



MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC)

Wednesday, February 17, 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
Fiona Apeldoorn	- Community Member
Mike Coca	- Community Member
Rozina Jaffer	- Community Member
Lizz Kelly	- Community Member
Karen Klein	- SD40 Representative
Rachel Matembe	- Community Member
Tanushree Pillai	- Community Member

MEMBER REGRETS:

Dalia Al Houseini	- Community Member
Karima Jivraj	- New Westminster Downtown BIA

GUEST:

Maryam Naser	- Associate Superintendent New Westminster School District
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STAFF PRESENT:

Oana Capota	- Curator, New Westminster Museum
Claudia Freire	- Housing and Social Planner
Diana McDaniel	- Inspector, NRPD
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk
Carilyn Cook	- Committee Clerk

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

1.0 ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee agenda of the February 17, 2021 meeting be adopted with the addition of:

- *Item 5.5 New Business – Holocaust Remembrance by Lizz Kelly*
- *Item 5.6 New Business – Black History Month by Rachel Matembe*

CARRIED.

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

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of February 19, 2020

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee minutes of the February 19, 2020 meeting be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

There were no items.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Welcome Centre at New Westminster Secondary School

Maryam Naser, Associate Superintendent, New Westminster School District, provided an update on the Welcome Centre (Neighbourhood Learning Centre) at New Westminster Secondary School which outlined the background on Neighbourhood Learning Centres (NLC), the engagement process, recommended programming, architectural renderings of the Welcome Centre space, and next steps.

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

- Centralize registration is taking place at the NLC;
- Registration information can be found on the website and information will be provided in a variety of languages with special effort going to sharing the

information to those who do not have children and may not hear about it otherwise;

- Identified homeschool families will be connected with the Home Learners Program which provides access to resources, testing, etc.;
- Financial management learning opportunities are being sought through services providers who will be able to provide financial education at the Centre; and,
- The Neighbourhood Learning Centre's adjacency to the Wellness Centre ensures that newcomer supports such as mental health and doctor/nurse practitioners, etc. are in close proximity for easy access.

Councillor Das advised that many agencies through the Welcome and Information for Newcomers (WIN) organization provide financial literacy training and may be able to provide such training in a classroom setting at the Centre.

Discussion ensued and it was noted that many people are looking forward to the opening of the Welcome Centre which has been very well supported by the community.

4.2 Komagata Maru Motion

Councillor Das advised of the motion she put forth and which was adopted at the October 7, 2019 Council meeting in response to a request that New Westminster recognize the Komagata Maru incident. She noted that the motion instructs staff to report on the incident and provide documentation of support provided to passengers of the ship by the City's South Asian community, and advised that it is anticipated that staff findings will be provided in a report to Council in the near future and that an update will be provided to Committee members at that time.

4.3 Sanctuary City Policy

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided an update on the Sanctuary City Policy which outlined the policy background and summary, the process taken to develop the draft summary, and next steps.

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

- Policy implementation will include staff training to ensure familiarity with the Policy as well as having robust communication so community members are aware of the Policy and what it offers; and,
- Staff are holding a stakeholder workshop with non-profit organizations to get input on the Draft Policy.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- Individuals, especially women with children, or employees who are being treated unfairly, may not feel safe calling 911 or reaching out for assistance in other ways as they may be concerned with having their undocumented status used against them; therefore, it is very important how the Policy is used and that people understand their rights, even if they are undocumented; and,
- Communication about the Policy could include outreach such as multilingual printed flyers at stores and public places that new immigrants frequent and through other types of media.

Councillor Das acknowledged that the New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) is aware that some community members are hesitant to call 911 or contact the Police and requested that Inspector McDaniel provide an overview of how the NWPD is handling this situation at a future meeting.

4.4 Newcomers Festival and Information Fair

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, provided an update on the Newcomers Festival and Information Fair, including:

- The event, which has been hosted by WIN, etc., for the last four years delivers a lot of information about resources available to the community, includes a robust performance component, offers a number of activities for both children and adults, provides free food to visitors, and is about connecting and celebrating the diversity of our community;
- Usually held in the spring, past festivals and fairs have hosted up to 250 visitors and, although the event was cancelled in 2020 due the pandemic, it is hoped that the event can be held in the fall of 2021 as part of the opening of the new Welcome Centre;
- Advertisement of the Festival and Fair is done through various social media, flyers sent to temples, mosques, churches, etc.; and,
- A request for volunteers to help plan and run the event will be sent out via email in the next couple of months.

4.5 Multicultural Festival Working Group

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, advised that the Multicultural Festival was, in the past curated by the Philippian Festival Society through a city grant as part of Canada Day festivities. She reminded Committee members that Council approved the Committee's September 2019 recommendation to establish a working group that represents the cultural and ethnic diversity of New Westminster, including Indigenous representation and which would be tasked with reviewing the

Festival and reporting back to Council. The working group was formed in 2020; however, work was halted due to the pandemic and the event did not run. As per the Terms of Reference of the working group, a Multiculturalism Advisory Committee member is to be elected to serve on the working group.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee elect Mike Coca to represent the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee on the Multicultural Festival Working Group.

CARRIED.

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

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Appointment of Alternate Chair

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Karen Klein be elected as the Alternate Chair for the 2021 term of the Multicultural Advisory Committee.

CARRIED.

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

5.2 COVID-19 Community Resources

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, advised Committee members of the various COVID-19 community resource lists and information which can be found on the City's website such as:

- Key Information and Resources for Tenants
- Summary of Financial Supports
- Survival Resources Guide
- Food Resources Calendar
- Trusted Links and Resources
- Key Agency Resources for Child Care

Ms. Freire encouraged members to visit the web portal often as the lists and information is updated on a regular basis.

5.3 Indigenous and Multicultural Programs

Oana Capota, Curator, Museums and Heritage Services reported that museum staff have started reaching out to the community in order to have a better diversity of voices in the archives and advised of current and upcoming Indigenous and multicultural programs, including:

- Air Hugs, an exhibit that features a few interactive elements and an online component;
- The Family You Choose, which looks at the many ways that people make a community;
- A presentation on the great fire in New Westminster in relation to the Pier Park fire;
- An Indigenous film series which will include the opportunity to hear the directors speak about their movies;
- A Metis presenter who will speak of oral traditions and values; and,
- Virtual online cooking programs.

In addition, Ms. Capota noted that work is also being done to include a larger diversity of voices at Irving House and in the Museum.

5.4 Upcoming Exhibition Involvement

Oana Capota, Curator, Museums and Heritage Services, asked members for suggestions of community groups that could be involved in upcoming exhibitions and, upon the suggestion of a Committee member, she advised that staff would reach out to the New West Community Kitchen, which provides food programs for many new immigrants and who may want to share their culture. Ms. Capota noted that the City has worked with the Kitchen previously on food security and encouraged Committee members to contact her directly if they had any other suggestions.

5.5 Holocaust Remembrance

Lizz Kelly reminded the Committee that Holocaust Remembrance day took place on January 27, 2021 during which many city halls and public facilities around the world were lit up in yellow in recognition of this dark time in history, noting that it would be nice if New Westminster participated in the memorial in 2022.

Discussion ensued, and Committee members agreed that further discussion of this request to Council take place at the September 8, 2021 Committee meeting, including presenting a motion to Council outlining the request and Committee members attending a Council meeting as a delegation to speak with Council directly about the request.

5.6 Black History Month – Rachel

Rachel Matembe requested that the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee and the City have a more active role in the recognition and promotion of Black History month, including such things as an exhibit of black history in New Westminster, song and dance workshops for families, and other events and/or exhibits to expand black history education.

In response to questions from the Committee, staff provided the following comments:

- Awareness of this gap in the City's history is important;
- The City has made some social media posts in recognition of Black History Month; and,
- Past exhibits have touched on universal topics that include many different communities, including black history; however, they have not specifically focused on the different black communities that have resided in the City.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee recommends that Council direct staff to create a task force to explore various ways to recognize and promote Black History Month.

CARRIED.

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

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 21, 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

