

Anti-Racism Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom at 5:30 p.m.

Members:

Hanan Awadh	Stanley Sadava
Rashmi Biswas	Fatima Sheikh
Samah Marei	Vicki-Lynn Smith
Rhiannon McRae	Saleh Waziruddin (Chair)

Staff Liaison:

Cindy Pfeffer, Organizational Development Consultant

1. **Call meeting to order (Chair)**
2. **Recognition of Traditional Territories**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
None
4. **Additions / Deletions to the Agenda**
A presentation from resident Ed Smith, on the issue of body cameras for the Niagara Regional Police was added to the agenda.
5. **Motion to approve the agenda**

Moved by: S. Savada
That the agenda of the June 18, 2020 meeting of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee be approved.

Carried as Amended

6. **Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting**

Moved by: H. Awadh

That the minutes of the March 12, 2020 meeting of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee.

Carried

7. **Request for Endorsement**

7.1.1. Request from LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee to endorse the use of the Progress Pride Flag design for the City's first Rainbow Crosswalk.

Moved by: V. Smith

That the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, endorses the use of the Brock University Pride Flag, which contains a purple triangle, as the design for the City's first Rainbow Crosswalk.

Carried

8. **Presentations**

Ed Smith address the members of the ARAC to express his support to the use of body cameras by the Niagara Regional Police and urged the committee to support the measure.

9. **Correspondence**

Support for Use of Body Cameras by NRP – M. Taylor

Moved by: S. Marei

That the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee accept the correspondence from M. Taylor regarding the Use of Body Cameras by the Niagara Regional Police for information purposes.

Carried

10. **Business**

10.1. Niagara Regional Police reforms to reduce racism, including body cameras.

A draft motion entitled *Motion on Police Reform Recommendations to City Council* was presented for discussion by S. Waziruddin.

Motion on Police Reform Recommendations to City Council

WHEREAS St. Catharines City Council has asked for advice from the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee on body cameras for police and other reforms

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee makes the following recommendations

1. *Body cameras*

WHEREAS body cameras are a tool which can be used for greater police accountability; and

WHEREAS earlier the Niagara Regional Police Services board had delayed a study on body cameras pending a similar study by the Toronto Police Service; and

WHEREAS the Toronto Police Service is now adopting body cameras

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS):

Implement body cameras for all front line officers as soon as possible

2. *Training*

a) WHEREAS the current Crisis Intervention Training offered twice a year cannot at this rate ensure all front line officers at any given time have this training

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Increase Crisis Intervention Training to being offered at least 4 times a year or until as close to 100% of front line officers as possible at any given time would have completed the training

b) *WHEREAS the “Memphis Model” the NRPS Crisis Intervention Training is based on includes cross-cultural mental health training but this is absent from the NRPS Crisis Intervention Training curriculum*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Add cross-cultural mental health training to its Crisis Intervention Training

c) *WHEREAS the NRPS does not have anti-bias or anti-racism training in its refresher training*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Add implicit bias and anti-racism trainings in its refresher trainings and that these trainings be lead by experts from equity seeking groups, along the lines of the African Canadian Legal Clinic's recommendations to the Ipperwash Inquiry:

“That police forces develop an anti-racism curriculum and training program to be incorporated into any existing training programs on use of force and which will be mandatory for recruits, new officers, and serving officers. The training should be designed and delivered by independent experts in anti-racism to ensure a full understanding of racially biased policing, racial discrimination and the racialized communities police serve, particularly with respect to use of force. This training should be provided as a refresher on a regular basis. The training program should be independently and regularly evaluated to assess its efficacy with respect to effecting anti-racist behavioral and attitudinal change.”

3. Street Checks

WHEREAS though street checks may provide police with some intelligence, like carding it also in practice involves racial discrimination

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

End street checks completely

4. De-militarization

a) WHEREAS though armored vehicles may occasionally be necessary, they are a constant threat to those subjected wrongly to use of force, especially racialized people, and if ever needed could be borrowed from other police forces

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Sell its armored vehicle and use the proceeds to fund body cameras and other initiatives recommended here

b) THEREFORE BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Ban the use of tear gas, pepper spray, or other chemical agents against protesters or at demonstrations.

5. Re-assessing police service standards to shift its budget (“de-funding”)

WHEREAS the 2018 NRPS annual report lists among the top 25 calls welfare checks (#1 and #15), mental health (#16), and suicide threats (#24) and these don't require an armed response; and

WHEREAS the NRPS Board told news media in 2019 that the police are not the ones to lead solutions to homelessness and drug addiction; and

WHEREAS police foot patrols have been increased in areas such as downtown St. Catharines, which the police chief has said is already safe and won't benefit from more police, for the sake of the perception of a few but making racialized and marginalized people unsafe

THEREFORE BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

The NRPS Chief and Board re-assess “adequate policing” requirements based on removing welfare checks, mental health, and suicide threat calls, as well as foot patrols that are only demanded because of perception

And that the Niagara Regional municipality shift these funds from the reduction of the NRPS budget to a dispatched civilian service such as the EMS

6. Civilian Review

WHEREAS current civilian oversight lacks representation from equity seeking group that is local and has enforcement powers

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the Police Act be amended to allow:

The establishment of a local purely civilian (no former police officers) body including members from equity seeking groups with oversight, disciplinary powers, and the power to refer charges for prosecution over police officers

THEREFORE BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Establish the office of a purely civilian (no former police officers) Ombudsperson with full access to police records and data

7. Releasing Statistics

WHEREAS releasing statistics helps in making policing more publicly transparent

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Publish online details of police-reported hate crimes for each incident including location, date and time, the protected group which was attacked, and the nature of the crime

Publish online the use of force by race data required to be submitted to the Ministry of the Solicitor General under the Anti-Racism Act

Extend the collection of race data to traffic stops and publish online these statistics as well as the outcome (any charges) for traffic stops

8. *Hiring*

WHEREAS the 2019-2021 NRPS Strategic Plan goal of “10% increase in diversity hires” over three years will fall short of the NRPS being as diverse as the Niagara population even just in terms of visible minorities

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Increase diversity hiring to at least 15% of the recruiting class over three years, and further as per the African Canadian Legal Clinics recommendation to the Ipperwash Inquiry:

“That police recruits be screened for prejudicial and racially discriminatory attitudes, similar to screening already being done for personality attributes, criminal record, and family background.

That police forces be encouraged to retain independent employment equity experts to develop concrete, measurable and attainable goals to increase the number of racialized people, particularly African Canadians and Aboriginals, especially in positions of responsibility, in order to achieve a “critical mass” of representation and diversity to promote cultural and organizational change.”

9. 8 Can't Wait Campaign

WHEREAS two demands of the 8 Can't Wait campaign do apply in Niagara

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS:

Require all officers to have a duty to intervene against excessive use of force or abuse; and Prohibit shooting at moving vehicles

10. Performance Reviews

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends that City Council ask that the NRPS, as per the African Canadian Legal Clinic's recommendation to the Ipperwash Inquiry:

"That police forces ensure that complaints and concerns against police officers relating to use of force, particularly when the complainant is racialized, are reflected and factored into the assessment of each officer's performance review and or promotions."

Through discussion, the committee made the following amendments.

Moved by: R. Biswas

That a new paragraph be added at the end of section 8 Hiring; and

That the text of the new paragraph be:

"And that these independent employment equity experts undertake a comprehensive review of the hiring, recruitment, selection, and management practices of the NRPS."

Carried

Moved by: R. Biswas

That the last statement in section 4. De-militarization, subsection a, be amended to:

"Sell its armored vehicle."

Carried

Moved by: V. Smith

That the *Motion on Police Reform Recommendations to City Council*, be approved as amended.

Carried as amended

Motion on Police Reform Recommendations to City Council

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10.2. Work Plan Updates

Reporting and Response

S. Waziruddin reported the Reporting and Response workgroup has conducted a survey of local cultural groups regarding their experience with racism in the community during the COVID-19. Preliminary results show there have been a moderate level of incidences.

He is also speaking with representatives from Hamilton about a racism survey conducted in that community to see if it can serve as a template for a survey in St. Catharines.

R. Biswas reported she is reviewing examples of racists incident response protocols that exists in other organization, including school

board and sports organizations. So noted that many organizations are now reporting in their annual reports on the 'triple bottom line', which encompasses, financial, environmental and social good. This may be something that the work group may want the committee to propose to City Council in the future.

Outreach and Education

S. Marei reported the Outreach and Education work group are continue to work on creating a community database of ethnic and religious group in Niagara. They are also working on including social justice groups in the community. In light of current attention on racism in the community, the workgroup will develop an anti-racism and will bring ideas back to the committee at a later date.

Policy

V. Smith due to personal circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic the existing members have not been able to make progress in this area. Other members of the committee offered to assist the policy workgroup as necessary.

11. **Date of next meeting**

To be determined

12. **Motion to Adjourn**

S. Marei moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m.