

**ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE
RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2010
TOWN OF MARKHAM**

**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
Monday, February 7, 2011 - 7:15 p.m.**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Committee

Theresa Coulter, Chair
Councilor Logan Kanapathi
Councilor Alan Ho
Prashanth Srichandramohan
Liliana Soengas
Winnie Wales
Carla Crooks
Darius Sookram
Jobson Easow

Staff

Darshika Patel – Committee Clerk
Cheryl McConney – Wilson - Diversity
Specialist
Nadine Dale – Manager of Human
Resources, Learning & Development, &
Diversity
Mariam Ku – Executive Assistant for Joe Li

Regrets

Shila Desai
Vilvan Gunasingham
Jason Tsien

The eleventh meeting of the Race Relations Committee was convened at 7:25 p.m. with Ms. Theresa Coulter, presiding as Chair.

- 1. CHAIRS OPENING REMARKS**
- 2. MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS
COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON NOVEMBER 1, 2010**

Moved by Liliana Soengas
Seconded by Darius Sookram

THE TOWN OF MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS
COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON JANUARY 10, 2011 BE ADOPTED.

3. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Committee members were interested in adding the article entitled “Too Asian” from Macleans magazine to the agenda for discussion.

4. MARKHAM HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

4. A. Diversity Update

Ms. Nadine Dale, a member of staff for the Town of Markham, updated the committee on the town's commitment to the Diversity Action Plan. This document is a good statement on what the town will undertake. Thus far, the objective has been to have different groups working on the 68 recommendations set out in the plan. What is required is an evaluative format to observe the progression of the recommendations and to determine whether targets are being met. This is what staff members are currently working on. On a monthly basis, this information is reported to senior staff members. A template on activities undertaken to promote diversity has been established including increasing interpretation, producing more locally grown cultural food and holding an annual diversity plan meeting. There is no definite corporation vision outlined in the Diversity Action Plan as yet. Presently, the focus is on implementing this plan on the internal customer service experience.

5. SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mr. Jobson Easow updated the committee on the progress of the Many Faces of Markham event taking place on March 20th. The auditions for performances are completed and the main attractions have been booked. The writing, art and video contest for school-aged children have commenced and the judging will take place February 27th in the Canada Room at the Markham Civic Centre from 12:00pm to 4:00pm. This will give the public an opportunity to help chose the winners for each competition. This event is expected to be sold out and it is recommended that in the future live streaming of this event may be a good idea to deal with the demand for this event. The next subcommittee meeting will take place in Monday March 7th, 2011.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6. A. Recruitment of New Committee Members

Recruitment of new committee members and a second councillor still needs to be appointed to this committee. At the moment, the committee is not at its full capacity.

6. B. Maclean's Article

Committee members were interested in discussing the article "Too Asian?" presented in Macleans Magazine, November 2010 edition. Councilor Alan Ho informed the committee that this issue emerged three months ago and was recently discussed at council. This article was presented for the first time to the committee and thus, it was difficult for committee members to comment on this issue. Councillor Logan Kanapathi informed the committee that Council has agreed to take action in expressing concern for the title and the contents presented in the article and will also be requesting an apology. Mariam Ku, the executive assistant for Councilor Joe Li, suggested that directing staff to conduct a lecture series on the portrayal of cultures in media would be beneficial in educating the community. This was a provocative article and it is important keep in the mind that this magazine may have had an agenda and misrepresented the Asian community.

Councilor Ho stated that the term "Too Asian" was a term used many years ago by American universities to limit quota for enrolment. The headline caused much controversy that Maclean magazine did eventually change it. Councilor Ho described the history of Chinese immigrants in Canada and stated the negative experience the East Asian community has faced within Canada. It was believed that this article was in a sense a way of bullying. This article promotes fear thus, it is important for this town not to promote this ignorance. It was brought to the committee's attention that the magazine did issue regret over the controversy of this article. This article will be discussed further at the next meeting after committee members have had time to thoroughly read and develop thoughts on this article.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on March 7, 2011 at 7:15 PM.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 8:55 p.m.