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## The Regional Municipality of Durham

### MINUTES

#### DURHAM REGION ANTI-RACISM TASKFORCE

Thursday, November 28, 2024

A meeting of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce was held on Thursday, November 28, 2024 in Meeting Room 1-A, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:06 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

#### 1. Traditional Territory Acknowledgment

Vice-Chair Case 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: Councillor Anderson\*, Regional Council Alternate  
PG Case, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Vice-Chair  
R. Coelho, Community Member attended the meeting at 7:13 PM  
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  
attended the meeting at 7:19 PM  
J. Williamson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative  
G. Wilson-Beier, Community Member

\* denotes Members participating electronically

Absent: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer  
S. Bookal, Community Member  
T. Hancock, Community Member  
J. Munawa, Community Member  
Councillor Shahid, Regional Council

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

**3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by A. Frempong, Seconded by G. Wilson-Beier,  
That the minutes of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting  
held on Thursday, October 24, 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**

There were no information items.

**8. Discussion Items**

A) Sub-Committee Updates

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1. DRPS Working Group

Councillor Lee provided an update on behalf of the DRPS Working Group and announced that Sargent Fiona Phillips has joined the Equity & Inclusion division at DRPS and that recurring monthly meetings with Sergeant D. Peden and Sergeant F. Phillips have been set up to facilitate ongoing discussions with DRPS.

Councillor Lee also advised that the working group is still waiting for responses to the questions posed to V. Chavannes earlier this year and an update is expected to be available at the next meeting.

2. School Board Working Group

C. Oyeniran stated that there are no new updates for the School Board Working Group. G. Wilson-Beier added that the Working Group will resume discussions with the school boards in January.

3. Education Working Group

A. Hector-Alexander provided an update on behalf of the Education Working Group and stated that the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Symposium that took place on October 26, 2024, was a successful event that generated meaningful conversation among the attendees, and thanked Members that attended for their contributions.

A. Hector-Alexander advised that the Working Group aims to use the information that was collected at the Symposium to develop a plan for the group's next steps with respect to exploring DEI and anti-racism strategies in the community.

4. EDI Working Group

R. Coelho provided an update on behalf of the EDI Working Group and stated that the group continues to work with the Region's Legal Division to determine how existing legislation can be applied and/or reformed in the Region to protect residents from hate-motivated incidents.

P. Hines added that the Working Group is also developing a resource for residents that outlines steps to take in the event they experience a hate-related incident.

A. Frempong stated that the Working Group has an interest in whether the local area municipalities have undertaken DEI surveys and shared that the Town of Whitby completed a survey in 2021, which led to the development of The IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism) Project: Whitby's Journey to Inclusivity. She further stated that the group is unaware of the outcomes of The IDEA Project and advised they will follow up with the Town in that regard.

A. Frempong responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether other local area municipalities also completed DEI surveys; and if the group will be following up with those municipalities as well.

Detailed discussion ensued with regards to the rise in antisemitism, islamophobia, and cyber-related hate incidents, and the Committee's role in raising awareness of same; data collection following the Region's recent equity audit and area

municipalities' census statistics; and delegating at the local area municipalities to convey support of the equity audit and DEI initiatives in the Region.

Staff responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether respondents of the census were employees or residents; and whether the DEI groups across the Region meet on a recurring basis to discuss issues.

## **9. Other Business**

### **A) Open Letter to Premier Doug Ford with Request to Invoke Notwithstanding Clause on Encampments**

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A. Frempong advised that several mayors from various municipalities in Ontario have sent an open letter to Premier Doug Ford requesting that he invoke the notwithstanding clause to enable municipalities to clear out homeless encampments. She stated that the mayors of Pickering, Oshawa and Clarington were signatories to the letter.

A. Frempong further stated that a counter-letter was also sent to Premier Ford from various local councillors who do not support the use of the notwithstanding clause for this purpose.

Discussion ensued with respect to the potential consequences of invoking the notwithstanding clause; whether this issue falls within the Committee's scope; and whether any action should be taken by the Committee to address same.

A. Hector-Alexander advised that multiple municipalities are currently developing encampment strategies and updates on any progress can be shared at a future meeting.

### **B) Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce (DRART) Member Survey Results and Discussion**

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A. Hector-Alexander stated that a survey was recently circulated to Members to collect feedback on overall satisfaction and the work accomplished by the Committee, and to gather suggestions regarding what improvements can be made for the remainder of the term. Results of the survey were shared with the Committee and Members were thanked for their responses.

Detailed discussion ensued with regards to Members' roles and contributions; the role of staff in supporting the Committee; the breadth of knowledge and skills of Members; effective strategies that have led to the Committee's successes to date; and suggestions for improvements that can be made for going forward, including arranging various education sessions for Members; refining the Committee's scope of activities; and hosting and attending further community events.

Moved by N. Samuel, Seconded by G. Wilson-Beier,  
That the Committee recess for 10 minutes.  
CARRIED

The Committee recessed at 8:08 PM and reconvened at 8:26 PM.

A roll call was conducted following the recess and all Members of the Committee were present, with the exception of E. Baxter-Trahair, S. Bookal, T. Hancock, J. Munawa, and Councillor Shahid.

Discussion regarding the survey continued with further recommendations including Regional resources available to Members to support their work; conducting a formal review of the Committee's Terms of Reference; key performance indicators to track the Committee's undertakings; development of resources and knowledge translation to enable Members to share information on a broader level; and strategies to increase visibility in the community.

General discussion ensued with respect to the Committee's current vacancies and the process for recruiting new members. It was noted that recruitment is now open for two (2) community members and one (1) institutional representative.

H. Mohammed stated that the survey responses shared will be compiled and distributed to the Committee.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting will be held on Thursday, January 23, 2025 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

**11. Adjournment**

Moved by A. Frempong, Seconded by B. Nelson,  
That the meeting be adjourned.  
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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PG Case, Vice-Chair

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V. Walker, Committee Clerk