



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
September 12, 2016

MINUTES

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

It was

Moved by Regional Councillor Joe Li
Seconded by Amer Mohammed

That the minutes of the Markham Race Relations Committee meetings held on May 2, 2016 and on June 6, 2016 be adopted with the following changes indicated in italics:

June 6, 2016

6. Race Relations Business

A) Community Roundtables – Youth Event

It was reported that the Youth Event took place on June 1, 2016. Chair Astra Josie Rose, Rina George-Alexander, Sarah Siddiqui, *Herleen Sayal and Andrew Yu* hosted fourteen youth and six youth facilitators. Issues similar to those identified at the Community Roundtable were expressed, including

- Markham was not seen as welcoming;
- There is a lack of affordable housing;
- There is also a lack of employment opportunities in Markham;
- Schools are not interested in their students and do not understand poverty issues;
- It is difficult to get around the City easily; bus travel takes a long time and is expensive, while bicycling is dangerous;
- There are few recreation activities for youth.

The Committee briefly discussed the role the Committee might play in improving this situation. Plans will be developed and discussed with Councillor Logan Kanapathi and Regional Councillor *Joe Li*.

CARRIED

4. Markham Human Resources Update

Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, reported that second suites may be approved in certain areas of Markham according to certain criteria. She will send a link to a document with frequently asked questions. Regional Councillor Joe Li advised that it will be very important for second suites to meet safety codes and for rental income to be reported. A consultant has been hired to study the matter and provide options for Markham to consider.

Cheryl McConney-Wilson also reported that there had been an incident reported where a real estate sign was displayed with writing only in Chinese. In such situations, callers are advised to send a photo of the sign to the Contact Centre, the real estate company in question, and to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

5. Race Relations Business

A) Community Roundtables – Youth Event

Herleen Sayal reported that the Youth Event took place on June 1, 2016. Chair Astra Josie Rose, Rina George-Alexander, Sarah Siddiqui, Andrew Yu and Herleen Sayal hosted fourteen youth and six youth facilitators. Issues similar to those identified at the Community Roundtable were expressed, and similar questions were asked, including

- Is Markham seen as friendly?
- Do youth want to call Markham home?
- Does Markham offer affordable housing, transit, and jobs?
- How is Markham supporting youth?
- Are there places for youth to express opinions?

The results of the event were presented to four members of Markham Council with the aim of increasing awareness of the issues and to ask how Markham could engage youth. Feedback from the Councillors included the possibility of having youth shadow Council members and suggestions on how Markham could approach the issues. The Council members suggested that the presentation be given to the entire Council. It was suggested that when presenting to Markham Council that solutions be offered for the identified issues. Chair Josie Rose and Herleen Sayal will update the Committee as required.

B) Community Engagement – Taste of Asia

Amer Mohammed reported that the Taste of Asia was a resounding success. The Race Relations Committee was promoted during the opening ceremonies and four times over the two day festival. York Regional Police and a mosque each donated the use of a bus, thereby doubling the number of Syrians that were brought to the event. However, there was a lack of communication from the Race Relations subcommittee, as well as problems with staffing the Race Relations Committee booth, and promotional materials not being available. It was recommended that, if the Committee wishes to participate next year, there be more planning in advance and marketing materials be available.

C) Community Engagement – Markham Library

Vice Chair Maggie Quirt reported that Markham Library is interested in collaborating with the Committee to provide services to the public about rights and race relations issues.

D) Community Engagement – Many Faces of Markham

Committee members asked whether an initiative with Markham Library could be tied into the Many Faces of Markham event. This prompted discussion about whether to keep the Many Faces of Markham event as it has been, or revamp it. Since it has been difficult to encourage public school involvement, it was suggested that a different approach be tried. Any new approach would be presented to Markham Council for approval.

The discussion about revamping the Many Faces of Markham event, in turn, prompted a discussion about the Committee's name and mandate. Some felt that the mandate is too broad, Committee members need to better understand what the Committee is trying to achieve, and that the Committee needs to find the best way to use its resources.

It was agreed that the October meeting will be devoted to discussing the Committee name, its work plan, and possible revisions for the Many Faces of Markham event.

7. New Business

None was identified.

8. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, October 3, 2016 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

9. Adjournment

It was

Moved by	Regional Councillor Joe Li
Seconded by	Amer Mohammed

That the Race Relations Committee adjourn at 8:40 PM.

CARRIED