



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

**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre  
December 5, 2016**

### **MINUTES**

<b>Attendance:</b> <u>Committee</u> Astra Josie Rose, Chair Maggie Quirt, Vice Chair Osman Akhtar Moises Calo Amer Mohammed Herleen Sayal Sarah Siddiqui Andrew Yu  <u>Council</u> Regional Councillor Joe Li  <u>Guest</u> Alicia Lauzon, York Region Police  <u>Staff</u> Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator	<u>Regrets</u> Bobbie France Rina George-Alexander Salman Hasan Grace Permaul Councillor Logan Kanapathi Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:08 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 with the following changes:

- addition – York Region District School Board
- deletion – Canada Race Relations Foundation Symposium

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

It was

Moved by Sarah Siddiqui  
Seconded by Moises Calo

That the minutes of the Markham Race Relations Committee meeting held on November 7, 2016 be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

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

No report was available.

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

#### **A) Many Faces of Markham – Youth Conference**

Chair Astra Josie Rose reported that a teleconference was held to discuss plans, including the name, for the L.I.G.H.T. Change Starts Today Conference. A component of Many Faces of Markham (MFOM) focused on youth will likely be included in the event, but not in the title. MFOM prizes could be presented during the conference. The event will be linked with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as MFOM has been.

It was reported that the event may be scheduled for Friday May 5, 2017. The Markham Civic Centre is not available on May 6, and students of L.I.G.H.T. must use the group's grant by May 20. Chair Astra Josie Rose will investigate whether the Markham Civic Centre might be available on dates at the end of April.

The intent of the conference is to raise awareness among York Region high school students about the ways in which racism impacts feminism, LGBTQ communities, mental health, disabilities, environmental issues and homelessness. The role of the Committee is to provide coaching to the members of L.I.G.H.T., to learn about planning a conference, to provide connections in regards to securing the logistics of the event, and to serve as mentors for planning workshops on each topic. Herleen Sayal will be the main liaison with L.I.G.H.T members. Chair Astra Josie Rose will discuss and confirm plans with Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Councillor Logan Kanapathi and Regional Councillor Joe Li.

The Committee discussed whether to hold another event if it is not able to support the L.I.G.H.T. conference. The Mayor's Youth Task Force would like to partner with the Committee in presenting a youth expo in May 2017. Chair Astra Josie Rose will liaise with the Task Force and also check to see if the Markham Flato Theatre would still be available for MFOM. It was suggested that the Committee might consider planting trees along the Highway of Heroes in order to remember fallen soldiers and this could be linked to the restoration of the Markham Cenotaph as part of Canada 150 celebrations. Amer Mohammed will send information about this to Committee members. The

Committee will discuss these ideas at the January meeting so that a decision may be made by February.

**B) Chai Chats**

Chair Astra Josie Rose reviewed the introduction of Chai Chats, relaxed informal opportunities to initiate dialogues and further understanding about issues, such as racialized youth or commemorating International Human Rights Day through a Peace Meal. Chai Chats could be presented in a variety of formats such as panel discussions, video presentations, or group discussions. Community space and presenters would be needed. Chair Astra Josie Rose will discuss possibilities with Cheryl McConney-Wilson.

The Committee discussed the message it wishes to put forward. Chair Astra Josie Rose reminded Committee members that one of the mandates for the Race Relations Committee is to engage with the community and partner with organizations like the Welcome Centre. She reviewed the outcomes of the October brainstorming session where it was suggested that the Committee focus on one theme, but conduct a few events to support it. The theme chosen for the coming year was racialized youth. It had been agreed that the customary MFOM had become routine, so it had been decided to focus on youth through the L.I.G.H.T. conference. The Chai Chats is another opportunity to engage the community about issues relating to racism and youth. The Committee was reminded that it should consult with Councillor Kanapathi and Regional Councillor Li for advice from the outset of potential projects.

**6. New Business**

**A) York Region District School Board**

Committee members discussed the media reports of alleged systemic discrimination not being taken seriously at YRDSB. It also discussed the possibility of passing a motion recommending that Markham Mayor Scarpitti send a letter to the YRDSB to express concern over the media reports regarding how matters relating to diversity are being handled at the YRDSB, and to affirm the City's desire that all Markham residents – including Markham residents who are stakeholders at YRDSB (students, staff and parents) – are able to live, work and study in an environment that respects Canada's diversity and multicultural nature. Regional Councillor Li will confer with Councillor Kanapathi about the possible motion. The Committee agreed to defer the motion pending the outcome of this discussion. Vice Chair Maggie Quirt will send to Regional Councillor Li and Councillor Kanapathi the email about the situation and the proposed motion.

**8. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, January 16, 2017 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

**9. Adjournment**

It was

Moved by	Maggie Quirt
Seconded by	Sarah Siddiqui

Race Relations Committee

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That the Race Relations Committee adjourn at 9:08 PM.

CARRIED