

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE JUNE 2, 2004 MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. May Lui
Mr. Shawn Lahey
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Mr. Wilfred McEachern
Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Debbie Hum

ABSENT: Ms. Betty Thomas (Regrets)
Mr. David Khokhar (Regrets)
Ms. Janet Spares
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton
Mr. Larry Guptill
Mr. Nigel Allison (Regrets)
Mr. Thomas Rissesco

STAFF: Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Program
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Millie Hull, Legislative Assistant

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1. Welcome & Introductions

Ms. Charla Williams called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and indicated that as a quorum of the members of the Committee was not present, the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair couldn't take place.

Ms. Williams addressed the members present and advised that the Committee had been in place in various forms prior to Amalgamation in the different municipalities. Upon amalgamation the committees came together as an interim Committee until such time as the official Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee were adopted by Council. It was noted that as the Community and Race Relations Policy was adopted by Council it was felt the Committee should retain that name and be an advisory committee on matters related to community and race relations.

She advised the members present that the former committee had been instrumental in drafting the Community and Race Relations Policy for HRM, which was adopted by Council, and assisted staff on implementing the policy. She indicated that there has been some concern in the past on the direction of the Committee. The break may have assisted in refocusing that direction.

At this time Ms. Williams welcomed the members present to the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee. It was noted that Mr. Khokhar will be unable to attend meetings until September for medical reasons.

2. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Discussion took place on the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair and Ms. Edmonds briefly outlined the role of the Chair. As there was no quorum present, it was agreed this item be deferred to the next meeting and request that members be present as a quorum is required.

3. Confirmation of Meeting Schedule

As there is no meeting scheduled for August, it was agreed to schedule a July meeting to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair and then begin the Committee's action plan in September.

4. Committee Protocol

Councillor Hendsbee requested a summary of the Committee's past achievements and annual reports be circulated to the Committee to assist in future aspirations of the Committee.

Councillor Hendsbee noted that HRM is in the process of developing a draft cultural policy,

and after a brief discussion it was suggested that Mr. Dan Norris, Manager, Culture & Heritage, be invited to make a presentation to the Committee on this policy.

Ms. Edmonds left the meeting at 5:30 pm.

Ms. Williams distributed a copy of the HRM Community and Race Relations Policy to the members present. During discussions on cultural diversity and race relations, Ms. Williams indicated that the Committee should advise Council on how to support race relations issues.

Councillor Hum made reference to the high Muslim population in Mainland North and of their very strict cultural background in relation to male and female interaction. She noted that a request had been received by Mr. John Henry, Northcliffe Recreation Centre, from a Muslim family for consideration of renovations to the recreation facility in that area to accommodate the requirements and programming needs of the Muslim cultural background. Councillor Hum further noted that this is an area where the Committee can become involved in to look at recreation facilities and other buildings within HRM to accommodate those kinds of cultural needs.

Ms. Williams informed the members present that once the Chair and Vice-Chair are elected her role will be as staff support to the Committee to assist in identifying resources should the need arise, and the Legislative Assistant will coordinate the agenda for the meetings and to record the proceedings. She also advised that it is the Committee's responsibility to decide on the issues that they will focus on over the next year. She proceeded to encourage communication among the members outside the meetings, and to expand their interaction with the communities.

It was suggested and agreed that the July 7th meeting be held in City Hall if a meeting room is available and for members to take note of the meeting place outlined on the top right corner of the agenda.

In reference to the notes of April 7, 2004:

Item 2. Definition of a Community:

Responding to a question on how many communities there were in HRM, Councillor Hendsbee agreed to provide a copy of the book "One City - Many Communities" to each member of the Committee.

Item 3. Future Direction - How does the Committee identify the concerns of the diverse communities?

Ms. Williams informed the members present that she did not have the information available

at this time and will bring it forward at a future meeting.

Item 4. Membership - Individual vs. Organizational Membership

Mr. Lahey suggested that maybe representatives from organizations sit as observers or presenters on the Committee. A concern was raised that it may become group oriented and group focused rather than community focused. There was also a concern as to how to choose what organizations to be represented. Ms. Williams suggested an invitation be extended to community organizations to make presentations to the Committee on issues or various events. She indicated post cards were created for the Committee to distribute within the community to advise residents the committee's existence. Samples will be distributed for review and possible amendments.

Ms. Lui advised the members present that the next newsletter for the Chinese Society of Nova Scotia will be out by the end of June. She noted that she had informed the Society of her reappointment to the Community & Race Relations Advisory Committee and had extended the invitation to the Society to present concerns or issues.

Ms. Williams advised that the Multi-Cultural Festival is June 16th to 20th. She also requested that members forward her information on future events and she will forward to HRM staff.

Councillor Hum advised that she has a calendar conflict with this Committee and she will have to split her time between another engagement and these meetings.

Ms. Williams advised the members present the Committee must follow the procedures of the other Boards and Committees. Members are asked to contact the Municipal Clerks' Office with regrets if unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Williams also noted that if there are no agenda items for an upcoming meeting, the meeting will be cancelled.

Ms. Parris asked if it was possible to provide food. Ms. Hull will check with the Clerk's Office and provide an answer at the next meeting.

At this time, a request was made to possibly change the day of future meetings. Ms. Hull will check her calendar and provide an alternative day, if possible, at the next meeting.

It was agreed that the Clerk's Office will call the members 48 hours prior to the next meeting to see if there will be a quorum.

5. ADDED ITEMS - None

6. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Committee will be Wednesday, July 7, 2004.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Millie Hull
Legislative Assistant