

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 1, 2005

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Shawn Lahey, Vice Chair
Councillor David Hendsbee
Mr. Larry Guptill
Mr. Wilf McEachern
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Ms. May Lui
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton
Ms. Susanne Wise
Mr. David Khokar
Mr. Thomas Rissesco

**ABSENT WITH
REGRETS:** Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Ms. Gail Wilson
Councillor Debbie Hum

STAFF: Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Program

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 4:58 p.m. in the Media Room, City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor David Hendsbee, seconded by Ms. Sylvia Parris, that the minutes of September 8, 2005 and October 6, 2005 (notes) be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

MOVED by Mr. Larry Guptill, seconded by Ms. Sylvia Parris, that the agenda be approved as distributed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Hendsbee advised that this will be his last meeting with the Committee as his term has expired. The Committee extended their thanks to Councillor Hendsbee.

4. APPROVAL OF THE 2006 MEETING AGENDA

MOVED by Ms. May Lui, seconded by Mr. David Khokhar, that the 2006 Meeting Schedule be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES:

5.1 Review of Community and Race Relations Policy (revised Draft as of Oct. 7/04)

C The Community and Race Relations Policy (revised Draft as of Oct. 7/04) was before the Committee.

The Vice-Chair advised, as per the October 6, 2005 minutes, that the revisions made to the draft policy at the October 7, 2004 meeting will be highlighted for ease of reference of Committee members. Along with the highlighted changes, the previous draft of the policy will be circulated to Committee members for comparison and errors and omissions to the revised draft will be reviewed at a meeting in the new year.

5.2 Future Work Plans

The Vice-Chair advised that at the January 2006 meeting of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee, the Committee will discuss funding and outreach options for 2006.

5.3 HRM Immigration Strategy

C The HRM Immigration Forum document was before the Committee.

Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Coordinator, provided a brief update of the Immigration Action Plan, which has been presented to Council. A copy of the Immigration Action Plan can be found on the HRM website at:

<http://www.halifax.ca/communications/ImmigrationActionPlan.html>

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Cultural Plan Update - Sue Uteck, Chair, Cultural Advisory Committee

C The Cultural Plan Policy Document Draft #1 November 23, 2005 was before the Committee.

C An excerpt of the Policy Statements affecting Diversity from the Cultural Plan Policy Document Draft #1, and decision-making criteria were distributed to Committee members at the meeting.

Ms. Holly Richardson, Community Developer, Recreation, Tourism and Culture, provided an update of the Cultural Plan to the Committee. Councillor Sue Uteck, Chair, Cultural Advisory Committee, was also in attendance to answer questions.

Ms. Richardson advised that the draft Plan has been released by the Cultural Advisory Committee and is not yet approved by Council. Public consultation by way of community open houses and consultation with stakeholders are being undertaken. Input from these consultations will be incorporated into the next draft. The Plan will be brought before Council in early to mid January 2006. The Plan will be implemented over the next 10 years.

Ms. Richardson provided an overview of the policy statements relating specifically to diversity including the following:

Policy 1.1: Cultural planning goals will be integrated into HRM's Land-Use, Economic and Community Planning policy framework through policy and implementation linkages with the HRM Regional Plan, HRM Immigration Action Plan, HRM Economic Development Strategy, Municipal Planning Strategies and Community Plans.

Policy 1.3: HRM's current cultural service delivery structure will be reviewed to ensure the necessary operational structure is in place to implement the Cultural Plan.

Policy 1.10: HRM will review the mandate of its Boards and Committees to ensure implementation links to the Cultural Plan.

Policy 1.11: HRM will establish a Permanent Cultural Advisory Committee of Council to draw on the expertise of the cultural sector and engage community in the implementation of the HRM Cultural Plan.

Responding to questions from the Committee regarding Policy 1.11, Ms. Richardson

clarified that membership of the permanent Cultural Advisory Committee and its possible sub-committees has not yet been fully developed. She clarified that at a previous Cultural Advisory Committee meeting, it was discussed that the Cultural Plan should set out the structure of the Committee and that Committee membership would be made up of experts to represent the seven pillars of the Cultural Plan, a councillor, and interested citizens. It was suggested to Ms. Richardson that qualified experts from different ethnic groups be represented on the Committee and sub-committees. It was also suggested that membership for the Committee and its sub-committees not be chosen from the same pool of people. Councillor Uteck advised that different members would be considered and implemented, for example, by having a constantly changing jury for the public art committee.

Policy 1.21: The development of local cultural plans will be explored as part of the Cultural Plan Implementation.

Policy 1.22: HRM will adopt a tiered approach to supporting community cultural organizations to address strategic cultural development priorities and funding fragmentation and instability.

Policy 1.24: HRM will facilitate public input into community cultural development.

Policy 1.26: HRM will develop a coordinated mechanism for information exchange, research and data collection through the development of a cultural information network.

Policy 2.1: HRM will review the HRM Recreation blueprint and service delivery criteria to integrate Culture into HRM's Recreation mandate and service delivery.

Policy 2.3: The cultural use of public, private and community facilities and spaces of all types will be enhanced.

Ms. Williams indicated that the Community and Race Relations Policy includes a piece that speaks to HRM prohibiting the use of municipal facilities from individuals and groups that are in violation of the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*.

Mr. Canales-Leyton requested that this policy include spaces for the written word.

Ms. Parris retired from the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Policy 2.7: Efforts will be made to ensure services and support provided by HRM meets the needs of all of its diverse communities.

Ms. Richardson indicated that this policy would include the implementation of the HRM Corporate Diversity Plan, which has been adopted by HRM but not formally implemented. Ms. Richardson advised that a definition of diversity will be included in the draft Plan and she reviewed the draft definition included with the Policy Statements affecting Diversity document before Committee members. Ms. Williams noted that there is a definition of diverse communities in the Community and Race Relations Policy and the definition in the

Corporate Diversity Plan was developed to represent diversity within HRM as a government and corporate entity. Ms. Williams suggested that one consistent definition for diversity should be agreed upon for HRM as a whole.

With regard to the clause in Policy 2.7 which states “working with organizations to determine an equitable method of choosing community members when public representation is required on HRM’s Boards and Committees”, Ms. Lui suggested that HRM advertise wider and reach out to individuals who are not members of organizations, yet are active members of their communities.

Councillor Uteck noted that it could also be suggested to the Membership Selection Committee to call on organizations such as the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) to obtain a more diverse membership for HRM’s Boards and Committees.

A discussion ensued regarding HRM’s existing policies, during which it was suggested that all of HRM’s policies should be reviewed for incorporation into the mandates of HRM’s Boards and Committees. In particular, some Committee members felt that the Race Relations Policy is rarely referenced outside of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee. It was suggested that perhaps the policy should be re-circulated to the Boards and Committees. Ms. Richardson clarified that only Committees with specific cultural mandates, which would fall under the seven pillars of the Cultural Plan, will be reviewed under the Cultural Plan.

Mr. McEachern noted that since there are so many different cultures within HRM, the underlying culture of HRM is inclusiveness, which is that everyone can participate. Councillor Uteck clarified that the principle of the Cultural Plan is equity and access for all.

Councillor Hendsbee noted that he sees the Cultural Plan as a compliment to the Race Relations Policy and that all of HRM’s policies need to be recognized and implemented. Councillor Uteck indicated that the Cultural Plan will act as a decision making template for this Council and future Councils. Ms. Williams noted that while the Cultural Plan and the Race Relations Policy have different objectives, some of the objectives overlap and suggested that on the website a link from one policy to another could be added. Councillor Hendsbee further suggested that a copy of the Race Relations Policy could be circulated with the final Cultural Plan document.

Policy 2.8: HRM will develop standards and processes to address cultural participation barriers and civic access barriers.

Policy 2.9: HRM will work with community organizations to help achieve cultural diversity goals.

Ms. Williams requested that the term “minority” be removed from the section of this policy stating “support for minority artists, ethno-cultural, indigenous and culturally diverse communities”.

Mr. Canales-Leyton requested that socio-economic or underprivileged groups be added to

the list of groups to receive support under this policy.

Policy 2.10: HRM will support the implementation of the Halifax Region Immigration Strategy and the HRM Immigration Action Plan.

Policy 2.11: HRM will establish an investment strategy to address arts diversity.

Policy 2.12: HRM will work with the arts sector and community groups to showcase local art and culture in high profile community buildings and spaces.

Policy 2.14: HRM will work with organizations to bring art to communities.

Policy 2.15: HRM will increase opportunities for community and regional events and celebrations.

The Committee discussed with Ms. Richardson and Councillor Uteck the possibility of creating a signature HRM cultural festival and an HRM cultural events calendar. Ms. Lui suggested that it would benefit tourism to HRM if a diverse representation of ethnicities and disabilities were shown on the calendar and other promotional materials such as posters. Councillor Uteck advised that Asset and Information Management has been working to show diverse representation on HRM promotional materials such as newsletters, posters and brochures.

Policy 3.14: HRM will develop and support cross-cultural opportunities through exhibitions, festivals, and awareness initiatives.

Policy 3.15: HRM will enhance cultural diversity through the production and presentation of art including the promotion of traditional, indigenous and contemporary art forms.

The Committee suggested that the policy be changed to read “the promotion of *various* art forms” in an effort to be inclusive to all art forms.

Mr. Rissesco retired from the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Policy 3.16: HRM will create opportunities for cultural expression in civic spaces and places.

Ms. Richardson indicated that the last two pages of the Policy Statements Affecting Diversity document are a set of decision-making criteria which will be submitted to council as a recommended guideline for prioritizing decisions regarding cultural investment. Ms. Williams questioned how this decision making criteria would affect smaller or less established organizations, for example the Financial Viability Criteria section may exclude groups. Ms. Richardson advised that the criteria is still being developed and is still in draft form. She clarified that the criteria set out now is aimed toward larger capital investment proposals. The tiered system for grants will have separate decision making criteria to avoid excluding smaller or less established organizations. Ms. Richardson and Ms. Williams agreed to meet to further discuss the decision-making criteria.

The Committee thanked Councillor Uteck and Ms. Richardson for the update.

6.2 **Racist Graffiti in HRM - Gary Martin, Manager, Community Response Team**

Mr. Gary Martin, Manager, Community Response Team, addressed the Committee regarding the increase of graffiti and racist graffiti in HRM and in particular the recent incident of racist graffiti in Dartmouth against the Lebanese community. Mr. Martin discussed the various categories of graffiti and the effects it has on communities. He informed the Committee that the difference between graffiti vs. art is defined by permission. Mr. Martin advised that racist graffiti can be classified as a hate crime, not just property damage, and an important step to stopping it is to educate the public that it is happening. He informed the Committee that he will be meeting shortly with the Mayor, the CAO, and the Chief of Police to discuss the issue of racist graffiti. Mr. Martin explained that when an incident of racist graffiti is reported, photographs are taken of the offence, and the photographs are catalogued for future reference. He described the HRM crime prevention initiative that took place last year where HRM staff attended private properties at business and civic addresses to remove graffiti. The obligation of the initiative has been fulfilled and staff are no longer permitted to attend private property to remove graffiti. Mr. Martin advised that HRM offers assistance to property owners removing graffiti by way of advice on removal materials and companies that provide graffiti removal services. He assured the Committee that racist graffiti on HRM property takes top priority for removal.

Responding to questions from the Committee, Mr. Martin advised that when an incident of racist graffiti is noticed on HRM property, it can be reported through the HRM Call Centre at 490-4000 or for other properties through the HR Police Non-Emergency Line at 490-5016. Mr. Martin advised that when an incident is reported, the goal is to set up a community meeting or a neighbourhood watch right away to create awareness and mobilize the community to respond to the issue. Community alerts are used to keep the community informed.

Mr. Martin advised that the average age of the offenders are between 15 and 30 years of age and that Restorative Justice is used for punishment of offenders and restoration of the community.

Mr. Guptill retired from the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Mr. Martin clarified that graffiti is classified as mischief property damage and is a Federal offence under the Criminal Code of Canada. The option of enacting a By-Law for graffiti offences has been looked at before and is being re-visited by HR Police.

The Committee thanked Mr. Martin for attending.

7. **ADDED ITEMS** - none

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Next regularly scheduled meeting date is January 5, 2006.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant