

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MARCH 7, 2001

MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Mr. Andre Massicotte
Mr. Tom Rissesco
Mr. Sid Chedrawe
Mr. Shawn Lahey
Ms. Ann Fougere

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Programs
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

REGRETS: Ms. Lui, Mr. Khokhar, Mr. Amari, Mr. Gillis and Cst. Upshaw

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INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Three new members were introduced: Ann Fougere, Shawn (Richard) Lahey and Sid (Assad) Chedrawe.

The Chair will be contacting the new members regarding an Orientation Session.

1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by Mr. Rissesco, seconded by Mr. Massicotte that the agenda be adopted as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by Mr. Rissesco, seconded by Ms. Parris that the January 3, 2001 minutes be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

3.1 WEB SITE UPDATE

Ms. Williams reported on her discussion with Kelly Marney regarding maintenance of the Committee's Web page. She recalled that Councillor Sloane has volunteered to work on the Web page. Reference was made to HRM policies regarding how and what can be added to the HRM Web site, so there is some control. When future training is offered, Ms. Williams plans to take it. She noted that if the Committee wishes to change the look of the page, it will have to be discussed with the Web Master. Reference was made to policies associated with including links to other web pages outside HRM. She felt a discussion of protocol would be worthwhile, i.e. should such links be brought to the Committee to determine their appropriateness. (See item 8.2)

Mr. Chedrawe indicated he had some experience with Web sites and felt he could coordinate e-mailing of potential web pages to be linked to the Committee's web page. He will compile a list of members e-mail addresses. The Chair indicated she did not mind her business e-mail being used for matters related to the Committee, but would not desire the address to be included on the web page.

4.0 COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Williams noted that since the last meeting, the Implementation Committee has acquired a new member. Eleven of the sixteen business units are now represented on the

Committee. She noted that one of the goals for the Committee is to have all business units represented.

For the benefit of the new members, the sequence of events leading to this step in implementing the Community and Race Relations Policy, were outlined. At this point in time, the Implementation Committee is trying to develop an internal communications strategy, while the Community & Race Relations Advisory Committee is considering an external communications strategy.

Ms. Williams noted that the next Implementation Committee meeting will focus on identifying workplace diversity in preparation for Diversity Week in September. A similar event was held September 2000. It is hoped that more business units will become involved this year.

4.1 **JOINT PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL**

Reference was made to a joint meeting held February 7, 2001 with EMT (Executive Management Team) and the Policy Implementation Committee. Copies of notes of this meeting were provided in the agenda package. Circulated at the meeting were copies of a report entitled "An Update on the Implementation and Initiatives" which was presented at this meeting.

It was noted that it was decided that the two committees should make a joint presentation to Council in April, after conclusion of the budget process. It was suggested that the two Councillors represented on the Committee, should be asked for suggestions as to the best meeting date. The Chair will contact them. She encouraged as many members as possible to attend the session of Council when the presentation is made. At that time, as suggested by the Mayor, copies of the green folder containing background materials will be provided to every member of Council.

The Chair reflected upon her impressions of the joint meeting. She stressed that although she felt a tremendous amount of work has been done by the Implementation Committee since its creation a year ago, the Community & Race Relations Advisory Committee should keep monitoring progress.

5.0 **CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair reported on her meeting with Mayor Kelly on behalf of the Committee. She outlined the Committee's activities to him. It was at this time that he suggested the provision of materials to the Councillors on the Committee at the Joint Presentation to Council. She indicated that the Mayor is very supportive of the Committee.

Mr. Canales-Leyton referred to the **Annual Report** for the Year 2000, published by HRM.

He noted that there is no mention made of Boards and Committees. Ms. Williams explained that this report is essentially a business report for the Municipality, outlining the work of the employees. This report falls within the jurisdiction of the CAO and Deputy CAOs. Boards and Committees fall under Mayor and Council. Under the two prong government structure, these are two separate entities. She did not know if the Mayor and Council do a similar report.

Mr. Canales-Leyton suggested that perhaps a report could be made combining both, i.e. elected and professional elements. Ms. Williams noted that some Committees make Annual Reports to Council, i.e. Community & Race Relations Advisory Committee and Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, but not all.

The Chair felt Mr. Canales-Leyton's suggestion to be a good one and should be communicated. She will draft a letter on behalf of the Committee to the Mayor.

The Chair was in receipt of correspondence from the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities regarding having a meeting to discuss an amendment to the Community and Race Relations **Policy**. They had been considering developing a Policy, but came to the conclusion that the Community & Race Relations Policy is inclusive. This being the case, they proposed simply expanding upon the Policy indicating their endorsement, so it goes to Council with both Committees' endorsement. The Chair will contact Jane Cale, Vice-Chair of the Disabilities Committee regarding a meeting.

Mr. Massicotte felt this would be an opportune time to also consider updating the Policy. He had some problems with the language, from the point of view of clarity. He felt the wording could be improved quite easily. The Committee was asked whether they supported reviewing the Policy. Some concern was expressed that it may be more involved than Mr. Massicotte was suggesting and may have some repercussions, such as delays to the implementation stage.

It was requested that Mr. Massicotte and any other members bring forward suggested changes for consideration. This item could be included as part of the 2001/2002 Work Plan. It was felt the Policy should always be open for review.

6.0 **2000-2001 WORKPLAN**

There was a discussion of the implementation plan, particularly the communication strategies. Mr. Massicotte stressed the importance of making the community aware that this is essentially a "Citizens Bill of Rights", i.e. you as citizens are entitled to receive services from the Municipality without barriers.

Referring to the two prong approach to date, i.e. Implementation Committee dealing with internal matters and the Committee external aspects, the Chair felt the two committees

could be working jointly. She felt there needs to be a meeting to sit down and discuss this option, particularly in light of the fact that the Committee has no funds. Ms. Williams felt that the Committee should not feel constrained by lack of resources, there are resources available.

(Chair had to depart for another meeting. Mr. Canales-Leyton took over the Chair.)

Several suggestions were discussed, but it was emphasized that the Committee must always keep in mind its mandate and the areas the Municipality has responsibility in, i.e. the scope of the Municipality's responsibilities as outlined in the Municipal Government Act. It had been suggested that the N.S. Teachers Union might be utilized in communicating the Policy, and reflecting on the above, there was no reason why they could not be approached.

For the next meeting, the members were asked to review the Policy to identify areas where improvements could be made.

Copies of a draft Work Plan prepared by Mr. Massicotte were circulated at the meeting. Referring to the issue of communication, he expressed concern that he had not received feedback from staff and the Chair. It was agreed that there is a need for communication between meetings. In light of the proposed joint presentation to Council, it was essential that he receive feedback. Mr. Chedrawe volunteered to develop an e-mail list which he will provide to all those with e-mail addresses, to facilitate communication.

Ms. Williams had nothing further to report on whether Shared Services will design the brochure free of charge. She is still negotiating with them. Concern was expressed as to why this is taking so long. It was suggested that the restrictions associated with lack of funds should be raised with the two Councillors on the Committee. It was suggested that perhaps a sponsor could be found. Ms. Williams explained why she did not believe this to be an appropriate alternative.

7.0 ISSUES AFFECTING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Mr. Canales-Leyton noted that this is a regular agenda item and invited members to submit items at any time.

7.1 COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN NEW CANADIANS AND THE POLICE

Mr. Canales-Leyton noted that the above item has yet to be resolved. Mr. Canales-Leyton had originally brought this item up. It reflects concerns he has based on his work as an interpreter, particularly in court settings.

It was suggested that Mr. Canales-Leyton contact Cst. Upshaw directly to discuss whether

there is a Policy in place within Police Services. If so, if there is a need to change it or communicate it better to the Police Officers.

8.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

8.1 **6TH ANNUAL HARMONY BRUNCH**

Copies of a poster related to this event held on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, were circulated.

8.2 **PROTOCOL FOR ADDING LINKS TO WEB PAGE**

When considering pages to be linked to the Committee's web site, it was suggested that the members use the selection criteria for significant dates, contained in the Green Folder to determine if the site meets the criteria. This will save the Committee having to debate every link.

8.3 **CENTRE FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES**

Mr. Canales-Leyton, a member of the above group, referred to an initiative for providing free voice mail to the homeless. The program will be implemented in the next 30 to 35 days.

9.0 **NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, April 4, 2001.

10.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk