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## The Regional Municipality of Durham

### MINUTES

#### DURHAM REGION ANTI-RACISM TASKFORCE

Thursday, September 26, 2024

A meeting of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce was held on Thursday, September 26, 2024 in Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:04 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

#### 1. Traditional Territory Acknowledgment

Chair Samuel read the following land acknowledgement:

The Region of Durham exists on lands that the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. These lands are the traditional and treaty territories of the Nations covered under the Williams Treaties, including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and the Chippewa Nations of Georgina Island, Beausoleil and Rama.

We honour, recognize, and respect Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live. In our efforts towards reconciliation, we continue to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations, as well as the growing Inuit communities and large Métis communities and here in Durham. We commit to learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, building opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing that we are all connected.

#### 2. Roll Call

Present: PG Case, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Vice-Chair  
R. Coelho, Community Member  
A. Frempong, Community Member  
B. Goodwin, Commissioner of Corporate Services  
Councillor Lee, Regional Council  
B. Nelson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative  
C. Oyeniran, Community Member  
N. Samuel, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Chair  
Councillor Shahid, Regional Council attended a portion of the meeting  
K. Vieneer, Community Member  
J. Williamson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative  
G. Wilson-Beier, Community Member  
**\* all Members participated electronically**

Absent: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer  
S. Bookal, Community Member  
T. Hancock, Community Member  
J. Munawa, 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  
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT  
V. Walker, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services  
**\* all staff participated electronically**

**3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by PG Case, Seconded by A. Frempong,  
That the minutes of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting  
held on Thursday, June 27, 2024, be adopted.

CARRIED

**5. Delegations**

There were no delegations to be heard.

**6. Presentations**

There were no presentations to be heard.

**7. Information Items**

A) Awareness Building – Emergency Services

A. Frempong stated that through discussions with Durham Region Paramedics it has been observed that many new residents to the Region, many of whom are newcomers to Canada, are not familiar with the emergency services available across the Region. She suggested that an emergency services awareness event would be a great way to bring awareness of these services and proposed the Committee organizes such an event which would include paramedics, fire services, and police who could provide overviews of the services they each provide.

Detailed discussion ensued with regards to organizing an emergency services awareness event including topics to cover; whether to include representation of fire services from all local area municipalities; appropriate venues to host the event; potentially forming a subcommittee to lead the event organization; ways to include the northern area municipalities in the event; the arrangement of drop-in sessions or a mobile awareness campaign to reach more residents; a timeline for organizing the event; who the event will be geared towards; and how to effectively reach different groups of people.

B) Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Healthy Democracy Forum

H. Mohammed stated that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is hosting a Healthy Democracy Forum in Toronto on October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. She advised that the forum will include topics relating to diversity in elected officials, the need for more diverse voices in politics, engaging youth in civic responsibilities, and inspiring residents about elections and the democratic process.

H. Mohammed stated that the forum is open to anyone to register to attend and advised that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Division will cover the registration costs for any DRART Members wishing to register.

C) Accessible Taxi Survey

P. Hines stated that the Accessibility Coordinators from each of the lower area municipalities meet monthly to discuss successes and concerns relating to accessible services and spaces across the Region. She advised that while Durham Region Transit (DRT) buses have been upgraded to be fully accessible to accommodate mobility devices, a shortage of accessible taxis in the Region has been identified as an area of concern.

P. Hines stated that the Accessibility Coordinators have developed a survey to help identify where service gaps exist and what challenges are being experienced in relation to accessibility across the Region. She further stated that the survey has already launched and will remain open until October 31<sup>st</sup>. She advised that all members of the public are welcome to contribute responses and encouraged Committee members to share the survey with their networks.

**8. Discussion Items**

A) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy Development

A. Sharma stated that the Region has partnered with management consultancy, Ediseed, to develop a DEI strategy for the Region. She further stated that the strategy development involves six (6) different phases consisting of the following:

- Phase 1(a): Discovery

- Phase 1(b): Communication
- Phase 2: Best Practices Environmental Scan
  - Global Best Practices
  - Municipalities' Best Practices
- Phase 3: Program Review
  - Internal
  - External – July 15<sup>th</sup> – August 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Phase 4: Consultations
- Phase 5: Develop Key Findings and Analysis Report
- Phase 6: Develop DEI Strategy

A. Sharma advised that the project is currently in Phase 4 and shared ideas for increasing engagement among residents.

A. Sharma welcomed feedback from Committee members regarding the overall DEI strategy development process and additional ways to increase engagement among residents through the consultation phase.

A. Sharma responded to questions from the Committee regarding whether the consultant accounted for changes that have occurred in the DEI landscape in recent years in their methodology; requirements for mandatory training in unionized environments; and the achieved response rates to date.

B) Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce Website

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H. Mohammed stated the Region's communications team will provide supports for the DRART website by publishing content to the website and issuing monthly social media posts. She advised that there is an opportunity for Committee members to curate content for the website.

Discussion ensued regarding whether any Committee members have communications experience to assist with developing content for the website; drafting social media content for future posts; and how to best organize and utilize sorting filters for web content.

Staff responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether there is an ability to monitor traffic to the site; and whether quarterly traffic reports for the website can be provided to the Committee to track the traffic flow to the website.

C) Sub-Working Group Updates

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1. DRPS Working Group

Councillor Lee provided an update on behalf of the DRPS Working Group and stated that the group is continuing with the development of a public resource that outlines the process for reporting hate crimes. This work is being done in consultation with DRPS.

Councillor Lee further stated that the working group has met with Stan McLellan, the CAO for DRPS, and is working towards scheduling a meeting with D. Peden to continue the discussion regarding diversity, equity and inclusion initiated with V. Chavannes earlier in the year.

Councillor Lee advised that DRPS has hired a consultant for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review and evaluation of the DEI practices of DRPS and upon completion a report is expected to be presented to DRPS and later to Regional Council. He further advised that the working group met with the consultant and expressed concerns relating to hate crime reporting and the lack of racialized officers in DRPS.

Councillor Lee responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether the consultant's report will be publicly available; when the responses to the questions posed to V. Chavannes will be made available for Committee members; and whether it can be arranged to invite D. Peden to present to the Committee at a future meeting.

2. Education Working Group

A. Hector-Alexander provided an update on behalf of the Education Working Group and stated that a date has been set for the Region's Municipal DEI Symposium which is taking place on October 26, 2024 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and welcomed all members of the Committee to attend the event.

Discussion ensued regarding inviting DRPS' Diversity Advisory Group (DAC) to attend the event.

3. EDI Working Group

R. Coelho provided an update on behalf of the EDI Working Group and stated that the group has been reviewing legislation and researching other municipalities as preliminary steps to creating an anti-hate by-law for the Region, but that the development of an anti-hate by-law may not be feasible. She advised that the working group is re-directing its focus on sharing the information learned with the community.

P. Hines stated that the working group is considering ways to collaborate with the Education Working Group to share learning with the community through educational activities.

N. Samuel stated that the working group is also considering the feasibility of developing an anti-discrimination campaign that emulates the City of Toronto's "Toronto for All" campaign.

Discussion ensued with regards to the development of a campaign; and the DRART's role in community outreach.

4. School Board Working Group

G. Wilson-Beier provided an update on behalf of the School Board Working Group and stated that the group held its second meeting with the school boards, with four out of the six school boards in attendance. She further stated that the school boards provided a high-level overview of the data received from their climate surveys and advised that a Ministry mandated survey that examines demographics will be conducted later this year. G. Wilson-Beier stated that the working group will request the results of that survey once available.

G. Wilson-Beier responded to questions from the Committee with regards to the working group's next steps; and whether there is an opportunity for the working group to collaborate with any of the school boards on future initiatives.

9. **Other Business**

A) Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce (DRART) Report to Council

A. Hector-Alexander stated that as the term is nearing the midway point, the DRART is required to submit a report to council highlighting the activities and achievements of the Committee to date. She advised that a further discussion regarding items to be included in the report will take place at the October meeting.

B) Member Resignation from DRART

K. Vieneer stated that he is resigning as a member of the DRART effective immediately as he has accepted a position at the Region and no longer meets the eligibility requirements for the Committee.

C) Letter of Support for Asylum Seekers

Staff responded to a question from the Committee regarding the anticipated timeline for the DRART letter of support for asylum seekers to be shared with Regional Council.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding the complexities surrounding refugee and asylum claimants; the costs incurred by the Region in supporting asylum seekers; whether the Region has recovered those incurred expenses; the process of lobbying various levels of government; and what is expected to happen to the individuals currently in the program if the Region discontinues its funding at the end of this year.

A. Hector-Alexander responded to a question from the Committee with respect to when it is anticipated that Regional Council will deliver its decision regarding future regional funding for asylum seekers.

A. Hector-Alexander advised that a short presentation that outlines more details of the situation will be shared at the next meeting.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting will be held on Thursday, October 24, 2024 at 7:00 PM in Meeting Room 1A, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

**11. Adjournment**

Moved by A. Frempong, Seconded by G. Wilson-Beier,  
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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N. Samuel, Chair

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V. Walker, Committee Clerk