

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

APRIL 5, 2000

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Councillor Blumenthal
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Mr. Andre Massicotte
Mr. Haji Amari
Mr. Keith Gillis
Ms. Seeman Khan
Mr. H. A. J. Wedderburn

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

REGRETS: Mr. Canales-Leyton, Ms. Lui, Mr. Khokhar, Mr. Rissesco and Councillor Colwell

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Meeting was called to order at 4:50 p.m. by the Chair.

1.0 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Two items were added under New Business:

- 6.1 Correspondence from Mr. Canales-Leyton re Application to CRTC for a multi-cultural specialty channel
- 6.2 Correspondence from Mr. Wedderburn re obtaining of statistics

The order of the agenda was changed, as it was anticipated the quorum might be lost later in the meeting.

2.0 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 1, 2000 meeting were approved as circulated on motion of Mr. Wedderburn and Councillor Blumenthal.

5.0 **CHAIR'S REPORT**

5.1 **WORKPLAN**

5.2 **ANNUAL REPORT**

A draft 2000-2001 Workplan and 1999-2000 Annual Report had been circulated at the March meeting.

During the review of the Workplan the need to change the date to March 31, 2000 was identified.

The Annual Report only required the addition of the Chair's name and title and the question mark (?) on page 2 removed.

MOVED by Mr. Massicotte and Mr. Gillis that the Committee adopt both the Annual Report and Workplan as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

A letter (report) will have to be drafted to accompany the Annual Report and Workplan to Council.

3.0 **1999-2000 WORK PLAN - STRATEGIES**

ISSUES AFFECTING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Referring to item 4.3, North Preston Community Centre, it was not felt this needed to appear on the agenda. It had simply been presented by Councillor Colwell at the March meeting as an information item.

6.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

6.1 **CORRESPONDENCE RE APPLICATION TO CRTC FOR MULTI-CULTURAL SPECIALTY CHANNEL**

Circulated at the meeting was a letter from Mr. Canales-Leyton pertaining to an application for a license for a cable channel that will present multi-cultural programming from around the world and from within Canada. He proposed a motion that the Committee approve the concept and send a letter to the CRTC endorsing the enterprise.

Considerable discussion followed on whether it was appropriate to send such a letter with the limited information available or if in fact it fell within the Committee's mandate. It was suggested, as an alternative, that individual members might wish to write in support of the enterprise. It was recognized that further information, particularly on programming, was available through the CDVC or through the CRTC's Web site, but considerable time would be required to review the materials and the deadline for the faxing of the letter(s) was April 12th.

The followings matters were raised:

- C Haji Amara is a CDVC representative, but since he is involved in a separate program, he was not aware of the application.
- C Concern expressed that the programming might be Ontario centered and if not, how do they propose to represent all communities in Canada. In particular, how would Atlantic Canada fare.

Options considered:

- C Someone second Mr. Canales-Leyton's motion and vote on it. If accepted the letter be written.

- C If not passed, an alternative motion be made and a letter be sent to Mr. Canales-Leyton explaining the Committee's position that because of time constraints and fact there was not enough information, the motion was not adopted.
- C The Committee approve the concept of a multi-cultural specialty channel but indicate its desire to receive more information on the contents before endorsing such an enterprise.

Mr. Wedderburn felt the Committee should approve the concept, but it would need more information before endorsing such an enterprise.

MOVED by Mr. Wedderburn and Councillor Blumenthal that the Committee approve the concept of a multi-cultural specialty channel, however it is hoped the programming will comply with the Federal Human Rights; the Multi-culturalism and the Nova Scotia Employment Equity Acts.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED. Andre Massicotte voting against.

Correspondence to this effect will be sent to the CRTC.

(Councillor Blumenthal departed)

It was pointed out by the Chair that this item illustrates the need for members who want something on the agenda to provide materials in advance of meetings, so members have time to research and make informed decisions.

3.0 **1999-2000 WORKPLAN (cont'd)**

ISSUES AFFECTING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Ms. Parris reported that on today's news it was announced that the Workplace Education Program has been canceled, which is funded by CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada). She wondered if the Committee might lobby CIC to rethink this cut and explore other options. Ms. Parris explained the negative impact this cut will have on immigrants who are employed. The program offered one to one support to help develop language skills particularly related to their field of work. It was noted that this program is an additional program to the program which works with new Canadians to develop general language skills.

Ms. Williams noted that there has been a decrease in the number of immigrants in the last few years and since CIC receives funds based on the number of new Canadians in the area,

funding has dropped dramatically. They thus had to review the programs they could fund. The ESL (English as a Second Language) program will continue.

Ms. Williams noted that the Municipality is not directly responsible for settlement issues in Nova Scotia. Ms. Parris proposed that perhaps this is something the Committee could take to the Chamber of Commerce. It was suggested that Ms. Parris do further research into the matter, i.e. approach MISA to get a sense of what the situation is. Determine if there is a role appropriate for the Committee and report back.

Ms. Parris will contact Ms. Maryanne Rodrigues on behalf of the Committee. Ms. Williams will attend the meeting as well to determine if there is any way the Committee can help in this situation.

6.2 CORRESPONDENCE - EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

The Chair was in receipt of a letter from Mr. Wedderburn requesting employment statistics for the HRM, ie. population of HRM, numbers of blacks and females employed and job categories. He felt this information would be useful in determining whether the Municipality is doing enough with respect to the hiring of non-whites. He suspected there were not enough black people employed in HRM and those who were employed were at the lower end of the employment scale. Reference was made to the fact there is only one black Councillor on Regional Council. Ms. Williams noted that while this is the case, since Councillors are elected, all one can do is encourage people to run for office.

Ms. Williams referred to the HRM's Employment Equity Policy and the four groups targeted. She stressed the black community is not separated out from the visible minorities and reflected on past endeavours by the Police Department, etc. to increase representation from these four groups, which have been under represented.

She stressed that good numbers are not available because of the requirement for self-identification. Ms. Williams noted that this is one of the areas being addressed through HRM's Policy Implementation Strategy initiative.

It was noted that while the population of HRM is approximately 350,000, only 3% of the population is black. A higher number of people would be hired from a Service Equity perspective than an Employment Equity one.

Ms. Williams will provide an information sheet with the next agenda package.

3.0 STRATEGY TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY OF COMMUNITIES IN HRM

While there is a plan in place to send out a letter to various organizations within HRM, Mr. Gillis felt the members should attend various events during the year and provide information on the Committee. During discussion of this initiative, it was felt this would be appropriate if the organizing bodies invited the Committee to participate. The Chair made reference to the Multi-cultural Festival. Last year, copies of our brochure were made available at the Conference and Councillor Blumenthal was asked to include information about the Committee in his remarks.

It was also identified that the Committee really does not have any literature to handout. Ms. Williams noted that there are facilities in the Print Shop to run off two color brochures. Reference was made to the synopsis of the Committee to accompany the letter to organizations, prepared by the Chair, be used for this purpose. Mr. Massicotte will endeavour to reformat it into a brochure.

Mr. Gillis reiterated that while invitations can be sent to organizations to attend meetings, not many will take up these invitations, thus the Committee has to be proactive and go to events and be visible.

In addition to the letter to be sent to organizations, the Chair made reference to a newspaper article which has been forwarded to Mr. Canales-Leyton for inclusion in various community newspapers. The Daily News supplement for March 21st contained reference to this article and the Committee's Policy was included in its entirety.

Ms. Williams listed a number of related endeavours within the Municipality.

It was suggested that every Councillor should be approached to include in their newsletters some information on the Committee. The Chair will action this item.

The Chair made reference to Peta-Temple's memorandum dated March 17, 2000, entitled "Inclusion" circulated with the agenda package. It was noted that under the heading "Community Development", the Committee has been mentioned in the promotional material to be sent to all HRM staff and some outside agencies.

4.0 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

4.1 **WEB SITE**

Copies of the current Committee's Web site were circulated with the agenda package. The Chair reminded the members that Mr. Canales-Leyton is still taking suggestions on additions to the page. Ms. Williams encouraged the members to ensure their personal information displayed is accurate. Mr. Massicotte noted his e-mail address is wrong.

Ms. Williams noted that the Human Resources Division is developing a more comprehensive web page, including a section on diversity. There will be a link back to the Community and Relations Policy. If the members had any suggestions for the HRM Web site, they were encouraged to pass them along to Ms. Williams.

4.2 **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

Ms. Williams updated the members on progress being made by the Implementation Strategy Committee which she coordinates. She noted that not every department has appointed a representative, but they are moving forward nevertheless. They are focusing on implementing the Policy within the Business Units versus HRM as a whole. A number of issues and challenges have been identified which need addressing. The participants are at various levels of understanding. The majority of those on the Committee don't have an extensive background of race relations matters. They are still in the research mode and she is encouraging them to become more aware of issues of diversity. She felt it has become a very positive initiative and they hope to have something published by the fall.

Reference was made to the HRM Facilities Rental Agreement being rewritten and the inclusion of the Policy.

It is proposed that a joint meeting be held. It was decided to hold this meeting May 3 in Halifax Hall or the Training Room, 3rd Floor Duke. It will be essentially a one item agenda. Ms. Williams will bring a GIS map to the meeting.

The Chair noted that she has tentatively booked the Black Cultural Centre for the June meeting. It was felt that the format should be a low key public forum and a letter should be sent to ratepayers associations, etc. inviting them to send one or two representatives.

4.3 **NORTH PRESTON COMMUNITY CENTRE**

See 3.0, Issues Affecting Diverse Communities.

4.4 **SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE TOURISM MATERIALS MORE INCLUSIVE**

Tourism packages were distributed at the meeting. The members were encouraged to take them home, peruse them and formulate suggestions to make them more inclusive.

4.5 **GRANTS PROGRAM**

Circulated with the agenda package was a memo from Peta-Jane Temple, Coordinator, Grants Program forwarding information on Inclusion Issues in Program Review, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Support and Community Development. Refer to item 3.0, Strategy to Promote Diversity of Communities in HRM.

5.0 **CHAIR'S REPORT (cont'd)**

The Chair reported that she was pleased to have been invited to attend a church service at the Cornwallis Street Baptist Church at the invitation of the Halifax Regional Police Service. Ms. Williams had also received an invitation. The Church Service was in dedication of one of the Committee's Significant dates - March 21 -The International Day for the Elimination of Racism.

This very well attended event was coordinated by Cst. Upshaw. In future years it was suggested that the Police Service invite all the Committee members. Mr. Gillis remarked that he has heard some very positive feedback on the service. The Chair indicated that she suggested to Cst. Upshaw possible inclusion of the Committee as a partner in the organization of this event.

7.0 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2000. As it is a joint meeting with the Implementation Strategy Committee, it will be held in Halifax Hall or the Training Room. The election of the Chair and Vice-Chair will also be an item for this meeting.

8.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m. on motion of Mr. Wedderburn.

Betty Thomas
Chair

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk

