

**THIRD MEETING OF THE
RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2011
TOWN OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
Monday, March 7, 2011 - 7:15 p.m.**

MINUTES

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<u>Attendance:</u>	
<u>Committee</u> Theresa Coulter, Chair Winnie Wales, Vice Chair Councilor Logan Kanapathi Prashanth Srichandramohan Darius Sookram Liliana Soengas Vilvan Gunasingham <u>Staff:</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Darshika Patel – Committee Clerk	<u>Regrets</u> Shila Desai Carla Crooks

The twelfth meeting of the Race Relations Committee convened at 7:15 p.m. with Ms. Theresa Coulter presiding as Chair.

1. CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

2. MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 7, 2011.

**Moved by Chair Theresa Coulter
Seconded by Vilvan Gunasingham**

THE TOWN OF MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:

That the minutes of the town of markham race relations committee meetings held on february 7, 2011 be adopted.

CARRIED

3. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Vilvan Gunasingham proposed a change to this committee's agenda format.

Moved by Chair Theresa Coulter
Seconded by Darius Sookram

That the Race Relations Committee adopt the revised agenda for this meeting and all subsequent meetings.

CARRIED

4. MARKHAM HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

A. Diversity Action Plan Update

Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, updated the committee on the town's execution of the Diversity Action Plan. Recently, 13 members from different departments within the Town of Markham met to discuss how recommendations set out by the plan were being met. Specifically, members discussed the aligning of recommendations and discussed which stages the departments were at whilst achieving these recommendations. The two major deadlines for meeting recommendations are by year 2014 and 2019. It appears that the town is on course for meeting goals for 2014. Much discussion has been placed on developing an internal diversity site that will encompass valuable information for town staff members regarding demographics, country profiles and facts, communication, and a Geographic Information System (GIS) map. Also, a Junior Achievement program was discussed, where a councilor participates in promoting the importance of diversity in schools. Furthermore, members discussed the possibility of having a diversity event this summer at the Civic Centre that will bridge together different groups of people.

Mr. Gunasingham wanted to know to what extent are the 10 common commitments that the Town adopted is being implemented in the Diversity Action Plan. Also, to what extent is the Diversity Action Plan being implemented to other services? Ms. McConney-Wilson stated that 10 common commitments are a part of the plan and that they are being applied to other sectors.

5. SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

A. Many Faces of Markham Event

Ms. Winnie Wales, Vice Chair, informed the committee that the Many Faces of Markham Event, "Waving Flags - United We Are", is coming into fruition as the event date approaches on March 20th. The two schools that will be performing are Father Michael McGivney Catholic Academy and Brother Andre Catholic High School. Father Michael McGivney

Catholic Academy has requested assistance with transportation and will provide the subcommittee with a quote. The subcommittee will need to follow up with town staff to ensure that this request can be met.

Mr. Prashanth Srichandramohan informed the committee that this event was granted \$1,500 that was dedicated to awarding students for the art, writing and video competitions. There will be 19 competition winners. This includes a winner for each grade for the art and writing competition and one winner for the video competition.

The Chair thanked all the subcommittee members and volunteers that came for the judging of submissions for art, writing, and video contest held on February 27th, 2011. This competition drew 1100 submissions. The first place winner will have an opportunity to come on stage and have their work displayed to the audience.

B. Diversity Action Plan Committee

No new updates.

6. PENDING ITEMS

A. CMARD Council Representative Appointment; Open: 4Q11

Ms. McConney-Wilson informed the committee that a second councilor is being sought after for this committee who will also be a Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) representative. Mr. Gunasingham stressed the importance of having a councilor that is a representative of CMARD. This committee requires someone that will inform and advise this committee on race relation issues. Mr. Gunasingham states that this committee is undefined as to what it does and CMARD will provide a good framework for this committee.

B. Race Relations Committee New Member Recruitment; Open: 1Q11

No new updates.

C. Second Councilor Appointment to the Race Relations Committee; Open: 1Q11

Ms. McConney-Wilson spoke to the Clerk's department in regards to appointing a second councilor. More updates to come - this is a work in progress.

D. Request to Hold CMARD Conference in Markham; Open: 3Q10

No new updates.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Communication (Race Relations Committee and Town of Markham)

The Committee discussed how it could improve its awareness of Town initiatives. The Committee Clerk will discuss this matter with the Clerk's Department and report back at the next meeting.

Councillor Logan Kanapathi states that this committee needs more definition and should not be a committee that merely runs events. Ms. Wales acknowledged that events take up a lot of time and planning. Thus, it may be necessary to have town staff or volunteers take over an event such as Many Faces of Markham in the future and for the Race Relations Committee to supervise the planning of the events. This is to be further discussed after the conclusion of the Many Faces of Markham event.

B. Maclean's Article

Mr. Gunasingham contacted the executive head at the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) for their response to the article "Too Asian?" presented in Maclean's magazine. The response that he received on March 3rd, 2011 stated that the CCNC believe that Maclean's magazine has not done enough to retract the contents of the article that present negative stereotyping and perceptions perpetuating racism of the Asian-Canadian community in Canada. Ms. Wales informed the committee that the Council has passed a motion to request for an apology from Maclean's magazine for the "Too Asian?" article. The Race Relations Committee formally supports the resolution that the Council came up with.

C. York Regional Police International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Ms. Wales informed the committee that the Race Relations Committee has been invited to set up a booth for this event. Ms. Soengas expressed that it is not appropriate for this committee to participate in this event, as this committee has not substantiated its vision and thus has nothing to communicate to the public as yet.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on April 4, 2011 at 7:15 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 8:50 p.m.