

**MEETING OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR  
CITY OF MARKHAM  
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre  
April 8, 2013, 7:00pm**

**MINUTES**

<p><b>Attendance:</b> <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 Samil Chagpar Moises Calo Councillor Logan Kanapathi Regional Councillor Joe Li Mirium Ku</p> <p><u>Staff</u> Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist Darshika Patel, Committee Clerk</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u> Liliana Soengas Vilvan Gunasingham Councillor Alan Ho</p>
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**1. CHAIR OPENING REMARKS**

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

**2. MANY FACES OF MARKHAM**

The Many Faces of Markham annual event took place on March 17, 2013 at the Flato Markham Theatre. There was a good turnout for the event and the event received positive reviews from attendees, Councillors and the Mayor. Overall, this was a successful event and it also demonstrated Markham's support for the Coalition of Municipalities Against Racial Discrimination (CMARD).

Race Relations committee members and City staff that were involved with this year's Many Faces of Markham shared some concerns and suggestions from their experience planning and executing the event. First, the length of the entire show was long, including some of the performances. To cut down on time, it was suggested that award winners come up on stage together as a group instead of coming up individually. Second, there was a lack of communication and improvement is needed in the delegation of roles and responsibilities so they are better understood. The planning process should also

involve the stage manager and the stage manager should be the main contact for performers from the start of the event. Third, spelling mistakes on the application form was reflected on the certificates that were distributed to the students. Next year's committee may want to look at creating a computerized form to avoid this problem. Lastly, next year's committee may also want look at standardizing the evaluation process of judging the art and writing competition and having more schools be involved in the competition.

Organizing and planning this event requires a lot of the committee member's time and effort. If the Race Relations committee is interested in holding this event again, they should start planning it soon. However, this committee has continuously discussed the possibility of putting this event on hold and perhaps holding a different sort of event next year. Ideas include having speakers or a mixed show with performances and talks that will attract adults. This committee will continue to discuss this topic and will decide by June if they would like to hold another Many Faces of Markham event.

### **3. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

There were no changes or additions made to the agenda.

### **4. MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON MARCH 4, 2013.**

It was

Moved by: Samil Chagpar  
Seconded by: Ramon Solis

That the minutes of the Town of Markham Race Relations Committee Meeting held on March 4, 2013 be adopted as distributed.

Carried

### **5. RACE RELATIONS BUSINESS**

#### **A. Race Relations Committee Work Plan 2013**

The Chair has taken all the suggestions and feedback from committee members and amendments to the work plan were made accordingly.

#### **B. CMARD update; Open: 3Q10**

Councillor Logan Kanapathi had the opportunity to travel Geneva to attend a Human Rights conference organized by the United Nations. This was great opportunity to represent Markham on the world stage. Councillor Kanapathi also had the opportunity to discuss human rights violations in Sri Lanka.

## **6. MARKHAM HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE**

### **A. Diversity Action Plan Update; Launched: 2Q10**

Ms. Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, informed the committee that the Lunch and Learn sessions on diversity is very popular amongst City staff. Some of the Lunch and Learn topics include the Chinese culture, how to manage diverse groups (with a focus on disabilities) and learning different languages with City of Markham interpreters.

The City of Markham held a focus group to discuss the respect they expect from City staff and how that would look like. Based on feedback from the focus group, the City has come up with a tool and guide that City staff can use. The guide describes five stages that include Self-Awareness, Empathy, Knowledge, Action and Learning. Ms. McConney-Wilson also shared the results of a discussion from a conference focusing on the Chinese community in Markham. The conference looked at what new immigrants thought were necessary to integrate into this community. New immigrants felt that the English classes offered to immigrants were too easy and that to be proficient in English, it takes approximately eight years. Also, they discussed the need for housing and priorities in terms of the amount of money required to come and settle in Canada.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

There have been discussions on changing the name of this committee. Committee members are asked to do some research in regards to the name and to bring this to the next meeting.

The annual committee dinner has been tentatively scheduled for the end of this month. The Chair will send out a Doodle to find a time and date that works best for all members.

As per the new tradition at Race Relations committee meetings, Mr. Moises Calo taught the committee members the following phrases in Filipino:

Good Morning - Magandang umaga  
How are you? - Kumusta ka na?  
Thank you - Salamat

## **8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee is scheduled for May 6, 2013 at 7:00 PM.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

It was

Moved by: Bobbie France  
Seconded by: Moises Calo

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

Carried