

**FOURTH MEETING OF THE
RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2011**

TOWN OF MARKHAM

Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre

Monday, April 4, 2011 - 7:15 p.m.

MINUTES

7. NEW BUSINESS

B. Israeli Apartheid week at York University

Councillor Howard Shore was in attendance to discuss the Town of Markham's proposed motion regarding Israeli Apartheid Week. This motion was put forward after community members raised concerns over a series of events held at various university campuses relating to this matter and their use of this contentious title. Councillor Shore described the proposed motion to condemn such activities as being very similar to the actions the Town took with the Maclean's magazine article "Too Asian".

Mr. Hayani Ibrahim, a resident, expressed his discontent over the Town's involvement with this issue. He finds it offensive that the municipal government is attempting to silence universities from doing what they do best, which is to engage knowledge. He believes this action is dangerous as it undermines freedom of speech. Ms. Helene Ijaz, another resident, asked members what is wrong with a university holding such an event. She stated that university already have mechanisms and policies to deal with such contentious issues. Hence, why is the Town getting involved? She stated that the Israeli Apartheid Week ran successfully at York University. Mr. Ahmed Ijaz, also a resident, believes that we should commend universities for looking into these issues. Ms. Ijaz believes that the upcoming lecture series by the Town should also cover the topic of hate speech. Ms. Carla Crooks reminded the committee that the public can be in attendance at the April 11th General Committee Meeting to further discuss and debate this topic.

Mr. Prashanth Srichandramohan asked Councillor Shore why the Town of Markham has decided to become involved in this issue. Councillor Shore stated that community members have brought up this issue with their Councillors and thus, this issue has been brought forward to the Town.

The Chair, reminded the committee that their position is to discuss the Town's motion. Mr. Vilvan Gunasingham, stated that it is difficult for the committee to comment on the motion without the insights from a human rights commission. Furthermore, the committee should be provided with the same background information that the Town used to come up with the resolutions stated in the proposed motion. As such, the Chair concluded that due to short notice and time, the Race Relations Committee cannot commit to a comment or recommendation at this time. However, any further requests to the Race Relations Committee by Council on this issue is welcomed and are to be directed to the Chair of this committee.