

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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4:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 1  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Duke Tower  
January 5, 2000

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair  
Councillor Keith Colwell  
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton  
Ms. May Lui  
Ms. Sylvia Parris  
Mr. Tom Rissesco  
Mr. Keith Gillis  
Mr. Andre Massicotte  
Ms. Seemeen Asad Khan

REGRETS: Councillor Blumenthal, Messrs. Khokhar, Amari and Wedderburn

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator Diversity Programs  
Cst. Cedric Upshaw, Black Youth Liaison Officer  
Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

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**1.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved, as circulated, on motion of Mr. Rissesco and Mr. Massicotte. The Chair proposed that the order of the items under Business Arising be slightly reordered.

**2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, were approved as circulated.

**3.0 BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**3.2 WEB SITE UPDATE**

Mr. Canales-Leyton reported that he had been in contact with Kelly Marney regarding the HRM Web site in general and the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee's page in particular. The whole site is presently being upgraded. In future, the Committee's site could be expanded to include pictures, a bulletin board, etc. Concern was expressed that some control would be required with respect to what could be posted on the bulletin board. Mr. Canales-Leyton indicated that he will be reporting the Committee's feedback to Ms. Marney.

Circulated to the members were pages printed off the HRM Web site. It was noted that under the category of Culture only the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia is presently listed.

In future the design of the Committee's Web page will be the responsibility of a Municipal Clerk's Office employee, not Ms. Marney.

It was suggested that Mr. Canales-Leyton prepare a synopsis of what he felt should be included on the Committee's Web page for the next meeting. It was recalled that in the past the Committee's membership list, Policy, meeting times and contact person had been listed. It was felt the Committee's terms of reference and Work Plan should be added. The members were encouraged to contact Mr. Canales-Leyton with any further suggestions of what should be included in his list.

**3.1 IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY - HRM EXECUTIVE/SENIOR MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP UPDATE**

The Chair reported on the outcome of the Workshop held December 10, 1999 with the

HRM Executive and Senior Managers. It was felt that the session went very well. Confidence was expressed that the EMT and Senior Managers will be champions of implementing the policy and working with the Committee in developing a monitoring process. Copies of the Flip Chart notes were circulated at the meeting. EMT will be discussing the notes at a further meeting.

The format of the Workshop was outlined and it was noted that Betty MacDonald spoke on how implementation of the Policy could be incorporated into the Business Plan.

Cst. Upshaw reflected on the experience of the Police Service implementing a similar policy in 1996.

Reference was made to the 'Next Steps' page of the Flip Chart Notes, in particular management's willingness to use Committee members as resources. It was proposed that the Committee might consider meeting at various HRM locations to get a feel for the variety of operations being run by the Municipality. It would help the members understand how the work of each department is very different, thus making the uniformity of application impractical. A uniformity of goal, rather than application was seen as achievable. It is anticipated that some of the strategies will be very exciting and interesting. Application will be different within the different departments. While the implementation may be different, the same objectives can be achieved.

The Chair encouraged the members to become familiar with the strategies to implement the Policy contained in their package.

A time line or time frame for implementation was discussed. It was noted that the strategies will have to be taken back to staff for input and an analysis of what is already in place. The Chair emphasized that the implementation strategy is no longer the Committee's responsibility but management's. Ms. Williams noted that Phase 1 of the Business Plans development has already been completed and these implementation strategies are not part of this year's Business Plans. They will no doubt be included in next year's Business Plans which will be more detailed and analytical.

Reference was made to the HRM's Alignment 2000 - Getting the Right Fit brochure. Copies of this brochure were circulated to the members. The Chair referred to the draft Business Strategies and suggested that something pertaining to the implementation of the Policy should be included in the next version.

### **3.3 FCM - RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND ABORIGINAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Was to have been taken off the agenda.

### **3.4 SIGNIFICANT DATES AND ASSOCIATED WORK PLAN**

Barbara Nehiley was in attendance to continue the discussions from the November meeting on the subject of proclaiming significant dates. It was recalled that while Council adopted the list of significant dates proposed by the Committee, adequate resources have not been identified to complete the associated work. Ms. Nehiley felt that in addition to proclaiming a significant date, research must be done into the background of the day. This can be very time-consuming and the data has to be condensed into a proclamation format. She also felt that follow-up of a proclamation is required, ie. programs and events be organized by HRM, alone or in partnerships, to recognize these significant dates, otherwise not much is accomplished. Whether the Tourism/Culture/Heritage Department was the right department to coordinate this initiative was debated.

Councillor Colwell, reflecting on his experience with tourism, felt that culture was one of the best and easiest things to sell and it would fit well with such a department. It was proposed by Mr. Massicotte that it might be worthwhile, from an education perspective, if a member of the Tourism/Culture/Heritage department was assigned as a resource to the Committee. Reference was made to the recent Workshop and while it was noted that Mr. Lewis Rogers, General Manager, Tourism/Culture/Heritage had not been in attendance, Lynn Ledwidge, Manager, Market Development, may have been.

It was felt it would be worthwhile to develop an appropriate activity to promote a significant day throughout the organization. Ms. Williams noted that it had been previously suggested that the Significant Dates list be recirculated within HRM. The Chair reflected that some of the managers did not even recall the Significant Dates list.

In the event the list is recirculated, it was proposed that departments be asked to identify any significant date they wished to adopt. This would make HRM look proactive and show its support of diversity.

It was proposed by Ms. Nehiley that the list of significant dates and explanation could be included in the "Alignment 2000 - Getting the Right Fit" booklet to help educate HRM employees. The Web site could also list the significant dates, with an accompanying explanation and include hot links. A tie into the Province's Tourism Guide, which lists festivals was also proposed. It was noted that the area of tourism is one of the places where the Province and Municipality work well together. A further communication vehicle is the HRM newsletter. There is a need to raise staff's awareness. Each publication could include reference to a significant date or dates, with accompanying explanation.

It was suggested by the Chair that each member take one significant date and research it and this information would then have to be refined and edited into statements for a proclamation, which would be understandable to the public. If in agreement, the Chair would coordinate. Ideally she wished to see someone assigned from HRM to this function, but this could be worked on further in the future. Ms. Williams proposed that this might be a duty for a summer student.

The members were in agreement with the Chair assigning each a significant date to research, etc. The information could be faxed to her. The Clerk was asked to contact the Mayor's office for examples of proclamation to be used as format in drafting ones for the significant dates.

Ms. Nehiley gave some suggestions on how information can be obtained, ie. contact organizations related to the issue and through the Internet. Once the information is compiled, it was suggested it be forwarded to the Corporate Library so it is readily accessible to the entire organization.

A discussion followed on whether the Significant Dates were the only dates the HRM recognizes. It was noted that Council regularly proclaims special days, weeks or months. Since Council minutes are kept on the HRM Web site, a search for proclamations is quite easy.

Ms. Nehiley stressed the need for follow-up. If events are to be developed in association with the proclamation, they will have to be included the Business Plans, thereby each department can make a contribution.

By raising staff's awareness of significant dates in general, consideration of important dates which impact certain communities could be taken into account when public meetings are scheduled.

It was noted that although a review of the Significant Dates is only required annually, members are welcome to bring forward dates at any time for consideration by the Committee. If the Selection Criteria are met, a report could be forwarded to Council to expand the list. It was also communicated that the Mayor's Office and/or City Clerks Office can be approached at anytime for inclusion of a proclamation on a Council agenda. Proclamations have been known to have been included, as added items. A member or an organization can make such requests, they don't have to go by the Committee. The Committee's list only pertains to dates that will be recognized on a regular basis annually. A date which does not make the Significant Dates list, can still be proclaimed.

#### **4.0 CHAIR'S REPORT**

In addition to the report the Chair had given earlier in the meeting on the December Workshop, she noted that she has received a letter from the Coordinator of the Grants Program who wishes to meet with the Committee in February or March. This will be added to the February agenda.

#### **5.0 CORRESPONDENCE FROM MS. LANG**

Circulated with the agenda package was a letter from Ms. Lang, New Brunswick to the Mayor expressing disappointment with the apparent lack of attention to the cultural diversity of the City, particularly in the tourist information. She felt the Municipality could better serve itself and tourists by highlighting cultural diversity. A copy of the Mayor's response had been sent to the Committee for its information.

Considerable debate followed on whether there was a need for follow-up.

It was felt that this may be an opportunity to encourage the inclusion of significant dates in the Tourism Guidebook and a list of all racial and/or cultural organizations in the Municipality and ways to contact. Whether it was the Committee's place to give advice to the Tourism/Culture/Heritage Department was debated.

It was suggested that a letter be written to the Mayor thanking him for forwarding the correspondence to the Committee, noting the Committee shares Ms. Lang's concern and suggesting a copy be sent to the Tourism/Culture/Heritage Department. It was further suggested that the Chair might consider meeting with staff of the Tourism/Culture/Heritage Department to discuss ways to improve the situation and determine what they are presently doing. It was identified that this is a concrete example of what this department could do to implement the Policy. It was felt that this letter could act as a catalyst for the Committee to focus on one department and encourage them to consider multi-culturalism as an area which could be marketed. The Department by meeting with the Committee, might be able to develop a truly diverse marketing effort. The Chair will arrange a meeting with Mr. Rogers and discuss the issues raised. Once the meeting date is set, the members will be advised.

It was proposed that the Greater Halifax Partnership might also be interested in Ms. Lang's observations.

A discussion followed on the apparent lack of sites on the Web dealing with culture and diversity. As noted earlier, the HRM Web site, under the category Culture, only lists the

Black Cultural Centre. Perhaps more need to be developed.

## **5.2 REVIEW OF MANDATE**

## **5.3 1999 WORK PLAN - STRATEGIES**

The Chair explained to the new members that the Committee feels that the Issues Affecting Diverse Communities and Strategy to Promote Diversity of Communities in HRM are ongoing issues and thus appear as on going agenda items.

Mr. Canales-Leyton noted that the Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures (CDVC) will be sending a letter to the Committee requesting an opportunity to meet and make a presentation regarding the setting aside of a week yearly to celebrate diversity. Mr. Canales-Leyton circulated to the members brochures introducing the organization. It is the Centre's desire to partner with the Municipality on this concept.

Referring to the subject of Issues Affecting Diverse Communities, Ms. Williams felt there is a need to develop a good vehicle for getting information. She felt the Committee needs to focus on this area. Perhaps it was time to get away from the promotion of positive relationships and focus on the more concrete role of providing services.

It was suggested that perhaps the Committee should determine what is being done in other municipalities such as Toronto. Staff explained how different the structure is of a city like Toronto and the need to design a strategy appropriate to HRM, which is still predominantly white, Anglo-saxon. Ms. Nehiley felt that the Committee should look at strategies which will work based on the makeup of the population.

The Chair felt the Committee should be identified as a place the community can go for advice which could proactively help reduce tensions. The simmering problems with the fisheries were given as an example.

Ms. Williams encouraged the new members, in particular, to fulfil the role of being the eyes and ears of the community. If issues are brought to their attention re diversity, they should bring them forward to the Committee. It was felt that in future staff will be approaching the Committee members more and they need to be prepared.

In future the Issues Affecting Diverse Communities will be moved up on the agenda before Business Arising.

It was suggested that the Committee may wish to consider holding a Town Hall meeting as



a vehicle to promote communication of such issues. It may be helpful as the Work Plan is developed to have information flowing into the organization through the Committee.

Mr. Canales-Leyton referred to a gathering of immigrant services organizations from around the Province held last year in Halifax. A follow-up meeting is to be held in March. He felt it would be desirable for the Committee to be represented at this meeting or make a presentation to tell them, among other things, what the Committee can do on behalf of their constituency.

He also suggested inviting organizations to attend Committee meetings. To date the Committee has heard from no organizations. He felt it important to establish these contacts and links by communicating with them directly.

#### **6.0 INFORMATION ONLY**

Copies of HRM's October/November and December Newsletters were circulated with the agenda package.

The Chair referred to an "Immigrants Handbook of Nova Scotia" by Robert Arthur which would make an good reference book. Cost \$7.50.

Mr. Canales-Leyton also noted that in the "Handy Dandy Directory" the Committee is listed. He had copies of the December/January issue of "Street Feat".

#### **6.0 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, February 2, 2000.

#### **7.0 ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. on motion of Councillor Colwell and Mr. Canales-Leyton.

Betty Thomas  
Chair

Lynne Le Boutillier  
Assistant Municipal Clerk

(Jan.26,2000)

