

MEETING OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2013
CITY OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
March 4, 2013, 7:00pm

MINUTES

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

The Race Relations committee convened at 7:10pm with Darius Sookram presiding as Chair. Mr. Sookram invited Councillor Alan Ho to start a new tradition where members learn words in a different language at the start of the Race Relations meetings. Councillor Alan Ho and Councillor Joe Li taught members the following phrases:

- Good Morning – jóusàhn (in Cantonese), zao shàng hao (in Mandarin)
- How are you? - lei hou ma (in Cantonese), néih hóu ma (in Mandarin)
- Thank you – dòjeh (in Cantonese), xiè-xie (in Mandarin)

2. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no changes or additions made to the agenda.

Councillor Li informed the committee of a special diversity celebration taking place on March 31st. This celebration is expanding from last year as it was a great success. It is a singing competition where participants sing in different languages. Anyone interested in attending this event can contact Councillor Li for tickets.

3. MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON FEB 4, 2013.

It was

Moved by: Samil Chagpar
Seconded by: Bobbie France

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

Carried

4. RACE RELATIONS BUSINESS

A. Race Relations Committee Work Plan 2013

Committee members received a draft version of the Race Relations Committee Work Plan 2013. The work plan was created to provide direction to what the Race Relations Committee is about. The principles listed in the work plan resulted from the meeting that took place early February. The guiding principles will help create tangibles outcomes. Members are to read through the guiding principles and provide their feedback at the next meeting. Also, the work plan includes specific goals related to the Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD). The Chair would like to have an official work plan completed by this year's term.

Members should remind themselves what they would like to achieve from these committee meetings and create a method to keep track of the committee's progresses and goals. There is also much interest in documenting cases for discussion. Ms. Sharon Laing, Director of Human Resources, recommended incorporating 'Information Sharing' to the agenda. The cases discussed under this agenda item will then be recorded/documented in the meeting minutes.

It was

Moved by: Councillor Joe Li
Seconded by: Vilvan Gunasingham

That Information Sharing be including on all subsequent Race Relations agenda right before Other Business.

Carried

5. MARKHAM HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

A. Diversity Action Plan Update; Launched: 2Q10

Ms. Liang provided the human resource update on behalf of Ms. Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist. Ms. Liang discussed the two Lunch and Learn sessions coordinated by the Human Resources department to educate staff on learning the Chinese culture and learning Chinese phrases. Also, in February, the Black History celebration was held at the Markham Civic Centre. This celebration included performances from local schools and the Chair spoke at the event. Furthermore, the City of Markham Civic Centre has created quiet spaces for individuals that would like to have a point of reflection which may be related to religion. These spaces were formerly recognized as prayer rooms.

B. York Region Poverty Update article

The Race Relations committee would like to continue recognizing the issue of poverty in York Region. Partnering with other community organizations such as United Way would help members be educated on this topic. This topic will remain on the agenda as members come up with a list of organizations and foreseeable opportunities.

6. MANY FACES OF MARKHAM

A. Current Status of Event

The subcommittee is now preparing for the final stages of the event. The presenters have been booked and the production manager has created a list and order of the performances. All members are encouraged to be a part of this event and will be delegated specific roles and tasks prior to the event. This will be sent by e-mail from Laura Gold, Clerk's Office.

B. Future of Event

It will be important for committee members to determine whether they would like to plan this event next year or put it on hold or prepare something new in its place. The Many Faces of Markham event typically attracts participation amongst schools that have participated in the past. In order to encourage more teachers to take part in this event, the current outreach method needs to change. Many Faces of Markham needs to be presented in a fun and entertaining way and presented at staff meetings and parent councils in schools across York Region. Other suggestions to promote the event include holding smaller events prior to the main event and encouraging youth to spread the word amongst other youths. Further discussion on this topic will be discussed after the event.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Astra Josie Rose, Vice Chair, suggested changing the name of this committee. The name Race Relations has been used since the inception of this committee. Once this committee has decided a new name, the committee will need to write a resolution and take it to Council. In the meantime, members are to come up with ideas.

The York Region Police Board has been setting up career fairs to recruit individuals from diverse backgrounds. They would like different communities to hold focus groups to discuss how different communities view the police force.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee is scheduled for April 8, 2013 at 7:00 PM.

9. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by: Vilvan Gunasingham

Seconded by: Astra Josie Rose

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

Carried