awards but the Committee would need to discuss and agree on the criteria for the award, as well as when and where to present it. A subcommittee will establish criteria by February 2017;

Chair Astra Josie Rose will send a request to all Committee members to serve on the subcommittee. Vice Chair Maggie Quirt and Bobbie France volunteered to do so.

**E) Chai Chats**

Chair Astra Josie Rose reviewed a third proposed activity – the introduction of Chai Chats, a way for Markham residents to learn about issues through discussions with local community leaders and others. Committee members would need to discuss the logistics of presenting this activity.

**7. New Business**

**A) Recruitment of Committee Members**

Chair Astra Josie Rose reported that the Clerk's Office has confirmed vacancies on the committee. It was suggested that Committee members recruit new members from among friends and colleagues who might be interested in serving on the Committee.

**8. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, December 5, 2016 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

**9. Adjournment**

It was

Moved by            Osman Akhtar  
Seconded by        Bobbie France

That the Race Relations Committee adjourn at 9:00 PM.

CARRIED