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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM REGION ANTI-RACISM TASKFORCE

Thursday, September 28, 2023

A meeting of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce was held on Thursday, September 28, 2023 in Meeting Room 1-B, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:41 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

Due to technical difficulties with audio sound in the meeting room, the meeting started later than the scheduled time and was conducted using a laptop as the main input and output for sound. Some audio echoes were experienced throughout the meeting as a result.

1. Traditional Territory Acknowledgment

Chair Samuel read the following land acknowledgement:

We are currently located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among the Mississauga Peoples and is the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississauga of Scugog Island First Nation. We honour, recognize and respect this nation and Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

2. Roll Call

Present: S. Bookal, Community Member
A. Frempong, Community Member
T. Hancock*, Community Member
Councillor Lee, Regional Council
J. Munawa*, Community Member
B. Nelson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative
C. Oyeniran*, Community Member
N. Samuel, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Chair
Councillor Shahid*, Regional Council
K. Vieneer, Community Member
J. Williamson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative
G. Wilson-Beier, Community Member
*** denotes members participating electronically**

Also Present: Councillor Anderson*, Regional Council Alternate
*** denotes members participating electronically**

Absent: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
S. Byrne, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative
PG Case, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Vice-Chair
R. Coelho, Community Member
R.O. Pule, Community Member

Staff

Present: A. Hector-Alexander, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
P. Hines, Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
H. Mohammed, Policy Coordinator, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
A. Sharma, Policy Advisor, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
A. Chung, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
V. Walker, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Lee, Seconded by S. Bookal,
That the minutes of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting
held on Thursday, June 22, 2023, be adopted.
CARRIED

5. Delegations

There were no delegations to be heard.

6. Presentations

A) Gillian Venning, Durham District School Board (DDSB), Josh Fullan, Director,
Maximum City and Katie Konstantopoulos, Project Facilitator, Maximum City re:
Durham District School Board's (DDSB) New Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Josh Fullan, Director, Maximum City, Katie Konstantopoulos, Project Facilitator,
Maximum City, and Priya Pinjani, Project Facilitator, Maximum City, provided a
PowerPoint presentation with regards to the Durham District School Board's
(DDSB) New Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Sean McCormack, System Lead, Anti-Oppression from DDSB was also present.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP): Fundamentals
 - What is a Multi-Year Strategic Plan?

- What a Multi-Year Strategic Plan does not contain
- Where are we coming from: MYSP 2018-2023
- DDSB MYSP Consultation Timeline
- Engagement by the Numbers
- Questions for Community/Organizations
 - Consultation Questions
 - What is working well for you as parent or caregiver / community partner in the DDSB?
 - What could be improved for you as a parent or caregiver / community partner in the DDSB?
 - How can the DDSB support anti-racist and inclusive school communities where all staff and students feel like they belong and are valued?
 - How can the DDSB strengthen relationships with community organizations like yours to support common goals?
 - What We've Heard
 - Emerging themes from consultation
- Next Steps for Consultation and Reporting

Discussion ensued with regards to the consultation questions outlined above, specifically the question: "How can the DDSB support anti-racist and inclusive school communities where all staff and students feel like they belong and are valued?". Responses from members of the Committee included not censoring literature; encouraging children to read from different authors and points of view; introducing the concept of critical race theory into the curriculum; putting more focus on Canadian black history in schools; issuing an annual human rights report and media release to provide data on hate incidents; implementing a reporting system for students and staff in schools; introducing measures to improve representation of staff at all levels of the organization; teaching children how to detect and deal with micro-aggressions and biases; adequately training teachers about racism; and providing ongoing education to students, parents and the community.

7. Information Items

There were no information items.

8. Discussion Items

A) Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) Community Resource Symposium and Fair

P. Hines advised that the Region's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division has been invited to participate in the DCDSB Community Resource Symposium and Fair on October 25, 2023 at Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School in Ajax. P.

Hines suggested to have DRART represented at the event and would share more details with the Committee.

B) Sub-committee Updates

1. EDI Working Group

A. Frempong provided an update of the EDI Working Group consisting of:

- Identifying formal EDI groups in Durham
- Developing self-care practice tips and tricks for EDI workers in the community
- Researching anti-racism reporting tools across the Region such as those used by DRPS and Regional school boards across Canada

Discussion ensued with members of the Committee regarding anti-racism reporting tools and suggestions were provided for additional resources to be considered.

2. DRPS Working Group

S. Bookal and J. Munawa provided an update of the DRPS Working Group consisting of:

- Reviewing the community input survey results released by DRPS
- Reviewing data collected by Statistics Canada and analyzing how the Region compares to other municipalities
- Arranging a meeting with the new Chief of DRPS
- Developing objectives for inclusion in the 2024 strategic plan
- Determining how to create an effective resource to outline the process for reporting racially motivated hate crimes
- Community engagement planning

3. School Board Working Group

G. Wilson-Beier provided an update on behalf of the School Board Working Group consisting of:

- Developing a comprehensive list of the private and public school systems across the Region
- The group has drafted a letter inviting Board staff to collaborate with DRART and other Durham school systems on approaches, policies, and practices to manage racism/discrimination in school communities
- The group plans on convening a virtual discussion with Board staff to share ideas and initiate priority anti-racism focused projects

G. Wilson-Beier requested information for any direct contacts within any of the school systems.

4. Education Working Group

A. Hector-Alexander advised that an update would be provided at the October 2023 meeting. The group has met to begin planning for an education session for the community and will reconvene soon to formalize details for a fall session.

C) DRART Workplan

A. Hector-Alexander advised that the DRART Cohort 2 Workplan was approved at the Regional Council meeting on September 27, 2023.

D) DRART Meetings

A. Hector-Alexander provided a general overview of DRART's development and work to date and requested feedback from the Committee members with respect to the mode and frequency of meetings, and if there is a preference to change the meetings to a virtual format. A member of the Region's DEI team will develop a survey to seek input from members on meeting logistics.

9. **Other Business**

A) Inappropriate Comment by City of Pickering Local Councillor

Councillor Lee advised of an incident regarding a City of Pickering Local Councillor making an inappropriate comment following a decision from the Integrity Commissioner. Councillor Lee suggested that as part of the Committee's responsibility to the community, developing a social media presence will enable DRART to speak out against such comments.

Discussion ensued with respect to the Committee sending a letter condemning the comments of the Pickering Councillor that reflects DRART's views on the matter.

Moved by Councillor Lee, Seconded by A. Frempong,
That the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce send a letter to City of
Pickering Local Councillor Robinson condemning her remarks.

CARRIED

B) Request to Raise Pan-African Flag

A. Frempong advised that the Region of Durham has welcomed a number of refugees and asylum seekers from African countries and asked the Committee for their support to make a formal request to raise the Pan-African flag at Regional Headquarters as a gesture of solidarity for new community members.

Moved by A. Frempong, Seconded by S. Bookal,
That the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce recommends to the
Finance and Administration Committee for approval and subsequent
recommendation to Regional Council:

That the Pan-African flag be flown continuously at Durham Region Headquarters
in support of African Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

CARRIED

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting will
be held on Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers,
Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

11. Adjournment

Moved by S. Bookal, Seconded by G. Wilson-Beier,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM

Respectfully submitted,

N. Samuel, Chair

V. Walker, Committee Clerk