



**MEETING OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE  
CITY OF MARKHAM**

**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre**

**September 8, 2014**

**7:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

<p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p><u>Committee</u> Astra Josie Rose, Vice Chair Osman Akhtar Bobbie France Saad Omar Khan Grace Permaul Dr. Maggie Quirt Jacqueline Sang Barbara Tate</p> <p><u>Via Teleconference</u> Darius Sookram, Chair</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Coordinator</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Moises Calo Carla Crooks Rina George-Alexander Ramon Solis Councillor Alan Ho Councillor Logan Kanapathi Regional Councillor Joe Li Sharon Laing, Director of Human Resources</p>
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:05 PM with Astra Josie Rose presiding as Chair.

**1. Chair's Opening Remarks**

Darius Sookram advised that he hoped that Committee members had enjoyed the summer and welcomed them to the meeting. He mentioned that he was excited to move forward with the many exciting topics facing the Committee.

**2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda**

The agenda was accepted as distributed.

### 3. Approval of the Minutes

It was

Moved by           Saad Omar Khan  
Seconded by       Grace Permaul

That the minutes of the Markham Race Relations Committee Meeting held on June 2, 2014 be adopted with the following change in italics:

#### **Markham Human Resources Update**

Ms. McConney-Wilson also reported on Lunch 'N Learn initiatives for Markham staff; recent sessions offered insights into issues relating to First Nations issues, and Transgendered/Transcommunity issues. Ms. McConney-Wilson may present a short session for the committee at the September meeting. She also advised that the *Harvard Project Implicit* training test could be of interest and that the Committee could consider partnering with Welcome Centers to assist in initiating newcomers to Markham.

CARRIED

### 4. Markham Human Resources Update

Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist reported that Markham is conducting diversity training for all Markham staff. The training includes scenarios to show staff how to apply diversity concepts and discussions allowing staff to share their experiences in managing diversity issues. Ms. McConney-Wilson reported that staff are enjoying the group work. Ms. McConney-Wilson advised she could share the training slides with the Committee.

Ms. McConney-Wilson also reported on Lunch 'N Learn training related to Transgendered/Transcommunity issues. A featured speaker presented information on issues such as choice of washrooms and change in names.

Ms. McConney-Wilson advised that Committee members would be permitted to participate in the religious awareness training, an all day tour visiting five places of worship. The tour will likely be scheduled for October 29 or December 2, 2014. Committee members were asked to let Ms. McConney-Wilson know if they are interested in participating in the tour.

Ms. McConney-Wilson asked Committee members for their thoughts about community engagement, specifically what does successful community engagement look like and what can Markham do more or less of to increase community engagement. Committee members suggested inviting local businesses host events at the Civic Centre in order to reach all ages or have Markham provide opportunities that reflect residents' interests, e.g. an event similar to the Taste of the Danforth. Other ideas suggested included events which feature novelty, are not necessarily family-oriented, and which bring people from all over. It was agreed that communication and marketing, perhaps via social media, would be key to spread the message to residents. Success should be measured not only quantitatively but also in terms of diversity.

## **5. Race Relations Business**

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

Astra Josie Rose reported that she, Rina George-Alexander and Laura Gold, Clerk's Office, met to finalize the package of material to inform teachers about the 2015 Many Faces of Markham event, so that they can encourage students to participate. Rina George-Alexander will follow up with teachers during fall 2014.

The Committee has agreed to adopt the theme "Getting to Know Your Neighbour" for the 2015 Many Faces of Markham event. The Committee selected a poster showing a circle representing peace and diversity, which had been awarded First Place among Grade 8 students in 2014, to be used on promotional flyers for the 2015 Many Faces of Markham event. Laura Gold will now be able to finalize packages for Committee members to distribute to community centres and libraries. It was noted that all planning dates have been brought forward by a month to avoid the need to rush plans at the last minute.

Committee members suggested that Lily Singh aka "Superwoman", a Markham resident, might be a good choice for emcee. Committee members were asked to recruit high quality singing or dancing acts, including school bands, for the event's entertainment. Osman Akhtar volunteered to serve as photographer; Ms. McConney-Wilson will verify whether this is permissible.

### **B) Committee Work Plan**

Darius Sookram reported that the Committee Work Plan was first distributed in February 2014; there has been no feedback to date. He will send the Committee Work Plan again to Committee members so it can be discussed at a Committee meeting and then submitted to Markham Council.

### **C) Community Consultation Roundtable**

Saad Omar Khan and Dr. Maggie Quirt reported that they had drafted a letter to invite speakers to the Committee's November meeting. Astra Josie Rose will ask Laura Gold to reserve the Council chambers for a date in November. Committee members were reminded that the community roundtable would be a good means for members to learn about issues and challenges affecting the community; they were asked to send proposed questions to Darius Sookram, Astra Josie Rose, Saad Omar Khan and Dr. Maggie Quirt. Astra Josie Rose noted that the Committee would need to choose invitees carefully.

### **D) Committee Name Discussion**

Darius Sookram reported that Committee members have indicated that there is no desire to change the name of the Committee.

### **E) CMARD Update: Open: 3Q10**

No update was available.

**6. New Business**

- Dr. Maggie Quirt advised that an increase of anti-Semitic graffiti has been noted in Toronto.
- Astra Josie Rose reported that the term as a Committee member ends at the end of November for Carla Crooks and possibly for Darius Sookram. She suggested that the Committee do something special at the December meeting to recognize them.
- Astra Josie Rose advised that the Committee should consider creating promotional material to be distributed at events such as Many Faces of Markham or the Community Consultation Roundtable.

**7. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, October 6, 2014 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

**8. Adjournment**

It was

Moved by	Barbara Tate
Seconded by	Dr. Maggie Quirt

That the Race Relations Committee adjourn at 8:40 PM.