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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

A regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 9:31 AM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

Regional Chair Henry assumed the Chair.

1. Roll Call

Present: Councillor Anderson
Councillor Ashe
Councillor Barton
Councillor Carter
Councillor Chapman
Councillor Collier
Councillor Crawford
Councillor Dies
Councillor Drew
Councillor Foster
Councillor Highet
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Leahy
Councillor Lee
Councillor Marimpietri
Councillor McLean
Councillor Mitchell
Councillor Mulcahy
Councillor John Neal
Councillor Joe Neal
Councillor Nicholson
Councillor Pickles
Councillor Roy
Councillor Ryan
Councillor Smith
Councillor Wotten
Councillor Yamada
Regional Chair Henry

*** all members of Council, except the Regional Chair, participated electronically**

Councillor Bath-Hadden was absent due to illness.

Staff

Present: S. Austin, C. Bandel, E. Baxter-Trahair, D. Beaton*, B. Bridgeman*, S. Danos-Papaconstantinou*, J. Demanuele*, L. Fleury, B. Holmes*, J. Hunt*, R. Inacio, J. Kilgour*, N. Taylor*, A. Wakeford and R. Walton
*denotes staff participating electronically

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Statutory Public Meetings

There were no statutory public meetings.

4. Delegations

4.1 Tanya Murray, on behalf of George Wallace, Angela Virgo and Michelle Zante, resident of Uxbridge, re: Anti-Black Racism in Durham [Item 7. A)] (2020-COW-26)

Tanya Murray and Michelle Zante, Uxbridge residents, appeared with respect to Anti-Black Racism in Durham.

T. Murray noted that two other members of their group, George Wallace and Angela Virgo, were not able to attend today's meeting but were part of a similar call to action at the June 22, 2020 Uxbridge Council meeting.

T. Murray advised that on Friday, June 5, 2020 community members stood in front of the municipal office in Uxbridge to participate in a peaceful stand-in and show their support for Black Lives Matter. She added that the event was positively received until a truck drove by twice displaying a confederate flag. She added that those in the truck were shouting and swearing at the community members.

T. Murray stated that racism is visible in Canada, Ontario and in Durham Region. She cited recent events including one in which a Pickering student's yearbook tribute to his grandmother was changed to a racist message. She added that standing up to racism is about education, awareness and accountability, and stated that when we know better we do better. She further added that we need to listen to the black community and we need to amplify the community voice.

M. Zante shared George Wallace's words with respect to the confederate flag: "When I see this flag, it brings me back to a time where my family and I were treated as less than human and treated as sub humans. It's demoralizing." She added that as a black man living in Uxbridge, George Wallace and his family have experienced racism and noted that the epitaphs and the housing signage in the Town don't represent the diverse population of Uxbridge.

M. Zante asked that Committee members consider how the confederate flag and other symbols of hate show up in Durham Region, and what type of inclusivity do they want represented in the Region.

Moved by Councillor Carter, Seconded by Councillor Collier,
(25) That T. Murray and M. Zante be granted a one time, two minute extension to finish their delegation.

CARRIED

M. Zante advised that following their delegation to Uxbridge Council, a group of citizens formed the Uxbridge Anti-Racism Coalition (U-ARC). She added that many of the group participated in Durham's Anti-Black Racism Town Hall and shared their experience.

M. Zante advised that in a September 14, 2020 Report, Uxbridge committed to various actions including: an amendment to the sign by-law to prohibit the public display of symbols of hate; investigating a potential anti-racism policy for staff, Councillors and users of town owned space; and scheduling anti-racism education and training for staff and council.

M. Zante stated that Durham has not collected data since 2014 and urged the Region and the area municipalities to speak with their residents and collect information on the needs of the community prior to making decisions.

T. Murray stated that their call to action to Durham is as follows:

"In response to the Uxbridge #BlackLivesMatter stand-in on June 5, 2020, where our families experienced a hateful act involving the Confederate Flag, we are urging Council to take action to immediately prohibit the public display of symbols of hate within Durham Region, using community voice to guide your actions.

For efficiency, we urge you to consult with Uxbridge Council regarding legal conversations that have happened over the summer regarding this action."

T. Murray and M. Zante responded to questions of the Committee.

4.2 Akuah Frempong, Secretary, Congress of Black Women of Canada – Oshawa/Whitby Chapter, re: Report #2020-COW-26: Anti-Black Racism Town Hall and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Follow-up [Item 7. A)] (2020-COW-26)

Akuah Frempong, Secretary, Congress of Black Women of Canada – Oshawa/Whitby Chapter appeared with respect to Report #2020-COW-26: Anti-Black Racism Town Hall and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Follow-up.

A. Frempong stated that there are some concerns with the direction that council has decided to go and stressed the need to make sure that minority populations are represented. She added that there has been growth in the number of visible

minorities in the Region which isn't necessarily reflected on Council or other places where there are elected officials.

A. Frempong stated that public consultations are repetitive, and stories of experiences and problems are recurrent. She added that there is a disconnect and she believes that there is a need for foundational knowledge of diversity at Regional Council levels.

A. Frempong stated that she believes the creation of the new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion division is a good thing, but there is also a need to make sure that foundational knowledge of basic concepts is known across the entire organization, to ensure that the people who are responsible for speaking about issues are also knowledgeable. She added that there is a need to connect experiences with concepts and basic terms.

A. Frempong stated that as part of the action plan there is a need for mandatory training for every public servant in the Region to understand and empathize with individuals, and to understand why community supports are required. She added that the Region should make sure that positions reflect the population they are working for.

A. Frempong stated she feels there is a disconnect with what community members are saying and what is in the Report. She added that perhaps it is an indication the Region needs to consult more often and connect with individuals at their level, to ensure citizens needs are met prior to putting in place policies that will affect them.

A. Frempong responded to a question from the Committee.

5. Presentations

5.1 Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and Sandra Austin, Director, Corporate Policy and Strategic Initiatives, re: Anti-Black Racism Town Hall and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Follow-up [Item 7. A)] (2020-COW-26)

Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and Sandra Austin, Director, Corporate Policy and Strategic Initiatives, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Anti-Black Racism Town Hall and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Follow-up.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Introduction
- Current Regional DEI Initiatives
- Evidence of Systemic Racism
- Anti-Black Racism Town Hall
- Anti-Black Racism Town Hall Follow Up

- Community Need
- DEI Initiatives Across Municipalities
- Recommendations
- Conclusions

E. Baxter-Trahair provided an overview of the Region's current diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. She stated key programs include the Diversity and Immigration Program and the Inclusive Durham initiative. She also stated that an Anti-Black Racism Town Hall meeting was hosted by Chair Henry on August 6, 2020 and joined by Chief Paul Martin and a guest panel. She noted there was 7,257 attendees for the session, 3,500 visits to the Your Voice Durham on-line portal, and 148 questions and comments submitted. In follow up to the Town Hall meeting, submissions were reviewed by an internal staff working group and specific action items were identified.

S. Austin advised that an Anti-Racism Framework is being developed with the assistance of an experienced consultant. She provided an overview of the initiatives that community stakeholders have called on the Region to undertake, and on the DEI initiatives across municipalities.

S. Austin stated that the establishment of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division is being recommended to provide a dedicated focus to undertake the work required, and that three new positions are being identified through the 2021 budget planning process to support this Division. She also outlined the key responsibilities and duties of the Division.

S. Austin concluded that establishing a dedicated DEI Division with well-defined deliverables will ensure that the Region is appropriately equipped, structured and supported to affect change on systemic racism.

Staff responded to questions with respect to statistics on the number of senior managers or directors that identify as people of colour; the level of diversity in the Region's HR Division; whether there is a "blind" job application process; when a statement will be posted on Durham.ca; the role of the existing diversity office; the composition and reporting structure for the Anti-Racism Task Force; what does taking a more active role with community service organizations mean; will groups/individuals currently part of the Region's diversity scope be transitioned into this new division; and working with the local area municipalities.

A suggestion was made that future Town Hall meetings include directors of education.

6. Correspondence

There were no communication items to be considered.

7. Reports

A) Anti-Black Racism Town Hall and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Follow-up (2020-COW-26)

Report #2020-COW-26 from Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer, was received.

Staff responded to questions with respect to what internal initiatives have occurred since the Region's existing Diversity and Inclusion strategy for the workplace was developed; who would develop the terms of reference for the new Task Force, how members will be selected, will a representative from DRPS be included, would the new division oversee the Task Force, the frequency of reporting to community and council; reaching out to the local area municipalities to reduce duplication; the budget for the three new positions; the Equity and Inclusion Charter; improving understanding of diversity and deepening commitment to inclusion; the role of the new division in developing the Action Plan; whether the Durham Immigration Portal is still part of ongoing programs at Durham Region and whether it will continue; and does the portal involve hiring practices at the Region.

Comments were made with respect to the commitment to combat oppression, racism, anti-black racism and discrimination on page 13 of the Report and changing the word "share" in the last paragraph to the word "change"; the importance of regular reporting to see progress or lack thereof; the value in a blind hiring process; Durham Regional Police Service's existing inclusion policy and the opportunities to learn from each other; the Durham District School Board's work on celebrating diversity being a good resource; and that long-time Regional staff may not reflect the diversity that exists in the community now as they were hired when the Region's demographic was not as diverse.

Moved by Councillor Foster, Seconded by Councillor Mulcahy,
(26) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division be established to provide a dedicated focus to undertake this work, including the establishment of an Anti-Racism Task Force with an initial focus on anti-Black racism, and coordination of the Region's interdepartmental efforts to address systemic racism and promote community development; and

- B) That pre-budget approval be granted for the hiring of three new positions which will be identified through the 2021 budget planning process to create the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion division reporting to the CAO. The positions include a Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, a Policy Advisor to lead the implementation of the Anti-Racism Framework, and a Policy/Program Coordinator.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY ON THE FOLLOWING
RECORDED VOTE:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Councillor Anderson	None
Councillor Ashe	
Councillor Barton	
Councillor Carter	
Councillor Chapman	
Councillor Collier	
Councillor Crawford	
Councillor Dies	
Councillor Drew	
Councillor Foster	
Councillor Highet	
Councillor Kerr	
Councillor Leahy	
Councillor Lee	
Councillor Marimpietri	
Councillor Mitchell	
Councillor Mulcahy	
Councillor John Neal	
Councillor Nicholson	
Councillor Pickles	
Councillor Roy	
Councillor Ryan	
Councillor Smith	
Councillor Wotten	
Councillor Yamada	
Regional Chair Henry	

Members Absent: Councillor Bath-Hadden
Councillor Chapman
Councillor McLean
Councillor Joe Neal

Declarations of Interest: None

8. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

9. Other Business

There was no other business to be considered.

10. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Marimpietri, Seconded by Councillor Anderson,
(27) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 11:04 AM

Respectfully submitted,

John Henry, Regional Chair

Leigh Fleury, Legislative Officer