

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE OCTOBER 2, 2002 MINUTES

PRESENT: Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton (Vice-Chair)
Ms. May Lui
Mr. David Khokhar
Mr. Tom Rissesco
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Mr. Haji M. Amari
Mr. Shawn Lahey

ABSENT: Councillor Blumenthal (regrets)
Mr. Sid Chedrawe (regrets)
Ms. Betty Thomas (regrets)
Councillor Sloane

STAFF: Ms. Charla Williams, Diversity Program Coordinator
Cst. Cedric Upshaw, Police Black Youth Liaison Officer
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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The meeting was called to order by Mr. Canales-Leyton, Vice-Chair at 5:15 p.m., Conference Room 1, 3rd Floor Duke Tower. Ms. Kathy Brown was introduced to the members.

1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

As the Chair could not attend today's meeting, due to illness, and a couple of other members were absent, it was decided to postpone having the facilitated session until November. A revised agenda was circulated by the Clerk to reflect this change.

It was suggested that item 3.1, New Strategy for the Committee/Work Plan be moved up on the agenda following item 1.0.

MOVED BY Mr. Rissesco, seconded by Mr. Khokhar that the agenda be adopted, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

During the course of the meeting, additional items were added related to the presentation from Denise Izzard Allen - Item 3.3; Recruitment of Members and Involvement with Community Organizations, item 5.2 and Item 5.3 - Promotion of events held within diverse communities over the Holiday Season.

2. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

3.1 **NEW STRATEGY FOR THE COMMITTEE/WORK PLAN**

Although it was decided to postpone the facilitated session until November, Ms. Kathy Brown, the facilitator, was in attendance to present some questions, in the form of a one page handout, that the members might wish to consider before the November session. She encouraged the members to be creative and bring forth as many ideas as possible.

Ms. Brown indicated that she anticipated the November session taking one to one-half hours. She will endeavour to focus the members and capture all ideas the members bring forward, which can be subsequently prioritized. The results will be forwarded to the Chair, Ms. Williams and the Clerk. If the Committee desires, a follow-up session can also be arranged.

Ms. Williams proposed that this sort of session may become an annual event.

For the November meeting, it was felt the Training Room would be a better meeting place for this interactive session.

A discussion followed on scheduling the meeting from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to allow a

little more time for the facilitation with Ms. Brown or conduct Committee business in the last half hour.

3.2 **SURVEY OF COUNCILLORS REGARDING REINTRODUCING AFTERNOON TEAS - HALIFAX HALL**

The Clerk was in receipt of an e-mail exchange between Councillor Sloane and Councillor Fougere regarding the Committee's suggestion that the practice of holding afternoon teas be reinstated. Councillor Sloane e-mailed the Councillors. Councillor Fougere felt it was a wonderful idea.

3.3 **PRESENTATION FROM DENISE IZZARD ALLEN**

Ms. Lui, referring to item 8.1 of the September 4, 2002 minutes, wondered if Mr. Lahey had contacted Ms. Allen. Mr. Lahey replied in the affirmative and noted that he had provided Ms. Allen's telephone number to the Clerk to be forwarded to the Chair. The Clerk advised that she had left a message on the Chair's business office answering machine, but Ms. Thomas may not have received it to date, due to her illness.

4. **COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE UPDATE - DIVERSITY WEEK**

Ms. Williams reviewed with the Committee the following events which took place during Diversity Week:

- C Panel Presentation to discuss the future challenges presented to HRM in addressing issues associated with immigration. She noted that Mr. Canales-Leyton was one of the panelists, along with Betty MacDonald, Manager, Financial Services, HRM and Claudette Legault, Executive Director, MISA.

Feedback has been extremely positive, i.e. it was an interesting topic and was thought valuable.

- C Job for a day initiative - Seventeen (17) people applied, all of which will be accommodated. Due to the good support received for this initiative, consideration is being given to developing it as an ongoing program in HRM.

- C Several diversity pot lucks were held.

- C Additional sessions were held between Public Works & Transportation and the CNIB for more staff to have an opportunity to understand firsthand the obstacles faced by the blind.

During the ensuing discussion, Ms. Williams stressed that Diversity Week is for HRM to focus on the diversity it already has and celebrate it. When an opportunity arises, reference is made to the Community and Race Relations Policy. She assured the members that progress is being made.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOVED BY Mr. Rissesco and seconded by Mr. Lahey that the September 4, 2002 minutes be adopted as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

5.1 **RESIGNATION - MR. MICHAEL PAUL**

The Clerk was in receipt of an e-mail from Mr. Paul advising of his resignation from the Committee. He noted that he has been elected as a Councillor for his First Nation Community and although he wanted to stay a member of the Committee he was finding it difficult to give the time to the Committee it deserved. He extended his best wishes to the Committee and commended the members for the time they are volunteering to their community.

MOVED BY Mr. Lahey and seconded by Ms. Lui that a letter of congratulations and acceptance of his resignation be sent to Mr. Paul and he be thanked for his kind words with regard to the Committee members. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5.2 **RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS AND INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

The Vice-Chair initiated a discussion on the need to recruit more members to the Committee to fill vacancies. (Terms of reference specify not less than 11 and not more than 15 residents of HRM and two members of Council.) He referred to the number of meetings in the past year which had no quorum (defined as no less than 50% plus one of voting members). He felt if there were more members on the Committee, it would be easier to achieve a quorum.

Mr. Canales-Leyton noted that the Committee, since amalgamation, has only gone out into the community on a couple of occasions. The Committee has not gone to community meetings. He noted each organization would have an annual meeting.

Mr. Khokhar referred to several upcoming and regularly scheduled meetings held in the Indo-Canadian community, i.e. their Annual meeting October 27; the celebration of Ghandi's birthday and Thanksgiving, October 13th and monthly meetings of senior

citizens, Bloomfield Community Centre, 1st Wednesday of the month. He felt it would be a good idea if a representative(s) of the Committee attended such functions.

Ms. Williams cautioned that the Committee might wish to consider postponing a decision, other than attending one of the above noted events, until the November facilitated session. The Committee may decide on a different priority. Referring to the Committee's mandate, the Vice-Chair did not feel a decision in this regard would represent a conflict with next month's session.

Ms. Lui noted that the Chinese Society also holds a lot of functions, some more formal than others.

Mr. Lahey recollected when he started on the Committee, he assumed the various communities had been identified, as the Policy had been created. Ms. Williams noted that HRM does not keep a list of the various communities, noting it would be changing constantly. However, she assured Mr. Lahey there was a lot of contact with various organizations during the development of the Policy adopted in 1997.

Even if this was the case, Mr. Canales-Leyton noted that there are changes in the organizations and there is no guarantee that information provided has been passed down to the members.

It was proposed that the Committee consider having a Committee member attend various events with the district Councillor on a rotational basis. This would enable the members to spread knowledge of the Committee, the nature of its work; gather information on the community's needs, aspirations and concerns and recruit new members.

Ms. Parris felt there is a need to be clear as to what the members will be doing when they go to such functions, i.e. if it is the intent to recruit new members, there needs to be a plan, i.e. what kind of promotional package should be developed, etc.

The Vice-Chair felt this might be something to discuss at the November meeting, i.e. what message, when and where.

Ms. Williams cautioned that the Committee might be accused of favoritism if it recruits from one organization versus another. She noted that when the members are acting on behalf of the Committee, they are also acting on behalf of the Municipality.

Mr. Amari suggested inviting representatives to attend Committee meetings might also be effective.

Cst. Upshaw lent his support to the idea of a representative of the Committee attending

functions with a Councillor(s). It would demonstrate the connection the Committee has to Council.

Ms. Williams suggested that there is no need to make a presentation at such events, just bringing greetings from the Committee would suffice. An invitation might be extended for the member to return to do a formal presentation. Just attending the events will speak volumes and generate interest.

Mr. Khokhar, referring to the October 13th event, advised that Councillor Blumenthal has been sent an invitation to bring greetings from the Mayor. If he accepts, he could provide information on the Committee. Mr. Khokhar will also be attending. An invitation to a Committee member could be arranged.

MOVED BY Ms. Parris and seconded by Ms. Lui that when the invitation to attend the celebration of Ghandi's birthday and Thanksgiving, October 13th, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. is received, the Committee send a delegate. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Rissesco volunteered to attend on the Committee's behalf. Councillor Blumenthal will be notified of the above.

In preparation for next month's meeting, Ms. Williams will draft a short protocol for the Committee's deliberation.

A discussion followed on sending out a letter to various organizations expressing the Committee's interest in attending their events. Mr. Lahey stressed the need to add to the list of known communities. Ms. Williams, referring to the Committee's mandate, noted it extends beyond elements of race and acknowledged there are a number of diverse communities that have not been dealt with. In preparation for the wide range of invitations which might be received, it was suggested that Committee should work on a number of presentations. Mr. Canales-Leyton suggested MISA and MANS might be able to provide a list.

5.3 PROMOTION OF EVENTS HELD WITH THE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES OVER THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The Clerk had an item which was in the 'brought forward file' from November 2001 regarding the above. Apparently at the November 2001 meeting there had been a discussion regarding the promotion of other events held within the diverse communities of HRM during the Holiday Season. *There is an advertisement associated with the Christmas Tree lighting and it was proposed individuals could be referred to the HRM web site for a listing of events celebrated by other communities. Shawn Lahey to contact Kelly Marney, Web Master regarding establishing links to pages associated with*

celebrations in the various communities. Mike Gillett, Special Events Coordinator requested he be contacted in October for inclusion of an 'event list website' reference. Kelly Marney saw no problem except for actually getting all the information together. She suggested Tourism might have.

Ms. Williams offered to contact Mike Gillette.

The Chair noted that the Municipality celebrates Christian and Jewish traditions, perhaps the Municipality could find a way to acknowledge other religious celebrations in December.

HRM ANNUAL REPORT 2001

Mr. Canales-Leyton observed that the Annual Report once again did not make any reference to Boards, Committees or Commissions. Ms. Williams noted that the report is essentially an administrative function, whereby business units report on their accomplishments and initiatives. She did not feel the Committee should feel slighted that there is no reference made to it.

Nevertheless, Mr. Canales-Leyton felt there should at least be mention somewhere of the Boards and Committees. Ms. Williams noted that the 2002 Annual Report is being drafted and if the Committee wishes to bring this matter to someone's attention the CAO's office should be contacted.

MOVED BY Mr. Rissesco and seconded by Mr. Khokhar that the Vice-Chair contact via e-mail Mr. John O'Brien, CAO's office regarding the above noted omission. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting date is Wednesday, November 6, 2002.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk