



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

Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre

November 2, 2015

7:00 PM

MINUTES

<p>Attendance:</p> <p><u>Committee</u> Astra Josie Rose, Chair Maggie Quirt, Vice Chair Moises Calo Bobbie France Rina George-Alexander Saad Omar Khan Amer Mohammed Jacqueline Sang Harleen Sayal Sarah Siddiqui Andrew Yu</p> <p><u>Council</u> Councillor Logan Kanapathi Regional Councillor Joe Li</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Osman Akhtar Salman Hasan Grace Permaul Ramon Solis Darius Sookram, Immediate Past Chair Barbara Tate</p>
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:11 PM with Astra Josie Rose presiding as Chair.

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Astra Josie Rose welcomed members.

2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

The agenda was accepted as distributed.

3. Approval of the Minutes

It was

Moved by Andrew Yu
Seconded by Bobbie France

That the minutes of the Markham Race Relations Committee meeting held on September 14, 2015 be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

4. Diversity Training

Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, presented diversity training, similar to that provided for City of Markham employees; it was created in response to requests by residents for Markham to focus on diversity and inclusion, and provide services keeping in mind the diverse nature of its population. The training included:

- discussion of Markham’s demographics (based on data in 2011),
- pertinent legislated requirements related to diversity such as the Human Rights Act, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Equal Pay for Equal Work legislation, or Bill 168 Occupational Health and Safety amendment Act (Violence and Harassment in the Workplace), and
- “Everyone Welcome” Markham’s Diversity Action Plan which recognizes the history of its original settlers as well as the energy and talents of new immigrants.

Committee members learned how Markham residents identify themselves:

- Chinese – 38%, South Asian – 19%, Black and Other – 15%
- Immigrants – 58%
- Mother tongue: English– 40%, French - <1%, Cantonese – 16%, Other Chinese languages – 11%, Mandarin – 5%, Tamil – 5%; it was noted that the percentage of Mandarin and Tamil speakers will likely increase in the 2016 statistics
- Age: 40-44 – 7%, 45-49 – 7%, 50-54 – 7%, 55-59 – 7%, 60-64 – 7%
- Having a disability: York Region – 16% compared to Ontario – 15.6%, Canada – 14.3%
- Religion: Christian – 44%, None – 30%, Hindu – 10%, Islam – 7.5%; Christianity, Hinduism and Islam are the same three leading religions identified in Canada and the world.

Members of Markham committees identify themselves as male, age 65 or older, with no disabilities, and from a variety of backgrounds.

Ms. McConney-Wilson distributed and discussed a personality diagram. Committee members learned that studies show that if a person reminds you of someone you like you are more likely to understand their views and collaborate with them, and that if someone feels left out, they feel physical pain. Ms. McConney-Wilson also distributed and discussed the Diversity Action Tool. Committee members explored ways one might express unconscious bias such as ignoring someone, and ways to manage bias such as sharing learning, empathy and respect for others values, active listening to what others are saying, and positive body language.

It was reported that Markham has embraced diversity in many different ways such as:

- Producing recruitment videos for firefighters in many languages in order to have the staff of fire force more closely reflect the diverse Markham population
- Leitchcroft Pebble Park – excellence award for customer service
- South Asian and Chinese guides to fresh food
- Welcome Centres for new immigrants
- Accessibility Fairs

Ms. McConney-Wilson presented scenarios that staff or Committee members might encounter and Committee members discussed the concept of privilege and how it is used. Chair Astra Josie Rose thanked Ms. McConney-Wilson for the excellent presentation which engaged the Committee members.

5. Markham Human Resources Update

This report was deferred to the next meeting.

6. Race Relations Business

A) Many Faces of Markham (MFOM)

Rina George-Alexander, Co-chair of the MFOF Sub-committee, reported that materials have been provided to Committee members for feedback. The ad in “Markham Life” was considered very good. It is hoped to send the letters and posters to Markham schools within the next week; Committee members were asked to provide any last feedback as soon as possible. Concerns were noted about private schools being over-represented among MFOM contest participants. The sub-committee will continue to address ways to have the MFOM appear relevant to Markham public schools. Harleen Sayal has contributed a number of suggestions such as visiting public schools directly, communicating via Twitter and other social media, communicating with after-school programs, music schools etc; she will continue to focus on outreach plans.

6. New Business

Chair Astra Josie Rose advised that this would be the last meeting for Saad Omar Khan and Barbara Tate. She thanked Saad for his leadership with regards to the 2014 Community Roundtable event. A card will be sent to Barbara Tate to thank her for her many contributions to the Committee.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on December 7, 2015 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM. It was agreed that this will be a potluck dinner meeting.

8. Adjournment

It was

Moved by Moises Calo
Seconded by Amer Mohammed

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

CARRIED