

MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 23, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.
Committee Room No. 2
City Hall

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Connie Behl	- Community Member
Eman Ismail-Elmasri	- Community Member
Maria Marcu	- Community Member
Bayoush Mengesha	- Community Member
Maryam Salmani	- Community Member
Maria Soriano	- Community Member

REGRETS:

Councillor Chuck Puchmayr	- Chair
Chinu Das	- Community Member

GUESTS:

Maylen Crespo	- Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Ramone Agbayani	- Welcoming Spaces Assessment Team
Somaya Alaloul	- Welcoming Spaces Assessment Team
Wafaa Alkhazraji	- Welcoming Spaces Assessment Team
Aisha Hussaini	- Welcoming Spaces Assessment Team

STAFF:

Oana Capota	- Curator, Museum and Archives
Donna Martin	- Recording Secretary
John Stark	- Senior Social Planner
Doug Walcott	- Police Services

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

PROCEDURAL NOTE: In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, by consensus, Connie Behl was selected to chair the meeting.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of September 25, 2013

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee meeting held on September 25, 2013 be adopted as presented.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Welcoming Spaces Assessments – Maylen Crespo

Ramone Agbayani, Somaya Alaloul and Aisha Hussaini, of the Welcoming Spaces Assessment Team, reviewed the components of the Welcoming Spaces Program, noting that there were three focus groups (two with immigrant residents and one with service providers).

Findings from the seven sites assessed indicate the following characteristics of public spaces are welcoming to immigrants:

- promotes human contact with effective and direct communication;
- feels safe and accommodating for English language learners;
- incorporates design and visual features that reflect community diversity, especially with respect to signage;
- promotes involvement with available multicultural activities;
- reflects the local culture;
- is well maintained; and
- includes supportive staff.

In response to a question regarding the service provider results, staff indicated the results are confidential but will be shared with the individual service providers in order for them to make any improvements they wish to make to become a more welcoming space.

Some hindrances to a welcoming environment are:

- sign design and sign placement;
- too much information – separate what is happening in the facility you are in from what is happening elsewhere; and
- no one available to direct people to the right place.

Maylen Crespo invited everyone to participate in the Welcoming Spaces and Receptive Communities activity provided and asked that any thoughts be sent to her at mcrespo@fsgv.ca. Ms. Crespo departed at 6:00 p.m.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 MAC Survey Suggestions for Action – John Stark

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, presented the suggested actions resulting from the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee's New Immigrant and Refugee Survey. It is generally felt that the City should continue to take a leadership role and continue its coordination and support role for the Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster (WIN) Community Partnership Table.

Suggestions were made concerning the following actions:

- Welcome and Integration Centre;
- Inclusive Workplaces;
- Welcoming Spaces; and
- Receptive communities.

(See report attached to these minutes).

Mr. Stark noted the final report will contain information from the survey and the initiatives. The report will go to Council for information.

Committee members should review and send along any further suggestions to John Stark at jstark@newwestcity.ca. The report will be presented at the next Multiculturalism Advisory Committee meeting and will be finalized in January.

Eman Ismail-Elmasri departed at 6:23 p.m.

5.0 NW BUSINESS

5.1 Indonesian Meeting – Oana Capota

Oana Capota, Curator, Museum and Archives, reported that her meeting with the Indonesian community was very successful. The Indonesian community has many resources which can be utilized for the good of the overall immigrant community in New Westminster.

5.2 Wait for Me Daddy Exhibit – Multicultural Elements – Oana Capota

Ms. Capota advised that a Wait for Me Daddy exhibit is planned for the temporary gallery space in the new museum. Upon further exploration, it was discovered there is much more history to the photo with respect to multiculturalism than first thought. The museum is exploring the idea of showing various themes through a modern lens. For example, separation of families, or people with backgrounds of war.

Committee members were encouraged to get involved or, at the least, send their feedback to Ms. Capota.

5.3 Receptive Communities Small Dialogues Invite – John Stark

John Stark invited everyone to a Common Ground circle for Women scheduled for November 14, 2013. Further details will be emailed to committee members.

5.4 WIN Community Partnership Table Call for Members – John Stark

The next meeting of WIN Community Partnership Table is scheduled for Friday, November 9, 2013 in Committee Room 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

6.1 Safe Harbour City-Wide Implementation Update – John Stark

It was announced that City employees will participate in the Safe Harbour Program training in November.

6.2 Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Program Update – John Stark

John Stark will invite Cori Lynn Germiquet, Executive Director, New Westminster Chamber of Commerce, to an upcoming Multiculturalism Advisory Committee meeting to speak to the area of Inclusive Workplaces.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence presented.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Next meeting November 27, 2013 in Committee Room No. 2

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

**CONNIE BEHL,
CHAIR**

**DONNA MARTIN
RECORDING SECRETARY**