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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM REGION ANTI-RACISM TASKFORCE

Thursday, January 23, 2025

A meeting of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce was held on Thursday, January 23, 2025 in Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:03 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

In the absence of the Chair, PG Case, Vice-Chair, chaired the 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 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
A. Frempong, Community Member
J. Munawa, Community Member
B. Nelson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative
Councillor Shahid, Regional Council
G. Wilson-Beier, Community Member
*** all members participated electronically**

Absent: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
S. Bookal, Community Member
T. Hancock, Community Member

Councillor Lee, Regional Council
C. Oyeniran, Community Member
N. Samuel, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Chair
J. Williamson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative

Staff

Present: A. Hector-Alexander, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
V. Burton, Supervisor, Income Employment and Homelessness Supports
P. Hines, Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
D. Nation-Williams, Area Manager, Income Employment and Homelessness Supports
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 A. Frempong, Seconded by G. Wilson-Beier,
That the minutes of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting
held on Thursday, November 28, 2024, be adopted.

CARRIED

5. Delegations

There were no delegations to be heard.

6. Presentations

A) Vanessa Burton, Supervisor, Income Employment and Homelessness Supports Division, Region of Durham, and Devon Nation-Williams, Area Manager, Income Employment and Homelessness Supports Division, Region of Durham, re: Summer Student Information Sessions for Black Post-Secondary Students

Vanessa Burton, Supervisor, Income Employment and Homelessness Supports Division, Region of Durham, and Devon Nation-Williams, Area Manager, Income Employment and Homelessness Supports Division, Region of Durham presented before the Committee with respect to Summer Student Information Sessions for Black Post-Secondary Students.

D. Nation-Williams stated that the Summer Student Information Sessions for Black Post-Secondary Students has been developed by the Income, Employment

and Homelessness Support Division and the Business Services Division (BSD) as part of the Region's commitment to addressing anti-Black racism and fostering diversity and inclusion in the workforce. He further stated that this initiative is an actionable response to the recommendations outlined in the Region's Anti-Black Racism Pillar Report and was designed to help break down the barriers that Black students often face when seeking employment opportunities.

V. Burton stated that the information sessions are held in a virtual format and provides a detailed overview of the application process, explains how to navigate the Region's website to locate additional resources to support their application, and highlights the value of summer employment at the Region through testimonials from previous students.

V. Burton further stated that this is the third year these information sessions have been offered and advised that feedback is collected from attendees to improve future sessions and make them more impactful. She advised that two (2) information sessions have already taken place this year on January 16 and January 20, with the next session scheduled for February 13.

V. Burton advised that promotional materials for the information sessions have been distributed to members of the Committee and encouraged them to promote the information sessions with their networks ahead of the next session in February.

D. Nation-Williams and V. Burton responded to questions from the Committee with respect to whether applicants are required to complete any assessments as part of the recruitment process; the process for collecting feedback from attendees; where the information sessions are held; the number of students that attend each session; whether the information sessions are being promoted at the post-secondary institutions in the Region; and how many summer student positions are available each year.

7. Information Items

A) Recruitment Update

P. Hines provided a status update regarding the recruitment process for the Committee's current vacancies and advised that the deadline for accepting applications has been extended to January 31, 2025. She encouraged members to continue sharing the opportunity among their networks.

P. Hines responded to a question from the Committee with regards to whether connections have been made with any Indigenous organizations to promote the Committee's vacancies and recruitment.

B) Black History Month

P. Hines provided an overview of the following Black History Month events being organized by the Region:

- The Region, in partnership with 7 out of the 8 lower tier municipalities and several other community organizations, will be hosting a community event for Black History Month on February 5th at the Audley Recreation Centre. The theme for the event is “Together We Rise Durham: Resistance, Resilience, Possibility” and will feature Dr. Andrew B. Campbell as the keynote speaker, along with artwork from Reisha Felix, a local GTA-based artist. A special feature of the event will include a segment for awards to recognize achievements among community members in various categories, including health/mental health leadership, educational excellence, and newcomer empowerment.
- The Region is hosting a Black History Month event for staff which is taking place on February 19th and will include a presentation from keynote speaker Bee Quammie.

P. Hines encouraged members of the Committee to attend the events and stated that there is an opportunity for the DRART to have an informational booth set up to promote the work being done by the Committee.

P. Hines added that the artwork created by Reisha Felix will be used in all the Region’s promotional materials, social media content, and posters relating to Black History Month.

P. Hines also stated that Durham Region Transit (DRT) will wrap one of its buses with the Black History Month artwork of Reisha Felix and advised that the bus will be assigned to various routes throughout the Region during the month of February.

8. Discussion Items

A) Reporting Hate Activity Initiative – Update

H. Mohammed provided a general overview of the traffic and engagement metrics that the Committee’s website has recently garnered.

H. Mohammed also provided a detailed overview of data collected with regards to the Reporting Hate Activity initiative developed and recently launched by the DRPS Sub-Working Group. She highlighted statistics of community engagement through various social media channels and the Committee’s website traffic.

Discussion ensued with regards to translating the Reporting Hate Activity initiative poster to be available in multiple languages; and methods that could be used to determine the most common languages spoken in the Region.

General discussion ensued regarding increasing the Committee's visibility in the community; and leveraging the Committee's website to curate articles and other knowledge sharing content.

A. Hector-Alexander welcomed members to consider relevant topics as themes for future community engagement events.

B) Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce (DRART) Mid-Term Review Results – Next Steps/Planning

A. Hector-Alexander advised that the feedback collected from the mid-term review survey and discussion at the previous meeting identified common trends around the following areas of interest: community visibility; training and education; community events; and resource development.

A. Hector-Alexander welcomed further dialogue with respect to the themes identified above to explore actionable items the Committee can focus on.

Detailed discussion ensued with regards to determining what topics and initiatives align with the Committee's scope of work, compared to topics and initiatives that more appropriately fall under general community engagement; how the Committee can support general community engagement initiatives; the importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and presence in the community; determining the Committee's target audience; and the capacity of the sub-working groups to take on new projects.

Further discussion ensued with members providing suggestions for future community initiatives, including a campaign around supporting diverse groups to vote; promoting personal impact statements from members and the community to highlight ongoing work and its impacts in the community; and what industry organizations to consider for future collaborations such as health care.

Following the suggestion to develop a campaign that would educate and engage the community to vote in the upcoming provincial and federal elections, general discussion ensued with respect to the potential timeline for such a campaign; and whether a digital campaign would be more achievable.

C) Sub-Working Group Updates

1. DRPS Working Group

J. Munawa provided an update on behalf of the DRPS Working Group and advised that the group recently met Sergeant D. Peden and Deputy Chief C.

Kirkpatrick as part of the recurring monthly meetings the group has scheduled with DRPS.

J. Munawa also stated that the group's focus for this year includes reviewing various DRPS policies surrounding appointments, recruitment, and advancement within DRPS; reviewing and discussing DRPS' 2024 Strategic Plan indicator with Sergeant D. Peden; reviewing the draft DRPS' equity assessment; discussing DRPS' action plan with Sgt. D. Peden; and arranging for group members to delegate at a future Police Board meeting.

J. Munawa provided details of an upcoming event that DRPS is hosting with regards to Youth in Policing. She advised the event is scheduled to take place on March 22, 2025, and there is an opportunity for members to attend if interested.

H. Mohammed stated that the group has received responses to most of the questions initially posed to V. Chavannes and advised that the responses have been circulated to members.

H. Mohammed further stated that the DRPS budget for 2025 has been approved, which will allow for the establishment of a hate crimes unit and advised that the current hate crime coordinator will be invited to a future meeting to present to the Committee on the process for reporting hate crimes.

2. School Board Working Group

G. Wilson-Beier provided an update on behalf of the School Board Working Group and advised that the group will reconnect with the school boards in the following weeks to continue working towards data gathering and sharing opportunities.

3. EDI Working Group

R. Coelho provided an update on behalf of the EDI Working Group and stated that the group is contemplating a pivot in its areas of focus following the determination that developing anti-hate legislation may not be achievable.

4. Education Working Group

A. Hector-Alexander provided an update on behalf of the Education Working Group and stated that following the DEI Municipal Symposium hosted in October 2024, the group has scheduled a follow-up meeting to collect feedback of the event to be used to determine next steps and future potential collaborations and partnerships among the attending organizations.

9. Other Business

A) Whitby Chamber of Commerce Black History Month Event

H. Mohammed stated that the Whitby Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Black History Month event on February 7, 2025, at the Ajax Convention Centre. She advised that staff have a limited number of tickets available for any members who are interested in attending the event.

B) Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce (DRART) Logo Rebranding

PG Case inquired if there was an interest among the Committee in rebranding the DRART logo.

A. Hector-Alexander stated that any design concepts for a new logo can be shared with staff who would work with the Communications team to develop an updated logo to present to the Committee.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting will be held on Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

11. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Shahid, Seconded by G. Wilson-Beier,
That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM

Respectfully submitted,

PG Case, Vice-Chair

V. Walker, Committee Clerk