

**COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
March 06, 2008**

MINUTES

- PRESENT:** Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Ms. May Lui, Vice-Chair
Ms. Alexandra McCallum
Dr. Inder Bhatia
Ms. Nicole Briand
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Councillor David Hendsbee
- REGRETS:** Ms. Patricia Skeir
Councillor Debbie Hum
- ABSENT:** Ms. Shelley Fashan
Mr. Thomas Rissesco
Mr. David Khokar
- STAFF:** Mr. Laughlin Rutt, Diversity Consultant
Ms. Sandra T. Riley, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Ms. Thomas, called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

The Community & Race Relations Committee welcomed Ms. Thomas back after a [recent] lengthy illness of which she is in the recovery stage.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - May 03, 2007

MOVED by Ms. McCallum, seconded by Ms. Parris that the minutes of May 03, 2007 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Approval of 'Information Notes' for meeting of February 07, 2008 will be addressed next meeting of the Committee on April 03, 2008.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

MOVED by Ms. Lui, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that the agenda was accepted as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Canadian Commission for UNESCO re: Canadian Coalition Against Racism (oral update)

Mr. Rutt gave a brief update after which Ms. Thomas suggested that item 4.1 and item 4.5 be re-addressed in the upcoming meeting of April 03, 2008 after refreshing the Committee on the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism Ten Common Commitments, and review of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee's new brochures. The documents will be re-circulated at that time.

4.2 CRRAC - Work Plan - Development and Task Assignments

This item will be re-addressed in the next meeting giving the Committee time to review the Work Plan and to make some suggestions.

4.3 Update from Cultural Advisory Committee Representative

Ms. Lui requested copies of the Cultural Advisory Committee's minutes be circulated, by the Clerk's Office, prior to Community and Race Relations Committee's meetings so that members are better able to follow her updates.

The Committee reviewed last month's Cultural Advisory Committee's meeting agenda and minutes.

4.4 Halifax Regional Immigration Leadership Council - Councillor Hum

This item to be addressed in next month's meeting, April 03, 2008.

4.5 CRRAC Brochure Distribution (Cover letter - Ms. Thomas). Approach School Board Diversity Officer (Mr. Rutt)

Refer to 4.1

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Proclamation. Recognition of Significant Dates - Mr. Rutt

Mr. Rutt advised that some proclamations were done while others were not. He suggested that the Committee should not rely on Community Agencies to handle the proclamations and submit them to the Mayor's Office. He stated that someone should be assigned the work and that he has done two proclamations and is willing to be that person.

Councillor Hendsbee advised that the process should be clarified with the Mayor's Office, and all proclamations that have been acknowledged throughout the year should be listed, and what has been done to implement them. He stated that he would do some research and find clarification on the proclamation criteria/policies and procedures and bring it before the Committee in the next meeting.

5.2 Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission re: re-scheduling important Community Events - Mr. Rutt

Mr. Rutt stated that he was advised that the onus is on Community Agencies to organize something on their own to recognize significant dates rather than re-scheduling, in the instance of coinciding event dates. He advised that he has reformatted and found web links for the Proclamation Web sites so that anyone can access them and understand what/when/where a specific event is being proclaimed.

In another Human Rights issue, Ms. Briand raised the discussion of Fair Trade. She advised that the Committee should review the Fair Trade Towns Action Kit and offered this web site www.transfair.ca for the Committee's review. She specifically referenced Page 9 of the document. This will be a new business item for a future meeting.

5.3 Invite Special Events and Cultural Advisory Committees re: Events surrounding the World Hockey Tournament. Contact the World Trade Convention Centre

Councillor Hendsbee advised that he is still trying to get in touch with the proper contacts and will advise the Committee when this has happened.

5.4 Committee Membership and Vacancies/Achieving Quorum. Structuring of Committee Attendance Rules

The Committee addressed the issue of achieving quorum and the present vacancies faced by the Committee. Concerns were expressed and suggestions made towards solving these issues.

It was advised that 'Information Notes' from 'Information Meetings' may be listed on the Committee's Agenda as an item to be approved in the next meeting following an Information Meeting; and as such, will become an item in the minutes of the next Committee meeting.

For clarification, 'Information Meetings' are unofficial meetings held, by choice, by members in attendance when a quorum is not reached. 'Quorum' is defined as having at least half of the total members of a Committee/Board plus one extra voting member. For example: If a Committee/Board has 12 members, quorum is 7 in attendance (Half of 12 = 6 + 1 extra = 7).

Information Meetings are used for discussions of old/deferred/suggestions of new business and review of Committee Agenda items; and as such are important to hold, and thus the Notes will be posted to the Committee's Web site, if they are included in a future meeting Agenda, and if warranted by the Committee.

In regards to an article published by the Chronicle Herald on March 06, 2008 stating that an 'anti-racial committee' was having difficulty reaching quorum, the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee discussed putting forth a motion to address this article to educate the members of the public on quorum, as well as informing of the Committee's objectives and achievements. The wording of 'anti-racial' will also be addressed to inform the public that the Committee deals with 'community and race relation' issues rather than 'anti-racial' concerns. The hard work of the volunteers as well as the Councillors has to be recognized.

The Committee will continue to followup with the concern of quorum in the next meeting of April 03, 2008.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Ms. McCallum that the Chair will contact Mr. John O'Brien, HRM Public Relations Officer, to prepare a press release to respond to the Chronicle Herald article and utilize it to advocate the work of the Committee that is being done through 'Information Meetings' as well as to use it as a recruitment opportunity for new legislation. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ms. Parris expressed the view that the Information Meeting should not be posted for public consumption as these are private hearings amongst the Committee members in attendance at the time, and are matters to be further discussed in future meetings of the Community and Race Relations Committee; issues that may be revised.

5.5 Attendance Letter - Review - Betty Thomas, Chair

Ms. Thomas submitted correspondence to the Committee regarding attendance. This matter had been previously discussed and further expressed in item 5.4. Ms. McCallum advised that the members list and current vacancies need to be updated.

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS - None

7. ADDED ITEMS

Ms. Alexandra McCallum informed the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee that she will be resigning from the Committee as she will be relocating to Prince Edward Island. The Committee thanked Ms. McCallum for her contribution and expertise.

Prior to adjournment, Councillor Hendsbee raised the Martin Luther King Jr. Project stating that he would be attending a meeting this evening with David Sparks regarding a time of reflection on the life of Dr. King, and would report back to the Committee and provide information for the next meeting of April 03, 2008.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for April 03, 2008 in the Media Room, 1st Floor, City Hall.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Sandra T. Riley
Legislative Assistant