

## **MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.  
Committee Room #2, City Hall**

### **MINUTES**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillor Chinu Das	- Chair, City Council Member
Harbir Batra	- Community Member
Mary Campbell	- Community Member
Halim Habibi	- Community Member, Alternate Chair
Karen Klein	- SD40 Representative
Jessica Roca-Muncaster	- Community Member
Elaine Su	- Community Member
Kelsi Wall	- Community Member

#### **MEMBERS REGRETS:**

Mike Coca	- Community Member
-----------	--------------------

#### **GUESTS**

Adnan Akiel	- Bridging Gaps Foundation
-------------	----------------------------

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Wendy Bowyer	- New Westminster Police Department
Oana Capota	- Curator, Museums and Heritage Services
Claudia Freire	- Housing Social Planner
Paul Hyland	- New Westminster Police Department
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.

### **1.0 ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

There were no additions.

## **2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

### **2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of February 20, 2019**

#### **MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT the Minutes of the February 20, 2019 Multiculturalism Advisory Committee meeting be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED.**

All Committee members present voted in favour of the motion.

## **3.0 PRESENTATIONS**

### **3.1 Multiculturalism 101**

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining the background, history and function of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee, including the following information:

- About New Westminster – the location, history and diversity of the City;
- Statistics about immigration and population growth in the City, including the top three countries of origin for immigrants and refugees, and languages spoken in the City;
- Details about the MAC Immigrant Survey, including information collected about the challenges that newcomers face in obtaining employment, housing, medical services and general information; and,
- Concept of a welcoming and inclusive community and past and future City initiatives on multiculturalism.

Councillor Das discussed the history of the City's Multicultural Policy and the development of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee, noting that it may for part of the Committee's mandate to review and revise the policy.

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

- The Immigrant Survey was designed by the MAC and showed which City services were most welcoming to newcomers; and,
- The survey would likely be repeated in 2020 with similar questions; however there would be opportunity for the Committee to give input before it is distributed.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- The statistics presented are of interest from a policing perspective, as they are trying to reflect the diversity of the community in terms of hiring;

- Police are often seen in conflicting, fear-inducing roles; therefore it may be useful to add Police questions to the survey to identify connection points with newcomer groups and to measure the degree that newcomers identify with police services; and,
- The survey would be useful to identify the environmental and social conditions within the City that affect the daily life of refugees and other newcomers.

### **3.2 Update on New Westminster Museum and Archives' Multicultural Work**

Oana Capota, Museum Curator, provided an update on past and future exhibitions, initiatives, and programs at the New Westminster Museum and Archives, and noted that one of her roles is to ensure that the museum's exhibits reflect the diversity of the community.

Exhibitions in 2017-2018:

- Bottoms Up – Cultures of Drink in the Royal City:
  - Included Chocolatl: a Latin American hot chocolate program, and the Not So Sober Self-guided walking tour, which included some history of Chinese Canadians in the City;
- Be/Longing
  - Explored the question of belonging in the City and included a coffee ceremony by the BC Ethiopian Association and a Twelfth Street walking tour which gave the history of Susan Chew;
- People Gotta Move
  - A transportation exhibit which included information about different types of Indigenous canoes and other forms of transportation;
- Getting the Word Out
  - About the history of printing in the City and how issues were tackled in the press over history, especially how racism and xenophobia was expressed in the past;
- Offsite Displays in City Hall and Queensborough Community Centre which feature student-led exhibits;

Upcoming Exhibitions in 2019-2020 with multicultural components:

- You Are What You Eat: Community Food Security (May 2019);
- The Heat is On: Keeping Warm Then, Keeping Cool Now (October 2019), featuring stories from the community;
- Sukh Sagar Gurdwara Anniversary (November 2019), will include reaching out to the community to help celebrate the 100th anniversary;
- The Call of the Wild (2020), as well as exhibits on the topics of housing and other aspects of social history in New Westminster;

Programs:

- National Indigenous Peoples' Day (June 21) – will take place in Moody Park this year;

- Human Library: Gatherings designed to encourage people to share personal experiences; and,
- Diwali Celebration.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Capota provided the following information:

- There is currently no dedicated communications person to expand the Museum's reach and get the word out about its exhibitions and programs;
- The process to develop an idea from the community is to contact the Museum's Community Advisory Group, and put together a proposal. The Advisory Group and the Museum would then evaluate it and consider what might exist in the Museum's collection and what may need to be borrowed;
- The whole process of developing a proposal could take up to two years; and,
- The aim is to develop topics which include different aspects of various communities, and the Museum often borrows items from community members to reflect many cultures.

## **4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **4.1 2019 Newcomers Festival and Information Fair**

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, updated the committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual 'Newcomers Festival and Information Fair', which took place on Saturday, March 30 at Century House, highlighting the following aspects of the event:

- 25 exhibitors were registered as part of the resource fair, including settlement agencies, Police services etc;
- Over 300 people attended, exceeding the target; and,
- Performances and activities were enjoyed by all.

In response to a question from the Committee, Ms. Freire noted that while Century House is centrally located, the event may be outgrowing the space.

Ms. Freire thanked the members of the Committee who helped to develop the event, and advised that future event plans would be brought back for discussion.

### **4.2 Sanctuary City Designation**

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Sanctuary City Policy, including the following information:

- Council activity and direction on the Sanctuary City Designation;
- Definition and policy ideologies of Sanctuary City, and the reasons for the City to designate;

- Designation process and staff workplan;
- Important note that collaboration with the Police department is a key aspect of this work and policy; and,
- Next steps, including a workshop at MAC and presentation at a Police Board meeting in May.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Freire and Councillor Das provided the following information:

- Currently, there is no requirement for Police to ask about immigration status for victims who call in, as there is a presumption of respect; however procedures and warrants do have to be followed within Canadian Border Services when arrests are made; and,
- At this time, no directly neighbouring municipalities (eg Burnaby, Surrey) are considering a similar designation.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- The timeline may be ambitious; the School District policy was developed over three school years due to the level of consultation that was carried out;
- Suggestion to investigate the reasons why Vancouver named their policy as they did, and which other municipalities considered policies, but did not carry through with them;
- The terminology can be confusing, particularly around undocumented and sanctuary;
- In order to ensure comprehensive consultation, it may be useful to find undocumented people and find out what their expectations would be, in terms of what services they would like to access, and what challenges they face;
- From a policing perspective, the City is fortunate that Vancouver has already set a precedent on this work; however, the major challenge for Police may be in terms of the communication and collaboration;
- Implementation of this designation may be may be easier for municipalities who have their own Police force than those who use RCMP;
- There may be merit in looking at the US examples to learn lessons in terms of implementation, communication and education of the public on the initiative, as these may present the biggest challenge;
- It may be helpful to be determine which services (City or otherwise) currently require the divulgence of immigration status;
- It would be important to involve Fraser Health in the consultation, however the Provincial Government seems to be removing requirements to present ID to access some services; and,
- It would be helpful to develop and communicate a glossary of terms to clarify terminology and connotation of the relevant words to ensure there is no misinterpretation.

## **5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Topics of Interest to the MAC**

This item was not addressed.

**Procedural Note: Item 5.2 was addressed after Item 2.1.**

### **5.2 Christchurch, New Zealand, Terrorist Attack**

Halim Habib, Community Member, discussed the attacks on March 15, 2019 at two mosques in the community of Christchurch, New Zealand, which took the lives of 51 Muslims, some of whom were New Zealand citizens, some immigrants.

Adnan Akiel, Bridging Gaps Foundation, addressed the Committee, presenting statistics about islamophobia and the importance of educating the City's residents about the harmful impacts of islamophobia on the Muslim community and on people of all ages. Mr. Akiel discussed the mission of the Bridging Gaps Foundation, which includes grassroots efforts and building relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims through education, outreach and social engagement.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr. Akiel noted that there had been a 253% increase in islamophobia in Canada between 2012 and 2015; however, he was uncertain how this increase was distributed regionally.

In response to a question from the Committee, Councillor Das noted that it would be Council's discretion to decide on the actions that would result from any motion passed at the MAC meeting, and that any precedent that may be set in sending letters of support to the Christchurch community would be carefully weighed.

#### **MOVED and SECONDED**

*THAT, within the context of the City of New Westminster's Multicultural Policy, the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee (MAC) condemns the horrible act of terror on worshipers in Christchurch, NZ that took the lives of 51 Muslims on Friday March 15, 2019 and injured dozens more; and,*

*THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee requests Mayor and Council send a letter of support to the Muslim community in BC and to the affected mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand; and,*

*THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee requests the City of New Westminster to create and implement policies that promote inclusivity and condemn racism, Islamophobia and the criminalization of minorities in our neighbourhoods, schools, colleges, workplaces, public spaces, and other places.*

**CARRIED.**

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

**6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION**

**6.1 Sanctuary City Designation: Process and Proposed Next Steps**

**7.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

**8.0 NEXT MEETING**

With agreement from the Committee, the date of the next meeting was changed to Tuesday June 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm in Committee Room #2

**9.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**ON MOTION**, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Certified correct,

\_\_\_\_\_  
ORIGINAL SIGNED  
**COUNCILLOR CHINU DAS**  
**CHAIR**

\_\_\_\_\_  
ORIGINAL SIGNED  
**HEATHER CORBETT**  
**COMMITTEE CLERK**