

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 6, 2000

MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Mr. Haji M. Amari
Mr. Andre Massicotte
Ms. May Lui
Councillor Dawn Sloane
Councillor Keith Colwell

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Programs
Ms. Lynne Le Boutillier, Assistant Municipal Clerk

REGRETS: Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton and Mr. Rissesco

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The meeting was called to order by the Chair at approximately 5:00 p.m. in Conference Room 1, 3rd Floor, Duke Street Tower.

Councillor Dawn Sloane, recently appointed to the Committee, was introduced to the members and staff.

1.0 **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted, as circulated.

2.0 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the October 4, 2000 meeting were adopted on motion of Mr. Massicotte and Ms. Lui.

3.0 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

3.1 **WEB SITE**

Concern was expressed that this item has not yet been resolved. Councillor Sloane indicated she had some expertise in this area and volunteered to act as the Committee's liaison. In the interim, Charla Williams offered to contact Kelly Marney, the Web Master to discuss process. It was felt important that the Committee agree on the content and devise a process to keep the site up-to-date. Mr. Canales-Leyton was going to bring forward to the Committee suggestions for content. The Chair will contact Mr. Canales-Leyton. The Secretary noted the process for putting the Committee's minutes on the site has been established and changes had been recently made to the membership list to reflect the appointment of the new Councillor.

3.2 **PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED WITH INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

It was recalled that problems with internal communications, particularly related to the use of Halifax Hall, had been identified by Mr. Canales-Leyton some months ago. At the October meeting, the subject was discussed and it was suggested that a letter be written to the Mayor on behalf of the Committee stating the concern raised and providing suggestions on how the matter might be resolved.

The Chair indicated that this has not yet been done. She sought further guidance from the members. The matter was discussed at some length and it was suggested that it might also be beneficial if the HRM Website listed the daily activities of the Mayor. Given the recent municipal election and the resultant changes, it was concluded that Ms. Williams should contact Mr. O'Brien, the Communications Officer again.

4.0 **UPDATE FROM COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE AND MEETING WITH EMT**

The members were advised that EMT will be able to attend the February meeting to discuss progress that has been made in implementing the Community and Race Relations Policy.

Ms. Williams reported that the Implementation Committee met this morning and will be focusing on preparing their Work Plan for next year and a report for EMT to present to the Committee. A copy of the report will be provided to the members in advance of the February meeting. It was suggested that it might be beneficial for the Implementation Committee to also attend the February meeting. The Committee agreed with this suggestion and Ms. Williams will pass the invitation along to the Implementation Committee, checking with EMT beforehand. In the event they accept, due to the potential number of attendees, the Secretary will endeavour to secure Halifax Hall for this meeting.

During the course of discussion, Ms. Williams noted that some business units don't have representation on the Implementation Committee. It was suggested by Mr. Massicotte that over the course of the next year, department heads should be invited to meetings to identify to the Committee progress they are making in their business units.

It was further suggested that it might be beneficial to invite a department head from a business unit represented on the Implementation Committee, together with a department head of a business unit not represented. This would provide the latter some insight into the benefits of participating through the gathering of ideas and suggestions. By being given advance notice, department heads of business units not yet involved may be encouraged to become involved and thus benefit from the communications and general networking. It was suggested by Ms. Williams that the Committee may wish to postpone making a decision on this suggestion until after they have seen the Implementation Committee's report.

Mr. Massicotte questioned whether any funds have been budgeted for next year for the purpose of implementing the policy. Ms. Williams noted that specifics would not be available until after the Operating Budget is passed, but the subject could be addressed in a general fashion.

Staff was asked to identify any specific areas where progress has been made. Ms. Williams referred to the following:

- C Diversity Week - This event will likely be enhanced for next year.
- C Police Service recruiting visible minorities. Aspects of the recruiting drive were

provided by Cst. Upshaw.

Metro Transit has done likewise. These endeavours reflect the increased awareness that the HRM's workforce is not a diverse workforce.

- C Recreation's Community Development initiatives and recognition of the need for more racially visible lifeguards.

Ms. Williams concluded that progress is being made. She felt this progress should be supported versus saying it is not enough.

5.0 **CHAIR'S REPORT**

None.

6.0 **2000 - 2001 WORKPLAN**

The **Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee Brochure** drafted by Mr. Massicotte, with input from the Committee, was circulated with the agenda package.

As there were no suggested changes to content, Ms. Williams to take to Shared Services to determine what the cost would be for them to reformat.

7.0 **ISSUES AFFECTING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES**

In addition to the life guard program referred to earlier, particularly as it related to Centennial pool, Councillor Sloane related some other initiatives in her District such as:

- C discussions surrounding establishing 'Citizens on Patrol'
- C activities for girls
- C Camp Brunswick, Brunswick United Church - A fundraiser will be held to rebuild.

Upcoming events were identified by Ms. Williams:

- C December 6th - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.
- C December 10th - Human Rights Day - Event planned at the N.S. Community College, Bell Road from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
- C December 10th - Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children Fund Raiser on Cable 10 from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Williams noted that the annual party held by HRM this year has been identified as a

'Holiday Celebration' versus Christmas Party.

Cst. Upshaw described a Law Program commenced in October whereby young people from various backgrounds are introduced to a judge, Crown Attorney and visit the Police Station.

Referring to the life guard program, Councillor Colwell reflected on his observations that those individuals who successfully complete such a demanding course, will undoubtedly continue on to post secondary education, as it is such a confidence builder and instills discipline.

Councillor Colwell provided an update on the situation respecting the Recreation Centre in North Preston, which had been discussed earlier in the year. He indicated he was pleased with progress in this area. A new Recreation Association is in place. It is anticipated that the present Centre will be demolished and be replaced with a Multi-Service Centre. The new Centre would be owned and operated by the HRM. Concept plans are being developed. It is anticipated that Department of Health, RCMP, Department of Community Services and HRM Customer Services (part-time) offices may be located in the Centre. Councillor Colwell felt funding from Provincial and Federal Government levels will likely be easier to obtain now that the HRM is committed to operating the centre. The biggest program now is funding. He also made reference to plans being developed for pocket parks, ball fields and basketball courts. Councillor Colwell reiterated his belief that neither HRM or its predecessor, the Halifax Regional Municipality has done this community, which is part of the urban core, justice.

The Chair thanked Councillor Colwell, on behalf of the Committee for the time and diligence he has devoted to the area. She encouraged him to continue the good work and the Committee was available if he required any assistance.

Ms. Williams emphasized involving the community as much as possible as it was very important for the pride of the community. Ways of developing pride in the community were discussed.

7.1 COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN NEW CANADIANS AND THE POLICE

An extract of the September minutes was read by the Chair related to this topic raised by Mr. Canales-Leyton. A similar matter had been brought up sometime ago and Cst. Upshaw had not been aware of Mr. Canales-Leyton's concern. Cst. Upshaw referred to the procedure used by Police Services, when new Canadians are brought in for booking. He assured the members that the Police Services liaises with Immigration. Cst. Upshaw was asked to contact Mr. Canales-Leyton directly for details.

8.0 NEW BUSINESS

8.1 **EXTENSION OF APPOINTMENTS**

The Secretary advised that appointments which expired November 2000 have been extended to January 31, 2001. A second advertisement has been run for volunteers and the deadline for applications is December 15, 2000.

8.2 **BUSINESS CARDS**

An error was identified by Mr. Amari in the telephone number on his business card. Ms. Lui's telephone number had been inadvertently used. Ms. Lui noted this to be her 'unlisted' number and encouraged members to check their business cards for accuracy. The Secretary noted errors on business cards had been identified to her earlier this year and corrected ones are presently at the printer.

9.0 **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 3, 2001.

10.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

Before adjourning, the Chair extended an invitation to Councillor Sloane to meet with her and Ms. Williams, to bring her up to speed on the Committee's endeavours.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.

Ms. Betty Thomas
Chair

Lynne Le Boutillier
Assistant Municipal Clerk

(dec.27/2000)