

**MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(MAC)**

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

**Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192/2020 and
Order of the Provincial Health Officer *Gatherings and Events – February 5, 2021***

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Chinu Das	- Chair, City Council Member
Karen Klein	- Alternate Chair/SD40 Representative
Dalia Al Houseini	- Community Member
Fiona Apeldoorn	- Community Member
Mike Coca	- Community Member
Rozina Jaffer	- Community Member
Lizz Kelly	- Community Member
Rachel Matembe	- Community Member
Tanushree Pillai	- Community Member

MEMBER REGRETS:

Karima Jivraj	- New Westminister Downtown BIA
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GUEST:

Dr. Elliot Rossiter	- Douglas College
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STAFF PRESENT:

Oana Capota	- Curator, New Westminister Museum
Claudia Freire	- Housing and Social Planner
Diana McDaniel	- Inspector, NWPD
Nicole Ludwig	- Assistant City Clerk
Carilyn Cook	- Committee Clerk

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 April 21, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

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 February 17, 2021

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee minutes of the February 17, 2021 meeting be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 2022 Housing Exhibit Project

Dr. Elliot Rossiter, Douglas College, provided a presentation titled, “Engaging Economic Insecurity through Narrative and Dialogue” which outlined the problems with stigmatizing narratives and engagement structures with respect to social housing.

Dr. Rossiter asked the following questions of Committee members:

- In terms of multicultural representation, what barriers currently exist in the structures that facilitate public dialogue (e.g., public hearings, city meetings, social media, etc.)?;
- What changes would help these structures be more inclusive from a multicultural perspective?; and,
- How should issues related to housing, work, and economic insecurity be represented in museum and gallery exhibitions in a way that ensures multicultural sensitivity?

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- A lot of feedback is missed as organizations do not know how to or are unable to reach the people they want to;
- Homelessness may be defined differently in the various cultural communities; and,
- Governmental or colonial aspects of things may be triggering for those that have experienced intergenerational trauma and this may prohibit them from participating in the conversation and providing feedback.

In response to questions from the Committee, Dr. Rossiter advised that once the Project is more clearly defined and supported, additional meetings will be held to provide the opportunity for additional feedback. In the meantime, Committee members are welcome to email him directly with questions and/or comments.

Oana Capota, Curator, New Westminster Museum, advised that, although still in the early stages, as many groups as possible will be included in the museum exhibit. She noted that the Museum's Exhibit Advisory Committee is made up of a variety of people who will participate in the Project.

Councillor Das shared that, in addition to reconciliation, Council has had ongoing discussions regarding accessibility and inclusion in city processes such as public hearings, agendas, etc., and noted that work is being done on the creation of a formal land acknowledgement. She also stated that the presentation was timely as staff and Council are focussing on housing and suggested that Dr. Rossiter contact John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, and Jennifer Miller, Manager of Public Engagement regarding the Project.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Sanctuary City Policy Update

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided an update on the Sanctuary City Policy of which the goal is to ensure that all residents feel welcome to access City facilities, programs, and services, regardless of their immigration status and be comfortable in the knowledge that their status will not be questioned City staff.

Ms. Freire advised that feedback on the draft Sanctuary City Policy can be provided through a survey on the www.beheardnewwest.ca website until May 24, 2021, that a stakeholder workshop is scheduled for Friday, April 23, 2021, and that a workshop with individuals with lived and/or living experience of precarious immigration status will be held in late May/early June. The draft will be revised once all feedback is received and reviewed, at which time it will come back to the Committee and WINS (Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster) before going to Council for final approval. If the Committee and WINS do not have a meetings scheduled between now and the time the draft is scheduled to go to Council, members will be able to provide additional feedback via email.

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

- While not ideal, questions on the Be Heard website survey are only in English;
- In order to alleviate technical and other barriers, stakeholder organizations and others are welcome to contact Ms. Freire directly for a one-on-one conversation; and,
- The suggestion to make hardcopies of the survey available so that they can be completed anonymously will be discussed at the upcoming workshop.

Inspector Diana McDaniel advised that the NW Police Department will be developing their own policy and/or guidelines in support of the objectives of the City policy, which will then be brought to their Police Board for approval.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Thank You Letter to Former Poet Laureate Alan Hill

Councillor Das reminded Committee members that former Poet Laureate, Alan Hill, sought feedback from the Committee on how to capture voices and reflect multiculturalism in his legacy project, a booklet of poetry. She noted that the Committee provided suggestions and ideas to Mr. Hill such as such as people writing about what they enjoy about New Westminister from their own unique perspectives.

In response to a Committee member's suggestion about the possible creation of a collection of poetry from different cultural perspectives, Councillor Das advised that the Arts Council of New Westminister or a New Westminister poetry or writer's group may be interested in working on such a project.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee requests that staff send a thank you letter to the City's former Poet Laureate, Alan Hill, on behalf of the Committee in appreciation of his anthology project the poetry booklet titled, "A Poetry of Place: Journeys Across New Westminister" and for being inclusive and soliciting input from the Committee during this project, recognizing that New Westminister is a diverse and welcoming city that embraces all that its residents have to offer.

CARRIED.

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

5.2 New Westminister Spokes Committee Anti-Racism Project

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided a presentation on the New Westminister Spokes Committee (NWSC) which was brought about by the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network, noting that New Westminister is one of 34 local organizations classified as "Spokes" which identify local priorities and develop activities to best address local issues and incidents of racism and hate. Ms. Freire noted that the Lower Mainland Purpose Society holds the funding for the New Westminister Spoke.

Ms. Freire advised that one of the first projects of the NWSC was to hire a consultant, Jasmidra Jawanda (Urban/Community/Cultural Planner and Diversity, Anti-racism & Gender Consultant) to undertake a scan of anti-racism activities and

resources in New West. The report will include a survey of existing programs and resources, a review of best practices from other municipalities, gaps to be addressed and recommendations. The project will be completed in May and findings will be presented to the NWSC in June. Ms. Freire suggested inviting the consultant to present at the June 16, 2021 Committee Meeting.

Councillor Das noted that the Committee may benefit by learning of the history of diversity and multiculturalism in New Westminster and supported the invitation to the consultant to present the report at the next meeting.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

6.1 Komagata Maru Staff Report to Council

Councillor Das provided an update on the March 1, 2021 staff report regarding the Komagata Maru, which came from a request that New Westminster formally recognize the Komagata Maru incident and the October 7, 2019 motion from Council that staff provide a report on the City's connection to the incident which saw passengers on the ship receiving much needed support from the City's South Asian Community. As a result, during the March 1, 2021 meeting Council approved that the Downtown and Queensborough docks, used by the Q to Q Ferry, and the river walk located in Queensborough, be named in commemoration of the Komagata Maru.

Councillor Das shared that during the March 1, 2021 Council meeting, New Westminster's political connection to the Komagata Maru was also addressed, including the words and motions of racism used at the time. She noted that, while Council acknowledged the ideology of the time, it was emotional for everyone to hear about the horrible treatment of the passengers who were denied food and water and left offshore for an extended period of time without medical support, and receiving assistance only from local residents.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee thanked Councillor Das for taking the October 7, 2019 motion to Council and noted that while there is still work to be done, society has come a long way in its acceptance of other cultures.

6.2 Museum Update: 2020 Actions for Multiculturalism and Diversity

Oana Capota, Curator, New Westminster Museum, shared a presentation titled, "New Westminster Museum and Archives + Cultural Services 2020 Report" which outlined the City's COVID-19 Response, the pivot to online services, the mobile museum, the re-opening of Irving House, upcoming exhibits such as the Gurdwara Exhibition: An Ocean of Peace and Air Hugs, as well as programs including an Indigenous Film Series, Culinary Heritage Programs, Indigenous Basket Program,

etc. A full list of upcoming exhibits and programs will be sent out to Committee members.

6.3 Air Hugs Exhibit Update

Oana Capota, Curator, New Westminster Museum, provided presentation overview of the exhibit “Air Hugs: New Westminster Together During Covid-19” and announced that she is currently seeking volunteers to provide an oral history of their pandemic experience, noting that a diversity of people is needed and that those interviewed may become a part of the historical record. Participants will be asked to share what they did during the pandemic, how their life changed, how they coped, etc., and that a pre-interview will help to determine what the volunteer is comfortable sharing so that interview questions can be tailored to their specific experience.

Rachel Matembe, Community Member, advised that she would like to participate in the interview process and will follow up with Ms. Capota.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Certified correct,

Original Signed
Councillor Chinu Das
Chair

Original Signed
Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk