

Present:

Councillor Martin, Chair (via-telecom)
Councillor Starchuk, Vice-Chair
A. David
B. Gurm
J. Kovach
M. Fallon
M. Pyne
P. Aylward
S. El-Nashar
S. Marcinkowska
S. Sabharwal
T. Ghuman

Absent:

B. King
C. Iweh
J. Thind
K. Polubinski
K. Thiara
M. Malik
S. Altokhais
T. Oleman

Staff Present:

B. Collis, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator
D. Gill-Badesha, Healthy Communities
Manager
H. Mann, Employment Specialist,
Human Resources
L. Cavan, GM, Parks, Recreation & Culture
N. Webb, GM, Human Resources
R. Takhar, RCMP Crime Reduction &
Community Services Manager
C. Eagles, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. The committee passed a motion adopting the minutes of September 21, 2016.

It was

Moved by S. El-Nashar

Seconded by M. Fallon

That the minutes of the Diversity Advisory
Committee meeting held September 21, 2016, be adopted as presented.

B. DELEGATION

1. **West African Vodou: An Exhibition of Sound, Sight, and Spirit**
Lynn Saffery, Museum Manager

In attendance as a delegation before the Committee to provide a presentation on the intersection between the West African Vodou exhibit, the arts, and community engagement.

The following comments were made:

- The West African Vodou is an exhibit at the Surrey Museum that explores the music, dance and spirit of West Africa. Vodou is the indigenous belief system of Gbe-speaking ethnic groups in West African counties such as Ghana, Togo, Nigeria and Benin. The practice of Vodou uses prayer, song, percussion, dance, sacrifice and ritual as a means of communicating and spiritual entities.
- The West African Vodou is a vibrant display of objects, video and sound. The exhibit included drums and had many of the guests participate in dancing.

- Staff noted that the Surrey Museum is family orientated and is welcoming, inclusive and accessible to all visitors. Information for upcoming events at the Surrey Museum is sent out quarterly through School District 36 and can be found online through City of Surrey's website; admission to the Surrey Museum is free.

The Committee commended the Surrey Museum on their efforts to be family orientated and inclusive to all communities.

2. **Inclusive Hiring**

Harbinder Mann, Employment Specialist, Human Resources

File: 0620-20

In attendance as a delegation before the Committee to provide a presentation on the inclusivity and diversity/outreach work the City is undertaking.

The following comments were made:

- The City of Surrey is committed to attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce. Surrey holds cultural events, and delivers communications and training initiatives as part of inclusiveness and celebrating diversity. Surrey's goal is to ensure the City is sustainable, accessible and inclusive for everyone who decides to work at the City. Surrey was the recipient of the Annual Inclusive Employer Award in 2015.
- Surrey offers innovative programs and services to ensure accessibility and inclusion are considered in order to inspire participation, create social connections, and foster lifelong learning.
- One dedicated HR Manager is responsible for providing equal opportunities, building accessibility and creating social connections. Staff have been working with the Rick Hansen Foundation since 2010 to ensure that buildings and other public spaces within the City are accessible.
- The Connector Program through IEC-BC encourages staff to mentor new Canadians in finding jobs in their profession. The delegation noted 30 skilled new Canadians have benefited from staff mentoring through the Connector Program and have found employment in Surrey.
- The City of Surrey hosted an Inclusive Hiring Fair on September 22, 2016, with over 500 people attending. Seven people were successfully hired to work at the City from this event. The delegation noted that Surrey hosted over 30 inclusive hiring employers with Surrey Work BC.

- On July 20, 2016, the City and Surrey Local Immigration Partnership hosted Surrey Welcomes Refugees Day. The City and LIP worked in collaboration with other levels of government and local service providers to welcome Syrian refugees to the community. Through this initiative, 1,500 transit passes were donated to Syrian refugees to facilitate accessibility in the community.
- Another cultural inclusion initiative hosted by the City was Orange Shirt Day, which recognized the impact of residential schools on First Nation, Metis and Inuit people. On September 30, 2016, staff were invited to honour the resilience and bravery of Indian Residential School Survivors, their families, and the children who did not make it home.

3. **Challenges of Syrian Refugees**

Sireen El-Nashar, Diversity Advisory Member

File: 5080-01

In attendance as a delegation before the Committee to provide a presentation on the challenges that the Syrian refugees are facing in Surrey and the culture of Arabic speaking refugees.

The following comments were made:

- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. was founded in 1973 and incorporated in 1974 as a non-profit charitable organization for the purpose of promoting the well-being of Canadians and immigrants. The organization offers youth counselling, community and housing services, health programs, employment, and language classes.
- There are over 4.5 million Syrians who have escaped to the neighbouring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. Many of the Syrian refugees are members of large families that have been relocated from rural areas. The majority of the refugees are Islam and Muslim and speak Arabic. 33% of the people living in Syria are under the age of 15, and many who have resettled to Canada are even younger.
- The delegation noted refugees are referred to Canada by the United Nations High Commissioner. They become landed immigrants upon arrival to Canada and may be assisted by other government or private sponsors. They receive their papers upon arrival which allow them to apply for a Social Insurance Number and Care Card.
- From January 1, 2016 to March 31, 2016, 1,072 Government Assisted Refugees arrived in British Columbia and the majority have settled in Surrey. Many of the Syrian refugees are experiencing trauma, mental illness, respiratory tract infections, dental, and medical needs. Additionally, many families have disabled children who require assistance and medical care.

- It was noted that Syrian parents are not sure how to discipline their children as Canadian practice of discipline is much different from what is considered acceptable in Syria. The refugees do not have English speaking skills and as a result are getting lost in transit. The delegation noted that Surrey needs to concentrate on literacy needs and create trades training programs for refugees.
- The refugees are not obtaining employment within their first year and the funding provided by the Federal government will transfer to the Provincial government's responsibilities. Many of the refugees are receiving Income Assistance and the Child Tax Benefit.
- It was suggested that a Syrian refugee child could be paired up with a Canadian child in a mentorship program, similar to Big Brothers and Big Sisters. This mentorship would help integrate the refugee child, teach them how to behave in class, and make them feel empowered. The children refugees have different philosophies when interacting with other children and treatment of females.
- A committee member noted that the distribution of Syrian refugees in Surrey is unequal, in that South Surrey did not receive as many as the City Centre area. It was discussed that transportation and access to services may be the rationale for location proximity to the City Centre.
- The Committee noted the local challenges and that higher levels of Government could not foresee the issues that have occurred. The City of Surrey has worked well to have inclusivity in our community and to empower our youth. The Committee noted that they would like to see all refugees immigrating to Canada receive the same support services and benefits, not just those from Syria, especially in terms of loan repayment. The settlement agencies note that the support differences have created some tension between the various refugee groups.
- The delegation noted that individuals could welcome Syrian refugees by giving a helping hand, opening up dialogue and getting in touch with different agencies to donate. The members of the Committee noted they would like to engage in brainstorming sessions on their own time to see how else they can help.

The Committee requested the Surrey School District 36 to provide a presentation on what integrated programs and services are offered to refugees. It was noted that Kwantlen Polytech University has restructured some of their programs specifically around this humanitarian issue.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

F. CORRESPONDENCE

G. INFORMATION ITEM

1. 2017 Staff Inclusion Calendar Corporate Report

File: 7710-01

It was
receive the 2017 Staff Inclusion Calendar as information.

Moved by B. Gurm
Seconded by M. Pyne
That the Diversity Advisory Committee
Carried

H. OTHER BUSINESS

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Diversity Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, January 17, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. in 2E Community Room A.

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was
meeting do now adjourn.

Moved by B. Gurm
Seconded by M. Pyne
That the Diversity Advisory Committee
Carried

The Diversity Advisory Committee adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

Councillor M. Starchuk, Vice-Chair
Diversity Advisory Committee