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**The Regional Municipality of Durham**  
**Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce Minutes**

**Thursday, October 23, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce was held on Thursday, October 23, 2025 in the Pickering Meeting Room, Lower Level, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 7:03 PM.

N. Samuel assumed the Chair.

**1. Traditional Territory Acknowledgement**

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 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**

Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

\* indicates individuals who participated electronically.

Members

Present: N. Samuel, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative, Chair  
PG Case, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative,  
Vice-Chair, attended the meeting at 7:29 PM  
S. Almeida-Schroen, Community Member  
S. Bookal\*, Community Member  
S. Byfield\*, Community Member  
R. Coelho, Community Member  
A. Frempong\*, Community Member, attended the meeting at 7:12 PM  
M. Hamel-Nelis, Industry/Association/Public Institution  
Representative  
J. Koono Nyemb, Community Member  
T. Morris, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative,  
attended the meeting at 7:16 PM

J. Munawa, Community Member  
B. Nelson\*, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative  
K. Smith\*, Community Member, attended the meeting at 7:10 PM  
J. Williamson, Industry/Association/Public Institution  
Representative  
G. Wilson-Beier, Community Member

Also

Present: Councillor Anderson\*, Regional Council Alternate  
B. Goodwin, Commissioner of Corporate Services

Members

Absent: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer  
A. Kong, Industry/Association/Public Institution Representative  
Councillor Lee, Regional Council  
Councillor Shahid, Regional Council

Staff Present: A. Hector-Alexander, P. Hines, N. Honarbakhsh, R. Inacio, A.  
Sharma, and K. Smith

### **3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

### **4. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by B. Nelson, Seconded by J. Munawa,  
That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce  
meeting held on Thursday, September 25, 2025, be adopted.

**Carried**

### **5. Delegations**

There were no delegations.

### **6. Presentations**

- A) Dr. Adwoa Onuora, Associate Professor, Black Studies of Gender/Sexualities and  
Health  
Re: Black Studies Specialization and B.L.A.C.K Lab at Trent University
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Dr. Adwoa Onuora, Associate Professor, Black Studies of Gender/Sexualities and  
Health, provided a presentation with regards to Black Studies Specialization and  
B.L.A.C.K Lab at Trent University.

Dr. Onuora advised that the Black studies specialization came from a  
recommendation in 2022 which examined how racism was affecting the  
experiences of faculty staff and students on the campus and the different barriers  
they were facing in terms of discrimination and microaggression. The idea was to

create a specialization that would address and prepare not just students but faculty and staff to be able to intervene prescriptively in terms of addressing anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism as it manifests. The specialization was launched on October 2, 2025 to build partnerships to help students see the practical importance of the specialization and to bridge the theory/practice gap by giving students hands-on experience with policy and community leaders.

Dr. Onuora stated the specialization is made up of three courses, which are Foundation of Black Studies in Canada; Black Sociology: Theorizing Race and Power; and Applied Intersectionality. Dr. Onuora provided a brief overview of what the courses offer.

At the request of the Committee, Dr. Onuora provided an overview of the Black Life and Community Knowledge (B.L.A.C.K.) Lab and advised the B.L.A.C.K. Lab is comprised of herself, Dr. Nadiya Ali and Beatrice Anane-Bediakoh who do work to allow students to contribute to research on issues such as Black health equity, anti-Black Islamophobia and the criminalization of Black communities. Dr. Onuora provided a brief overview of each of their portfolios within the Lab.

Dr. Onuora responded to questions from the Committee with regards to whether there is potential for students to be able to connect theoretical components and apply it with potential partnerships to further extend their transition to knowledge and application; whether situations in the United States is influencing her work; and how to engage with students to see the benefit of the program and deal with the barrier of students not being aware of what jobs can stem from the program.

Discussion ensued with regards to having students create a curriculum to create training and educational materials and provide training in real life situations.

B) Alexander Harras, Director, Legislative Services and Regional Clerk, Regional Municipality of Durham  
Re: Municipal Elections

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Alexander Harras, Director, Legislative Services and Regional Clerk, Regional Municipality of Durham, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to 2026 Municipal Election Engagement & Participation.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Overview
- Voter Turnout % by Durham Municipality, 2014-2022
- Other 2022 Statistics
- Ways to Engage
- Candidate Eligibility
- How to Become a Candidate
- Working on a Campaign
- Working for a Municipality
- How Municipalities Vote

- Tips for Voters
- Key Takeaways

A. Harras responded to questions from the Committee with regards to how Durham Region spreads awareness on the importance of municipal elections; whether presentations on the municipal election can be held within the community; whether data is collected on improvements to voter turnout; whether data is collected on the candidate demographic for those running in municipal elections; and the process on engaging those who recently turned 18 to get out and vote.

Discussion ensued with regards to engagement in the community to encourage youth to vote in elections and ways to educate the community on the importance of voting.

## **7. Introduction of Members**

P. Hines invited members of the Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce to introduce themselves. The members introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of their background.

## **8. Information Items**

There were no information items to consider.

## **9. Discussion Items**

### **A) Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce Swag**

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A. Hector-Alexander requested feedback from Committee members regarding obtaining Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce swag for use at community events.

Discussion ensued with regards to putting the DRART website on the swag for community members to easily identify how to access information; having t-shirts or sweaters made for Committee members to wear at events; and having the DRART logo on the front of a tablecloth for better presentation.

In response to a question from the Committee, P. Hines advised that there are one or more events in each quarter for Committee members to potentially be present at. Discussion ensued with regards to setting up a calendar for Committee events and using categories to identify the type of event.

### **B) Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce Community Event Proposal**

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A. Hector-Alexander provided a brief overview of the symposium hosted last year for the new Committee members. She advised that at the last meeting there was discussion on whether the Committee would like to host a similar event in the new year.

Committee members provided the following feedback: in order to reach more of the community, target community leaders and increase the Committee's visibility; bringing together other taskforces and teams for the symposium; being more strategic on promoting the event; having an education component at the event; creating an "elevator pitch" for Committee members to use to describe DRART; and incorporating a component about protecting your own mental health.

A. Hector-Alexander stated the community event will be included as an item for discussion on the next Committee meeting agenda and an update will be provided on potential next steps.

C) Subcommittee Updates

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1. EDI Working Group

PG Case provided the following update on behalf of the EDI Working Group:

- The Together Against Hate Durham campaign has launched with the public awareness website being live. Resources such as pamphlets, posters, postcards and videos have been distributed to local area municipalities, libraries, senior centres, Indigenous organizations, and school boards. There is a community survey available on the website to gather feedback and guide future policy recommendations.
- The Anti-Hate Conference is taking place on Friday, November 7 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Ajax Community Centre. The keynote speaker is Dr. Sara Thompson, Criminology Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University. Councillor Lee will be speaking as Deputy Mayor of Ajax, a member of DRART and the Ajax Anti-Racism Taskforce.
- There are 11 draft policy recommendations for implementing Anti-Hate policies. There is a subgroup reviewing the policy themes and will provide feedback, and there is input from the Region's Legal team. Following the conference, the top five recommendations will be selected to present to Regional Council by March 2026.
- Committee members are encouraged to attend the final steering committee meeting on Wednesday, October 29 at 10:00 AM and were reminded to register for the conference. There is an opportunity for DRART members to facilitate breakout tables at the conference.

N. Honarbakhsh advised four videos are being prepared for the Together Against Hate campaign and the first video on bystander intervention has launched. The Together Against Hate Durham: Bystander Intervention video was played for Committee members.

2. DRPS Working Group

J. Munawa provided the following update on behalf of the DRPS Working Group:

- The officer program is education focused while emphasizing prevention and building the relationship between all school boards. There are 10 school community officers that cover 215 schools in Durham Region, averaging 19 schools per officer.
- Liaison officers support youth through education and community engagement through activities such as cyber safety, education subgroup awareness and youth law awareness.
- Complimentary programs reinforced a non-enforcement approach and offer exclusive development focus opportunities for youth.
- Evidence shows that well trained, culturally competent liaison officers improve safety and perceptions especially when separated from the international studies.
- Bill 33 will mandate police and school collaboration, and Durham Regional Police Services (DRPS) already fulfills its collaboration with Durham school boards. The DRPS model supports equity and human rights by avoiding embedded enforcement and focuses on education and production.

3. School Board Working Group

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

4. Education Working Group

There were no new updates from the Education Working Group.

**10. Other Business**

A) Durham Catholic District School Board Black Student Excellence Awards

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A. Hector-Alexander advised the Durham Catholic District School Board Black Student Excellence Awards are taking place on Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce meeting will be held on Thursday, November 27, 2025 at 7:00 PM.

**12. Adjournment**

Moved by PG Case, Seconded by G. Wilson-Beier,  
That the meeting be adjourned.

**Carried**

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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N. Samuel  
Chair, Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce

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K. Smith  
Committee Clerk