

MEETING OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2012
TOWN OF MARKHAM
Ontario Room, Markham Civic Centre
Monday, March 5, 2012, 7:00pm

MINUTES

<p>Attendance:</p> <p><u>Committee</u></p> <p>Ramon Solis Bobbie France Astra Josie Rose Darius Sookram, Chair Liliana Soengas Vilvan Gunasingham Saad Omar Khan Councillor Logan Kanapathi Regional Councillor Joe Li Councillor Alan Ho</p> <p><u>Staff</u></p> <p>Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator Darshika Patel, Committee Clerk</p>	<p><u>Regrets</u></p> <p>Theresa Coulter, Vice-Chair Rina George-Alexander Carla Crooks Si Ming (Steven) Lu Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist</p>
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1. CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

The Race Relations Committee convened at 7:05 PM with Mr. Darius Sookram presiding as Chair.

A. Follow Up Questions

The Chair briefed the committee on the following responses given by the Clerk's Department to queries from last meeting:

- Councillors are able to vote on motions and not staff.
- In an event of a tie during an election process, the Robert's Rule of Order states that "When electing officers, if there is a tie vote or no one receives a majority vote, members keep voting until someone is elected".
- The Chair should be elected at the first of every year however there is no mandatory term limit. Therefore, a Chair can be re-appointed for another year.
- The Committee can choose to change the date and time of this meeting as long as the Committee agrees to the change.

B. Black History Month Celebration

The Chair spoke briefly at this event organized by the Town of Markham. He received positive feedback after the event.

2. MINUTES OF THE MARKHAM RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2012.

Moved by Liliana Soengas

Seconded by Logan Kanapathi

That the Minutes of the Town of Markham Race Relations Committee Meeting held on February 6, 2012 be adopted.

CARRIED

3. CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Moved by Vilvan Gunasingham

Seconded by Astra Josie Rose

That CMARD updates be added to the agenda under Markham Human Resources Update.

CARRIED

4. MARKHAM HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

A. Diversity Action Plan Update; Launched: 2Q10

No new updates as Cheryl McConney-Wilson, Diversity Specialist, was not present at the meeting.

B. Diversity Lecture Series

The Chair reminded the committee that the Diversity Lecture Series will take place March 25th at the Markham Civic Centre.

C. CMARD update; Open: 3Q10

Markham is a signatory of CMARD (Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination) and must adhere to the 10 commitments outlined in the document. Mr. Vilvan Gunasingham briefly went over the commitments and highlighted item six - support measures to promote equity in the labour market - as being a hot topic due to the economic downturn. He informed the committee that CMARD has been preparing a toolkit that will be released soon. The Diversity Action Plan, which can be found online on the Town's website, should reflect the goals of CMARD. The Town is at the stage where they are looking at data to determine what accomplishments the Town has made. It will be important for this committee to find out from the Town of Markham the specific actions that have taken place to fulfil

these commitments. The last CMARD conference was held in Kingston, Ontario and there has been much interest in having a conference in Markham.

The York Region police force is putting on a diversity conference in March and this committee can present CMARD information at this event. It is important to note that one of the ten commitments of CMARD is to support policing services in their efforts to be exemplary institutions in combating racism and discrimination. Previously, a councillor from Thunder Bay, Rebecca Johnson, had spoken to the Race Relations committee about their commitment to CMARD. Ms. Laura Gold, the Council/Committee Coordinator, will send members a copy of the minutes from that meeting.

5. MANY FACES OF MARKHAM EVENT

Ms. Gold updated the committee on this event. During the Family Day long weekend, judges selected winners of the art and written competition. The winners have been notified. Corporate communication has helped with the promotion and production aspect of this event and Ms. Rina George-Alexander will be assisting with the script. Members that are interested in volunteering for this event should inform Ms. Gold and arrive at 12:00 pm on the day of the event and the event is expected to end at 4:30pm.

6. FUTURE ROLE AND DIRECTION OF THE RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

A. Committee Membership

As Mr. Hetal Damania has decided to withdraw from this committee, another applicant will need to be selected. At this time, the committee is short of a member from Thornhill. The appointment committee will need to conduct an interview to appoint a new member and this process will take time. The Committee is interested in having a member that can represent the police or education sector.

Moved by Vilvan Gunasingham

Seconded by Councillor Alan Ho

That Appointment Committee appoint a new member to the Race Relations Committee in a timely manner and that the new member be from the policing service or education sector.

CARRIED

B. Meeting Time

A Doodle request was sent to all members to vote for a date and time for committee meetings. Not all members agreed to meet on Thursday and because Monday was the date most members were informed about, this committee's meeting date will remain unchanged. However, the meeting will commence now at 7:00pm instead of 7:15pm.

C. Primary Objective and Group Thinking

Committee members engaged in a brainstorming exercise to determine interests and plans for this committee. Members looked at past accomplishments such as CMARD and the Many Faces of Markham event. Members agreed that this committee's role is to be a voice of the community and to bring and

elevate issues to Markham Council. The committee would like to see the focus be more on policy making and fostering partnerships and relationships with external stakeholders and community members. For the next meeting, the Chair will connect and articulate these ideas into tangible outcomes and goals for this committee. The committee should also look at creating a workplan.

ACTION: The Committee Coordinator will e-mail members an example of a workplan.

D. Utilizing Skill-Sets and Budgeting

The Race Relations committee has been allocated an operating budget of \$7,300 as it is responsible for running a major event. As signatories of CMARD, the committee may also need to allocate funds towards accomplishing the commitments of CMARD. Any changes the Race Relations committee makes to the budget will need to be approved by Human Resources.

ACTION: The Committee Coordinator will request information on the budget from Human Resources.

The Committee decided to designate the following roles:

Budget Preparation – Ramon Solis

Attendance – The Chair

Minutes from council and other committees – Vilvan Gunasingham

Media – everyone.

E. Cultural Consumption

The Committee discussed the possibility of having other food options to be served during meetings that is cost efficient and will reduce waste. The committee will look into having pizza served during meetings.

7. SHARK FIN SOUP

Committee members questioned why other municipalities are taking a stand on this issue when it appears to belong to the federal jurisdiction. Since other municipalities have taken a strong stand, it will be important for the Town of Markham to discuss this issue as it disproportionately affects a group in this community. Reports presented in the media have been misleading as there is wide belief that sharks are being hunted for their fins and not for other parts of the shark. It was noted that the bones of the shark is worth more than the fin. A resolution and the committee's position on this issue will be further discussed at the next meeting.

8. ISRAELI APARTHEID INFORMATIONAL DISCUSSION

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

The Race Relations committee has a booth set up at the York Region Police diversity conference next month. It will be important for a representative from this committee to be present during this event. The booth should be supplied with CMARD pamphlets.

ACTION: The Chair will look up prices for the banner and request related information from corporate communication.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Race Relations Committee will be held on April 2, 2011 at 7:00pm

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Race Relations Committee adjourned at 8:55pm.