

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 7, 2004

NOTES

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Mr. Shawn Lahey
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton

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

1. Welcome & Introductions

Ms. Charla Williams addressed the members present and advised that the Committee had not met in some time due to the fact that the membership numbers didn't meeting the requirement under the terms of reference, and that there was some concern about the direction of the Committee.

She explained that when the Clerk's Office issued a call for candidates for all of HRM's Boards and Committees for the 2003/04 year, several people put their names forward to sit on the Board. Ms. Williams added that the present membership of the Committee, with the addition of the new appointees, will fulfill the requirements of the Terms of Reference.

Ms. Williams advised that she scheduled this informal meeting of the present committee to get feedback on whether they wished to continue serving, and if so, to discuss the direction in which to take. Ms. Williams added that she wanted to review the terms of reference with the members present, to ensure everyone is comfortable with them or if they feel that they need to be revised. As well, Ms. Williams suggested that once the Committee is up and running again, it focus on more specific issues, noting that perhaps in the past the Committee had been sidetracked by focusing too much on race relations policy, and by spending too much time on various topics.

2. Committee Terms of Reference - Discussion

Ms. Williams circulated copies of the Committee's Terms of Reference, and the members reviewed and made revisions as follows:

Under the heading, 1.0 Objective - item 1.1:

- < it was suggested that the word '*ensure*' be removed and replaced with the phrase '*strive to achieve*'.
- < Another suggestion was the wording, '*by ensuring that policies and programs do not impose barriers to such participation*' be removed and replaced with, '*by identifying the policies and programs that impose barriers to such participation*'.

Under the heading, 1.0 Objective - item 1.5:

- < It was suggested that a period be placed after the word '*programs*' and remove the rest of the sentence to have the clause read, "*to ensure that HRM's diverse communities have an equitable opportunity to voice their views on community and race relations issues, as defined in the Policy, affected by HRM policies and programs.*"

Additional comments put forth with respect to the Committee's Term of Reference were as follows:

- S what is HRM's definition of 'a community' when, for example, in its promotional literature, it says it has "over 200 communities". Ms. Williams indicated there was a local book about the communities within HRM which might be helpful on this point.
- S there was general consensus that the 'Objectives' in the Committee's Terms of Reference support what the Committee sets out to do.
- S with regard to clauses 2.4 and 2.5 under the heading of 'Responsibilities', a comment was made that the Committee has fallen down on actioning these items.
- S the focus of the Committee should be to identify issues and prioritize
- S suggestion put forth that the Committee hold an open house at some point

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

The following comments were put forth:

- S it was noted that in the fall of 2002 Cathy Brown, HRM Human Resources, facilitated a session with the Committee concerning its future direction. It was suggested that the minutes from this session would be helpful and that they should be circulated to the Committee. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant will follow-up.
- S it was suggested that the Committee schedule a meeting, specifically to review the minutes on the facilitated session.
- S Ms. Williams will research information from other municipalities on the way they identify the concerns of their diverse communities.

4. Membership - Individual vs. Organizational Membership

The following comments were put forth:

- S in future, look at improving the recruiting process for the Committee
- S suggestion that representatives from organizations such as MISA, MANS, and the Black Cultural Centre have a seat on the Committee
- S suggestion that organizations shouldn't have a representative on the Committee, but rather, the Committee work to ensure input from those organizations
- S new members have to be available to attend Committee meetings
- S once the Committee has a clear objective, the issue of commitment and

- S availability of the members to the Committee will be resolved
 annual forum on race relations

5. Future Meeting Schedule

It was generally agreed that the Committee would keep to its previous schedule of meeting the first Wednesday of the month at 4:45 p.m.

Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton indicated he would check his schedule as he may have another meeting scheduled for the same date.

6. Next Steps

The next step will be for the Membership Selection Committee to meet and a recommendation to Council would come from the Membership Selection Committee for appointments to the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee.

Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant, will prepare the notes from this meeting and circulate them to the Committee.

Ms. Williams advised that when a meeting of the newly appointed Committee is scheduled, it will be helpful for the members to be advised on her role, and the role of the Legislative Assistant to the Committee.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Sheilagh Edmonds
Legislative Assistant