

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
September 8, 2005

MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Mr. Larry Guptil
Mr. Wilf McEachern
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Ms. May Lui
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton
Ms. Susanne Wise
Ms. Gail Wilson
Councillor Hendsbee
Councillor Debbie Hum

ABSENT: Mr. Shawn Lahey, Vice Chair (regrets)
Mr. David Khokar (regrets)
Mr. Thomas Rissesco

STAFF: Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Program
Ms. Holly Richardson, Community Developer, Recreation, Tourism
and Culture

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:55 p.m. in the Media Room, City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Hum, the minutes of July 7, 2005 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

The following items were added to the agenda:

Bloomfield Centre (Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton)
Enumerators (Larry Guptil)

MOVED by Mr. Guptil, seconded by Mr. Canales-Leyton, the agenda, as amended be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES:

4.1 Review of Community and Race Relations Policy

The Chair advised that Mr. McEachern submitted comments to her in regard to suggestions for revisions to the Community and Race Relations Policy. With Mr. McEachern's consent she circulated copies to the Committee members.

Mr. McEachern advised that some time ago he had reviewed the Community and Race Relations Policy and noted that there was no definition of the word 'race' or 'racism' and he felt that if the Committee was to discuss issues of race, then it should have a definition.

A discussion ensued and the majority of members agreed not to include a definition of 'race' in the Policy. The Committee then entered a discussion on whether to define the words, 'racism' and 'community relations.'

During the course of discussion, Ms. Williams pointed out that the suggestions put forward were not changing the content or direction of the policy. She suggested that the Committee question whether this was semantics or substantive change, and cautioned against going through this process if it is only semantics.

Following further discussion, it was **MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Ms. Parris to defer this matter to the next meeting.**

The Chair asked the members to give this matter further thought, and send any comments to the Legislative Assistant for discussion at the next meeting.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4.2 Future Work Plans

MOVED by Mr. Canales-Leyton, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that this matter be deferred to the Committee's next meeting.

Ms. Williams advised that the idea of *Future Work Plans* was discussed by the Committee when it thought it may require additional support from the Municipal Clerk's Office. As a way to justify the additional support, the work plan would identify why it was required. She noted that the Committee has been able to work through its agenda items without additional support and suggested the Committee drop this item until such time that it feels it would require additional support from the Clerk's Office. A work plan could then be filed.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested the Committee put this on the agenda for discussion at October's meeting. He indicated that Councillor Hum encountered some difficulty in finding funds to provide supper for this meeting of the Committee, and noted that the budget process will be getting underway soon, and the timing would be appropriate for the Committee to suggest ways as to how the Committee can be better served by the Clerk's Office. The Councillor suggested a discussion at October's and November's meetings. Councillor Hendsbee also suggested that the members give some thought to the following questions of what resources does the committee need in order to do their job more effectively: i.e. Are we adequately funded? Are there shortcomings? Should we do outreach?

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Cultural Advisory Committee - Update

C A document entitled HRM Cultural Plan - Draft Goals & Objectives revised August 29th was submitted.

Ms. Holly Richardson, Community Developer, Recreation, Tourism and Culture was in attendance to provide an update on the Cultural Advisory Committee's development of a cultural policy. Ms. Richardson circulated the above-noted document with the same information but in a different format. She noted that this would be submitted to the September 13, 2005 Regional Council meeting.

Ms. Susanna Fuller, an observer, entered the meeting at 6:10 p.m. and took a seat at the table.

Ms. Richardson advised that since her last visit to the Committee, Ms. Betty Thomas was

appointed to the Cultural Advisory Committee. She added that the Cultural Advisory Committee has drafted guiding principles and defined the scope of the cultural plan. The final draft of the Cultural Plan is scheduled to go to Council in December. Ms. Richardson noted that the Committee has finished phase 1 and will be presenting the draft goals and objectives to Regional Council next week. If Council approves this, they will enter phase 2 and this includes focus group sessions in September and October. She noted that there will be a final phase of consultation before taking the Plan to Regional Council in December.

Ms. Richardson then reviewed the draft goals and objectives, and noted that, at this point in time, there was not the opportunity for the Committee to make changes to the document. She noted, however, future phases involve further consultation in the community.

With regard to the document, Committee members provided the following feedback:

- S concern expressed with the term 'minority' artist; Ms. Richardson indicated this was something for the Diversity Focus Group to consider.
- S concern expressed that the focus groups would not be objective; and, in response, Ms. Richardson suggested that perhaps in phase 2 a community meeting could be held around the diversity issue and this committee (C&RRAC) could look at partnering a meeting.
- S Ms. May Lui pointed out that she was the Chairperson of Asian Heritage Month but she does not get invitations to attend focus groups etc. and noted that she would very much like to be included in the future.

At 6:40 p.m. Councillor Hendsbee excused himself from the meeting advising that he had a prior commitment but would return to the meeting later. At 7:20 p.m. Councillor Hendsbee returned to the meeting.

- S too much emphasis on the Municipality carrying out the objectives; want to see more involvement by the private sector.
- S ensure other HRM policies are observed in creating a Cultural Policy; when going out for community consultation, have the other HRM policies with them.

At 7:35 p.m. Ms. Parris retired from the meeting.

- S ensure that the language in which the document is prepared, will address individuals who have different levels of literacy.

At 7:40 p.m. Mr. Guptil retired from the meeting.

- S suggestion that the objectives be reviewed with a view of determining areas the government could stimulate and provide incentives for others to carry out the objectives.
- S noted that, at public consultation there may be other cultures requiring an interpreter and having someone from their culture, for instance, doing the interpreting will make them more comfortable.

In closing the discussion the Chair advised that everything discussed this evening will be taken back to the Cultural Advisory Committee.

5.2 HRM Immigration Strategy - Update

The Chair requested and **it was agreed** that this item would be deferred in order that the Committee could deal with the added items.

5.3 Bloomfield Centre

This item was added to the agenda at the request of Mr. Canales-Leyton. Mr. Canales-Leyton introduced Ms. Susanna Fuller, and advised that she wished to speak to the Committee on closing of Bloomfield Centre. He indicated that he felt it was appropriate to bring this matter before the Committee for discussion, because of the diversity of individuals who use the Centre.

Mr. Canales-Leyton advised that the closing of Bloomfield Centre came as a shock to him and others who use the facility. He noted that his newsletter, StreetFeat, has been based out of Bloomfield.

Ms. Susanna Fuller circulated a two page flyer entitled, Bloomfield Community Centre Update, September 2005 and addressed the issue of the closing of Bloomfield Centre, expressing concern about the various groups who will be displaced with the Centre's closing. She suggested that the issue has only been addressed from one viewpoint, that being recreation, and many of the groups have been shut out of the process. Ms. Fuller reviewed ways in which she felt the centre could be kept operating and advised that if this Centre is lost, it will never be recreated.

A discussion ensued and Ms. Fuller responded to questions.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested to Ms. Fuller that an appropriate avenue to voice concerns over this matter would be to contact the Peninsula Community Council and request to make a presentation.

Councillor Hum pointed out she did not feel this topic and presentation was appropriate for this Committee, adding that this matter will be coming to Council, and that the presentation made today appears to be lobbying. She noted that she would not support any motion on this matter should the Committee decide to put one forward. Councillor Hum advised that she also felt this matter should be addressed through a presentation at Peninsula Community Council.

The Chair pointed that she agreed to add this item to the agenda because she felt that it fell within the Committee's Terms of Reference because it was something that affected diverse Committees.

Mr. Canales-Leyton advised that he was not trying to influence anyone to vote a certain way on this matter, and that he wanted to present information he was certain, would not be

heard otherwise.

Ms. Wise expressed some concern that the building was being closed before a needs assessment was done.

Mr. McEachern indicated he disapproved of the presentation noting that the Committee reports to Council, and this presentation was an attempt to get the Committee to undermine Council.

Ms. William advised that she was glad the discussion was brought to this meeting. She advised that the presentation is the voice of the community, and the Committee has to find ways to include their voices.

5.4 Enumerators

The Chair advised that Mr. Guptil had added this to the agenda; however he had to leave the meeting earlier. The Chair explained that Mr. Guptil's concern was that he noticed in his district, there did not seem to be visible diverse individuals carrying out enumeration.

Councillor Hum noted that the Elections Office will contact the MLA's constituency offices to recruit enumerators. She suggested that anyone with a concern should contact their MLA.

6. ADDED ITEMS

Added items were dealt with in 5.3 and 5.4.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next regularly scheduled meeting date is October 6, 2005.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Sheilagh Edmonds
Legislative Assistant