

COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 2, 2006

MINUTES

PRESENT: Ms. Betty Thomas, Chair
Mr. Larry Guphill
Mr. Wilf McEachern
Ms. Susanne Wise
Ms. Gail Wilson
Mr. Thomas Rissesco
Mr. David Khokar
Councillor Debbie Hum

**ABSENT WITH
REGRETS:** Mr. Shawn Lahey, Vice Chair
Ms. Sylvia Parris
Ms. May Lui
Councillor Krista Snow
Mr. Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton

STAFF: Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Program

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:50 p.m. in the Media Room, City Hall **without a quorum.**

The Committee agreed to review the Canadian Commission for UNESCO correspondence first on the agenda.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Canadian Commission for UNESCO re: Coalition of Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

C Correspondence dated January 13, 2006 from David A. Walden, Secretary-General, Canadian Commission for UNESCO was before the Committee.

It was clarified by Councillor Debbie Hum that Regional Council did not have any discussion on this item, but that a motion was passed by Council to refer the UNESCO correspondence to the Committee and staff for review and to report back to Council. She further noted that no time line to report to Council was given and there does not appear to be a time line set out in the UNESCO correspondence.

Ms. Charla Williams, Coordinator, Diversity Programs, clarified the following:

- C She will be preparing a staff report to Council, which she will bring before the Committee in draft form for discussion before the report goes to Council.
- C A separate report to Council will be prepared from the Committee.
- C In order for HRM to undertake this initiative, it will require additional resources for coordination of such projects as collaboration with other levels of government, non-government organizations and various HRM business units and departments.
- C Upon review of the Ten Common Commitments and examples of actions set out in the UNESCO correspondence, she noted that HRM has already been following many of these commitments and implementing many similar actions, however, they have not been recorded and compiled.
- C She will contact UNESCO to discuss the initiative and contact some of the municipalities that have joined the Coalition to discuss their involvement in the initiative.
- C She will not contact non-government organizations to discuss collaboration on the initiative until staff have direction from Council.

Mr. David Khokhar spoke in support of the initiative and the direction, education, and clarification it would provide.

Councillor Hum noted that the initiative would be a considerable undertaking for HRM. She further noted that an extensive staff report would be required setting out an action plan for each commitment and the required resources. The Councillor indicated that this would be a good opportunity to compile and clarify what HRM has accomplished and are currently accomplishing through anti-racism and anti-discrimination initiatives.

Mr. Larry Guptill asked the Committee to consider what HRM will get in return from implementing the initiative. Mr. Guptill advised that he has had experience partnering with UNESCO and noted that undertaking this initiative will be labour intensive and require significant resources. He suggested that HRM could draw on the ideas from the UNESCO initiative to enhance HRM's Race Relations Policy and the Committee's work plan. Mr. Guptill further suggested that a document could be compiled outlining anti-racism and anti-discrimination actions and initiatives undertaken by HRM to provide UNESCO with examples.

Ms. Gail Wilson arrived at 5:06 p.m., at which time **a quorum was achieved.**

Mr. Wilfred McEachern noted that, in his opinion, upon weighing the costs of implementing the initiative against the rewards, the costs would be insignificant in consideration of having an opportunity to showcase HRM as an example to the rest of the world.

The Chair spoke in support of the initiative, noting that if the initiative is approved by Council, it will be important to see through its implementation and to ensure that it does not become another adopted yet unused policy. She noted that this initiative could be a good opportunity to work with other community organizations and also to work with the Aboriginal community.

Ms. Williams noted that she would recommend to have the School Board sign on as a partner, as the initiative extensively involves education. She commented that the School Board has been working on anti-racism and anti-discrimination initiatives as well. Ms. Williams further noted that she sees two major benefits to HRM through this initiative, as follows:

- C Adopting the initiative will raise the profile of anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts in HRM.
- C Adopting the initiative will allow HRM to draw on and learn more from the anti-racism and anti-discrimination experiences of other municipalities

Ms. Williams further noted that she considers the initiative positive in principle. However, until she speaks with other municipalities regarding their experiences with involvement in the initiative, and with UNESCO regarding their expectations, it will be difficult to determine whether HRM can practically put in place resources to undertake the initiative.

Mr. McEachern encouraged the Committee to maintain a charitable outlook, not only focussing on what benefits the initiative will bring to HRM, but what other municipalities around the world will gain from HRM's anti-racism and anti-discrimination experiences.

MOVED BY Mr. Thomas Rissesco, seconded by Mr. David Khokhar, that the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council endorse in principle the initiative set out by the Coalition of Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Guptill advised of regrets for the April 6, 2006 meeting and Ms. Williams advised she would email the report to him for his review and input.

MOVED BY Councillor Debbie Hum, seconded by Mr. Larry Guptill, that staff bring the draft report on the initiative set out by the Coalition of Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination before the Committee for input and discussion prior to going before Regional Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Future Work Plans

C The Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee Work Plan was before the Committee.

The Chair clarified that the Goals outlined in the work plan are the Goals from the Race Relations Policy, the Objectives in the Work Plan are from the Terms of Reference, and the Activities in the Work Plan are from discussion at the January 5, 2006 meeting. She further noted that Ms. Sylvia Parris, who could not attend the meeting today, forwarded input via email on the Work Plan, as follows:

- C Events be posted for Committee members and the public on the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee website.
- C The Committee host a Councillor's gathering as part of HRM's Diversity Week (3rd week of September).

Ms. Williams and Councillor Hum noted that there are normally many events planned during Diversity Week, which may compromise attendance in holding a Councillor's gathering. It was suggested that perhaps the first Thursday of October may be a more appropriate time to hold the event.

Ms. Williams noted that the Work Plan may be more useful as a status sheet type document. She noted that the February to December 2006 time frame should be deleted as some of the projects will be ongoing beyond December 2006. It was suggested that it would be helpful if the Committee prioritized the activities set out in the Work Plan.

Ms. Susanne Wise noted that a Method column should be added between the Objective and Activities columns. She clarified that the Method column could set out the method of implementing the Goal (ie: educate, inform, etc.) and that the Activities column should specifically set out the action that will be taken to implement the Method (ie: public meeting, letter writing, etc.).

It was further suggested by Ms. Williams that the Delegation column specifically set out the staff person or the Committee member that will be taking a lead on that specific activity. Committee members also noted that the Date Completed column should be revised to indicate a start date and a target completion date.

The Chair requested that the Legislative Assistant forward the Work Plan document to each Committee member via email. The Chair further requested that Committee members input suggestions (ie: specific projects, Committee members as leaders of activities, prioritization

of activities, etc.) directly into the document and email or mail the document to herself to be compiled for the review of the Committee at the April 6, 2006 meeting. It was noted that changes should be made in bold for ease of reference.

MOVED BY Ms. Gail Wilson, seconded by Councillor Debbie Hum, that Committee members input suggestions for the CRRAC Work Plan and return suggestions to the Chair to be compiled for the April 6, 2006 meeting. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 5, 2006

It was requested that the header of the minutes of January 5, 2006 be revised from 2005 to 2006.

MOVED BY Mr. Thomas Rissesco, seconded by Ms. Susanne Wise, that the minutes of January 5, 2006 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

The Committee agreed to discuss agenda items in the following order:

- C **Canadian Commission for UNESCO re: Coalition of Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination**
- C **Future Work Plans**
- C **Approval of Minutes - January 5, 2006**
- C **Approval of the Agenda, Additions and Deletions**
- C **Added Items:**
 - C **Email from Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton re: Islamic Students Renting Bloomfield Gymnasium**
 - C **Committee Budget**

MOVED by Councillor Debbie Hum, seconded by Mr. Larry Guptill, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

6. ADDED ITEMS

6.1 Email from Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton re: Islamic Students Renting Bloomfield Gymnasium

The Chair reviewed an email sent to Committee members March 2, 2006 from Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton, who could not attend the meeting today. Mr. Canales-Leyton, in his email indicated that the Is'han Educational Centre is an Islamic School that rents gymnasium space from the Bloomfield Centre two days per week, for one hour at a time. He went on to note that the Bloomfield Centre also rents gymnasium space to the HR Police for full days at a time, and the administration of the Bloomfield Centre had informed the Is'han Educational Centre that police activity takes precedence over any other bookings. Mr. Canales-Leyton requested that the Committee draft a letter to the Mayor, copied to HRM Real Property and Asset

Management (RPAM), asking that bookings for the Is'han Educational Centre be left undisturbed.

Ms. Wise noted that it should be first clarified whether the Bloomfield Centre administration, HR Police, and the Is'han Educational Centre have discussed this matter internally. She suggested that this be clarified before the Committee intervenes.

Ms. Williams offered to contact HR Police and the RPAM Operations Coordinator to clarify the situation. She will advise the Legislative Assistant of the response to forward to Committee members.

MOVED BY Councillor Debbie Hum, seconded by Mr. Larry Guptill, to refer this matter to staff to discuss with HR Police and RPAM for clarification and resolution. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Hum retired from the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

6.2 Committee Budget

The Committee discussed a wish to have refreshments during Committee meetings, due to the fact that meetings are held during the supper hour, there are some members that are older, and there are other members that are diabetic. The Legislative Assistant advised that HRM Boards, Committees and Commissions are not provided with refreshment allowances due to the large volume of volunteer members and the cost to tax payers to provide refreshments to them all. The Chair indicated that she will write a letter to the Mayor requesting refreshments at Community and Race Relations Committee meetings.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee is scheduled for April 6, 2006.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant