



City of Surrey

Multicultural Advisory Committee

Minutes

Pondside Meeting Room
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2007
Time: 11:07 a.m.
File: 0540-20

Present:

Chair – Councillor M. Martin
Councillor Villeneuve
R. Asistio
T. Ghuman
Dr. B. Gurm
C. Hong
Corp. J. Hundial
B. King
J. Kovach
F. Kung
M. Malik
C. McBeth
S. El-Nashar
V. Pittakidis
K. Polubinski
D. Sandhu
K. Sanghera
M. Solorzano
H. Stilwell, Surrey S.D.36
E. Szucs
M. Thompson

Absent:

Councillor Higginbotham
Mayor Watts *
N. Beuk
S. Scott

Staff Present:

L. Cavan, GM, Parks, Recreation & Culture
O. Croy, Manager, Parks
N. Webb, GM, Human Resources
L. Chernick, Training & Development, Human Resources
J. McLeod, Manager, Long Range Planning & Policy Development
Pam Reddy, Intercultural Outreach Coordinator
*Craig Amundsen, Office of the Mayor
H. Dmytriw, Legislative Services

Guests:

Penny Coates, School District 36
Barbara Gould/Rosemarie Cooper,
Arts Council of Surrey

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. Minutes of the Multicultural Advisory Committee meeting, September 18, 2007, to be adopted.

It was

Moved by Muhammad Malik

Seconded by Connie Hong

That the minutes of the Multicultural

Advisory Committee September 18, 2007, be adopted, as circulated.

Carried

B. DELEGATION

1. **Penny Coates, Co-ordinator, Office of Early Childhood Development, Learning & Care, School District 36** provided a report regarding **refugee issues**. Following are the comments by the delegation:
 - Chairperson, Council Mary Martin welcomed Penny Coates.
 - Early Childhood and Care, as posted by the school district is funded by the Ministry of Childhood and Development and Learning and Care. The function is to look at early childhood issues.
 - The “how to” was derived through recommendations provided by refugee families that have approached her along the way. Penny Coates is here

today to share this information with the Multicultural Advisory Committee.

“Walking Together “Hand in Hand”

- Refugee Criteria – a refugee is a person with a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality or social group or political membership.
- Strong emphasis on humanitarianism criteria since 2002.
- Classifications:
 - Government Assisted Refugees
 - Privately sponsored refugee (church or individual)
 - Asylum refugees
 - Refugee dependents
- Refugee Profile since 2002:
 - Prolonged period in refugee camp – up to 20 years.
 - High medical needs due to lack of adequate medical care, poor nutrition and dental care.
 - Often minimal levels of formal education.
 - Often low literacy levels in English/French language and may be illiterate in home language.
 - Often little formal employment or urban living experience.
 - Little or no experience with handling monies, buying groceries, negotiating public transit, accessing services.
 - Often have serious mental health issues due to culture shock, grieving separation from or loss of family members, traumatized as survivors or witnesses of rape and torture.
- BC Statistics:
 - BC is the third largest recipient of refugees in Canada.
 - Approximately 800 refugees each year since 2002 and an additional 100+ move to BC from other provinces. Increasing numbers of refugee claimants.
 - 2003-2006 Fraser Region received over 70% of all government assisted refugees -- over 50% have settled in Burnaby and Surrey.
- Surrey Highlights:
 - As of 2007, Surrey became the primary recipient of refugees since 2002. Since 2002 over 800 settled here.
 - Top source countries are Myanmar, Sudan, Afghanistan, Columbia, Somalia, Liberia, and Bhutan -- over 30 countries in total.
 - Until this year, funding for settlement services and ESL training did not recognize unique refugee issues and only focused on adult needs.
- Arrival in BC:
 - Referred by the United Nations, selected by Canadian Foreign Mission. Approx 50% of refugees arrive between September-December. This is significant if after the school registry date as children don't get registered into the school system for funding and budgets process until the following year.
 - All government-assisted refugees are met at the Vancouver airport and taken to Welcome House (can only stay there for 2-3 weeks).
 - Refugees are already in debt because they must repay their travel costs to Canadian Federal Government after one year.

- Immediate health needs are met through Bridge Community Health Clinic in Vancouver.
 - Within 2–3 weeks, resettled in housing that fits shelter allowance of \$400-\$795 per month, based on family size.
 - Provided with monthly food/basic needs allowance for one year (\$1,200/mo for family of 10 plus 2 one-zone bus passes).
 - Provided with basic furniture/household goods package and a one-time amount for clothing, telephone installation, school supplies and repayable rent security.
 - Receive basic information about local settlement services and occasional follow up phone call for one year.
 - Given a letter to present to local school if relevant.
 - Expected to be self-sufficient within one year.
- A Perspective from a Sudanese Community Leader:
- *“We are losing our rich culture, language, dignity and values.*
 - *We are not getting the language and schooling support we need for success.*
 - *Most people live in poverty.*
 - *Are not recognized as a visible minority with a big problem therefore we are not getting what we need so we can manage our life here in Canada.*
 - *We have no opportunity to get involved in Canadian society where we can explain who we are.*
 - *Our children are incompetent in schools, and so most are unsuccessful.*
 - *Most families experiencing family breakdown.*
 - *Most of our people are not getting proper medical treatment.*
 - *We experience racism and prejudice—especially our youth.*
 - *Facing all those challenges, and in our pain and despair, it is easy to lose hope...*
 - *BUT we are resilient people, chosen to survive and glad to be alive in Canada. We have hidden talents yet to be revealed. While we ask for your help, it is so we can give back and share who we really are.*
 - *“Not a hand out or forever a hand up, but a chance to walk hand in hand together.”*
- Startling thoughts to ponder as we walk “hand in hand”:
- 42,000 immigrants and refugees in BC; projected to increase to 42,000+ to over 70,000 annually within 5 years. 90% arrive from over 180 countries. Projections are for 28,000 children annually.
 - By 2017 one in three BC residents will be foreign born and by 2024 annual net gain in population growth will be from immigration.
 - Issues to be addressed under employment: Child poverty, childcare, affordable housing, ESL, training newcomer settlement and orientation, diversity life skills, and inter-cultural cohesion strategies.
 - New and proposed settlement services:
 - New -
 - Fraser Health Newcomer Clinic in Surrey

- School based settlement workers
- Specialized support for multiple barriered newcomers
- Additional settlement service funding (dollars doubled)
- Surrey settlement service coordinating group created
- Proposed -
 - Early Childhood Development Project (ECD) refugee settlement project
 - Settlement workers attached to library
- ECD Refugee Project:
 - A whole lot of rationale as to why we need to do something for the refugee children and youth
 - Existing ECD and settlement service lack capacity and expertise
 - Refugee preschooler presenting serious physical and mental health concerns. Significant school readiness concerns
- Project Components:
 - First steps family centre – new refugees
 - Stepping stones program existing refugees – will be held at NUMOJA
 - Transportation strategy – van, bus tickets
 - Community Connections Program – including a family friend matching program
 - ESL training program focused on parenting child development issues – nobody spends any time teaching Canadian things such as *how to talk about your child* with your teachers
 - Participation in settlement services coordinating group
 - ECD awareness training for settlement workers
- ECD Refugee Project:
 - Leading edge innovative project designed to shift BC Settlement Policy to include ECD training for settlement workers and service providers
 - Collaborative venture of 15 local ECD partners
 - Local funding and in-kind contributions
 - United Way considering sizable contribution
 - Request for primary funding from Ministry of Attorney: Settlement & Multiculturalism
 - Will require Treasury Board support

Discussion ensued and the following comments and information was provided in answer to questions by the committee members:

- The recent tasing incident resulting in the death of the Polish immigrant has hurt all communities. There is to be a rally on Saturday, November 24, 2007 at 12:00 pm at Robson Square in support of making changes to the immigration procedures to ensure translators and other services are made available for new arrival immigrants. It is expected that over 5,000 people will be attending. Committee members were invited to attend the rally.
- The repayment policy for immigrant's transportation costs is not a new thing. This policy was in effect even 20 some years ago. The Canadian government

- should be requested to abolish the policy altogether. Canada is so contrary and inadequate in how we receive peoples to this country.
- Those with or without children find it hard to connect into a community when they arrive. In the past we have done nothing with the children at all. Option Settlement Services has taken care of this.
 - Penny Coates' mandate is around early childhood and birth to 5 years old and as an organization they look at what can be done. Still trying to get the money for that project. A banker is coming forward to the school district. There will be options and diversity and NUMOJA.
 - ISS - Welcome House picks up new immigrants – there is a brochure in different languages (but not all languages) that is handed out.
 - There is a lot of work to be done in this area. Children have been identified at this point as being the most vulnerable. We were ending up with children going to school who had no concept or the skill sets to function in the schools. They can't even access the education system, let alone do well in that. We have looked at what we can do and what we can do that is manageable that would make a huge difference to those kids and their families.
 - Was recently involved in African Survive/Thrive: Youth connecting with teachers and finding things to do through recreation. These new immigrants have huge family responsibilities and don't have much time to participate in youth activities. Youth are expected to work, be involved in church/temple and take care of younger children and families. If they arrived when they were younger and could learn English in school then they were more successful. At a pilot project at Queen Elizabeth High School the older youth, who had never been to school one day in their life, are pulled out and work with one teacher to help them. Other jurisdictions will place the children in different situations for a few months.
 - There is a need for ESL in all Surrey schools. Some schools are 90% English second language children. Every class has ESL kids in them and have 67 languages spoken within the one school.

It was

Moved by Emese Szücs

Seconded by Connie Hong

That the Multicultural Advisory Committee recommend that Council urge the Federal Government to abolish the repayment policy of transportation costs for new refugees.

Carried

- 2. Barbara Gould/Rosemarie Cooper, Arts Council of Surrey** provided a presentation regarding Arts Council Spotlight. Following are the comments provided:
- Intercultural Cohesion Strategies – looking at the community that is well settled, and arts and theatre.
 - Arts council 40th anniversary this year
 - Directors and Barbara Gould, who are active in arts council for over 10 years, meet with groups on a monthly basis to hear and disseminate information about activities that are going on:
 - Surrey Secondary School arts teacher
 - Choral Festival

- Strawberry Tea
- Oldest continuing performing group in Surrey (oldest member is 90)
- The only young people opera society in Canada is in Surrey. This year performing a historical opera on the signing of BC into a Province.
- Surrey International Writers Conference
- Craft fairs, community events, Surrey Rock Hounds, Arts 2007, etc.
- Offer you the Spotlight
 - Highlights local artists, performers, sponsors, and Surrey events in the back.
 - Published once per month (10 per year)
 - Extra publication due to Fusion '08
- Surrey has been named the Cultural Capital of Canada, and a number of other multicultural events throughout year.
 - A tremendous way to make contact to all groups in Surrey who are involved in theatre, dance, writing. If you would like to be a part of it, invite/encourage you to join the Arts Council of Surrey.
 - Membership brings meetings, listings, stories in the spot, opportunities to become a Director. And just being part of the Arts Community in Surrey to be the heart and soul of who we are.
 - Are offering 2008 membership free to our Multicultural partners.
 - Provided application forms

The Chairperson thanked the delegation for participating today.

3. Wally Sandvoss to provide a presentation regarding **Community Grass Roots**.

- **DEFERRED** to next meeting in the interest of time.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. The **2008 Schedule of Meetings** dates for the Multicultural Advisory Committee be approved.

It was Moved and seconded
That the Multicultural Advisory
Committee approve the 2008 Schedule of Meetings to be on the third Tuesday
of every second month at **9:00 am** at Pondsides as follows:

January 15
March 18
May 20
July 15
September 16
November 18

Carried

2. **How do multicultural communities reach out to families with disabilities?**

Councillor Martin provided the following comments:

- South Surrey Semiahmoo House Society provides services right through Surrey that touches all of Surrey as well as parts of Delta.
- Councillor Martin requested that the members of the Multicultural Advisory Committee provide feedback from their individual communities indicating what areas of interest Semiahmoo House could help support.

3. **Multi-Cultural Sharing: Presentation Opportunities for 2008.**

Laurie Cavan, GM, Parks, Recreation & Culture discussed the concept of having committee members take turns in providing a presentation on their community, what we would like to achieve by multicultural sharing and how this relates to the committee Terms of Reference.

- This was a suggestion from Nicola Webb for future agenda items. To engage committee members with an opportunity to present to the group on something happening in their community. Something that will affect all of our community and their specific community.
- This ties in with the mandate, the goals of the Terms of Reference, and to share information and build inter-global harmony. Presentations need not be elaborate and be about 10-15 minutes. One presentation per meeting.
- The GM, Parks, Recreation & Culture requested the committee members to give this some thought and coordinate through the committee administrative assistant.
- Cameron McBeth, Urban Aboriginal Community will present at the January 15, 2008 meeting.

D. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**E. STAFF PRESENTATIONS**

1. Laurie Cavan, GM, Parks, Recreation & Culture provided an update regarding the **Fusion Festival '08**.
 - Held one committee meeting in October to share ideas and vision for the festival. Working on bringing into concept for the festival the Cultural Capitals of Canada the overall budget.
 - Just developed a corporate sponsor package – very colourful.
 - Staff have already begun meeting with people from the community.
 - Confirmed Coast Capital as a presenting sponsor at \$30,000.
 - Had a number of meetings with individuals in City Centre; developers of large towers are very interested.
 - Corporate sponsors – contact information on the brochure for those members who may have interested.
 - To tie in to other events happening in City -- Launch of the Cultural Capitals as part of Winter Fest on Saturday, February 9, 2008 -- A brand new festival hosted in City Centre. Entertainment and diversity happening there.
 - Preparing packages of how cultural groups can get involved with the festival.
 - Names of cultural groups who may be interested in hosting a pavilion/tent at the festival to showcase their cultural background should be forwarded to Mary Rukavina, Manager, Special Events.
 - Funding being provided? Looking at exactly at how that combination works. The host would have to cover some of the costs and to look at revenue generating capabilities. The more corporate sponsorship there will be the less we have to rely on funding by the individual groups. Still a work in progress.
 - July 18, 19, and 20, 2008 at Holland Park at Old Yale Road and the old shopping centre.
 - Holland Park is *beautiful* now. Will have fountain features and public art.
 - Parking is not designated, but will encourage transit use. Mall will designate some of its parking to host events at the park.
 - Fantastic connection with sub-committee to ensure some excellent talent.
 - Park belongs to the City. City invested \$3 Million to build the current infrastructure. The park is designed to be used by the residents of the surrounding high-density development, is wheelchair accessible with flat asphalt walkways and a one KM walking route. There is one permanent stage and second temporary stage will be erected. One stage to face the lawn. The lawn is designed to withstand intense pedestrian traffic. It is a very large 18 acre park.
 - The GM, Parks encouraged the committee members to take a walk through Holland Park but will bring photos to the next meeting for a virtual tour.

F. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting of the Multicultural Advisory Committee to be January 15, 2008 @ **9:00** am at Pondsider.

G. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded that the Multicultural Advisory Committee meeting do now adjourn.

Carried

The Multicultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Margaret Jones, City Clerk

Chairperson, Councillor M. Martin
Multicultural Advisory Committee