

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 4, 2001

MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton
Mr. Andre Massicotte
Mr. Sid Chedrawe
Mr. Shawn Lahey
Ms. Ann Fougere
Mr. David Khokhar
Ms. May Lui
Mr. Haji Amari

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Programs
Cst. Cedric Upshaw
Mr. Mansoor Wani (guest)
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

REGRETS: Ms. Parris and Councillor Sloane

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The meeting was called to order by Mr. Massicotte in Conference Room 1, 3rd Floor, Duke Tower at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Massicotte chaired the meeting on Ms. Thomas' behalf.

INTRODUCTIONS

As several members had not been present for the March meeting introductions of the new members were made.

1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as circulated on motion of Mr. Khokhar and Mr. Chedrawe.

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 7, 2001 meeting were adopted, as circulated, on motion of Mr. Lahey and Mr. Khokhar.

3.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

3.1 WEB SITE - UPDATE

Ms. Williams recalled that at the March meeting the Committee decided to use the selection criteria for significant dates to determine if a site should be linked to the Committee's web page.

Mr. Chedrawe had composed a list of e-mail addresses and provided to the members. The membership list was recirculated at to days meeting to obtain the e-mail addresses of those not in attendance last month. He will update the list and send to those on e-mail.

4.0 COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

4.1 JOINT PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

Ms. Williams assured the Committee that the Implementation Committee is flexible and would be available to attend a joint presentation to Council on whatever date the Committee chooses. In the interim, Ms. Williams and the Chair will meet to discuss the presentation, particularly what subjects would be appropriate for the two committees to address.

While the Committee would like the presentation made before the May meeting, they wished it to take place after the budget is finalized. Two tentative dates were selected, April 24th and

May 1st. The Secretary was asked to determine what the schedule is for the budget and advise the Chair.

In her update, Ms. Williams advised the Committee that the Implementation Committee is working on plans for the HRM Diversity Week scheduled for September 17 to 23rd. For the benefit of the new members, she noted that this is the second year the event has been held. It's primary focus is on diversity within the HRM's workforce. This year the Kickoff is being hosted by Tourism, Culture and Heritage. They will share some of the results of their research into the various founding cultures of HRM. They are starting with a group of seven. She noted that this initiative itself can be seen as implementation of the Policy. Reference was made to the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee's interaction with the business unit.

It is planned that the Multicultural Potluck Lunch will be held again this year and hopefully be enhanced. There is also an event planned associated with disabilities.

This year the HRM will be encouraging all levels of government and major employers in the area to host a workplace Diversity Week.

Ms. Williams reported that arrangements have been made to have the pamphlet produced, free of charge, through Shared Services. Copies of the proof should be received via e-mail in the next week. Ms. Lui noted she is not on e-mail and would like a copy by regular mail. Mr. Canales-Leyton requested the proof be provided in a PDF file.

Ms. Williams indicated that the pamphlet has been designed so it can be printed in house and changes can be made as required. As long as there are no major changes required to the proof, she felt printed copies should be available for the May meeting.

5.0 **CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair advised that a letter has been written to the Mayor regarding inclusion of Boards and Committees in the HRM's Annual Report. A second letter was sent to Jane Cale, Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities extending an invitation to the May meeting to discuss changes to the Policy. The Chair will follow-up with a telephone call.

6.0 **2000 - 2001 WORKPLAN**

2001 - 2002 WORKPLAN

Mr. Massicotte sought input into the draft 2001-2002 Workplan. He explained to the new members that it essentially a plan the Committee takes to Regional Council to outline what the Committee plans to do in the upcoming year and in theory what resources are required. He noted that there may not appear to be too many activities, but the Committee only meets

once a month, for a couple of hours, so one has to be realistic. The Chair also stressed that the Committee has no budget.

Ms. Thomas referred to a session Ms. Williams had given on Cultural Diversity and Competency at her workplace. Very positive feedback was received. Ms. Williams was pleased that the session has relevance outside the HRM. Ms. Williams noted that she and Cst. Upshaw co-facilitated a session today for HRM. More sessions are planned.

Mr. Canales-Leyton suggested the Work Plan should include some reference to these sessions and encourage all Councillors to attend. Considerable discussion followed on the pros and cons of such an approach. Ms. Williams had strong reservations about making any suggestion that attendance be mandatory. She referred to the Orientation Session for the Councillors and assured the members that they are well aware of the program. She also had a problem including this program in the Committee's Workplan, as it was an initiative of Human Resources.

(Ms. Thomas departed)

The Workplan was reviewed and the following change to the draft was suggested:

C Inclusion of the words "working in partnerships where possible" in Activity 2.

Mr. Massicotte will make changes and e-mail the members.

Ms. Williams recalled that the Committee had discussed holding a Community Forum. She visited the Winnipeg website. Winnipeg held a community forum last year. She has requested a copy of the agenda. She will provide copies to the members for consideration. There had been initial concern that such a forum would incite citizens to simply raise complaints.

(Ms. Williams left)

COMPLETION OF 2000 - 2001 WORKPLAN

Mr. Massicotte proposed a one page report to Council indicating what had been accomplished last year. He will draft and circulate to the members via e-mail. In addition to listing topics discussed and issues addressed, HRM will be thanked for the support provided.

7.0 ISSUES AFFECTING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

8.0 NEW BUSINESS

The following issues were raised:

- C Equalization Fund proposed by the Province - Ms. Lui proposed the Committee write a letter to the Mayor indicating support of his opposition to using property taxes for this purpose. A discussion followed whether this falls within the Committee's mandate. Members indicated that they were not opposed to equalization, but the use of property taxes for this purpose. Mr. Lahey referred to the Committee attending a Regional Council meeting in the next month. Comment could be made at that time that members of the Committee have expressed concern that the strategy may have a negative impact on the HRM and has the Mayor and Council identified any initiatives being jeopardized. There was consensus that the Committee not make a stand, just raise this question.
- C Communications between new Canadians and Police - Cst. Upshaw referred to a program Police Services conducts at Dal-Tech each year for new students who are immigrants, on the law particularly as it relates to family matters. Referring to the concerns that Mr. Canales-Leyton had regarding problems with communication between the Police and new immigrants, Cst. Upshaw assured the Committee that if a problem is identified, Immigration is contacted to provide an interpreter.
- C Mr. Canales-Leyton referred to the initiative of the Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures to provide community voice mail. While originally intended for the immigrant community, it is now available to the population at large.
- C Mr. Canales-Leyton referred to a recent \$6 million initiative to provide shelter for the homeless. He referred to a recent announcement of a seventeen (17) unit complex to be constructed in the Gerrish Street area. He noted that there are twenty-five (25) surplus homes in Dartmouth, owned by the Federal Government, up for sale by tender. They can be purchased on condition they be removed. Any homes not sold will be demolished. He speculated that these homes could be purchased for less money than the above noted development. He outlined efforts he has made to find a vacant HRM lot to temporarily store a building until a lot can be secured. HRM has advised they have no land available for this purpose. He asked the members if anyone could help in identifying a location for this purpose. Mr. Massicotte suggested the information could be found through the Land Registry Office.
- C Cst. Upshaw updated the Committee on the initiative of the Police Service to recruit visible minorities. A class of twenty-five (25) cadets has started. Ten of the class are racially visible. The Police Science Program provides training until December.
- C Ms. Lui noted Asian Heritage Month is held the month of May. This year an event is being held 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 2 at St. Mary's University. She invited all the

Committee members to attend. She reflected that last year's attendance was limited as the event was held in Halifax Hall. This year, 500 to 800 people can be accommodated. The event could not be held May 1st, as this is a Council night and they wished Mayor Kelly to attend. It was proposed that the regularly scheduled meeting of May 2nd be changed to accommodate attendance at this event. The Secretary will raise with the Chair.

9.0 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Regularly scheduled date is May 2nd. However, in order for members to attend the Asian Heritage Month opening, consideration being given to another date.

10.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m. on motion of Ms. Lui and Mr. Chedrawe.

Lynne Le Boutillier,
Assistant Municipal Clerk