

Anti-Racism Advisory Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

Electronic Meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Rashmi Biswas
Rhiannon McCrae
Stanley Sadava
Fatima Sheikh, Vice-Chair
Vicki-Lynn Smith
Saleh Waziruddin, Chair
Erica Williams

Absent:

Samah Marei

Staff Liaison:

Chantal Switzer, Corporate Support Services Coordinator

1. Call meeting to order (Chair)

Saleh Waziruddin called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. Recognition of Traditional Territories

Saleh Waziruddin acknowledged that the land on which the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee meets today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples. Acknowledging this is a reminder that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

3. Committee Update

S. Waziruddin advised that Hanan Awadh has resigned from the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and that recruitment is now closed for new members. A recommendation is being made by the Chair and Staff liaison at the Social Pillar committee meeting on April 22, 2021.

4. Additions / Deletions to the Agenda

None

5. Motion to approve the agenda

Moved by S. Waziruddin

That the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee approve the April 20, 2021 meeting agenda.

Carried

6. Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting

Moved by V-L Smith

That the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee approve the minutes of the March 16, 2021 meeting.

Carried

7. Declarations of Interest

None

8. Business arising from the minutes

Correspondence: phone call from resident, no attachment:

S. Waziruddin relayed that he was contacted by a resident who stated that they experienced racism from other levels of government relating to public housing. The matter was outside the scope of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and the complainant was directed to the appropriate resources.

9. Business

- a. Recommendation to Clerk on committee meetings during Ramadhan and Eid: The motion is to advise staff, chairs, and conveners of committees and other bodies that if they have members who are fasting, they should try to schedule the meeting to avoid overlapping with sunset during Ramadhan or meeting during Eid.

Moved by F. Sheikh

Motion Advising Clerk's Office of Meetings During Ramadhan and Eid

St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, April 20, 2021

Motion

WHEREAS those who observe fasting during the Islamic month of Ramadhan and celebrate Eid immediately after Ramadhan should not be forced to choose between their religious obligations and their obligations to the City; and

WHEREAS those who observe fasting during Ramadhan need to break their fast at sunset and may have family obligations organized around this time

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends to the Clerk's office to advise chairs, conveners, and staff liaisons of committees, sub-committees, task forces, working groups, forums, boards, and other such bodies that if they have members who are fasting during Ramadhan or who celebrate Eid, that they should avoid meetings overlapping with sunset during Ramadhan or during the three days of Eid immediately following Ramadhan.

Carried

b. Renaming of Centennial Gardens to Richard Pierpoint

Moved by F. Sheikh

To support the Heritage Advisory Committee's recommendation to rename Centennial Gardens after Richard Peirpoint.

Carried

c. Content on the ARAC's web page on the City's website

Moved by V-L. Smith

Motion to Enhance Committee Web Page

St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, April 20, 2021

Motion

WHEREAS the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee web page on the City of St. Catharines web site is used by residents to find out more about the committee but the web page currently does not include all pertinent information; and

WHEREAS other Anti-Racism Advisory Committees such as in neighboring Hamilton do provide more information

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the web page for the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee have added to it:

- selected links to media coverage of the committee
- a downloadable link to the current work plan
- a link to the latest YouTube video of the committee's meeting on the City of St. Catharines YouTube channel

Carried

d. Committee Self-Evaluation Results

The Committee discussed the results of the evaluation survey which had been administered through email.

Topics discussed included:

1. How the pandemic has impacted the ability for members to devote time to committee work.
2. The general opinion stated was that the community is aware of the committee's work as evidenced by various contacts made with the committee.
3. It was stated that the Committee is laying groundwork by talking to each other and to Council and that St. Catharines does not exist in a vacuum as evidenced by the response to the guilty verdicts in the death of George Floyd, by a police officer, in the United States.
4. The relationship between the Committee and Council and the Committee's mandate to provide leadership to Council similar to that of other equity seeking committees was noted.
5. Having timely access to information for agenda items was mentioned.
6. It was raised that the committee is not currently adequately resourced.
7. In general committee members felt that most responses to the questions and direction the committee is taking were positive.

e. Workplan

i. Anti-Street harassment by-law proposal

The committee noted that the City of London currently has this by-law and that the legal basis for it came from Niagara. In their recommendation, London City staff refer to the Ontario Court of Appeals case of the late Fred Bracken vs Niagara Parks.

Bracken v. Niagara Parks Police, 2018 ONCA 261) which found that it does not violate charter rights to ban:

“ (1) disturbing other persons and (2) using abusive or insulting language.”

Moved by S. Waziruddin

Motion for Anti-Street Harassment By-law

St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, April 20, 2021

WHEREAS hate and personal abuse directed at individuals is contrary to the values of the City of St. Catharines; and

WHEREAS there is a legal precedent when in 2018 the Ontario Court of Appeals decided in Bracken v. Niagara Parks Police, 2018 ONCA 261, that a regulatory body can make it an offense to use insulting and abusive language against an individual; and

WHEREAS the City of London passed a by-law PH-18 on public nuisances which states that “No person shall, in a Public Place, unnecessarily interfere with another person’s use and enjoyment of the Public Place by using abusive or insulting language as a personal invective,” and has successfully prosecuted violators in court; and

WHEREAS under existing bylaws it is an offense for a person to not identify themselves upon the request of a municipal by-law enforcement officer (2007-295 as amended by 2017-196)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends to city council to amend By-law 2007-295 (A By-law to address Public Nuisances) under Section 2 “Prohibitions” to add:

“No person shall, in a public place, unnecessarily interfere with another person’s use and enjoyment of the Public Place by using abusive or insulting language as a personal invective.”

Carried

ii. Racist/hate incident response protocol

Committee members reviewed existing policies and amendments to existing policies that make up a response protocol in the event of major racist and hate incidents in the City.

Moved by V-L. Smith

Motion for Racist and Hate Incident Response Protocol

St. Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, April 20, 2021

Motion

WHEREAS there should be established protocols in the event of a major racist or hate incident

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends:

1) When there is a significant racist or hate incident, the mayor will officially and publicly denounce the incident.

2) Amend by-law 2007-295 (public nuisances) section 2.5.1 (graffiti on private property) to state additionally “except in the case of hate graffiti, which will be removed by the City within 24 hours”

3) Amend the Rzone policy as follows:

(Adapted from UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) and FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) Guidelines.)

- If the offenders cannot be identified, or while waiting for police, stop the event and make audible announcements to cease the racist/hate behavior. Address the crowd and make the announcement three times, and then resume the event.
- If the offense continues and police have not arrived, make a second announcement and suspend the event for 15 minutes. State that if the racist or hateful behavior continues the event will be canceled.
- If the offense escalates after resuming the event and the police have not arrived, cancel the event.

4) Amend the Respect in the Workplace Policy – Harassment and Violence (HR 01-04) to say:

Hate Mail: Hate mail (and any other objects involved in a hate-motivated incident) should be handled as little as possible, to ensure police can obtain fingerprints. Item(s) should be placed in a clear plastic bag and set aside. A direct supervisor should be informed as soon as possible.

Hate Phone Call/Voice Message: Hate motivated phone calls or voicemail messages should be documented immediately by the receiver. The receiver should notify their direct supervisor as soon as possible.

Carried as amended

iii. Employment Equity recommendations

The Committee reviewed and discussed best employment equity practices and made the following recommendation which is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

Moved by E. Williams

Proposals for Employment Equity Policy

St Catharines Anti-Racism Advisory Committee April 20, 2020

Motion

WHEREAS the City of St. Catharines is interested in breaking down barriers to employment equity

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee recommends the adoption of the following practices

- To the Workforce Census add the questions “have you experienced racism or discrimination at work?”, “have you tried to report it?”, “what was the outcome?”
- Ask the demographic questions asked of employees to applicants (invite them to self-identify) as well and store this information separately
- Where practical consider “double blind” selection where the name is not known to selection officials until the interview
- Analyze the diversity gaps in the applicant pool and hiring pool to identify systemic barriers
- Adopt the following practices from BUFA (Brock University Faculty Association): where possible ensure that at least one member of the recruitment committee is from either a visible minority, LGBTQ2S+, or disability group, in addition at least one woman.
- Set and track targets for the diversity of applicant and the hiring pool.
- Advertise jobs in venues and publications frequented by, and agencies which service, equity seeking groups.
- As part of regular outreach make presentations to organizations and audiences

of equity-seeking groups about why working for the city is an attractive career choice.

- Create year-long internships for members of equity-seeking groups.
- Require and provide anti-bias/discrimination training with certification for hiring managers and recruiting/interviewing/selection staff.

Carried as amended

iv. 2021/2022 Workplan

Committee members enquired on the frequency of recommendations going to the Social Pillar meetings, and the timeliness of recommendations going to Council as part of planning the workplan. It was noted that some items on the workplan might require a budget request in the future.

The committee discussed the workplan items.

Moved by S. Waziruddin

That for the 2021 workplan the new items listed below will be added and the listed items from 2020 will carry over:

Items Added:

- Public Education Campaign
- Paired Testing for Housing
- Committee/Board Diversity
- BIPOC Arts/Culture Supports
- Pay Equity

Items carried over from 2020:

- Racism Reporting and Monitoring Channels
- Community Survey on Racism
- Review and Audit City Policies
- Create a Resource Database of Specialists on Anti-Racism Training and Education, Develop Training Materials

Carried as amended

v. Correspondence Item added to the agenda.

No attachment

This item was dealt with under agenda item #8

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

11. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by S. Waziruddin

That the April 20, 2021 meeting of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee be adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.37 p.m.