

Anti-Racism Advisory Committee

Minutes

Monday, August 31, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom at 6 p.m.

Members Present:

Rashmi Biswas

Samah Marei

Rhiannon McRae

(Joined at 6:11 p.m., left at 7:24 p.m.)

Stanley Sadava

(Joined at 6:13)

Fatima Sheikh

Vicki-Lynn Smith (Vice-Chair)

Saleh Waziruddin (Chair)

Erica Williams

Absent:

Hanan Awadh

Guests:

Mayor Walter Sendzik

Staff Liaison:

Cindy Pfeffer, Organizational Development Consultant

1. **Call meeting to order**
S. Waziruddin called the meeting to order at **6:01 p.m.**
2. **Recognition of Traditional Territories**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
None
4. **Additions / Deletions to the Agenda**
S. Waziruddin added the following to the agenda:
 - Facer Street Banner
 - Diversity Supplier Policy
 - Community Survey and Racism Reporting Channels

S. Marei asked added the Education and Outreach working group's outreach flyer

5. **Motion to approve the agenda**

Moved by: V. Smith

That the agenda of the Aug. 31, 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: R. Biswas

That the minutes of the June 18, 2020 meeting of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee.

Carried

7. **Business arising from the minutes**

Mayor Walter Sendzik provided the committee with an update the ARAC motion regarding Niagara Regional Police.

S. Waziruddin provided an overview of the actions of City Council and Niagara Region Council related to the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee's (ARAC) motion regarding its recommendations to reform the Niagara Regional Police passed at the committee's June meeting.

Mayor Walter Sendzik commended the committee on bringing the recommendations forward, noting it was very impactful in providing an understanding of how the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) community feels about policing. Although the Niagara Regional Police is a regional responsibility, the ARAC motion helped inform members of local and regional council and advance the discussion around police reform.

8. **Business**

8.1 Facer Street Banners

S. Waziruddin updated the committee on an issue related to the proposed banners in the Facet Street area. He introduced a resolution expressing its objection to attempts to overlook the neighbourhood historically diverse nature, and asked for the committees support.

Moved by: V. Smith

That the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee provide the following feedback and

recommendations to City staff in relation to the design and content of the Face Street banners;

Facer Street area has historically been a diverse neighborhood. Black families have been among those that called the neighbourhood home since its earliest days of its existence as a neighborhood. References to Black families can be found in newspapers articles documents of the time. In fact, some of the first European immigrants were sponsored by a Black resident.

Facer Street author Stan Skrzyszewski's description of the area speaks to its diversity:

"It is a place of daily walks to the local corner stores and cafes, warm-scented Polish bakeries, welcoming Italian cafes, beautiful Ukrainian churches, and descendants of those who followed the North Star, escaped slavery via the Underground Railroad, and many others that consider this place their home."

Additionally, the sites listed as part of a Facer Street historical walking tour includes 63 Garnet Street, the home of Mal Nicholson:

"The Nicholsons were also one of the many Black families who had settled in the Facer area. Facer was one of the final terminals on the famed Underground Railway. But, more importantly this home was one of the best places to go for good treats on Halloween, given that in this community, this Black family was better off than many of the newly arrived "foreign" families."

Given this information, it appears the banners as proposed erase the historically multiracial character of the neighborhood through promoting an imagined and erroneous exclusively European heritage. The City of St. Catharines has previously gone so far as to withdraw street signs marked "Little Europe" to protect the multiracial heritage of the area.

With reference to the design of the proposed banners, the St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee **makes the following recommendation:**

That City withdraw and withhold its participation from any signage, banners, or other messaging that promotes a European or white heritage for what has historically been a mixed-race area and ignores the contributions of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour residents; and

That neighborhood partners be advise their campaigns to promote the neighborhood must be true to and recognize the multiracial historic character of the Facer neighborhood.

Carried

- 8.2 Request from Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee to endorse a letter to Council regarding the hiring of the Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Position at the City.

Moved by: R. Biswas

That the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee endorse, as written, the letter by the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, regarding the hiring of an equity, inclusion and diversity staff position for the City of St. Catharines.

Carried

9. Work Plan Updates

9.1 Racist and Hate Incident Response Protocol

S. Waziruddin presented a draft Racist and Hate Incident Response Protocol. As the issues of hate incidents extends beyond the City's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and the LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee, will be consulted before the items is forwarded to City Council for consideration.

Moved by: S. Sadava

That the Racist and Hate Incident Response Protocol be forward to Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and the LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee for feedback and input.

Carried

9.2 Intersection of gender and race on economic recovery in a post-pandemic environment

R. Biswas introduced A Feminist Economic Recovery Plan: Making the Economy Work for Everyone, a publication by the YWCA and the Institute for Gender and the Economy (GATE) at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. She suggested that equity-seeking committees, including Equity and Inclusion and LGBTQ2+, can use the recommendations in the plan to work together to ensure a more equitable recovery for St. Catharines.

As a starting point, the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee will reach out via staff liaisons to arrange a joint meeting to hear about the City's recovery plans and discuss what can be done to ensure members of equity seeking communities are included.

9.3 Diverse Supplier Policy

S. Waziruddin presented a draft resolution, asking City Council to direct staff to incorporate diverse supplier requirements into the City's purchasing policy. It was created following discussions with Certified Women Business Enterprises and the City of Brampton purchasing department who is implementing a Diverse Supplier policy there.

The resolution was forwarded to City Council after receiving input from the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and the LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee, as the issue extended beyond racism.

Moved by: S. Marei

That the draft resolution related to the diverse supplier requirements be forward to Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and the LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee for feedback and input.

Carried

9.4 Outreach to other anti-racism groups

S. Marei reported members are reaching out to other groups in the community who are also involved in anti-racism activities. As some are doing similar work, there may be overlap with the ARAC. The committee wants to be sure it is not replicating the work being done by other groups.

9.5 Outreach Flyer

S. Marei presented a draft of a flyer / poster regarding the ARAC. She asked committee members to provide comments and feedback to her via email.

9.6 Community Survey and Racism Reporting Channels

S. Waziruddin reported he has been in contract with a profession who was involved with Hamilton's community survey on racism, for advice and guidance on how the ARAC can move forward with its survey. He will also reach out to local community

partners for assistance.

Date of next meeting

Oct. 7, 2020 at 5:30p.m.

Motion to Adjourn

F. Sheikh moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:34p.m.