



RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
April 4, 2016

MINUTES

Attendance: <u>Committee</u> Osman Akhtar Bobbie France Rina George-Alexander Maggie Quirt, Vice Chair Grace Permaul – via telephone Josie Rose, Chair Amer Mohammed Herleen Sayal Sarah Siddiqui <u>Council</u> Regional Councillor Joe Li <u>Staff</u> Kitty Bavington, Council/Committee Coordinator	<u>Regrets</u> Moises Calo Salman Hasan Councillor Logan Kanapathi Andrew Yu
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:10 PM with Josie Rose presiding as Chair.

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Josie Rose welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

There were no changes made to the agenda.

3. Approval of the Minutes

It was

Moved by Amer Mohammed
Seconded by Osman Akhtar

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

CARRIED

4. Markham Human Resources Update

The report was deferred to the next meeting.

5. Race Relations Business

A) Many Faces of Markham (MFOM)

The Committee provided feedback of the event held on March 20, 2016:

- It was a good event, the performers really pumped up the crowd
- It seemed chaotic, with lots of younger children
- Should students Grade 2 and younger have a parent with them during show? Is it better if they can sit with someone they know (parents or friends)?
- Clarification is needed on responsibility for children
- It was suggested that next year there could be a parade of the children down the stairs, and let parents see where kids are seated, or - the children could sit with the parents until the ceremony starts, then parade down to the front three rows for the ceremony
- Change to new performers for the next event
- It needs to be shorter - 3 performers plus the keynote
- We have received many 'thank-yous' from people attending
- Try to fill up the seats in front as they are vacated (seat fillers)
- We need to sell more tickets, not much profit was raised. If not sold, tickets should be given away to fill up the theatre
- There was good school representation this year due to promotion by committee members, but more promotion is needed in the general community
- Ensure that the upstairs section of the theatre can be used for photos, etc.
- Parents appreciate the opportunity to take pictures of the children receiving awards
- Theme for next year – “sharing of culture”
- Should next year's event be different? What is the intent of the function and are we meeting it? Camile and the Mayor wanted an event for schools and children to bring awareness of diversity to the community. It appears to be targeting, but may need to be wider. We are not receiving any feedback from parents or community.
- Are we getting the message out? We can brainstorm for other approaches – perhaps extend the event or partner with other events; change the time of year; add poetry or other formats?
- The cost is \$4,000 – 5,000. Re-assess the event and its purpose, perhaps modify it to increase the demographics and participation
- If the event is expanded to include high schools, it would get much bigger
- It was suggested that a subcommittee be formed to examine the direction of the event
- More than 300 students were entered. The winners were notified, and although thank-you letters to all the participants would have a positive effect on the students, we don't have the resources to do so. We have to count on the schools to reach out to each of the students
- It is important to thank the schools, as we want them to participate again
- Staff resources for such tasks include the Staff Liaison (Cheryl McConney-Wilson) and the assistants to the Council Members on the Committee

The Committee agreed to form a Sub-committee, with membership to be determined later.

It was

Moved by Maggie Quirt
Seconded by Herleen Sayal

That a Sub-Committee be formed to plan the future Many Faces of Markham events.

CARRIED

B) Community Engagement – Partnership with YRP – Elimination of Racial Discrimination Day April 10

York Regional Police are holding an "Elimination of Racism" event on Sunday, April 10, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Markham Event Centre. Josie Rose provided an update on this event and requested volunteers to assist with networking. There will be brochures to hand out. It was suggested that the names of the Council Members on this Committee be added to the brochures for contact information. Maggie, Sara, Barb Tate, and Osmon indicated they would be able to help.

The library is working on an Aboriginal "reading" event and is having different groups present workshops throughout Markham. Another partnerships discussed was the Health Fair for cultural diversity by the Markham Stouffville Hospital.

Josie will be meeting with the Markham's Seniors Advisory Committee, who are currently developing a strategy, and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to discuss partnerships, possibly with other groups as well instead of working in silos. A meeting is also being arranged with the Chair of Georgina's Race Relations Committee for similar discussions.

A representative of the York Regional Police will be coming to speak at the next Race Relations Committee meeting. It was suggested that the Committee enquire about their budget, as they appear to be accomplishing a lot. Other groups should be consulted about their best practices. The Committee's mandate and funding may need to be updated.

In order to better engage the community, the Race Relations Committee needs to become better known in the community – perhaps create a logo and website. Before branding the Committee, research is needed as well as clarification of the mandate. Conversations with the community and feedback are required to develop a recommendation for Council regarding the future direction of this Committee. Regional Councillor Li agreed that the Committee needed a logo and would endorse having one.

It was suggested that a two or three year strategy plan be developed, targeting one demographic or area each year to survey, for outreach and to connect with (i.e. south end community, seniors). A work matrix would help. An Action Plan was developed in 2014 but did not result in any action items. Josie will send out the 2014 plan to the Committee members.

C) Community Engagement – Taste of Asia

The Race Relation Committee passed the following resolution at the last meeting:

‘That the Markham Race Relations Committee recommend that Amer Mohammed and a subcommittee explore the Taste of Asia proposal further with Regional Councillor Li, Councillor Kanapathi and Cheryl McConney-Wilson, and report the results to Committee.’

Amer Mohammed has met with the Taste of Asia Board, and they would like to involve the Race Relations Committee by providing a booth, along with promotion. The focus will be on Syrian refugees and Aboriginals. This provides the Race Relations Committee an opportunity to get on the stage and get our name out to the public. There will be media present and an opportunities for publicity. Everyone is invited to participate, but we need to have the proposal approved in order to participate.

Aamir has submitted a funding proposal to Councillor Joe Li, to showcase the progress Markham has made regarding race relations and cultural diversity, at the Taste of Asia event. The proposal is now with Andy Taylor, CAO. Joe Li provided an update regarding the funding process. Aamir advised that he will try to move the event forward without funding. If funding is not available, the YR Police have shuttle busses that will provide transportation for free. It is important that the immigrant children participate without worrying about paying, so we need to help them whatever way we can.

After talking to Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, it was suggested that the Committee submit a \$2,500 funding request to the City; however, we are now separating the funding from the proposal so that we can submit the proposal now, and worry about the funding separately. The Board is willing to give us the booth for free. Federal/Provincial and other funding sources are also being explored. The event will involve 200-300 people, with bussing from the hubs where the refugees are staying, to the Pacific Mall compound for the festival. Information is being communicated through community groups and church organizations.

Options for the presentation include: displaying art competition winners; a slide show of 3 – 5 minutes to introduce the Committee; and, talking about aboriginals/refugees; etc.

Once Council decides, the Subcommittee will work together and report back in May.

D) Community Engagement – Refugee Settlement Initiative

This item was deferred.

E) Community Roundtables – Youth Event

Herleen Sayal and Josie Rose met with the Mayors Youth Council. They determined that they usually do more leadership-style community events with a volunteer focus, aimed toward resume building for university-bound 14-18 year old youths, and that it was not very inclusive or

diverse. Herleen proposed a round-table on youth issues and policies, and that the findings be presented to Council to identify what the issues are and what the future of Markham looks like.

There is an upcoming York Region youth roundtable group, that would help the Race Relations Committee to connect with other groups. It would also assist in ensuring all groups and economic backgrounds are represented.

For the June 1, 2016 event, funding approval is required for food – approximately \$800. It is reasonable to provide refreshments, as the participants are volunteering their time and incurring travel expenses. It is not necessary for the Mayor to attend, as it will be an informal conversation event.

It was suggested that in the future, a representative of Race Relations sit on the selection committee for advisory committee meetings, to ensure inclusive diversity.

It was

Moved by Herleen Sayal

Seconded by Rina George-Alexander

That the Markham Race Relations Committee recommend that Herleen Sayal prepare a Markham Youth Round Table proposal with a funding request, for submission to Council.

CARRIED

F) CMARD Update: Open: 3Q10

This item was deferred.

6. New Business

Josie Rose advised of the upcoming Public Information Meeting for Managing Growth in Markham, and will send the e-vite to Committee members.

Rina George-Alexander referred to a recent news article in the Toronto Star concerning Aboriginals.

Maggie Quirt referred to the recent House Fire at a First Nations location, and made the Committee aware of the City of Markham connection with the Pikangikum First Nation.

The Committee was advised of a Taste of Asia press conference on April 22, and noted that the Prime Minister is being invited to the event in Ottawa.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on May 2, 2016 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

8. Adjournment

It was

Moved by	Maggie Quirt
Seconded by	Amer Mohammed

That the Race Relations Committee adjourn at 9:15 PM.

CARRIED