

Diversity Committee
Meeting held March 30, 2021

A meeting of the Diversity Committee is held this day commencing at 10:00 o'clock a.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Peter Ijeh, Chair
Councillor Ed Sleiman
Riham Al-Saadi
Lacy Carty (arrives at 10:36 a.m.)
Sherrilyn Colley-Vegh
Khagendra Gautam
Sungee John

Regrets received from:

Shelley Evans
Christopher Fletcher
Yo Son Dah Nost Huff

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Gayle Jones, Diversity/Accessibility Officer
Mary Ellen Bernard, Manager Social Policy and Planning
Sergeant Andy Drouillard, Windsor Police Services
Katie Pavlovski, Coordinator Community Development
Neil MacEachrane, Windsor Police Services
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Committee Coordinator calls the meeting to order at 10:02 o'clock a.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Election of Chair

The Committee Coordinator calls for nominations from the floor for the position of Chair. Councillor Sleiman nominates Peter Ijeh, seconded by S. John. The Committee Coordinator calls for further nominations from the floor. Seeing none, the Committee Coordinator asks P. Ijeh if he accepts. P. Ijeh accepts.

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by S. John,
That Peter Ijeh **BE ELECTED** Chair of the Diversity Committee for the term ending
December 31, 2021.
Carried.

3. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

4. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by R. Al-Saadi,
That the minutes of the Diversity Committee held December 15, 2020 **BE
ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

1. Business Items

5.1 2020 Annual Report

Moved by S. Colley-Vegh, seconded by R. Al-Saadi,
That the Diversity Committee 2020 Annual Report **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

5.2 Meeting with the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WELIP)

The Chair advises that R. Al-Saadi is a member of the Diversity Committee and the WELIP Board and in partnership with WELIP will undertake the consultation phase of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

R. Al-Saadi refers to her Research Work Plan Report entitled “Collaborative Approach to Diversity and Inclusion Initiative and Inclusion and Antiracism Campaign”. The goal is to amalgamate the efforts of both parties and move forward with the next steps.

G. Jones is pleased that R. Al-Saadi is a member of both groups and commends her for putting together this skeleton work plan for the Committee to work with. It is important to ensure that we come up with a good plan between WELIP and the Diversity Committee that meets our needs and will provide important data from the community. She adds from the Diversity Committee aspect, the focus will be on the City of Windsor. She suggests the formation of a subcommittee that can meet with WELIP to refine a final

plan to be approved by WELIP, the Diversity Committee, Standing Committee and City Council.

G. Jones indicates that the first draft of the Work Plan outlines the partnership role, the research methods which at this point suggests a qualitative approach, the process to collect data i.e. a survey that goes out to the public and virtual focus groups. There is the base of twelve possible questions that were provided in the past by a subcommittee that we can consider and build upon. The City of Niagara did a survey that asked questions relating to experience with racism and discrimination in the community. Reviewing the Niagara survey and other similar surveys will provide some guidance as to key topics to cover in our survey. Once the survey is finalized, approved and distributed it will offer valuable data regarding what is going on in the community and can guide the Committee in our future focus groups.

M. E. Bernard advises that WELIP is a partnership of over 80 organizations in Windsor-Essex County that covers user services. One of the focuses of WELIP is the Greater Windsor-Essex community and she adds that the people are experiencing some level of discrimination in many different sectors. They have done some research among employment and notes that people have a very difficult time getting jobs. The question is how do we reduce or eliminate the barriers. One area that requires some exploration with respect to the consultation; is to look at the broader sectors of our community and where people are encountering challenges. When you ask questions of the broader population, the results will be received and brought back to the focus groups. She indicates what WELIP would like to see is the creation of a small subcommittee to work with a subcommittee of the Diversity Committee. We would look at finalizing a methodology and the questions and then come back to both groups with something that would work for our community from a broader perspective.

G. Jones asks for volunteers to sit on the subcommittee as this is an opportunity to get involved and help the community. The Chair volunteers, along with N. MacEachrane, S. John, K. Gautum and R. Al-Saadi.

2. Business

2.1 o Tolerance on Anti-Asian Racism

The Chair expresses concern relating to the recent anti-Asian incidents that have occurred and adds that this has to be taken seriously. We are all human beings; and we must respect one another. He suggests that a motion on behalf of the Diversity Committee be sent to the Standing Committee and City Council.

S. John advises that recently several Chinese Associations met virtually to discuss anti-Asian racism and hate in the local area. On behalf of the Associations, she was asked to ascertain if the City can help to identify intolerant or racist incidents in the Asian

communities locally either through a hot line or a survey. There have been examples of micro aggressions in the workplace none of which is enough to put into a large scale report for Windsor-Essex. She adds they looked at the National Report Study that came out of the Chinese Canadian Counsel Survey from July to October 2020 to gather incidences of anti-Asian racism, which talked about 150 incidences across the country.

The Chair states the reason that we are still fighting racism is because not all levels of governments have dealt with the issue of racism whether it is anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism or anti-Indigenous racism.

Councillor Sleiman remarks that the many racist incidences that have occurred in the United States have brought racism to the forefront. Racism is not only against Asians, there are many communities in Windsor that have experienced racism i.e. applying for a job.

Councillor Sleiman asks Windsor Police to comment on calls received relating to racism.

N. MacEachrane responds that they receive many calls relating to racism and name-calling. He indicates that the Officer goes out and has to determine if this is a hate-based crime or just someone talking. The Police can only act if there is a threat or something criminal is attached to that. They receive calls from people who have seen someone of a different colour in their neighbourhood and they think they look suspicious.

Councillor Sleiman asks Administration to comment on if victims of racism will speak about it or are silent due to fear of retaliation.

M.E. Bernard responds that in her opinion, many people do not report it because of concerns of retribution or, they may feel like things will never change.

The Chair reports that all communities have experienced racism; however, when the Police are called in regarding a racist incident, the history between that community and the Police becomes a factor in managing the situation. He adds that many Police Officers are not equipped to deal with racist issues. This is an opportunity for the Diversity Committee to teach and learn about racism; there will be outcomes that are more positive if we talk about it.

G. Jones adds that having a consultation where we are asking about people's experiences with racism and discrimination in the community will offer valuable data but we have to go on from there to get the details.

As it relates to the Police being called, sometimes showing the prevalence and the types of racism can help with those initial conversations. N. MacEachrane notes that most times with racism, it is not something that we can enforce. We can direct people as to where they can go to get help.

R. Al-Saadi states that the City of Windsor welcomes immigrants and refugees from all across the world coming from war torn communities and from a negative relationship with law enforcement and police officers. As a settlement worker initially, the police were invited to redefine the role of the police to those communities who only see them as an authority figure that may put them in prison. When a person reports something to the police, they are facing a negative reaction to the police thus becoming revictimized by that experience. We cannot continue to see such rising patterns of people saying “go back home where you came from”.

Councillor Sleiman suggests that if a motion is put forward, that it address anti-racism for all sectors.

S. Colley-Vegh remarks that there is zero tolerance on hate crimes. As the Police have indicated when it refers to zero tolerance on the behavior of people, it is difficult to enforce because if you have zero tolerance, what is the consequence. It is it not a crime, you cannot force people to be nice, so how do you have a policy without consequences attached to them.

Sergeant Drouillard responds that unfortunately, when racism happens and we receive a call to go to the incident as a police officer, we are mediators and there to keep the peace. We recently did a presentation regarding racism for kids in grade school and it was very well received. Obviously, there is a need for this given the climate relating to the anti-Asian rhetoric. He suggests education in some manner, i.e. doing presentations to high school students and parents. He notes that the Police Officers are sharing their experiences with racism as well.

S. Colley-Vegh adds that sensitivity training is needed for the teachers.

K. Gautam states that the new immigrant community is struggling to learn the English language and when they experience a problem, they do not know where to go. He adds that people are humiliated and harassed but stay silent, as they do not know how to communicate with the police, as they are unaware of their rights.

G. Jones suggests that the discussion relating to the motion be deferred to the next meeting.

3. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the call of the Chair.

4. Journment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR