



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

**Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre**

**May 5, 2014**

**7:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

<p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p><u>Committee</u> Darius Sookram, Chair Astra Josie Rose, Vice Chair Rina George-Alexander Bobbie France Saad Omar Khan Dr. Maggie Quirt Barbara Tate</p> <p><u>Council</u> Regional Councillor Joe Li Councillor Alan Ho</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator Kiran Saini, Assistant to Council/Committee</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Osman Akhtar Moises Calo Carla Crooks Councillor Logan Kanapathi Grace Permaul Jacqueline Sang Ramon Solis</p>
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The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:09 PM with Darius Sookram presiding as Chair.

**1. Chairs Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed Kiran Saini to the meeting and asked committee members to introduce themselves. Kiran Saini works in the Clerk's Department and will be providing secretariat support to the committee clerk as required.

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

The Chair asked if changes or additions to the agenda were required. Saad Omar Khan suggested that the Proposed Community Roundtable should be discussed before the Race Relations Business.

## **3. Approval of the Minutes**

Moved by Bobbie France

Seconded by Astra Josie Rose

That the April 7, 2014 Race Relations Committee meeting minutes be approved as presented.

Carried

## **4. Markham Human Resources Update**

Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist provided the following Human Resources update:

- Features of the website: [www.citiesofmigration.ca](http://www.citiesofmigration.ca).
- Diversity and Inclusion training will continue to be offered to City staff.
- Special lunch and learn sessions regarding diversity and inclusion issues will be offered to City staff.

## **5. Proposal: Community Roundtable**

The Chair thanked Saad Omar Khan, Astra Josie Rose and Dr. Maggie Quirt for their hard work on the proposed community roundtable and was very supportive of the idea. Saad Omar Khan highlighted the proposal that was circulated to Committee Members. Dr. Maggie Quirt explained that the draft questions are meant to be open and non-prescriptive.

Saad Omar Khan further explained the community roundtable would address issues and challenges with stakeholders from the community. Committee members discussed the possibility of having partnerships with community stakeholders such as York Regional Police and the Markham African Caribbean Association (MACA). The Community Roundtable would have a positive anti-racism tone and would address current issues affecting the community.

It was noted that the community roundtable will be a good starting point for discussion and future topics for the Committee to address. Advertisements in local newspapers and partnerships with the right groups will help create awareness of the Race Relations Committee within the City of Markham.

The Committee discussed event logistics, promotion and location. In order to foster a positive environment, it was suggested that the Committee encourage people to share examples of how they have been inclusive. Those participating in the community roundtable could provide examples of how they make people from different backgrounds feel welcome within their communities.

Moved by Saad Omar Khan

Seconded by Dr. Maggie Quirt

That the Race Relations Committee hold the Proposed Community Roundtable before the end of 2014.

Carried

The March 2014 Family Service Toronto newsletter was circulated to Committee Members. This is their first newsletter and highlights issues of human rights, race and social justice.

#### Getting to know your neighbour

This initiative would help combat discriminatory thoughts that often lead to ignorance and ultimately, intolerance. It is an example of a series that could be published in the newspaper or other medium such as the Family Service Toronto newsletter.

- Anti-Racism Campaign

There was discussion on the potential community partnerships for launching an anti-racism campaign similar to the one in Edmonton, Alberta. The Committee was particularly interested in having school children involved in the anti-racism campaign. The Committee acknowledge the great work accomplished by Racism Free Edmonton during their “I’m committed to a racism free Edmonton” campaign. There was discussion on whether a similar campaign could be launched in Markham.

## **6. Many Faces of Markham Survey Update**

The Chair advised that the overall results of the committee survey were positive and the Many Faces of Markham event was scored an eight out of ten by 38% of those who completed the survey. The committee discussed contacting teachers in the fall, prior to the new school year, so that they can plan for the Many Faces of Markham event in 2015.

General feedback from the survey included:

- Require more participation from a wider range of school boards.
- The awards ceremony was too long and could be presented in a more creative manner.
- Lacked Aboriginal content.
- Focused too much on children - need to engage adults as well.
- Require a wider range of socio-economic groups.

Moved by Dr. Maggie Quirt

Seconded by Barbara Tate

That Rina George-Alexander and Astra Josie Rose be nominated as Co-Chairs of the Many Faces of Markham Subcommittee.

Carried

## **7. Work Plan Discussion**

It was noted that the outcome of the Community Roundtable will impact the 2015 Committee Work Plan.

## **8. Committee Name Discussion**

The Chair provided the results of the survey from the committee, noting that 54% of members did not support a committee name change. From those who did support a name change, "Racial and Cultural Diversity Committee" received the popular vote. Because the results were marginal in support of not changing the committee name, the Chair stated he would send out a final survey with a list of name suggestions. The results of this survey would be brought forward to a future meeting.

**9. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on Monday, June 2, 2014 in the Ontario Room at 7:00 PM.

**10. Adjournment**

The Race Relations Committee adjourned at 8:29 PM.