

**MEETING OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE
CITY OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
June 3, 2013, 7:00pm**

MINUTES

<p>Attendance: <u>Committee</u> Darius Sookram, Chair Moises Calo Samil Chagpar Saad Omar Khan Barbara Tate</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Sharon Laing, Director of Human Resources Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Bev Shugg Barbeito, Committee Secretary</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Carla Crooks Bobbie France Rina George-Alexander Vilvan Gunasingham Si Ming (Steven) Lu Astra Josie Rose, Vice Chair Ramon Solis Councillor Alan Ho Councillor Logan Kanapathi Regional Councillor Joe Li</p>
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1. CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

The Race Relations committee convened at 7:20 pm with Darius Sookram presiding as Chair. He announced that Liliana Soengas had resigned and that Vilvan Gunasingham has reached the end of his term; the Committee has been fortunate to have them as members. Markham will be recruiting for new members and it was recommended that Committee members encourage anyone who might be interested to apply.

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 MAY 6, 2013.

Adoption of the minutes of the Race Relations Committee meeting held on May 6, 2013 was deferred to the next meeting since there was no quorum.

4. MANY FACES OF MARKHAM

It was suggested that planning for the Many Faces of Markham event should be started earlier and efforts should be made to encourage participation by more schools. Following Committee discussion, Barbara Tate and Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, offered to review and fine-tune the package that would be sent to school principals.

Committee members also discussed potential event themes that would align with Markham initiatives and link the theme of diversity to:

- environmental issues
- healthy living e.g. different cultures
- a garden theme e.g. growing our gardens

- the Winter Olympics in February 2014 in Sochi Russia
- civic action/participation (since 2014 is an election year), creating opportunities for children's voices at a young age

It was suggested that a choice of sub-themes be offered to different age groups, e.g. Grades 1 – 3, Grades 4 – 6, etc. The Committee will continue discussion on the event theme at its September meeting.

5. RACE RELATIONS BUSINESS

A. Race Relations Committee Work Plan 2013

Chair Darius Sookram advised that the Race Relations Committee Work Plan 2013 was emailed to Committee members. Suggestions may be emailed to Darius Sookram during the summer. Discussion about the work plan will take place at the September meeting.

B. CMARD update; Open: 3Q10

There were no new updates.

6. MARKHAM HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Ms. Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, advised that Markham hosted a delegation from Sweden interested in learning how Markham embraces diversity in its activities and initiatives. The delegation learned that Markham has shifted its focus from diversity to inclusion. A similar presentation will be made to a visiting delegation from Pakistan.

Ms. McConney-Wilson reported that the City of Markham is currently providing guidance to managers about showing sensitivity to staff requests relating to religious holidays and practices, and advising their staff of the availability of prayer rooms at the Markham Civic Centre and other locations in Markham. Other Markham initiatives include lunch 'n learn sessions; a recent session featured presentations on the south Asian religions of Hindu and Islam.

Markham will recognize Gay Pride Week on June 17. Following a flag raising ceremony outdoors, Mayor Scarpitti and Councillor Burke will make a presentation to those in attendance. Committee members are invited to attend. On June 19, Markham is working with the Welcome Centre to host new immigrants; the half-day event will include a tour of the Civic Center and selected sites such as the Markham Museum. Ms. McConney-Wilson will verify whether Committee members might participate in this event.

Ms. McConney-Wilson reported that Markham has received Statistics Canada information based on the recent household survey (census) relating to the City's demographics, culture, mother tongue, religion and other categories. The new information indicates few changes although the percentage of Canadians of Chinese descent living in Markham rose slightly. Markham staff are preparing a document outlining all the statistics; it will be sent to Committee members when it has been completed. In the interim, information is available on the Statistics Canada website.

7. YORK REGION POVERY ARTICLE

There were no new updates.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Information Sharing

Chair Darius Sookram encouraged Committee members to share ideas and articles.

Sharon Laing, Director of Human Resources, mentioned a recent news story that dealt with an altercation between police officers that included the use of racial slurs. It was also reported that, on June 19, the Maytree foundation will host DiverseCity onBoard to celebrate the winners of this year's Diversity in Governance Awards. The awards recognize leading organizations in the public and non-profit sectors which embrace board diversity and make it a priority to recruit board members from diverse backgrounds. In addition, the Canadian Board Diversity Council will present its Corporate Diversity Award to a leader in the private sector.

B. Name Discussion

Chair Darius Sookram led the Committee members in reviewing a list of possible new names for the committee. It was agreed that the name chosen must reflect who the committee is and what it does, as well as the move from diversity to inclusiveness/inclusion. Among other points, the Committee discussed whether to include the word "race" in the name or in the mandate; some believed the word "race" does not truly define the scope of the Committee's mandate. After lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed to consider two potential names at the September meeting:

- Committee for All Races and Ethnicities (CARE) - We CARE about you
- Inclusion and Cultural Diversity Committee (ICDC)

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee is scheduled for September 9, 2013 at 7:00 PM.

10. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by Barbara Tate
Seconded by Moises Calo

That the Race Relations Committee adjourn at 8:30 PM.

Carried