

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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4:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 1  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Duke Street Tower  
February 2, 2000

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair  
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton  
Ms. May Lui  
Mr. Haji M. Amari  
Mr. David K. Khokhar  
Mr. Andre Massicotte  
Ms. Sylvia Parris

REGRETS: Councillors Colwell & Blumenthal and Mr. Keith Gillis

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Programs  
Cst. Cedric Upshaw, Black Youth Liaison Officer  
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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**1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Item 6.2, Annual Report was added to the agenda. The agenda was adopted, as modified, on motion of Mr. Khokhar and Ms. Lui.

Later in the meeting, an Implementation Strategy Update was added under Business Arising as item 4.2.

**2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the January 5, 2000 meeting were adopted, as circulated, on motion of Mr. Massicotte and Ms. Parris.

**3.0 1999 WORK PLAN - STRATEGIES**

**SIGNIFICANT DATES ASSIGNMENT**

Several members passed in their assignments related to researching of specific significant dates to the Chair.

**ISSUES AFFECTING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES:**

**POLICE AND FIRE SERVICE RECRUITMENT**

The members were provided information on a proposed Racially Visible Minority Recruitment program for Police Officers tentatively scheduled for September. The program could entail identifying fifteen (15) recruits. Once funding is secured, the program will proceed.

This information was brought to the Committee by Charla Williams and Cst. Upshaw. They encouraged the members to spread word of this opportunity and advise interested parties to contact Cst. Upshaw if they have any questions. It was noted that the minimum educational requirement is grade 12.

Should the members be advised of any organization wanting an information session on the recruitment process, Cst. Upshaw should be contacted.

Mr. Massicotte questioned if there is a similar program for recruiting firefighters. While no recruitment program is being planned at this time, Charla Williams encouraged the members to advise her of anyone interested in becoming a firefighter. A general discussion followed on problems with recruiting particularly for volunteer fire departments

and issues associated with preference given to Canadian volunteer firefighters during recruitment for professional firefighters. In addition to having knowledge about fighting fires, they have the advantage of being familiar with Canadian rules and regulations associated with the Fire Service.

It was suggested by Charla Williams that during the implementation process, the difficulty of recruiting women and people of color will be addressed, both in the volunteer and professional ranks. There will be opportunities for further discussion as the process is worked through.

### **PC's FISCAL TASK FORCE (SHAW REPORT)**

It was suggested by Ms. Williams that members should keep an eye on a recommendations going forward to the Province from the above noted Task Force regarding the need to increase the number of immigrants to Nova Scotia. In the event this recommendation is adopted, there is a chance that there will be a significant increase to HRM's immigrant community. As a result, the Municipality might look to the Committee for advice. This would be a good opportunity to be pro-active.

A general discussion followed on the fact that immigrants tend not to remain in the Municipality but move to more metropolitan centers in Canada and to the United States. It was felt that this trend relates to the availability of jobs. How to keep immigrants in the area needs addressing.

It was noted that the Municipality has no formal role related to providing services to new immigrants.

Mr. Massicotte felt that by the Committee concentrating its efforts on seeing the Policy is implemented, an environment will be created conducive to immigrants.

Mr. Canales-Leyton reminded the members that Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC) holds meetings four times a year with its service providers. \$2.5 million in funding is available for related programs. A gathering of approximately seventy (70) such organizations was held in the past month. One of the problems CIC recognizes is the problem Nova Scotia has in retaining new immigrants. Mr. Canales-Leyton suggested it would be beneficial for the Committee to request observer status at these meetings. The Manager for Nova Scotia and P.E.I. is Ron Hisler.

As a result of the Municipality having no direct responsibility to provide such services, Ms. Williams felt they are very removed from what is taking place regarding such initiatives. She felt that by obtaining observer status, members would have an opportunity to become

more educated about current issues.

### **STRATEGY TO PROMOTE DIVERSE COMMUNITY IN HRM**

The Committee discussed methods by which it could communicate:

- C about diversity within the Municipality
- C alert organizations that there is a Community and Race Relations Committee and Policy
- C they are welcome to bring forward issues

Essentially the above was a communications strategy which could be fleshed out and included in the Work Plan as a strategy for this year.

The following ideas were put forward to raise awareness of diversity in a positive light:

- C develop an Awards Program
- C hold Town Hall (public forums)

During the ensuing discussions, it was agreed that while there are a lot of organizations in the Municipality, who may or may not be familiar with the Committee, the Committee never seems to hear from them. Mr. Massicotte found it hard to believe they have no issues with the Municipality with regard to Community and Race Relations.

The following vehicles were suggested for communicating the Committee's existence. It was stressed that organizations must be made aware of the Committee's role, ie. the Committee can't solve problems, but can make recommendations to Council.

- C a letter be sent to all organizations associated with multi-culturalism, enclosing a copy of the Community and Race Relations Policy and inviting them to bring forward any concerns to the Committee.

Charla Williams felt this would be a good way to develop a good data base of organizations.

The Chair will provide the Halifax Regional Library's list of organizations. The members can review this list and add to it. She saw every community as important and it was stressed that the Municipality can't be seen as favoring any one organization over another.

Once the list is available, as members become aware of additional organizations they could advise the Secretary to add to the list and send out a package.

Mailing costs will have to be covered.

The letter should provide information on who the Committee members are and request the organizations provide their web site address, so a link can be established with the Community and Race Relations Web page.

- C If the Municipality is placing any advertisements, mention be made of the Committee and its desire to obtain feedback from the public.

It would be useful to have individual photos or a group picture of the Committee included. Mr. Canales-Leyton noted that he felt having such pictures on the Committee's Web site would be desirable.

Reference was made to the fact that individual Councillors often have articles published in local newspapers, accompanied by their pictures and phone numbers. If Municipal funds are used for this purpose, it would be nice if they would make reference to the Community and Race Relations Committee, noting the name of the member, who resides in the District or general area.

- C When Councillors send out their newsletters, provide them with a copy of general information on the Committee for inclusion.

- C Submit an article on the Committee to every community news publication.

Mr. Massicotte will draft a 200 to 300 words article on the Committee and send it to the Chair for input. It will be then sent to Mr. Canales-Leyton for editing and submission to various community newspapers.

- C Organizations' Newsletters

Once the article is prepared, David Khokhar and May Lui volunteered to submit it to organizations they are involved with.

A list of those who receive the article should be kept by the Chair or Secretary. Feedback may be received reflecting editing.

- C Provide a copy of the article to Councillors.

#### **4.0 BUSINESS ARISING**

##### **4.1 WEB SITE**

Mr. Canales Leyton requested that this item be deferred until next month. He has not had an opportunity to prepare the synopsis. He noted that he has received no suggestions from the members on what should be included on the page.

He circulated to the members a copy of what the current Web site looks like. It was noted that changes are required to the Origin.

Referring to the 'Links', web site addresses to include were solicited. By having these, links could be established to the web pages of various organizations. Addresses could be obtained through the letter proposed to be mailed to all community organizations.

Charla Williams will confer with Kelly Marney on what links are valid and ask Ms. Marney to delete the rest. Once the Police hiring information is available, it was suggested it be mentioned on the Committee's web page or reference be made to a link to the Police Services web page.

##### **4.2 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY- UPDATE**

In her update, Ms. Williams noted that at a management meeting, it was decided to form a Working Group, with Ms. Williams as the Coordinator. She has a couple of co-op students working with her. One of the individuals is currently e-mailing Directors asking them to appoint a representative to the Working Group. By the next meeting, Ms. Williams hopes to be able to report that the process has been initiated.

Mr. Massicotte asked Ms. Williams if an invitation should be extended to the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee's members to attend Committee meetings as observers. Ms. Williams felt this might be premature. It will take them awhile to grasp the concept and as they go through the process issues will be raised and there may be an identified need to liaise with the Committee. It was also noted that the Directors want a monitoring mechanism, which will provide a link to the Committee. When future Annual Reports are made to Council, reference to whether the Committee is pleased with progress in implementing the Policy can be made.

#### **5.0 CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair advised that she wrote to Lewis Rogers and the Mayor regarding Ms. Lang's correspondence forwarded to the Committee. A meeting has been arranged for 10:00

a.m., Wednesday, February 9, 2000 at Mr. Rogers' office, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Halifax Ferry Terminal Building. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss ways to include cultural diversity in marketing plans. Ms. Williams noted that Mr. Rogers is looking for information and ways to achieve this end.

May Lui, Andre Massicotte and Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton indicated a desire to accompany Ms. Thomas to the meeting.

## **6.0 NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.1 GRANTS COMMITTEE COORDINATOR - PETA-JANE TEMPLE**

The Chair advised that Ms. Temple will not be able to attend today's meeting, but will come to the March one. The Secretary will provide her with an agenda package. Included in the March agenda package will be an information package pertaining to the Grants Committee, so that Committee members can review in advance of the meeting and be prepared to ask appropriate questions.

### **6.2 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chair indicated that the Annual Report is due in March. It was recalled that last year's Annual Report had been a single page and Mr. Massicotte questioned whether the members felt this would suffice for this year. It was recognized that there may be more to report this year.

Ms. Williams suggested that one page contain bullets to give the Councillors a gist of what has taken place, and follow-up information be provided on subsequent pages.

Mr. Massicotte and Ms. Thomas volunteered to draft the Annual Report and send the draft to Ms. Williams for comment.

For purposes of communication, the Chair proposed that the Annual Report be presented verbally again this year to Council.

### **'KALEIDOSCOPE'**

Due to the cost associated with printing, Mr. Canales-Leyton advised the members that the next issue of 'Kaleidoscope' will appear at [www.multicultures.halifax.ns.ca](http://www.multicultures.halifax.ns.ca). He will advise the date of the first issue.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

The Chair congratulated May Lui on receiving an award recently recognizing her contributions to the City of Halifax by Mayor Walter Fitzgerald. May Lui in turn noted that Ms. Thomas was the recipient of a similar award from the Mayor for her contributions to the City of Dartmouth. Committee members extended congratulations to Ms. Thomas and Ms. May Lui.

**CHINESE SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA**

May Lui noted that this is the Year of the Dragon and a Dinner/Dance is being held at the Westin, February 26, 2000.

Ms. Lui suggested that Committee members plan to have a full course Chinese dinner at The Wall Restaurant after one of its meetings.

**POSTING FOR HRM BUS OPERATORS**

Ms. Williams advised that there was a recent job posting to develop a pool of potential bus operators. If one meets the qualifications, they may be selected and enter a pool. As openings come on stream they will be hired and trained. She is attending a meeting next week to discuss aspects of equity and diversity in the process. They will be looking for women, racially visible applicants and possibly those with disabilities, if they can meet the physical requirements. She encouraged the members to pass along information about this employment opportunity. A copy of the application for Bus Operators and a regular HRM Employment Application was provided for the files. It was noted that both the posting and application forms are available through the HRM Website.

**7.0 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 1, 2000.

**8.0 ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:20 p.m.

Betty Thomas  
Chair

Lynne Le Boutillier  
Assistant Municipal Clerk

