



**RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM**  
**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre**  
**June 6, 2016**

**MINUTES**

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

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 and guest Dennis Flaherty 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. Presentation on Outreach Communications Strategies**

Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, introduced Dennis Flaherty, Director, Communications & Community Relations, in charge of managing all City of Markham external communications, including advertisements, electronic message boards, collateral marketing pieces, social media, sponsorship, and event management. He congratulated the Race Relations Committee for its activities on behalf of Markham and its desire to increase its outreach. He suggested that Markham residents in general may not be aware of Markham advisory committees and the work they do. Corporate Communications could help the Race Relations increase outreach by including an ad on the Markham City page, creating a special section in the Markham Life magazine or a FAQ sheet with the top five things that the Committee would want residents to know, or by promoting the Committee by using Markham's social media platforms. Corporate Communications does not encourage Committees to have their own websites but each could have its own hashtag; because of the amount and frequency of information shared, Markham's index reach is higher than that of cities with a higher number of Facebook followers. Tweets and other promotional items must be information rather than opinion based; Dennis Flaherty will ask staff to create a tip sheet for Committees. He will consider including a special section featuring all Markham Advisory Committees in the November issue of Markham Life. He will develop a communications plan for the Committee and present it at the September meeting. Chair Astra Josie Rose thanked Dennis Flaherty for his presentation; he left the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

### **5. Markham Human Resources Update**

Cheryl McConney-Wilson reported that two events will take place: Accessibility Fair on October 15 and Pride Flag Raising on June 23. The Committee may wish to consider scheduling its events close to York Region events. National Aboriginal Day will take place on June 21; next year, there would be an opportunity for the Committee to educate those who know little about aboriginal matters. She would be pleased to arrange speakers to make presentations about transgender, First Nations or Human Rights issues.

### **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 and Sarah Siddiqui 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 Je Li.

**B) Community Engagement – Taste of Asia**

Amer Mohammed reported that there is a form to be completed for the Committee's participation. He has developed a "to do" list. He has been contacting the Muslim community; Regional Councillor Joe Li will provide a contact for Christian Syrian immigrants. Efforts to provide food vouchers, amusement rides, and transportation for Syrian immigrants have raised \$1700 to date; it is hoped that \$1000 more will be raised. York Region Police may be able to provide shuttle buses to transport immigrants. It was agreed that there was not enough time to plan a food drive as part of this year's event.

The Taste of Asia board would like to review and approve any materials the Race Relations Committee would like to distribute. The booth should be hosted on Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm and on Sunday from 10 am to 3 pm. Committee members were asked to volunteer and Sarah Siddiqui will develop a schedule.

Regional Councillor Joe Li congratulated Amer Mohammed for his efforts.

Regional Councillor Joe Li and Cheryl McConney-Wilson left the meeting at 8:45 pm.

Chair Astra Josie Rose will discuss with Cheryl McConney-Wilson interviews with media and the opening speech, and will then advise Amer Mohammed.

**7. New Business**

None was identified.

**8. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, September 12, 2016 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

**9. Adjournment**

It was

Moved by            Moises Calo  
Seconded by        Amer Mohammed

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

CARRIED