

**COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
November 4, 2004**

NOTES

PRESENT: Mr. Shawn Lahey, Vice Chair
Mr. Larry Guphill
Mr. Wilf McEachern
Ms. May Lui
Mr. Thomas Rissesco
Councillor Hendsbee

ABSENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair (regrets)
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton (regrets)
Mr. David Khokhar (regrets)
Mr. Councillor Debbie Hum (regrets)
Mr. Sylvia Parris (regrets)

STAFF: Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Program
Sgt. Don MacLean, Equity/Diversity Officer, HRP

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 4:55 p.m. Advising there was no quorum, he indicated that the regular agenda would not be dealt with, however, he invited the members to put forward any issues they want to discuss on an informal basis.

The following points were raised:

- C Ms. May Lui noted that she uses bus routes 1 and 14 and, lately, these buses were experiencing overloads particular during the hours between 3:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. and she questioned if something could be done. A brief discussion ensued and it was suggested Ms. Lui contact Metro Transit Services and speak to someone directly about the problem. Councillor Hendsbee pointed out that the University Bus Pass program has been an overwhelming success, and is probably leading to bus overloads.
- C Councillor Hendsbee noted that the recent edition of the *HRM News* contains an article on Diversity Week which was held in September. The Vice Chair advised that the Committee members used to receive a copy of the newsletter and he asked the Legislative Assistant to send out the most recent copy in the Committee's next agenda package.
- C Ms. Williams advised of the recent CAO awards for staff and indicated that, beginning next year, there will be a CAO Award for Diversity. This will be awarded to someone who promotes diversity in the workplace.
- C Councillor Hendsbee advised of the Annual Meeting of the Black Cultural Centre to be held Saturday, November 20th.
- C Ms. Lui advised of Centennial Day, an Italian Day celebration at Pier 21 to be held November 13.
- C Ms. Williams announced that on November 20th a recognition dinner will be held for Rocky Jones. She noted that it is a fundraising dinner for the Buddy Daye Scholarship, and will be held at St. Antonio Hall.
- C The Committee entered a discussion on the issues of immigration and Ms. Williams updated the Committee on the staff networking group which is looking into this matter. Councillor Hendsbee advised that Hon. Judy Sgro, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, spoke at the recent Atlantic Mayors Congress on issues surrounding immigration and he suggested the Mayor's Office be contacted and see if her presentation or a transcript of her remarks could be made available for the Committee.

- C Ms. Williams and Sgt. MacLean responded to questions regarding the HRM employment equity programs and HRP's commitment to ensuring diversity in its recruitment process. Mr. McEachern advised that upon hearing Ms. Williams and Sgt. MacLean's comments on the support that HRM has built into its systems with regard to employment equity and supporting diversity, he questioned the purpose of this Committee. Mr. McEachern indicated that with staffing resources like Ms. Williams and Sgt. MacLean these issues appear to be addressed. In response, Ms. Williams noted that this Committee needs to look at the citizens of HRM and whether there are issues pertaining to the diverse nature of the community.
- C Councillor Hendsbee spoke in support of the Committee, and he suggested that one issue the Committee could look into is the high percentage of immigrants who are taxi drivers.

Mr. Rissesco and St. MacLean retired from the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

- C A discussion ensued concerning the mandate of the Committee and the frustration of the lack of issues being brought forward. Ms. Williams suggested the Committee could invite the Mayor and other members of Council, as well as the CAO and Deputy CAO to have an open discussion as to how the Committee can be effectively be used as a resource to Council.
- C Councillor Hendsbee requested that the latest Regional Planning brochure be circulated in the next agenda package for the Committee member's information.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Sheilagh Edmonds
Legislative Assistant