



REGULAR MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON RECONCILIATION, SOCIAL INCLUSION, AND ENGAGEMENT

March 8, 2021

Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Councillor Nadine Nakagawa, Chair
Councillor Chinu Das
Councillor Chuck Puchmayr

STAFF:

Ms. Lisa Spitale	- Chief Administrative Officer
Ms. Emilie Adin	- Director of Development Services
Mr. Blair Fryer	- Manager of Communications and Economic Development
Mr. Dean Gibson	- Director of Parks and Recreation
Mr. Chris Koth	- Manager of Programs and Community Development, New Westminster Public Library
Mr. Rob McCullough	- Manager, Museums and Heritage Services
Ms. Diana McDaniel	- Inspector, New Westminster Police Department
Ms. Jennifer Miller	- Manager of Public Engagement
Ms. Jacque Killawee	- City Clerk
Mr. John Stark	- Supervisor of Community Planning
Ms. Denise Tambellini	- Manager of Intergovernmental and Community Relations
Heather Corbett	- Committee Clerk

GUESTS:

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA **Urgent/time sensitive matters only**

No additions or revisions were made to the agenda.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2. **MOVED and SECONDED**

THAT the following minutes of the Reconciliation, Social Inclusion and Engagement Task Force meeting be adopted:

- *Regular Meeting of January 11, 2021; and*
- *Special Regular Meeting of February 9, 2021*

CARRIED.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

3. **Update on Council Motion: A Welcome and Inclusive City**

Jacque Killawee, City Clerk, Jennifer Miller, Manager of Public Engagement, and John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning, provided status updates on items outlined in the January 27, 2020 Council motion on addressing methods of becoming a Welcoming and Inclusive City, and requested feedback from the Task Force.

In discussion, members noted the following:

- Appreciation was expressed for the forward direction on the items outlined in the motion and the City's progress in creating a welcoming and inclusive community;
- Incorporating inclusive spaces in Parks and Recreation spaces would be an important aspect of creating the physical side of being a welcoming City;
- Periodic audits of initiated changes (on an annual or bi-annual basis) would help to sustain, review and celebrate the effects of the changes made, and ensure that they become part of the fabric of the organization;
- Initiatives should concentrate on demographics that are unable to engage due to barriers, such as people who are unable to use virtual tools or who are unable to attend engagement opportunities due to timing or accessibility;
- One opportunity to increase inclusion and diversity may be for the City to look at the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA) calendar and recognize all cultural and religious celebrations through displays in its venues and on CityPage;
- Celebration displays in City Hall, or in places where people physically walk past, may provide a connection and make people feel at home, by seeing welcoming words and items;
- Some examples of celebrating diversity may be to publically recognize events such Lunar New Year, Diwali, Black History month etc., to allow people to see themselves in the City's communications;

- Examples of increasing the use of inclusive and less formal language could include using Councillors' first names in meetings, introducing Council and staff's preferred pronouns, and reducing formalities;
- It would be important to look at issues with as many lenses as possible – immigration status, language, disabilities, age groups, etc. – and to continuously examine the issues and keep broadening the lenses;
- An idea to broaden the work that is done by Council, and make it more accessible, may be to make a “Public Engagement hub” at the library, as it is an inclusive and physical space to feel comfortable and is already a central location to get information;
- It would be ideal to prioritize testing Zoom's closed captioning function while the City's new system becomes available;
- It would be excellent for other cities to look to New Westminster for leadership in this type of work;
- The Calgary Public Library has set a high standard for an example of what engagement through a Library can look like; however, it requires funding, cultural shift, and an active approach; and,
- Some further inclusion ideas may be brought forward through the Library's upcoming strategic plan process.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS FOR ACTION

None.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Commemorative Plaque Proposal at Simcoe Park

Rob McCullough, Manager of Museums and Heritage Services, discussed a proposal to install a plaque on School District #40 property in Simcoe Park, commemorating Mewa Singh, who was executed there in 1915.

In discussion, members noted the following:

- There may also be a future request to name Ryall Park after Mewa Singh;
- Support was shown for the plaque recognizing Mewa Singh, as well as plaque that gives a contextual story for education and awareness;
- It is important to understand the concerns of the South Asian community and be mindful of how people in the community feel about this issue;
- The request(s) would need to go through the City's existing process of consulting with the Community Heritage Commission and the Facilities, Infrastructure and Public Realm Advisory Committee, and could also be rolled into the ongoing policy work on public place naming;

- Simcoe Park is not on the heritage register; however, consideration could be given to doing so, as putting commemorative sites like this on the heritage register may change the perception and allow people to see themselves in the history;
- In commemorating this history, it would also be commemorating the colonialization; therefore, it may be important to also commemorate the past history of the place, which is still under investigation through the City’s reconciliation efforts;
- The plaque could be installed as an interim measure while further investigation into the history of the site is conducted;
- Concern was expressed that this may be seen as “queue-jumping”, as there are still outstanding requests for other commemorative plaques, and for streets and squares to be re-named;
- The installation of this plaque may start a longer conversation for future policy, and identify ways to reconcile with both important and joyful, as well as unfortunate, events;
- Commemoration in a sensitive fashion is very complex and difficult, because the City would never want to say no to a request, and there is a strong desire and appetite for acknowledgement of the past; and,
- There are opportunities to publically commemorate and portray historical events and people in inventive and engaging formats, such as public art or interactive displays – this request may be an opportunity to engage with the Public Art Advisory Committee.

6. Community Action Network: Next Steps and Report to Council

John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning, provided a presentation and update on the Community Action Network (CAN), outlining the proposed Ethics in Engagement Project, and the future plans for the program. Mr. Stark looked for feedback on the project deliverables.

In response to questions from the Task Force, Mr. Stark provided the following information:

- If the external funding is not received, the project would be included as a service enhancement in the 2022 budget;
- Eight graduates of the program are ready to explore opportunities to use their learnings, and may be engaged in projects that have existing budget;
- Prior to inviting the CAN graduates to join the City’s Advisory Committees, there would need to be an educational piece for committee members – to both inform them that CAN graduates would be joining, and to ensure that they are introduced within a supportive and welcoming environment;

In discussion, members noted the following:

- Support was expressed for the program and its sustainability over time;
- Feedback received from Vancouver, indicating that graduates did not feel like they were involved, is an important consideration;
- The planned education component for the committees is an important piece, as the committee environment needs to feel like a safe and unthreatening environment;
- It may be beneficial to introduce a series of initiatives, such as a buddy or mentor system, as the graduates are introduced to the committee process, to provide support and reduce intimidation; and,
- The Committees may be an opportunity to bring community members along on the training and to introduce the creation of inclusive environments.

Procedural Note: Councillor Puchmayr left the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

7. Language Translation for Public Engagement: Review of Current Practice and Discussion of Possible Approaches

Jennifer Miller, Manager of Public Engagement, provided a presentation on the City's current practices regarding translation services, and possible approaches for introduction in engagement processes.

In discussion, members noted the following:

- Given budget constraints, some innovative solutions may need to be incorporated, or current solutions may need more promotion;
- Reaching out to religious organizations may be helpful in finding translation services;
- The use of plain language and awareness of competency levels are possibly the most important aspects of this issue; and,
- Cultural background and comfort levels of with interacting with the City are important components to consider side by side with translation.

Task Force members were asked to send comments to Ms. Miller and to review the topic at a future meeting

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Task Force on Reconciliation, Social Inclusion and Engagement will occur on:

Date:	May 10, 2021
Time:	2:00 p.m.
Location:	TBD

ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

Original Signed

NADINE NAKAGAWA
CHAIR

Original Signed

NICOLE LUDWIG
ASSISTANT CITY CLERK