



Hamilton

- MINUTES -
COMMITTEE AGAINST RACISM
Tuesday May 22, 2012, 6:30 p.m.
City Hall, 71 Main Street West - Room 192

Present: Joe Rhodes, Tyrone Childs, Winston Morrison, Yim Chung, Roger Cameron, MIMOZA Kajtazi, Nerene Virgin, Jessica Brennan, Zafar Siddiqui, Ashok Kumar

Also Present: Maxine Carter, Jennifer Mak, Jaffar Hayat, May-Marie Duwai-Sowa - City of Hamilton's Access & Equity Office, Judith Ngan, Tanja Roglic (HWDSB)

Regrets: City Councillor Brian McHattie, Amirah Hassan, Wael Ghuneim, Taimur Qasim (on leave), Baldeep Virk, Ismail Baris Oz

Guest: Jenni Vengris, Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, Housing Division

Meeting was chaired by Jo Rhodes.

1. Welcome and Introductions.

- o All were welcomed

2. Declaration of Interest.

- o None declared

3. Review of Agenda.

A. Kumar /W. Morrison

To accept the agenda as presented.

CARRIED.

4. Approval of Minutes April 24, 2012.

Item 9.4: Judith Ngan requested that the item be amended to reflect that the South Asian Heritage Association is hosting the South Asian Heritage event, and not Ancaster Secondary School. The school is the venue and not hosting the event.

J. Rhodes/Y. Chung

That the minutes of April 24, 2012 be approved as amended.

CARRIED.

5. Matters Arising From Minutes.

5.1 Volunteer Advisory Appointments

M. Carter informed the committee that City Clerks have been in touch with her to let her know that they will be recruiting new citizens to serve on some of the volunteer advisory committees as many of these committees have lost some members over the course of the past 2 years. The closing date is June 8th.

5.2 SIU Presentation

M. Carter made contact with the SIU in Toronto regarding a presentation to the advisory committee and is awaiting a reply. A date is still needed to confirm the presentation. M. Carter to follow up.

5.3 2011 Hamilton Police Services (HPS) Hate Crime Report

Councillor McHattie will be extending an invitation to Police Chief Glen De Caire to attend a future Committee Against Racism to discuss the report and to clarify some of the numbers presented.

6. Presentations Jenni Vengris, Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, Housing Division

Jenni Vengris presented an overview of the Housing and Homelessness Action plan and process to date.

- The project is driven by the Province’s mandate for municipalities to develop an action plan and as it stands right now Hamilton does not have a Housing and Homelessness strategy. The process is being steered by an advisory committee for the Housing section. They meet regularly.
- The vision, mission and strategy including 5 outcomes and 54 strategies have been developed and will be presented to Council on June 11.
- The framework states that “Everyone has a home and home is the foundation”. It is based on the fundamental belief that housing is rights-based and anti-discriminatory.
- The core values and principles have also been developed, which include equity and respect.
- The next phase involves developing an accountability framework and cost / feasibility study. The action plan is to be completed by winter 2013.
- Moving forward, the next step will be developing a set of work groups and will encourage committee’s input. Work plans will be developed and a focus group session will be hosted for review and feedback. Committee is encouraged to assist with the feedback process.

Committee members posed the following questions and comments:

Who are the stakeholders?

25 member Planning group, sector representatives including Women Abuse Working Group, Seniors Collaborative, Newcomer / Immigrant groups (ACNO), City Housing Hamilton, Hamilton Poverty Flagship, Aboriginal groups.

Who owns and drives the plan?

The project is City-led and community-owned. It is anticipated that community momentum and service providers support will move the project forward. There is a 1.5 FTE assigned to the project whose responsibilities include researching, writing and planning.

What is the project’s relationship to/ with other community plans?

The project has and continues to review all community housing initiatives and plans to avoid duplication.

What are the implementation parameters?

There are 54 strategies for which templates have been developed. These strategies will be prioritized.

Will the strategies be presented to the community?

There will be presentations to the community.

When will homelessness be eliminated?

We will have to educate the community and the tenants regarding their rights, collaborating with other stakeholders to assist with some of the root causes of homelessness. We plan to look at increasing affordable housing and look at other models that are working such as Calgary's.

Who is going to ensure the plan is effectively implemented?

Staff resources will be dedicated to ensuring effective implementation of the plan. Our director will continue to put the funding into the implementation of the action plan. SMT has put housing and homelessness action plan as one of the strategic priorities.

Will all strategies be included in the Council report?

Yes, the council report will be comprehensive including all the outcomes and strategies.

How will you seek out the homeless persons?

Through shelters, food banks, hot meals programs, and other agencies that provide services to the homeless. Seniors and newcomers may be missed so we will have to try other ways to reach them as they usually do not access shelters but sleep on couches or live with multiple families, etc.

What is the potential impact of the political landscape?

The project team is aware of the political landscape and austerity measures in place, which is why they are keeping Council involved and engaged with realities of their various wards.

How will the project address the complaints of disrespectful attitude toward clients from housing staff in the City?

City housing senior management is aware of this reality and is working on a strategy which includes training staff to address these issues so that respect, equity and anti-discrimination become a central core of service delivery.

Does Housing Services (Housing and Homelessness) not have the ability to ensure anti-racism training for funded agencies?

The City has an ability to encourage training for funded agencies and will utilize the opportunity, though it is cautious to mandate training as forced training could be counter-productive.

Has Housing Services staff conducted training for clients on understanding legislative language?

Housing Services conducts training for clients and through community partnerships on topics including Education about Housing Process, Tenant Rights, Access to Housing, Housing act and does interpretation of documents into different languages.

Does Housing Services know how many people are displaced by bed bugs?

Housing Services is aware of this issue and is taking measures to address it alongside the property managers / landlords in the affected buildings. There is a strategy for addressing bed bugs in the action plan.

Has the project looked at best practices or success models?

Housing models that can demonstrate hope have been reviewed but Hamilton's complex factors of poverty, unemployment make it unique.

Housing Services needs to look seriously at a third party who can do evaluations of the service providers. However the City cannot ask a private enterprise to do something when they themselves are not.

That's a good idea to consider.

J. Vengris will keep M. Carter updated regarding the report to Council on June 11th. The next steps will be to gather the unique experiences of each person, develop an implementation strategy and a work plan. J. Vengris anticipates having a ½ day session from different sections of the community participating. CAR will be invited to participate.

The committee thanked J. Vengris for her presentation.

J. Brennan / T. Childs

That the committee accept the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Project Report update delivered by J. Vengris.

CARRIED.

7. Business Items: Work Plan Reports.**7.1 Report from the Chair**

- Chair updated committee about the resource centre proposal presentation to Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. The committee (ACPD) was supportive of the initiative and requested an update on its progress as they feel it will be a useful resource for persons with disabilities as well.
- The Chair reported that a response was received from Hamilton Police Services (HPS) with respect to the request sent regarding a copy of the Hamilton Police Services Equity Policy and Anti-Racism Policies, Practices and Procedures. The HPS Administrator, Lois Morin responded on behalf of the Chair of the Board Nancy DeGregorio. The response stated that "if you would like to receive information on policies and procedures of the Hamilton Police Services you will need to make a Freedom of Information Request."

- The committee was perplexed by the response since they were made to believe that accessing these policies was a non issue.

Roger Cameron/Tyrone Childs

That the chair be empowered to contact Councillor Morelli to discuss the response that was received in the letter dated May 17, 2012 and:

- To find out if Councillor Morelli was in attendance at this particular HPS board meeting where this decision was made; and
- To find out why HPS board is refusing to provide copies of the Equity Policy and the Anti-Racism Policies, procedures and processes; and
- That Councillor Morelli made a commitment to CAR after their February 1, 2012 presentation to GIC that he would obtain copies of these policies for them; and
- To make Councillor Morelli aware that a Spectator reporter has contacted the Chair to express her interest in knowing why the HPS Board is not cooperating with this request.

CARRIED

Roger Cameron/Jessica Brennan

That Roger Cameron, Joe Rhodes, and Noreen Virgin arrange a meeting with the Spectator reporter at the earliest convenience to discuss the request sent to the Hamilton Police Services Board.

CARRIED

7.2 Sub-committee I – Symposium & Resource Centre

- Committee met and have set out the beginnings of an action plan for the resource centre. With the endorsement from Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, the committee will continue to seek support from other Advisory Committees.
- Next meeting is scheduled for June 11th at 6:30pm.

7.3 Sub-committee II – Participatory Democracy & Anti-Racism Policies

Next meeting date set for July 17, 2012. Members include Jessica Brennan, Zafar Siddiqui, Mimoza Katjazi and Ashok Kumar.

7.4 Sub-committee III – Education, Training & Awareness Raising

- No update was presented. Members include Nerene Virgin, Amirah Hassan and Yim Chung

7.5 Hamilton Spectator

- No follow up was reported.

7.5.1 Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

A report has been drafted and is being reviewed by Councilor Brian McHattie pending presentation to the Mayor and Council.

8. New Business.

9. Information Sharing

No information presented.

10. Next Meeting June 26, 2012.

11. Adjournment.

R. Cameron / T. Childs

Motion to adjourn.

CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.