

MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC)

Wednesday, November 10, 2021
Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192/2020
And in Meeting Room G, City Hall

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Chinu Das	- Chair, City Council Member
Karen Klein	- Alternate Chair/SD40 Representative
Rozina Jaffer	- Community Member
Dalia Al Houseini	- Community Member
Mike Coca	- Community Member*
Tanushree Pillai	- Community Member*

MEMBER REGRETS:

Fiona Apeldoorn	- Community Member
Karima Jivraj	- New Westminster Downtown BIA
Lizz Kelly	- Community Member
Rachel Matembe	- Community Member
Richard Schabler	- Indigenous Representative

STAFF PRESENT:

Claudia Freire	- Housing and Social Planner
Diana McDaniel	- Inspector, New Westminster Police Department*
Jacque Killawee	- City Clerk
Carilyn Cook	- Committee Clerk

*Denotes virtual attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee agenda of the November 10, 2021 be adopted with the addition of Item 5.2 – Staff and Council Time Off for Non-Christian Holidays by Tanushree Pillai, Community Member.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of September 8, 2021

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee minutes of the September 8, 2021 meeting be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

There were no items.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Social Inclusion, Engagement and Reconciliation Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Jacque Killawee, City Clerk, advised that that feedback received from the Committee at the last meeting helped to inform the new Social Inclusion, Engagement and Reconciliation Advisory Committee's (SIERAC) Terms of Reference. She noted that WINS (Welcoming and Inclusive New West) will have a designated spot on the SIERAC and that the City is committed to continuously seeking representation from diverse populations such as youth, seniors, different ethnicities, abilities, etc., to sit on all city committees. Recent committee recruitment outreach included new immigrant groups via numerous social media advertisements, at the libraries, through direct emails, etc.

Councillor Das reported that she had contacted WINS and others encouraging them to apply.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Killawee provided the following comments:

- Alternate Chair training, where attendees receive a script and role play, is offered to all committee members, whether they are their committee's alternate chair or if they want the training for personal knowledge. Staff strive to make the training session relaxing and fun for participants; and,
- The Terms of Reference for the Social Inclusion, Engagement and Reconciliation Advisory Committee will be going to Council on December 13, 2021 for final approval.

Discussion ensued, and Committee members provided the following comments:

- During committee orientations and first meetings, new members, especially new immigrants, may need extra encouragement to participate, learn how meetings are run, and how change is brought about through committees;
- Committee orientations could be run more than once so that people become more comfortable with speaking up, being with other committee members, and the process in general;
- Active participation on committees may help members envision themselves leading a committee either with the City or in another area of their lives; and,
- We need to remain cognizant that, culturally, people communicate differently and that the onus is on the Chair to encourage people to actively participate in the discussions that take place during committee meetings.

4.2 Holocaust Remembrance Day Motion

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, announced that the Holocaust Remembrance Day recommendation that was passed by the Committee at the September 8, 2021 meeting will be going in a report to Council on December 13, 2021. She advised that speaker registration will open six days before the meeting for those who wish to address Council regarding the recommendation, and noted that she would send the link for registration to Committee members once registration is open.

4.3 Sanctuary City Policy Implementation Phase 1 Update

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided an update regarding the implementation of Phase 1 of the Sanctuary City Policy which involves two components, staff training and education, and communications and public awareness. Actions that have been taken so far include:

- Development of the Sanctuary City brochure, which has been translated into six languages, and for which input was received from the Committee, Community Action Network (CAN) members, the Umbrella Society, and Mosaic Community Services; and,
- Commencement of staff training and education, including a recorded presentation by staff and individuals with lived and living experience of precarious immigration status will co-present and share their personal stories and share their views on how the Policy will impact residents. The presentation will also become a part of the staff onboarding process.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Freire provided the following comments:

- The brochure will be available in the six languages by next week and shared publically through WINS, on the city website and other social media, through word of mouth, etc.; and,
- The presentation could be shared not only with staff but with others through organizations such as Mosaic Community Services.

Committee members commended staff for the hard work put into the Policy which is a very exciting initiative for the City.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Highlights of MACs accomplishments – Councillor Das/Claudia Freire

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, shared a presentation which highlighted some of the Committee's work and achievements from 2008, the start of the Committee, to present, including:

- The Chinese Reconciliation Process resulting in a formal apology to the Chinese community, dedication of a park, and mosaic commemorations regarding Chinese history;
- Immigrant and Refugee Survey to improve services and support for new immigrants;
- The Safe Harbour Program to create respectful and welcoming workplaces and communities;
- Century House's Inclusion Enhancement Initiative for a more diverse membership;
- Translation Policy Framework to improve access to information and services;
- Newcomers Festival and Information Fair to connect newcomers to programs and services;
- Motion to Council regarding the Christchurch Act of Terror;
- New Westminster Welcome Centre to facilitate connections, integration, and social inclusion;
- Privacy Swims at the new təməsew' txw Aquatic and Community Centre;
- The Sanctuary City Policy; and,
- Motion to Council regarding the Komagata Maru.

Ms. Freire assured members that while this was the last meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee, the ongoing work of the Committee would be assumed by the new Social Inclusion, Engagement and Reconciliation Advisory Committee.

In response to an inquiry from the Committee, Diana McDaniel, Inspector, New Westminster Police Department, advised that the Sanctuary City Policy will be discussed at the next Police Board meeting and that their related policy guidelines are anticipated to go to the Police Board in January 2022.

Committee members noted how far the community has come with respect to inclusivity of gender and ethnicity and thanked Councillor Das and staff for their work over the years.

5.2 Staff and Council Time Off for Non-Christian Holidays

Tanushree Pillai, Community Member, requested that the Committee discuss the possibility of sending a recommendation to Council with respect to allowing staff

and Council additional paid time-off on their own cultural non-Christian holidays such as Diwali, Eid, Rosh Hashanah, etc. as they are not already Federal Statutory holidays.

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, reported that she had spoken with the City's Human Resources Department prior to the meeting which determined that further investigation of this initiative could continue with the direction of Council. Ms. Freire shared that the Boys and Girls Club of South Coast BC have recently provided their staff the option to trade statutory holidays with ones that better reflect their personal beliefs.

Discussion ensued, and Committee members provided the following comments:

- In Canada there are a certain number of Federal Statutory holidays that are legislated and each workplace has its own HR department that sets these policies out;
- This suggestion is worth exploring as statutory holidays are a legacy of the colonial era; and,
- In India, while statutory holidays such as Christmas are observed, government employees are allowed to choose a couple of extra religious days to have off for celebration.

Councillor Das advised that a lot of consideration would need to go into implementing this request and, as such, it should go to the new Social Inclusion, Engagement and Reconciliation Advisory Committee for further investigation.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee request that the Social Inclusion, Engagement and Reconciliation Advisory Committee look into non-Christian and non-Eurocentric holidays that city staff may be allowed to observe as paid days off and present their findings to Council for consideration.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

Councillor Das expressed her gratitude to past and current members of the Committee for all of their hard work over the years and wished everyone the best of luck in their future endeavours.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

This is the last meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Certified correct,

Councillor Chinu Das
Chair

Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk