



**RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF MARKHAM**  
**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre**  
**February 1, 2016**

**MINUTES**

<p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p><u>Committee</u> Astra Josie Rose, Chair Maggie Quirt, Vice Chair Osman Akhtar Moises Calo Bobbie France Grace Permaul Harleen Sayal Andrew Yu</p> <p><u>Council</u> Councillor Logan Kanapathi</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Rina George-Alexander Salman Hasan Sarah Siddiqui Regional Councillor Joe Li</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 welcomed members 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           Maggie Quirt  
Seconded by       Andrew Yu

That the minutes of the Markham Race Relations Committee meeting held on January 11, 2016 be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

**4. Markham Human Resources Update**

Councillor Logan Kanapathi and Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, reported that Markham had hosted a meeting about relocating Syrian refugees to Markham which was attended by members of the Markham business community interested in donating clothes and other needs; MP John McCallum and his team also attended to present information from the Federal Government. A meeting to provide information about sponsoring Syrian refugees will also be held at the Markham Welcome Centre; Chair Astra Josie Rose advised that she intends to attend that meeting. Committee members were advised that the City needs to be sensitive to the message given to immigrants as they adjust to a new environment and lifestyle.

Cheryl McConney-Wilson encouraged Committee members to review the Markham Accessibility Report Card, which has been posted on the Markham website.

Cheryl McConney-Wilson reported that the Lunch 'N Learn session, coordinated by Committee Vice Chair Maggie Quirt and scheduled for February 10, 2016, would feature Indigenous ambassadors from York University to talk about Indigenous culture and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. She requested that Committee members suggest topics for future Lunch 'N Learn sessions.

## **5. Race Relations Business**

### **A) Many Faces of Markham (MFOM)**

The following updates were provided:

- There will be seven acts, each approximately 5 minutes long.
- Committee members were thanked for liaising with local schools in efforts to increase participation from public schools.
- For future years, Committee members will consider addressing school assemblies to interest students in participating, promoting MFOM through Markham city services – Councillor Logan Kanapathi offered to assist in this regard, awarding an honorarium to schools if the school participates and a student from the school wins a prize – it was noted that this would have to be approved by the City first.
- Chair Astra Josie Rose will email Cheryl McConney-Wilson about having MFOM tweeted.
- Laura Gold has sent invitations to 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; Councillor Logan Kanapathi offered to work with Chair Astra Josie Rose and Cheryl McConney-Wilson to review the budget and negotiate favourable terms for the theatre rental.
- Volunteers are needed on February 7 starting at approximately 10 am to assist with judging contest entries and on the day of the event, March 20, 2016, starting at 10 am for set up; Vice Chair Maggie Quirt will email Councillor Logan Kanapathi about getting community volunteers for the February 7 judging since many committee members are busy that day.
- Cheryl McConney-Wilson has arranged for a photographer and advised that a media advisory has been issued.
- Cheryl McConney-Wilson will invite staff contacts in Georgina who may be interested in attending.

**B) Community Roundtables**

Participants at the Community Roundtables event identified that there was a need to have an event to discuss ways to create space in Markham of interest to youth. Such an event may be held in April or May, and other committees might wish to collaborate and benefit from it also. Committee members were asked to think of ideas. It was noted that youth attendees could use the time at the event to count toward the number of volunteer hours required of them.

**6. New Business**

**A) Community Engagement**

Committee members discussed the current resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada in general and in Markham specifically. In order to confront misconceptions and enhance understanding about accepting refugees into the Markham community with facts, it was suggested that Markham might wish to draft a short list of frequently asked questions and appropriate responses, to develop into a series of posters. Chair Astra Josie Rose will work with Cheryl McConney-Wilson to research pertinent information for such projects to present the economic and other benefits of bringing refugees to the community.

Information was distributed and discussed about a Taste of Asia Programme proposal which could showcase the progress Markham has made regarding race relations and cultural diversity. The Taste of Asia event will be held June 25-28, 2016. The Race Relations Committee could feature a presentation of MFOM awards or, assist in showcasing diversity in the opening ceremony or in stage performances. Amer Mohammed advised that the proposal was well received by the Taste of Asia Board. It was felt that this proposal would help enhance the profile of both the Race Relations Committee and the Taste of Asia event. Committee members also agreed that the proposal had merit and suggested more discussion take place at the March meeting. Amer Mohammed asked that Committee members send him any changes to the proposal, so that he can revise and then forward it to Mayor Scarpitti (via the City Councillors on the Committee ) and the Minister of Citizenship for consideration.

**7. Next Meeting Date**

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

**8. Adjournment**

It was

Moved by           Maggie Quirt  
Seconded by       Moises Calo

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

CARRIED