

**MEETING OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR
CITY OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
May 6, 2013, 7:00pm**

MINUTES

<p>Attendance: <u>Committee</u> Darius Sookram, Chair Astra Josie Rose, Vice Chair Ramon Solis Bobbie France Rina George-Alexander Carla Crooks Saad Omar Khan Barbara Tate Moises Calo Councillor Alan Ho</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Darshika Patel, Committee Clerk</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Liliana Soengas Vilvan Gunasingham Samil Chagpar Councillor Logan Kanapathi Regional Councillor Joe Li</p>
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1. CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

The Race Relations committee convened at 7:05pm with Darius Sookram presiding as Chair.

2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additions made to the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON APRIL 8, 2013.

It was

Moved by: Ramon Solis
Seconded by: Saad Omar Khan

That the minutes of the Town of Markham Race Relations Committee Meeting held on April 8, 2013 be adopted as distributed.

Carried

4. MANY FACES OF MARKHAM

The Many Faces of Markham is an event that the Race Relations Committee has helped organize for a number of years. As this event requires a great deal of time commitment and planning, the Committee will further deliberate on whether this is an event that the Committee will continue to plan or whether a sub-committee should be formally formed. The Committee also has the option of holding a different event or holding multiple events throughout the year. The Committee is interested in involving a different target audience as the current event is aimed at school-aged children. A basketball shoot-out was mentioned as an event that can be promoted to older children. The Chair encouraged members to continue presenting ideas. Planning for a large event like the Many Faces of Markham should begin immediately. In order to encourage participation amongst a wider range of schools, the committee should look into attending parent council meetings and having this event promoted at staff meeting. Over the summer, Ms. Rina George-Alexander will conduct some research to determine whether this event fits in with the curriculum.

It has not been confirmed whether the Flato Markham Theatre has been reserved for next year's event. The funding for this event is provided by the City of Markham's Human Resources Department.

5. RACE RELATIONS BUSINESS

A. Race Relations Committee Work Plan 2013

No new updates.

B. CMARD update; Open: 3Q10

No new updates.

6. MARKHAM HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Ms. Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, informed the committee that the City of Markham is currently sharing information with Managers in regards to prayer spaces for staff and to allow for flexibility to their staff requesting religious accommodations. In addition, the City will welcome a delegation from Sweden this month and will be discussing diversity in Markham.

The committee also discussed a recent situation where a service animal was denied entry to a local restaurant. The committee believes the bylaw may need to be clearer in regards to discrimination based on person with disability with a service animal. Also, it is important to remind the public what services animals are.

In the coming weeks, Markham will receive more recent statistics from Statistics Canada. Information in regards to the City's demographics, language spoken and age can be found on the Markham's portal website. Currently, this information is based on the 2006 census.

7. YORK REGION POVERTY ARTICLE

Ms. Jose Rose spoke to Jane Wedlock from United Way in regards to a town hall discussing poverty in Markham that took place recently. The Committee would be interested in having Ms. Wedlock give a presentation at a future meeting. Markham is currently ranked second for having a high rate of poverty in York Region. The best donation the public can make to food banks are gift cards for grocery stores which allow the recipients to access to a wider range of produce and food items.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Name Discussion

New names for this committee were submitted to the Chair. A link will be sent to members and will be further discussed at the next meeting. It was suggested that the word "advisory" be included in the name.

B. Information Sharing

The Committee discussed a recent news story that dealt with an altercation between police officers that included the use of racial slurs. This case is currently pending.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of having the Welcome Centre conduct a presentation at a future meeting. The Committee also has the option of having the meeting at the Welcome Centre at the Markham North location.

The Chair concluded the meeting by stating that this Committee is committed to following through with their ideas. Future meetings will further discuss ideas and ways to create support and bring ideas into fruition.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee is scheduled for June 3, 2013 at 7:00 PM.

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10. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by: Ramon Solis

Seconded by: Bobbie France

That the Race Relations Committee adjourns at 8:35 PM.

Carried