

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JUNE 7, 2000

MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Councillor Colwell
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Mr. Keith Gillis
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton
Mr. Tom Rissesco
Mr. Haji M. Amari

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

REGRETS: Councillor Blumenthal, Mr. Andre Massicotte, Ms. Seeman Asad Khan, Mr. David Khokhar and Ms. May Lui

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 2 - June 7, 2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Introductions	3
2.0	Approval of Agenda	3
3.0	Approval of Minutes	3
4.0	Business Arising from Minutes	
4.1	Membership List of Implementation Strategy Committee	3
4.2	Web Site	3 & 4
5.0	Overview of Committee's Mandate	4
6.0	Chair's Report	4 & 5
7.0	2000 - 2001 Workplan	5 & 6
8.0	Issues Affecting Diverse Communities	6 & 7
9.0	New Business	7 & 8
10.0	Next Meeting Date	8
11.0	Adjournment	8

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 3 - June 7, 2000

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:45 p.m. at the Black Cultural Centre.

1.0 INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Ronald David a member of the North Preston Ratepayers Association, Monitoring Committee since 1973 was introduced to the members.

2.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved, as circulated, on motion of Councillor Colwell and Ms. Parris.

3.0 APPROVAL OF MAY 3, 2000 MINUTES

The minutes of the May 3, 2000 meeting were adopted, as circulated, on motion of Mr. Rissesco and Mr. Canales-Leyton.

4.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

4.1 MEMBERSHIP LIST OF IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Copies of the membership list were circulated by Ms. Williams, as requested at the May meeting.

4.2 WEB SITE

Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton advised the Committee that he and Mr. Massicotte have yet to meet. He therefore did not have a synopsis to present. However, he did discuss with Kelly Marney, HRM's Web master. Ms. Marney indicated to him that:

- C Anything the Committee wants can be put on the Web site, but it must conform to HRM's style/standards. The Committee's page would have to look like the other HRM Web site pages.
- C The page can be programmed by anyone.
- C The Committee may wish to consider a page on the Chebucto Community Network.
- C No bulletin boards of any kind are permitted on HRM servers.

Bearing these comments in mind, the Chair indicated that the Committee still wishes to

obtain a proposal for improving the Committee's page on the HRM Web site. She requested that a submission be made within the month. Mr. Canales-Leyton agreed. He will put the draft page on his site for viewing by the Chair and advise the Clerk of its location, so she can print off the page.

4.3 UPDATE ON PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED WITH INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Williams reported that she passed along the concerns expressed to her Manager. He is a member of an internal committee looking at the whole issue of communications. She will provide an update at the next meeting.

5.0 OVERVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S MANDATE

Copies of the Committee's Mandate, Objectives and Responsibilities were available at the meeting. The Chair reviewed them for the benefit of Ronald David. A copy of the Community and Race Relations Policy was also provided to Mr. David. In the introduction to the Committee, she noted that a regular agenda item relates to issues affecting diverse communities. She noted that the Committee is endeavouring to focus on the issue of communications, particularly as it relates to advising the community of its existence and encouraging residents to bring issues of concern to the Committee's attention.

Ms. Williams advised Mr. David that members are appointed to the Committee via an application process. The HRM advertises for members for its various boards and committees annually.

The Chair gave a brief outline of the history of the Committee, pre and post amalgamation. She noted that a presentation is made to Regional Council annually on the Committee's Workplan and accomplishments over the year. She noted that the Committee has two very active Councillors on its membership, Councillors Colwell and Blumenthal.

6.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported that she had met with some members of the Standing Task Force for a Dialogue Project, associated with the Quebec Francophone Federation. One of the individuals represented the Acadian Association of Nova Scotia. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton had provided them with the Chair's name. She was advised that they have been meeting with a number of diversity groups across Canada. Reference was made to a book entitled "Discussion Paper", which the Chair had. The Chair advised them of the Committee's Mandate and the Committee embarking on a communications program to reach out to other diverse groups in HRM.

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 5 - June 7, 2000

The Chair and Ms. Williams described a four day symposium on education that they had been involved with. Mr. Massicotte had attended one of the round tables as a member of the Committee. Ms. Williams noted that she had been asked to sit on a panel to relate her experience as a racially visible person going through the university system. The Chair attended a dinner related to the symposium at the Nova Scotia Art Gallery.

It was noted by the Chair that Ms. Williams had recently represented HRM at a Conference on diversity in Washington, D.C. Ms. Williams will be asked to give an update to the Board on this conference.

The Chair made reference to a Notice of MCANS Annual Meeting to be held June 15, 2000 at the Nova Scotia Teachers Union Building.

7.0 2000 - 2001 WORKPLAN

The members reviewed the draft brochure circulated at the previous meeting by Mr. Massicotte.

The following was observed:

- C The brochure may be too wordy. For example, since there is a pamphlet on the Policy, there really is no need to include an extract. A reference to where copies can be obtained would suffice. At the Customer Services Centres, copies of the Policy could be displayed next to the brochure.
- C Font too small. If there were fewer words, the font size could be increased.
- C Some of the wording will date the document.
- C Only three of the five 'responsibilities' are listed.
- C Historical Background requires rewording, to reflect that the Committee was established before the Policy was adopted by Council. Reference be made to the fact that the City of Dartmouth had a Human Rights Advisory group and City of Halifax, a Community and Race Relations Committee prior to amalgamation.
- C Preference expressed for the use of bullets in the format, to allow for ease of reading and thus make it available to a broader segment of the community. This would allow an individual to get a sense of the Committee and what it does very quickly. Information would be provided on how to obtain more information, ie. Storefronts, the HRM Web site, phone numbers. The Web site address should not

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 6 - June 7, 2000

be simply the HRM's address but the Committee's full URL.

- C The Mission Statement be edited to the crux.
- C Reference was made to a Multicultural Festival's 2000 brochure and why its format is so effective, i.e. inclusion of graphics, white space, photos, etc.
- C Items such as headings be bolded.
- C Mention be included as to how people can apply to become members of the Committee.

While the majority of the members supported reducing the amount of text drastically, Mr. Rissesco felt it need only be pared down a bit. In a second printing the amount could be reduced further. Mr. Amari indicated he liked it the way it was.

During the review of the draft, it was mentioned to Mr. David that the Committee focuses on the responsibilities of the Municipality, which does not include education. Should an issue arise out of the Monitoring Committee, which the Municipality is responsible for, the Committee would be pleased to serve as a link to Regional Council.

The Chair sought direction on how the Committee wished to proceed, i.e. volunteers work with Mr. Massicotte on a second draft, etc. A discussion ensued on the purpose of the brochure. The Chair noted that the purpose of the brochure was for public relations, i.e. who we are, what we do and why the Committee exists. Ms. Williams suggested another purpose would be to let members of the community know how the Committee can be accessed, perhaps through a changeable panel.

Ms. Williams indicated she had a problem with developing a brochure by Committee. Mr. Rissesco, Charla Williams and the Chair volunteered to do a second draft individually. Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton was also asked to do likewise. Anyone else who had the time was invited to do a draft of the brochure. These individuals are to have their drafts to the Clerk within the month. They will be circulated to all members.

Mr. Canales-Leyton regretted that the brochure will not be available for this year's Multicultural Festival. It was noted that copies of the Policy would be available.

8.0 ISSUES AFFECTING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Mr. David outlined to the members issues of concern in North Preston. He referred to previous challenges faced with getting a new school in the community, the ongoing

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 7 - June 7, 2000

problems associated with the recreation centre and littering in the community.

It was noted that in the interim, three portable classrooms have been located in the community to serve as a temporary replacement for the recreation centre, which had been closed due to mold problems.

Mr. David felt it was imperative that both the recreation centre and what remains of the mini mall be demolished, as they pose a danger.

Councillor Colwell indicated that he believed that North Preston, as an urban portion of the HRM, has been neglected. Referring to the need for getting a sense of pride in the community he described two initiatives. One involves a contest, with prizes for the most improved property in the communities of North Preston, East Preston and Cherry Brook. A prize from the Atlantic Superstore has been committed and others are being pursued. Suggestions were given to Councillor Colwell on the best approach to judging to avoid conflict.

Secondly, a sign at the entrance of North Preston, indicating it is the largest black community in Canada, etc. is proposed. A challenge has been given to the community to design the sign. A free barbecue is planned in association with its erection.

Councillor Colwell noted that pocket parks for the use of toddlers are proposed. Land to accommodate the parks has yet to be identified. He noted that a Task Force has been set up to look into the recreation requirements of North Preston in the long term.

Referring to the community centre issue, Councillor Colwell noted that the HRM would be prepared to operate, maintain and staff the facility once it is constructed. He referred to discussions he has had with the Health Board, School Board and RCMP in this regard. He is also going to speak with the Fire Chief, about combining the Fire Station with the Community Centre. Mr. David envisaged the community centre also including a daycare, seniors complex, etc. in the building. The suggestion was well received in the community.

Referring to the Task Force, Ms. Williams emphasized the need for community involvement and distributing to the whole community via newsletter regular updates. She felt communications was the key and providing members of the community with an opportunity to provide input. The HRM has historically not been very strong in this area.

Referring to the community's litter problem, Ms. Williams suggested a community pride approach rather than a punitive approach be initiated through involvement of the young people in the community. She referred to her involvement in the Leo Club of New Glasgow as a young person.

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 8 - June 7, 2000

9.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

Referring to the upcoming Multicultural Festival, the Chair noted that Councillor Blumenthal had made reference to the Committee in his opening remarks last year. It has been suggested by Ms. Lui that a similar request be made this year. The members agreed. Copies of the Policy will be supplied to the Information Booth.

10.0 **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held Wednesday, August 2. Instead of the regular July meeting, the Chair proposed that the Committee members go to a Chinese Dinner at the Great Wall Restaurant to celebrate the Year of the Dragon. The Chair will ask May Lui to coordinate this event.

11.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

In closing, the Chair thanked Mr. David for his attendance. The meeting concluded at approximately 7:00 p.m. Mr. Canales-Leyton circulated copies of the May-June issue of Street Feat to those in attendance.

Betty Thomas
Chair

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk

(July25/00)

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 9 - June 7, 2000

To do: Sent out membership list to those not present.
Cancel July booking of Conference Room and tell MacKenzie of change.