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## **The Regional Municipality of Durham**

### **MINUTES**

#### **DURHAM REGION ANTI-RACISM TASKFORCE**

**Thursday, February 27, 2025**

A meeting of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce was held on Thursday, February 27, 2025 in Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:01 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.

Vice-Chair Case acknowledged, as Black History Month comes to a close, the importance of honouring and celebrating the peoples who have contributed to Black history and recognized the essential contribution that Black history has made to the overall shared history of our society.

#### **2. Roll Call**

Present: S. Bookal, Community Member attended the meeting at 7:02 PM  
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  
N. Samuel, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Chair, attended the meeting at 7:08 PM

Councillor Shahid, Regional Council  
J. Williamson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative  
G. Wilson-Beier, Community Member  
**\* all members participated electronically**

Absent: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer  
J. Munawa, Community Member  
B. Nelson, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative

**Staff**

Present: 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 Councillor Shahid, Seconded by Councillor Lee,  
That the minutes of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting  
held on Thursday, January 23, 2025, 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) Member Recruitment – Update

P. Hines provided an update with respect to the ongoing member recruitment and stated that there are several vacancies for both community members and industry representatives. She advised that applications to join the Committee will be accepted up to end of day on March 7, 2025, at which time staff will review all

applications and begin the process of scoring and selecting qualified applicants. P. Hines encouraged members to continue sharing this opportunity among their networks.

P. Hines responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether any applications for youth members or Indigenous persons have been received.

B) Municipal Diversity Plan for the Durham Regional Police Services (DRPS) Board

A. Sharma stated that the Community Safety and Policing Act that came into effect on April 1, 2024 requires municipalities to create a diversity plan for its police services board for the purpose of ensuring appointed board members represent the diversity of the municipality's residents.

A. Sharma advised that Regional Council approved the Municipal Diversity Plan and Recruitment Policy for the Durham Region Police Services Board (DRPSB) at its February meeting. She stated that the plan was developed by the Region's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) team in consultation with the Legal Division, Legislative Services, and the Communications and Engagement Division, and advised that DRPS and the DRPS Board had an opportunity to review the plan, ask questions, and provide feedback before it was presented to Regional Council.

A. Sharma provided a comprehensive overview of the Municipal Diversity Plan and Recruitment Policy that is comprised of the following sections:

- Statement
- Purpose
- Definitions
- Guiding Principles
  - Respect
  - Community Engagement
  - Innovation
  - Continuous Improvement
- Board Composition
- Promoting Board Appointment Opportunities
- Application Process and Selection Criteria
- Term of Office
- Equity-Specific Recommendations for All Members of the DRPSB
- Application
- Review Schedule
- Information Sharing

A. Sharma responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether the Community Safety and Policing Act prescribes any guidelines for the selection of provincial appointees; the structure of police services boards in neighbouring municipalities; the process and requisite qualifications for board member

appointments; who is responsible for conducting the four (4) year review and how it is carried out; whether appointments coincide with the term of Council; whether DRPS' strategic plan aligns with the Region's strategic plan; and how often DRPS develops a new strategic plan.

Discussion ensued with regards to the importance of a non-partial body appointing board members; the composition and ratios of board members as outlined in the Community Safety and Policing Act; and the extent of the influence of elected officials who serve as members of police boards.

C) 2024 Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce (DRART) Workplan Review

P. Hines recognized the importance the DRART plays in advising Council on anti-racism matters and conducting anti-racism work within local communities. She also recognized the rise in criticism of DEI initiatives from various political entities and sectors and stated the importance of the work being accomplished by the Committee.

P. Hines stated that staff has used the feedback collected from Committee members as part of the recent mid-term review survey to develop a new approach to the Committee's structure. She advised that the current formation is a sub-committee style, and the proposed approach will structure the Committee in a project-style formation.

P. Hines identified the following project sub-groups under the proposed new structure:

- Engaging with DRPS;
- Community Connections;
- Protocol for Reporting Non-Criminal Hate Activity; and
- Key Messages – Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

H. Mohammed provided a detailed overview of the core goals for each of the above sub-groups and advised that other applicable projects could be undertaken as directed by the Committee.

Committee members were encouraged to share input on the proposed new structure and select which project they would be interested in working on. It is expected that all members would be connected to a project sub-group.

Detailed discussion ensued with regards to a motion brought to Regional Council at its February meeting with respect to combatting antisemitism and developing a protocol for reporting non-criminal acts of hate; the contribution that a sub-group can take to assist Regional Council in its development of a protocol; whether the recently developed tool for reporting hate can be useful to the development of a

protocol; and the need for further direction from the CAO with respect to the Committee's prospective role.

Further discussion ensued with regards to the similarities between the current committee structure to the proposed project-style structure; and postponing the need for members to select a project until the Committee reaches its full compliment.

D) International Women's Day Celebration

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P. Hines advised that the Region is hosting the following International Women's Day events:

- A community event is being held on March 5<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 PM at the Chestnut Hill Developments Recreation Complex in Pickering. The event has been organized in partnership with 13 community partners and the theme of the event is "The Time is Now – Women Driving Change". The event will include performances and a panel discussion with Susan Byrne, Indigenous Liaison to the Employment System Service Manager, Durham Region & Crisis Intervention Counsellor – Victim Services, Umwali Sauter, Director of Organizational Development & IDEAA at Lakeridge, and Matisse Hamel-Nelis, Communications and Digital Accessibility Consultant.
- A staff event is being held on March 4<sup>th</sup> from 12:30-2:30 PM and will include a panel discussion and performances.

P. Hines invited members to attend and promote the events with their networks.

E) Sub-Committee Updates

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1. DRPS Working Group

S. Bookal and Councillor Lee provided an update on behalf of the DRPS Working Group.

S. Bookal stated that the DRPS Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) has recently undergone some changes to alter the DAC's structure to have a leadership committee consisting of the chair, vice-chair and secretary, and four (4) sub-committees. She advised that the leadership committee is to meet separately with DRPS officers and the sub-committees, however, plans for the committee to meet as a whole have not been announced. S. Bookal added that a lack of communication from the leadership committee surrounding the changes has led to some confusion among DAC members. Councillor Lee stated that a letter from the DRART advocating for more transparent changes is being considered and may be discussed further at the next meeting.

Councillor Lee advised that Sergeant D. Peden has moved to a new position and at this time a diversity officer replacement has not been announced. He further advised that this will be raised at the next standing meeting the Working Group has with DRPS.

Councillor Lee stated that the Working Group is arranging a meeting with S. McLellan, CAO, DRPS, a representative from DRPS' human resources department, and B. Goodwin, the Region's Commissioner of Corporate Services, to gather insights into DRPS' hiring process.

Councillor Lee advised that the Working Group is also arranging a meeting with Councillor Collier, Chair of the DRPS Board, to get a better understanding of the Board's recruitment, training and general policies and will report back to the Committee once the meeting has taken place.

2. School Board EDI Working Group

There were no new updates shared from the School Board Working Group.

3. EDI Working Group

There were no new updates shared from the EDI Working Group.

4. Education Working Group

There were no new updates shared from the Education Working Group.

**9. Other Business**

A) Durham Local Immigration Partnership 2025-2030 Inclusion Plan

H. Mohammed stated that Regional Council approved the Durham Local Immigration Partnership 2025-2030 Community and Inclusion Plan at its February meeting. She added that consideration is being given to inviting Local Immigration Partnership staff to present at a future DRART meeting so that further information about the plan and work being accomplished can be shared with the Committee.

B) Promote Voting Campaign

H. Mohammed stated that a poster was created for the promote voting campaign to encourage community members to vote in the provincial election on February 27<sup>th</sup> and recognized A. Sharma, N. Samuel, R. Coelho, A. Frempong, and H. Mohammed as contributors to this initiative, in collaboration with the communications team. She advised that the slogan for the poster was "You Matter. Your Community Matters. Democracy Matters."

H. Mohammed stated that the poster was published on the Committee's website and the Region's social media channels and shared statistics of the campaign's impressions on the different platforms the poster was shared to.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

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

**11. Adjournment**

Moved by S. Bookal, Seconded by A. Frempong,  
That the meeting be adjourned.  
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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PG Case, Vice-Chair

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V. Walker, Committee Clerk