

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Secretary, Planning and Operations Committee
FROM: Chair, Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee
DATE: March 9, 2006
SUBJECT: 2005 Annual Report
Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee
FILE NO.: CK. 430-29)

RECOMMENDATION: that the information be received and forwarded to City Council as information.

Message from the Chair – Andrew Mason

2005 was an important year for building bridges within Saskatoon. Important initiatives were undertaken to strengthen relations between:

- Our Police force and the citizens of Saskatoon (the report of the Committee for Strategic Renewal, Board of Police Commissioners);
- The Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities (the preparation and distribution of the “Building Bridges” pamphlet to all Saskatoon households; the Centennial Powwow at Credit Union Centre);
- The immigrant communities, new immigrants and the City (the Pontikes/Garcea project to develop an Immigrant Resettlement Strategy and Action Plan for Saskatoon).

The Anne Frank Exhibit was brought to Saskatoon in May and by the end of June was seen by over ten thousand visitors, including thousands of school children. It was so successful that it was held over for another month at the Diefenbaker Canada Centre before moving on to Winnipeg.

These are all very positive signs that Saskatoon is moving in the right direction and tackling these problems honestly and directly. Your Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee wants to help City Council to continue to move forward with a new sense of purpose on these issues, recognizing that there is much yet to be done.

REPORT

Mandate

In 1989, City Council established the Race Relations Committee as an advisory committee to propose to local government short-term and long-term strategies to minimize racial tension and promote racial harmony. Following an extensive review of the Race Relations Program and Committee, a new Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy was approved by City Council and the name of the Committee was changed to the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee. With the approval of this policy, the Committee’s main role is to monitor and

provide advice to City Council on issues relating to the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy.

Committee Membership

Membership on the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee for the year 2005 included:

Mr. Andrew Mason, Chair (General Public Representative);
 Ms. Patricia McNeill-McCrea (General Public Representative);
 Mr. Nesar Rajput, (General Public Representative);
 Mr. David Simpson, (General Public Representative);
 Ms. Paulette Traynor (General Public Representative);
 Mr. Gatdeet Wakou (General Public Representative);
 Dr. Shakeel Akhtar (Saskatchewan Intercultural Association Representative);
 Mr. Marcel Petit (Métis Community – Public – to May 15);
 Ms. Cathy Nilson (Métis Community – Public – May 16 on);
 Ms. Raven Sinclair (First Nations Community – Public – to May 15);
 Ms. Tasha Hubbard (First Nations Community – Public – May 16 on);
 Mr. Jim Balfour (Department of Community Resources and Employment);
 Ms. Anna-Leah King (Saskatoon Catholic Schools Representative);
 Mr. Cort Dogniez (Saskatoon Board of Education Representative to end of year);
 Ms. Mariah Sinclair (Saskatoon Health Region Representative to end of August);
 Police Chief Russell Sabo (Saskatoon Police Service Representative);
 Councillor Elaine Hnatyshyn (City Council Representative); and
 Councillor Maurice Neault (City Council Representative).

2005 ACTIVITIES

Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy Review

In February 9, 2004, City Council adopted a new Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy, which included the following outcome statements, along with indicators of success and ways to monitor the success in achieving the outcomes:

- The workforce will be representative of the population of Saskatoon.
- There will be zero tolerance for racism or discrimination in Saskatoon.
- Community decision-making bodies will be representative of the whole community of Saskatoon.
- There will be awareness and understanding in the community regarding the issues, and acceptance of the various cultures that make up Saskatoon.

The City's role and strategies for achieving the outcomes were identified in the policy. The policy stated that the City of Saskatoon would be:

- A leader in the community by communicating the City's vision and role in regards to the issues.

- A leader in the community by achieving the outcomes within its own organization.
- A facilitator to bring other agencies together to work jointly towards the outcomes.
- A coordinator or clearing house for information sharing.
- A granting agency through existing grant programs.

In 2005, the Administration submitted a draft report updating the Committee on the development of monitoring tools for the evaluation of the progress made with respect to the new policy. The Committee provided input and this matter was reported to City Council under the 2005 Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Annual Report of the Community Services Department.

Proposal for the Development of Immigration and Refugee Resettlement Strategy

In November 2004, the Committee forwarded recommendations for the development of a City of Saskatoon immigration and refugee resettlement plan. This followed upon the Committee's work in 2004, which identified the need to improve Saskatoon's success in attracting and retaining immigrants. City Council gave approval in principle for the development of a strategy and action plan.

A team consisting of the Chair of Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee, the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Coordinator and the Employment Equity Coordinator met with and obtained commitments from representatives of the federal and provincial governments for funding of \$30,000 to conduct the project, which consisted of the hiring of consultants to facilitate the development a proposed immigration strategy and action plan.

Under the direction of the City Administration, the team conducted a public tender and selection process that resulted, in September 2005, in the hiring of consultants Ken Pontikes and Prof. Joe Garcea, to conduct the project. This team, together with representatives from the federal and provincial departments of immigration, has been involved in ongoing communication and consultation with the consultants. The project is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of 2006.

Proposal for Canadian Coalition of Cities Against Racism

In 2005, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO approached the City to encourage participation in the establishment of the Canadian Coalition of Cities Against Racism. This matter was referred to the Committee for consideration. Members of the Committee met with Elisabeth Barot, Program Officer with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, to discuss the City of Saskatoon becoming a member of the Coalition.

The Committee supported the City's participation in the Coalition and forwarded recommendations to the Planning and Operations Committee to that effect. City Council adopted a recommendation of the Planning and Operations Committee that the City of Saskatoon become a member of and, by following the City of Saskatoon's Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy and action plan, take a leadership role by example and by networking in the Canadian Coalition of Cities Against Racism.

The City's participation in the Coalition was announced at the national meeting of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies held in Saskatoon from June 12 to 14, 2005. Mr. Jim Balfour, member of the Committee, has agreed to participate in communications with respect to this matter and to provide ongoing updates to the Committee. The Committee views this as an opportunity to share information about what the City of Saskatoon has already done in the area of cultural diversity and race relations, including the development of its policy and action plan.

Draft Report – Committee on Strategic Renewal

The Committee reviewed the draft report from the Committee on Strategic Renewal. Several members of the Committee attended a public information reception to meet with the Mayor, Councillors, and members of the public to discuss this report. Members of the Committee provided feedback to the Board of Police Commissioners with respect to the report.

SIGMA Testing

At an invitation from the Saskatoon Police Services, Committee members took the SIGMA test, which is used as part of the recruitment process for the Saskatoon Police Services. The Committee provided feedback from a cultural bias perspective.

2005 Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Month

Once again, City Council proclaimed March as “Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Month” in Saskatoon. The events for the month were organized by Ms. Fay Santos and included an opening ceremony in the Council Chambers on March 1, 2005 and the Living in Harmony Awards Ceremony on March 21st at the Frances Morrison Library Auditorium. Awards were presented for the Living in Harmony Art and Literary Contests. In addition, Recognition Awards were presented to individuals and organizations to recognize them for their efforts in promoting intercultural harmony. Each year the Committee presents these awards to focus attention on the positive initiatives that are taking place within our community.

Saskatchewan Intercultural Association

March 21st Events

In 2005, the Committee continued its involvement on the planning committee and provided co-sponsorship for the events organized by the Saskatchewan Intercultural Association for March 21st. Dr. Shakeel Akhtar represented the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee on the planning committee for these events.

National Aboriginal Day

Members of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee once again participated on the planning committee and provided co-sponsorship for National Aboriginal Day held on June 21, 2005. Mr. Cort Dogniez and Ms. Anna-Leah King represented the Committee for this event. This year's theme was "Honouring Our Aboriginal Veterans". Events for the day were held in Friendship Park and were well attended by the public.

Request for Co-Sponsorship – 2005 First Nations Centennial Cultural Celebrations and Powwow Planning Committee

As in the past, the Committee provided co-sponsorship to offset school transportation costs to facilitate an opportunity for students to attend the events held at the Credit Union Centre on October 13 and 14, 2005, in conjunction with the 2005 First Nations Centennial Cultural Celebrations. Students participated in a variety of workshops designed to improve their understanding of First Nations history, culture and perspectives.

Yellow Bear/Purple Bear Colouring Book Project

The Committee partnered with the Public Legal Education Association (PLEA) in reprinting the "Yellow Bear/Purple Bear" story and colouring book project by Saskatoon student Carlene Deutscher.

To date, 40,000 copies of this book have been printed of which over 38,000 copies have been distributed by PLEA to schools and organizations throughout the province.

Building Bridges with the Aboriginal Community - Brochure

As part of its responsibility to promote public education on matters relating to cross-cultural understanding and positive race relations in the city, the Committee proposed that a brochure be prepared to provide accurate factual information about Saskatoon's Aboriginal communities. This action was taken in response to an accumulation of informal comments and complaints received by Committee members from the general public concerning misinformation regarding Aboriginal people being distributed in the community.

The Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Co-ordinator, working with members of the Committee, prepared the brochure. Funding for printing costs was obtained for printing the brochure from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Interprovincial Association on Native Employment (IANE), and the Saskatoon Public and Catholic School Boards. Approximately 60,000 copies of the brochure were distributed to the Saskatoon residents in their November 2005 utility bills.

Report of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Coordinator

The Committee continued to receive regular updates with respect to the work and activities of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Coordinator, which included the development of “Building Bridges with the Aboriginal Community” brochure, participation in organizing and hosting the Anne Frank Exhibit at the Diefenbaker Centre from May 16 to August 28, 2005, the development of a telephone survey on the perception of race relations in the city, participation in planning a provincial forum on missing Aboriginal women, and plans for a forum on getting involved in municipal government, focusing on Aboriginal and immigrant communities. Regular updates were also provided with respect to development of monitoring tools for the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy and progress on the Immigration and Resettlement Strategy item.

Presentations

As part of the Committee’s continued education on issues relating to its mandate, presentations or information were provided as follows:

- Safe Housing Rehabilitation Program – Mr. Brian Bentley, General Manager, Fire and Protective Services Department.
- “Food for Thought” Video and Luncheon – The Committee was invited to this event hosted by Saskatoon Catholic Schools First Nations and Métis Education Team and coordinated by Committee member, Ms. Anna-Leah King.
- Cohesion 2005 – Possible one-day event to celebrate City and Province’s Centennial, including request for co-sponsorship or waiving of any fees for street closures etc. - Committee referred the matter to the Planning and Operations Committee for consideration. The event did not proceed.
- *DiverCity* Screening – The Committee received a presentation and viewed a video documenting stories of immigrant youth in Saskatoon.
- Centennial Project - Multi-Faith Book for School Children – The Committee received as information a presentation and request for co-sponsorship on the above project.
- 100 Years of Saskatchewan History on Film – Films to be shown during November, December and January at the Broadway Theatre to celebrate Centennial – Committee members were encouraged to view the films.
- Mathieu Da Costa Challenge - Writing and Artwork Contest launched by Department of Canadian Heritage to encourage youth to discover how diversity has shaped Canada’s history and the important role that multiculturalism plays in Canadian society – This was provided to Committee as information.
- Missing Persons Task Force and Missing Aboriginal Women – Provincial Forum – The Committee received a presentation and had discussions with Ms. Darlene Lanceley, Researcher, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. The matter was referred to the community networking ad hoc subcommittee for a further proposal for discussion by the full Committee.

- Received report on Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Consultation Processes, as well as FCM National Research and Resource Kit documents, as information. The City had participated in the FCM Research project.

Strategic Planning Session

The Committee held a strategic planning session in February, 2005. Orientation on the Committee's mandate was provided; the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy was reviewed; the Committee's strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities were discussed; and priorities for the future direction and consideration of the Committee were identified. Following this, the Committee decided to focus on two areas of priority and identify strategies to address the areas of focus. Ad hoc subcommittees were formed to look at the areas of education and community networking and they will be reporting back to the full Committee in the future.

Submitted by,

Andrew Mason, Chair
Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee