



**SOCIAL INCLUSION, ENGAGEMENT, AND RECONCILIATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT:

Tony Duong	Community Member
Frances Blake	Community Member
Damian Durica	Community Member
Megumi Taguchi	Community Member
Natalie Johnston	Community Member*
Rozina Jaffer	Community Member
Vishal Jain	Community Member
Satnam Sangra	Community Member
Nate Batara	Community Member*
Briana Harris	Community Member
Ruth Weller	Representative from a Local Indigenous Support Organization*

ABSENT:

Councilor Chinu Das	Chair
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STAFF PRESENT:

Rob McCullough	Manager, Museums and Heritage Services, Office of the CAO
Jennifer Miller	Manager of Public Engagement, Office of the CAO
Jacque Killawee	City Clerk
Christina Coolidge	Indigenous Relations Advisor*
Christine Cho	Human Resources Business Partner*
Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, opened the meeting at 5:32 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. She acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. She recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Rozina Jaffer, Community Member, be elected as the Alternate Chair for the duration of the meeting.

CARRIED.

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

Procedural note: At this point in the meeting, Ms. Jaffer assume the Chair.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS**

A roundtable of introductions took place.

2.1 Christina Coolidge, Indigenous Relations Advisor

Christina Coolidge, Indigenous Relations Advisory, formally introduced herself and shared of the importance of introductions at meetings, noting that Indigenous people introduce themselves per their government structure which helps to internalize responsibility within people.

Ms. Coolidge shared that this is her first time working for a colonial organization and that the City is willing to do reconciliation work and has already made changes for the better. She stated that it is good that the Committee is comprised of people from many walks of life and that the lack of Indigenous involvement across Canada is problematic.

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

- Working for a municipality will facilitate change from the ground up, using colonial-based tools;
- The lack of Indigenous involvement and inclusion in things is very much an afterthought when they should be considered in partnerships from the start; and,

- Consensus information with respect to the Indigenous population in New Westminster is generally outdated and incorrect;

Discussion ensued, and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Many Canadians were unaware of the Residential Schools until the discovery of remains at the Kamloops Indian Residential School after which there was a shift in Canadian consciousness; and,
- Many cultures have experienced racism throughout Canadian history.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 February 16, 2022

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the February 16, 2022 Social Inclusion, Engagement, and Reconciliation Advisory Committee minutes be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

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

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Engagement

Jennifer Miller, Manager of Public Engagement, provided a PowerPoint presentation titled, "Evaluation of Public Engagement" during which she reviewed the City's current practice for engagement evaluation and evaluation principles.

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

- While the City's Request for Proposals does not specifically include a section for contractors as to how to evaluate engagement as part of the procurement of services, contractors are given a copy of the City's Public Engagement Policy and requested to provide details about how they are planning to engage for feedback but without a specific outline of what they are planning to do. In the future, the City could look at including more specific guidelines of what is expected.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Accessibility and overcoming barriers can be achieved through offering transportation to open houses, etc., supporting childcare, planning in-person engagement sessions at various times to facilitate people's varying work schedules;
- Acknowledgement of cultural events and observances will provide residents with a sense of belonging which will make them want to participate in the City's public engagement efforts;
- Engagement should be fun and amusing and provide social interaction with others to facilitate lively conversations;
- Engagement should take place where people congregate, not with the expectation that they will come to you;
- The word "engagement" may be confusing for some; therefore, the kind of feedback that is being requested must be clearly defined;
- Let people know the result of the engagement so they want to participate and contribute again, even if the results are not what they were hoping for;
- Good engagement is when community members are thinking of the greater community not just themselves;
- Help people to see the full picture and how the project for which they are providing input will affect the community;
- Engagement outreach needs to include those that are not digitally literate or do not have access to devices for online participation; and,
- Feedback should be requested through various methods to provide the most opportunities for people to participate.

5.2 City Celebrations and Observances

Rob McCullough, Manager, Museums and Heritage Services, advised that this item has come from various motions around diversity and inclusivity by Council over the last year and half, and that the discussion has come to the Committee for feedback as a referral from the Reconciliation, Social Inclusion, and Engagement Task Force. He noted that, while some celebrations and observances are represented across the City, there is a need to start equitizing those events and create principles as to how to move forward. Currently, the City does not have an official list of celebrations and observances and there are proclamations put forward throughout the year by both staff and the community which are vast and broad, so there is a desire to establish the most meaningful ones.

Jacque Killawee, City Clerk, shared that as most current celebrations and observances are tied to our colonial past, the City wants to authentically look at what is important to Community, including how these can be integrated into children's programming. She noted that staff have started their own cultural celebrations and observances in City Hall and that the City celebrates National Indigenous Day on June 21st.

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

- Historical events specifically tied to New Westminster could be observed, including the remembrance of Chief Ahan;
- Recognition and narratives around the First Nations presence prior to colonization could be reflected in the landscape through street names, park names, etc. The City does not yet have an inventory of these things, nor who has or should be represented and once that is known, the City can be more reflective;
- Staff have surveyed some other municipalities and found that the City of Vancouver has a list of celebrations and observances that was approved by their City Council; however, it has not yet been determined how their list was established. In addition, the City of Toronto has a list which more specifically observes memorial dates;
- Micro grants offered by the City are a way for smaller groups to celebrate their culture through seed funding, and may also receive city assistance with respect to space to use, assistance with crowd control, etc.
- Recent staff initiated cultural celebrations have included Nowruz (Persian New Year), Vaisakhi, and decorating City Hall for the Chinese Lunar New Year;
- A community group that serves African Canadians is putting on a festival sometime this year; and,
- Whether religious or non-religious based, it is important to hear strong cultural voices in the community for things such as Eid or Vaisakhi and that there are visual representations of these in the community.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- There needs to be a balance so as not to offend people; however, it is important to learn about other cultures;

- The City could look at the demographics of the City and reach out to communities, especially equity seeking groups, to see how they want to be celebrated and acknowledged;
- Acknowledgement of the Indigenous presence before the colonizers arrived is essential and could be done through visualizations of history that people can see when they visit different parts of the City;
- The City could celebrate everyone's biggest holidays equally, although some may feel that they should have a larger presentation;
- The small grants offered by the City need to be better advertised as many residents are unaware of them;
- City Hall is situated in an ideal place for passersby to see the City's acknowledgement of various celebrations and observances on the outside of the building which will show that the main institutional building in the City is a place of acknowledgement and celebration of the community, including having things in various languages;
- It is important to see things through the eyes children as they are learning about how they belong and see themselves in the community;
- To facilitate feelings of connectedness, educate people on the various celebrations and observances through videos that can be shared on social media;
- The increase in racial attacks may further isolate people and acknowledging events significant to them will help bring them into the community fold;
- We must remember that people celebrate and observe events significant to them in different ways; and,
- The City should build upon things that it is already doing well such as the Shine Bright New West campaign. Those principles could be applied to other celebrations and observances.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

7. **MOTION TO MOVE THE MEETING INTO THE CLOSED MEETING**

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the committee will now go into a meeting which is closed to the public, pursuant to Section 90(1)(k) of the Community Charter:

(k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality if they were held in public.

CARRIED.

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

8. END OF MEETING

On MOTION, the meeting ended at 7:02 p.m.

9. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Remaining scheduled meetings, which take place at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

- June 15
- Sept 14
- December 14

Certified correct,

Councillor Chinu Das

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk