

City of Mississauga Corporate Report



Date: January 19, 2024	Originator's files:
To: Chair and Members of General Committee	
From: Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer	Meeting date: February 7, 2024
	Combating Racism, Discrimination and Hatred Advisory Committee February 20, 2024

Subject

Combating Racism, Discrimination and Hatred Committee Update

Recommendation

That the recommendations contained in the report dated January 19, 2024 entitled "Combating Racism, Discrimination and Hatred Committee Update" from the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer be approved.

Executive Summary

- In November 2022, Council created the Combating Racism, Discrimination and Hatred Advisory Committee (CRDHC) to replace the former Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DIAC).
- The mandate of the new committee is to gather feedback, input, and advice from committee members and the public about how best to combat racism, hate, and discrimination within the corporation and in the wider community.
- Following a deputation to the CRDHC on November 8, 2023, and General Committee on November 15, 2023, General Committee directed staff to prepare a report providing information on how committee members can be added to advisory committees, in particular the CRDHC.
- The terms of reference for the CRDHC provide detailed criteria for membership on the committee. All members of the CRDHC were selected in accordance with the Citizen Appointments to Committees, Boards and Authorities Policy 02-01-01.
- At the meeting of General Committee on November 29, 2023, following a deputation by a resident, direction was given for staff to prepare a report on how best to address the rise of Hinduphobia in the community.
- Based on data from Peel Regional Police Hate Crimes Unit, in 2022 there were 123 hate-motivated crimes reported, of which 30% resulted in charges. Incidents of hate crime rose through 2022 and the trend appears to have continued through 2023. Complete 2023

hate crime data from PRP will be released later in 2024.

- Staff have provided two recommendations to address the direction provided by Council:
 - Do not add new members to the CRDHC, but instead work with the CRDHC to identify experts and community partners to address the committee on matters pertaining to its work; and
 - Prepare a comprehensive anti-racism, discrimination and hatred public awareness and education campaign, in consultation with the CRDHC and the community, and report back to Council with a plan.

Background

In 2014, the City of Mississauga Council created the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DIAC). This committee was formed to work on advancing the City's goals of increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion within the City and wider community.

In 2023, Council approved the retirement of DIAC and the creation of a new committee titled, Combating Racism, Discrimination and Hatred Committee (CRDHC). The mandate of the committee is as follows:

1. Provide insights to Council and staff on the needs of diverse, equity deserving communities in Mississauga impacted by racism and hate;
2. Guide staff in supporting those communities in fighting racism and hate through policies, programs, services;
3. Guide staff on piloting innovative and effective anti-racism and anti-hate tools and resources;
4. Demonstrate for the Corporation effective strategies to remove systemic barriers to equitable access to City services and programs for marginalized residents & equity-deserving groups;
5. Build public awareness of City's policies, programs and services to combat racism and hate; and
6. Identify potential policy and program reforms that the City could probe into and explore ways of strengthening them.

The Committee is comprised of three members of Council, and 10 members of the community. Members of Advisory Committees are appointed through the Citizen Appointments to Committees, Boards and Authorities Policy 02-01-01 (Appendix 1). This policy outlines the general criteria applicants must meet to become members of an advisory committee. On November 15, 2023, following a deputation to General Committee and the CRDHC, Council provided direction to staff to prepare a report with information on how new members could be added to the CRDHC.

Addressing Hinduphobia

On November 29, 2023, General Committee directed staff to report back to the CRDHC on how to address the issue of Hinduphobia in the community. Unlike Anti-Semitism and Anti Muslim Hate, Hinduphobia is a relatively new and emerging phenomenon and manifests itself in a dislike or prejudice leading to acts of vandalism/negative propaganda against people identifying as Hindu. This report provides recommendations to address all forms of hate and discrimination in our community, including Hinduphobia.

Comments

At the November 15, 2023 meeting of General Committee, Council directed staff to prepare a report providing an overview of how the committee members of the CRDHC were selected, and how new members could be added to the committee.

Selection of Members

The members of the CRDHC were selected in accordance with the procedure to appoint all citizen members of advisory committees found in Policy 02-01-01. Public notice was provided for three weeks that the City was recruiting interested residents to join this advisory committee, along with the terms of reference for the committee and the necessary qualifications of the citizen members.

To ensure this committee has the expertise to tackle issues of racism, discrimination and hatred, the criteria for measuring applicants for this committee is as follows:

- Past experience related to the work/scope of the Committee;
- Related skills to the work of the Committee;
- Expressed interest in work of the Committee aligns with its responsibilities;
- Expressed contribution to the work of the Committee aligns with its responsibilities;
- Previous experience working on Committees/Boards;
- Lived experiential understanding and/or educational expertise and/or practical experience in the field of EDI generally and Anti-Racism/Anti-Hate particularly;
- Have demonstrated strong advocacy work in the past on EDI; and
- Possess demonstrated knowledge of existing and emerging legislation/policies on anti-racism and anti-hate

In accordance with the terms of reference approved by Council (Appendix 2), the three Council Members of the Committee, along with staff from the Clerk's Office and City Manager's Office, interviewed the applicants. From these interviews, each applicant was given a score based on how well they met the criteria outlined in the terms of reference. The committee members were chosen based on the highest scores. The members were then notified of their selection to the committee.

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Appointing a New Member to the Committee

Council can appoint new members to any advisory committee by amending the terms of reference. New members are not usually appointed to an advisory committee when there is no vacancy. As per the Policy 02-01-01, “when a vacancy needs to be filled, the previous applications will be submitted to the applicable Nominating Committee for consideration. If there are no previous applicants who are suitable and available to serve, the City Clerk repeats the application and appointment process described above (with the public notice appearing for two weeks, rather than three).

Recommendation 1: Staff do not recommend adding new members to the CRDHC.

As noted, the members of CRDHC were appointed after careful consideration and interviews. The current members of the committee scored the highest and best represented the criteria as set out in the terms of reference. As such, staff do not recommend adding members to the committee at this time, but instead, working with the committee and the community to call on experts to speak to issues as they arise and to provide information and counsel to the Committee and Council as required.

As noted above, there are unfortunately many groups that are targeted by racism, hate and discrimination. The job of the committee is to listen to these groups and take action, using their expertise and experience in anti-racism, discrimination, and hatred. As an example, following the deputation at the November 8, 2023 meeting of the CRDHC regarding antisemitism, the committee took action by passing a motion to convene a meeting of the Peel Interfaith Council, as well as request the partnership of the Peel Regional Police Hate Crimes Unit in addressing hate-motivated incidents in the community. This meeting is taking place in Q1 of 2024.

Anti-Racism, Hate and Discrimination Public Education and Awareness Campaign

Mississauga is home to a globally diverse multicultural community. According to 2021 Census Data, approximately 60% of City’s population identify as visible minority and 53% as immigrants. This means that global is local in Mississauga and events occurring around the world have deep resonance with many local residents. At times, this can lead to rising tensions and conflicts amongst certain groups and even lead to acts of racism and hate. However, the City of Mississauga remains a peaceful community overall.

According to the Peel Regional Police (PRP) 2022 annual Hate Motivated Crime Report: there was an increase of 8 hate-motivated crimes in 2022 a 6.95% increase in the Region of Peel, which is significantly lower than the National increase of 27% in 2021 (Appendix 3). The PRP report further states:

- The total number of Criminal Code offences reported to Peel Regional Police in 2022 was 42,832. Of those, 123 have been identified as hate-motivated crimes
- Of the 123 reported hate-motivated crimes, 37 (30%) resulted in charges

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- Incidents involving violence or threats of violence rose from 47 in 2021 to 64 in 2022, marking a 36% increase
- Among these violent incidents and threats, majority were verbal threats with 31 instances (48%), followed by 24 (38%) which were physical assaults, and 7 (11%) involved assault with a weapon
- Of all the categorized violent occurrences, 11 incidents led to minor injuries

According to the report, a yearly comparison of ‘reported’ hate motivated crimes by type of motivation shows race and/or nationality as the top motivation for hate motivated crime followed by religion, sexual orientation, disability and multiple motivations.

This is an aggregated data set that represents Anti-Semitic, Anti-Israel, Anti-Muslim hate and Anti-Palestine incidents/crimes. The PRP Community Safety and Well-being team is still analyzing the 2023 data and trends compared to 2022, and that information will be forthcoming some time in 2024. Based on preliminary assessments, they have noticed an increase in incidents from 2022 in the data.

In the past few years, Council has passed various resolutions in response to instances of hate, racism and discrimination:

- Resolution 0154-2021 Anti-Muslim Hate
- Resolution 0155-2021 Truth and Reconciliation
- Resolution 0207-2020 Anti-Indigenous Anti-Black Racism

The City has not engaged in a public education and awareness campaign to address the sources and/or implications of hate, racism and discrimination in the community; support communities in resisting instances of hate, racism and discrimination; and build municipal capacity to partner with law enforcement and other community partners to address ‘competing interests’ within or between communities through dialogue.

There are some examples of municipalities who have engaged in such campaigns. These include the City of Toronto’s “Toronto For All” campaign, the City of Hamilton’s “Hate Prevention and Mitigation” initiative, and York Region’s “Hate has no home in York Region” campaign.

Municipal governments, being closest to the people, have a role to play in investing in building “civic resilience” of local communities. This includes, helping communities resist and recover from instances of hate, racism and discrimination; building public awareness about what constitutes hate, racism and discrimination and how it impacts certain communities; fostering pro-active partnerships (with law enforcement bodies and CROs) to meaningfully address any incidence of hate, racism or discrimination; and using data to build municipal capacity to minimize risk factors and enhance ‘protective’ factors.

This campaign would aim to address all forms of hate, racism and discrimination impacting our communities, including, but not limited to:

- Anti-Semitism;
- Anti-Muslim hate;
- Anti-Black racism;
- Anti-Indigenous racism and hate;
- Anti-Asian racism and hate;
- Hinduphobia;
- Homophobia and Transphobia;
- Discrimination against persons with disability; and
- All other forms of identified hate, racism and discrimination.

Education/awareness campaign tactics could include:

- Public education through social media and paid advertising on what constitutes hate, racism, discrimination is and how it impacts certain communities;
- Public awareness on steps people can take if they experience a hate-motivated incident;
- Allocating dedicated resources (financial/in-kind) through City grants program to support key community organizations in supporting communities subjected to hate, racism, discrimination; and
- Developing key partnerships with Hate Crime Unit of Peel Regional Police and other relevant bodies to build municipal capacity to minimize risk factors and enhance 'protective' factors

This initiative is based on the acknowledgement that addressing hate, racism and discrimination is as much a matter of law and policing as it is building the capacity of the City and communities to be:

- Resilient in the face of hate, racism and discrimination;
- Have the capacity to recognize/acknowledge the issue of hate, racism and discrimination; and
- Be able to create 'bold spaces' for competing interests and opinions to be exchanged for building common grounds for understanding of each other's realities

Recommendation 2: Staff be directed to work with the CRDHC, the community, and relevant partners, to prepare an anti-racism and discrimination public education and awareness campaign. Further, that following this work, staff report to Council with a proposed plan of action.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact as a result of this report.

Conclusion

Council directed staff to prepare reports on addressing Hinduphobia in Mississauga and how to add new members to an advisory committee, in particular the Combating Racism, Discrimination, and Hatred Advisory Committee. To address the direction provided by Council, staff have provided two recommendations. The first is to not add more members to the CRDHC, but instead, bring in experts to address the Committee and Council where necessary, on important issues facing the community on the topics of racism, discrimination and hatred. The second recommendation is to address Hinduphobia and all forms of racism, discrimination and hatred in the community through a public information and awareness education campaign, developed in concert with the members of the CRDHC, experts in this area, and community partners.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Citizen Appointments to Committees, Boards and Authorities Policy 02-01-01

Appendix 2: Combating Racism, Discrimination, and Hatred Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix 3: Peel Regional Police 2022 Annual Hate Motivated Crime Report



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