

# **HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

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## **COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE October 7, 2004 MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair  
Mr. Thomas Rissesco  
Ms. May Lui  
Ms. Sylvia Parris  
Mr. David Khokhar  
Councillor Debbie Hum (5:10 pm)

**ABSENT:** Mr. Shawn Lahey, Vice-Chair (Regrets)  
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton (Regrets)  
Mr. Larry Guphill (Regrets)  
Mr. Wilfred McEachern (Regrets)  
Councillor David Hendsbee (Regrets)

**STAFF:** Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Program  
Sgt. Don MacLean, Equity/Diversity Officer, HRP  
Ms. Tatjana Zatezalo, Diversity Consultant  
Ms. Millie Hull, Legislative Assistant

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Betty Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm in the Media Room, City Hall, with no quorum present.

**2. INTRODUCTION**

Ms. Thomas introduced and welcomed Sgt. Don MacLean, Equity/Diversity Officer, Halifax Regional Police and Ms. Tatjana Zatezalo, Diversity Consultant, HRM.

Sgt. MacLean advised that as Diversity Officer his position is an internal resource with Halifax Regional Police and deals with internal and external issues within the community as well as initiatives of the Halifax Regional Police. He noted that he felt the role of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee would tie in with his responsibilities. A brief discussion ensued with Sgt. MacLean responding to questions from the Committee.

Councillor Hum entered the meeting at 5:10 pm.

Ms. Zatezalo advised that in her position as Diversity Consultant, she will work closely with Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Program. She noted that she will assist with the promotion and awareness of diversity within the organization and communicating to the public that the organization is a diverse employer and an employer that respects diversity. A brief discussion ensued with Ms. Zatezalo and Ms. Williams responding to questions from the Committee.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS**

**5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

**5.1 Distribution of Diversity Post Card**

It was agreed the Diversity Post Card be distributed to HRM Recreation facilities, Customer Service Centres, and Halifax Regional Libraries. Councillor Hum also requested she be given some so she could distribute them to the schools in her district.

Ms. Williams made the suggestion the Committee explore the possibility of creating a poster that could include more information about the Committee. Ms. Williams also noted that HRM is working on a stewardship calendar which could possibly include contact information and photos of the Committee members. Ms. Hull to contact Ms. Corrine Hartley-Robinson of Marketing for information.

## **5.2 Review of Community & Race Relations Policy**

A preliminary discussion took place on the policy and it was agreed that the Origin portion be moved to the back of the policy for information purposes and the Acknowledgment portion be removed.

Ms. Thomas requested the Committee review the policy again and noted that any recommended changes will be discussed at the next meeting.

Ms. Thomas opened the floor to discussion on some issues that affect diverse communities. Mr. David Khokhar suggested some discussion take place on the issue of immigration. Ms. Williams noted that after the last meeting she had contacted Betty MacDonald, Director of Governance, and noted that it was Ms. MacDonald's intention to involve the Committee in discussions of immigration. Ms. Williams further noted that on October 15, 2004 staff will begin discussions on issues of immigration.

Discussion ensued with some Members sharing their personal experiences relating to immigration. Some issues that were raised are as follows:

1. lack of availability of jobs
2. academic credentials from other countries not recognized
3. lack of available services to immigrants
4. immigration process is lengthy and strict
5. support of English as a second language
6. sensitivity awareness on cultural diversity within the public schools
7. municipality work with the school board to provide understanding of municipal policies and recruitment strategies
8. newcomers to the ESL schools have issues within the daycare system relating to different cultures
9. cultural awareness training in schools as to what is acceptable in Canada and what is not acceptable within HRM
10. HRM work to make life easier for newcomers to Canada
11. HRM become involve in a public education and awareness campaign in areas of diversity

Ms. Zatezalo advised the Committee that HRM Human Resources is working on adopting recruitment policies and strategies where diversity will play a major role.

Ms. Parris left the meeting at 6:07 pm.

Discussion continued with Councillor Hum and Mr. Khokhar leaving the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Ms. Thomas thanked the Members for their input on immigration. It was suggested that comments on the Discussion Paper - A Framework for Immigration - be sent directly to the Province of Nova Scotia and copied to HRM.

On another matter, Ms. Williams referencing the memo from John O'Brien, Corporate Communications Officer, titled "HRM Publications and Printing - Diversity", noted that Mr. O'Brien has committed to requesting all HRM representatives use diversity in representing the Municipality. She also noted that as a result of restructuring, Marketing, Design & Print Services are now under Mr. O'Brien's office.

**5.3 Future Work Plans**

This item to be discussed at the next meeting.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

**7. ADDED ITEMS**

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2004

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Millie Hull  
Legislative Assistant