



**MEETING OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE
CITY OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
January 11, 2016
7:00 PM**

MINUTES

<p>Attendance:</p> <p><u>Committee</u> Astra Josie Rose, Chair Maggie Quirt, Vice Chair Osman Akhtar Moises Calo Salman Hasan Sarah Siddiqui Andrew Yu</p> <p><u>Council</u> Regional Councillor Joe Li</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Bobbie France Rina George-Alexander Grace Permaul Jacqueline Sang Harleen Sayal Councillor Logan Kanapathi</p>
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:06 PM with Astra Josie Rose presiding as Chair.

1. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Astra Josie Rose welcomed members to the first meeting after the holidays.

2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

The agenda was accepted as distributed.

3. Approval of the Minutes

It was

Moved by Maggie Quirt
Seconded by Moises Calo

That the minutes of the Markham Race Relations Committee meeting held on December 7, 2015 be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

4. Markham Human Resources Update

No report was available.

5. Race Relations Business

A) Many Faces of Markham (MFOM)

The following updates were provided:

- Three performers from previous years are interested in performing again; if no other performers come forward before the audition deadline then the auditions will be cancelled
- The script is being prepared
- The guest list of dignitaries needs to be confirmed; Regional Councillor Joe Li was asked to remind other Council members
- It was noted that there is a budget of \$6,000 for the event, including expenses such as rental of the theatre and advertising
- Volunteers are needed on the day of the event, March 20, 2016, starting at 10 am for set up
- Volunteers are also needed on February 7 starting at approximately 10 am to assist with judging contest entries
- Committee members were reminded that, if they had a personal connection to a local school, to drop by and show the MFOM package to the principal in efforts to increase participation from public schools; Amer Mohammed and Osman Akhtar volunteered to visit schools

B) Community Roundtables

Participants at the Community Roundtables event identified that there were not enough opportunities to address issues affecting youth; therefore, it was thought to hold an event with youth as the focus. It was reported that Harleen Sayal is trying to bring together diverse youth groups to discuss possible events.

6. New Business

A) Community Engagement

Committee members discussed the current resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada in general and in Markham specifically. Chair Astra Josie Rose thanked Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, for information showing how the City of Markham is moving forward in this matter. It was advised that the Committee might be of assistance in dealing with potential racist backlash, educating Markham residents about the benefits of refugee resettlement, and reaching out to groups who might have fears about refugees arriving in Markham. The Committee is an advisory committee to Markham Council and can suggest ways for Markham to increase relations with media and opportunities to correct misconceptions about accepting refugees into the Markham community.

It was agreed that the Community Engagement team will prepare a short article to present the economic and other benefits of bringing refugees to the community, as well as to enhance understanding and debunk myths about refugee populations, for review by the Committee at the February meeting.

Moises Calo left the meeting at 8:15 pm.

B) Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

Vice Chair Maggie Quirt reported that she is working on a revised motion relating to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

C) Events

It was reported that Markham will present Black History Month activities on February 22 from 11 am – 1 pm at the Civic Centre. There may be an opportunity for the Chair of the Race Relations Committee to have a part in the activities.

It was also reported that Bobbie France will develop a list of Markham events so that the Race Relations Committee can participate and thereby increase its presence in the community.

Amer Mohammed will approach the Taste of Asia planning committee about the possibility of the Race Relations Committee taking part in that event, which might be a tremendous opportunity for the Committee.

7. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on February 1, 2016 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

8. Adjournment

It was

Moved by	Salman Hasan
Seconded by	Amer Mohammed

That the Race Relations Committee adjourn at 8:55 PM.

CARRIED