

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

**TO:** Secretary, Planning and Operations Committee  
**FROM:** Chair, Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee  
**DATE:** April 5, 2007  
**SUBJECT:** 2006 Annual Report  
Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee  
**FILE NO.:** CK. 430-29)

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

### **Message from the Chair**

I would like to take this opportunity to submit the report outlining the work of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee of the City of Saskatoon during 2006.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to express sincere thanks to the City Council and the Administration for their continued support enabling the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee to fulfill its mandated responsibility.

The ongoing work of the Committee and the challenges involved clearly demonstrate a need for sustained focus on issues that are at the heart of socio-economic inequity and discrimination. The Committee continues to address these difficult issues.

Consultations and close cooperation with agencies that are involved in addressing matters related to social harmony in general and other relevant concerns constituted a significant part of the Committee's regular meetings as outlined in the report.

Discussions with the consultants engaged in the preparation of the report on "Immigration Resettlement Strategy and Action Plan for Saskatoon" and other significant matters, such as "Canadian Coalition of Cities Against Racism", reflect the need for the development of a strategic framework that is consistent with a changing environment. In this respect strategic planning sessions that were initiated by the Committee have proven to be of great value.

The Committee looks forward to the future with a strong commitment to helping create an environment of positive understanding that the citizens of Saskatoon can be truly proud of.

## **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 2006 included:

Mr. Andrew Mason, Chair (General Public Representative);  
 Dr. Shakeel Akhtar, Vice Chair (Saskatchewan Intercultural Association Representative);  
 Ms. Patricia McNeill-McCrea (General Public Representative);  
 Mr. Nesar Rajput, (General Public Representative);  
 Dr. Eric Lefol (September to December) and Ms. Gerlinde Sarkar (January to August)  
 (General Public Representative);  
 Mr. Alon Zack (General Public Representative);  
 Mr. Gatdeet Wakou (General Public Representative);  
 Ms. Cathy Nilson (Saskatoon Health Region Representative – September to December)  
 (Public, Métis Community – January to August)  
 Ms. Mariah Sinclair (Saskatoon Health Region Representative January to August);  
 Ms. Tasha Hubbard (Public, First Nations Community – January to August);  
 Ms. Anna-Leah King (Public, First Nations Community – September to December)  
 (Saskatoon Catholic School Board Representative - January to August);  
 Mr. Larry McCallum (Saskatoon Catholic School Board Representative - September to  
 December);  
 Mr. Cort Dogniez (Saskatoon Public Board of Education Representative);  
 Mr. Jim Balfour (Department of Community Resources and Employment);  
 Police Chief Weighill (Saskatoon Police Service Representative - September to  
 December); Police Chief Sabo or designate (January to August)  
 Councillor Elaine Hnatyshyn (City Council Representative to October); and  
 Councillor Maurice Neault (City Council Representative).

## **2006 ACTIVITIES**

### **Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy**

On 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 2006, the Administration reported to the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee and City Council on the results of a public opinion survey which had been conducted by Fast Consulting on cultural diversity and race relations issues in the community. The survey was identified as one of the tools to monitor the effectiveness in achieving the outcomes of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy and the intent was to conduct the same survey every three years to be able to compare the results.

### **Proposal for the Development of Immigration and Refugee Resettlement Strategy**

In November 2004, the Committee forwarded recommendations to the Planning and Operations Committee for the development of a City of Saskatoon immigration and refugee resettlement plan 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.

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. The consultants were hired in 2005. The Administration and Chair of the Committee, together with representatives from the federal and provincial departments of immigration, have been involved in ongoing

communication and consultation with the consultants. In 2006, the consultants met with the Committee on a number of occasions to obtain further input with respect to this issue.

At the invitation of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Coordinator, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Immigration met with the Committee to discuss immigration and opportunities for Canada and Saskatchewan. The Committee also reviewed the challenges facing immigrants as identified in its earlier report to City Council.

### **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. 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 acted as liaison and has provided the Committee with updates as information comes forward about the Coalition. He will be meeting with the Administration in the near future to discuss ways to share this involvement, which includes sharing information on what Saskatoon has done in the area of cultural diversity and race relations, including the development of its policy and action plan.

### **Strategic Planning Session**

As in 2005, the Committee held a strategic planning session in February and identified youth, Aboriginal issues and immigration as its priority areas for the year. The Committee formed ad hoc subcommittees in the three priority areas, with the task to identify specific matters within their priority areas that merited consideration by the Committee as a whole, to lead discussion at the monthly Committee meetings in these areas, and to assist the Committee in making recommendations to City Council. This was reflected in the issues reviewed by the Committee and in the presentations received throughout the year. The Committee believes the strategic planning session is an excellent opportunity for members to learn more about each other and the organizations they represent, as well as provide a focus for the year. It also assists in providing new members with information on the mandate of the Committee and the work of the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Office.

## **Presentations**

The following presentations were received by the Committee in its areas of focus and from those wishing to provide information to the Committee on issues relating to cultural diversity and race relations:

- Information on the Kids Not in School Pleasant Hill Project and the work of the Kids Not in School Committee.
- Métis Family and Community Justice Services of Saskatchewan Inc. – Ms. Lynn La Rose, Executive Director, provided information about the organization, including its mission, mandate, and the programs it is involved in.
- Information developed by the Saskatoon Police Service on the role of police in Canada, reporting crime and suspicious behaviour, recruitment information, traffic information and bicycle safety. The information is available in 10 different languages. Members were invited to copy and distribute the information as they wished.
- Chief Weighill provided a further presentation on the short-term plan for the Saskatoon Police Service.
- Women Cycling across Canada to raise awareness of violence against women – The Committee was provided with information about an event held in Saskatoon on June 14<sup>th</sup> when the group traveled through the city.
- Information on the National Association of Friendship Centre's 35<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting in Saskatoon – July 10 to 14, 2006.
- Cultural Capital of Canada – The Arts and Grants Consultant provided information about Saskatoon's designation as a cultural capital, funding aspects, and the various components of the program.
- Invitation to Open House at Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre on October 12, 2006.
- River Landing Project – Tree Grate Initiative – Representatives of Urban Design and Elders Kay Poundmaker and Stan Cuthand provided information to the Committee about the initiative, including the identification of themes, and also talked about the history and the life of First Nations people.
- Urban Aboriginal Strategy – PowerPoint presentation by Dwayne Docken, Coordinator, Bob Merasty, and Georgina Taylor, Manager of Community Services Unit, Service Canada, Saskatoon.

## **2006 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 included an opening ceremony in the Council Chambers on February 27, 2006 and the Living in Harmony Awards Ceremony on March 21<sup>st</sup> at St. Mary's School. Awards were presented for the Living in Harmony Art Contest, as follows: Rachel Couture and Cynthia Nguyen (High School Category) and Kristjan Garratt and Garret Hansen (Elementary School Category). The recipients of the Literary Contest Awards were Lindsey Li and Cory-Lynn Langan. In addition, Recognition Awards were presented to the following individuals and organizations to recognize them for their efforts in promoting intercultural

harmony: Miklos Kanitz, John Arcand, John Lagimodiere, Cosmopolitan Industries Ltd. Seniors and St. Michael Community School, Giant Tiger, and St. Mark Elementary School. 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 21<sup>st</sup> Events**

As in the past, the Committee continued its involvement on the planning committee and provided co-sponsorship for the events organized by the Saskatchewan Intercultural Association to commemorate March 21, The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

#### **National Aboriginal Day**

Once again, Cort Dogniez and Anna-Leah King represented the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee on the planning committee for National Aboriginal Day. The Committee provided co-sponsorship for the event. The celebrations took place on June 21 and 22 in Friendship Park, in conjunction with Urban Treaty Day celebrations.

#### **Updates from 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 Office, which included plans for Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Month, survey on cultural diversity and race relations issues, work on monitoring tools for the Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy, update on the Cultural Capital of Canada Program, and the progress on the Immigration and Resettlement Strategy initiative.

#### **Focus for 2007**

As has been the case since 2005, the Committee will be holding a strategic planning session to review progress to date and to determine future direction to assist the Committee in bringing forward issues and recommendations to City Council in the area of cultural diversity and race relations.

Submitted by,

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Dr. Shakeel Akhtar, 2007 Chair  
Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Committee