



City of Surrey

Multicultural Advisory Committee

Minutes

Pondside Room
City Hall
14245 - 56 Avenue
Surrey, B.C.
TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2008
Time: 9:03 am
File: 0540-20

Present:

Chair – Councillor M. Martin
Councillor Villeneuve
Mayor Watts /Craig Amundsen
R. Asistio
N. Beuk
C. Hong
Corp. J. Hundial
B. King
J. Kovach
F. Kung
M. Malik
C. McBeth /Stuart Cadwallader
S. El-Nashar
V. Pittakidis
K. Polubinski
W. Sandvoss
S. Scott
H. Stilwell, Surrey S.D.36
E. Szucs
M. Thompson

Absent:

Councillor Higginbotham
T. Ghuman
Dr. B. Gurm
D. Sandhu
K. Sanghera
M. Solorzano

Staff Present:

L. Cavan, GM, Parks, Recreation & Culture
N. Webb, GM, Human Resources
L. Chernick, Training & Development,
Human Resources
H. Dmytriw, Legislative Services

Guests:

John Murray, Ukrainian Community
Ms. Vasso Vahlas, English Language
Services for Adults (ELSA)
Pius Ryan, School District 36
Vincent Gonsalves, Fusion Festival
Community Coordinator

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was Moved by Muhammad Malik
Seconded by Wally Sandvoss
That the minutes of the Multicultural
Advisory Committee January 15, 2008, be adopted, as circulated.
Carried

B. DELEGATION

Ms. Vasso Vahlas, Surrey Language Assessment Centre provided a presentation on the Centre's free testing services for immigrants to determine language benchmarks regarding placement of ESL classes throughout the region.

- ELSA stands for English Language Services for Adults. The ELSA program provides basic and intermediate level English training for adult newcomers to Canada. ELSA is Provincial government sponsored and programs have been offered for immigrants since February 2007.
- The assessment centre provides services to the region including Surrey, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, and the area to the east of Surrey out to Chilliwack.
- To be eligible for the services clients must be a newcomer to Canada, be 17 years or older and approved for permanent residency.
- Eligible clients are placed in classes throughout region.
- Up to 12,000 people are served per year. One third are residents of Surrey and have to wait 1-6 months to enter classes.

- Through ELSA, nine service providers in Surrey provide classes from literacy to level 5.

In response to queries the following information was provided:

- The City of Surrey's Parks, Recreation and Culture department advertises ESL conversation group and are looking for volunteers for networking for assisting in developing language skills through the City.
- English conversation classes have been provided in the public libraries over the past two years.

Mary Martin thanked the delegation for her presentation.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Pius Ryan, School District 36** provided a presentation regarding English Language in the school system. The following comments were provided.

English Language Learners:

- Future directions – Trends:
 - The question is how to set the direction and determine what is actually happening with the young children entering into the school system and what initiatives are available.
 - 2007 had the highest numbers of immigrants in 25 years.
 - Current context – BC has the highest child poverty rate in Canada at 23.5%; 49% are children from immigrant and poor families.
- Historic view of service instruction:
 - ESL was historically considered a service that supported student integration within a predominant English language culture and environment.
 - ESL methodology and teaching strategy were built on this assumption.
 - In many schools the predominant language is not English. What does this mean for the organizations of learner support and teaching methodology?
- Key issues for immigrant children and youth:
 - Lack of English language skills.
 - Lack of understanding of schools and recreational system expectations of teachers.
- Continuum of Language Acquisition:
 - Basic language skills take 9 years to develop.
 - ESL graduation rates vary by ethnic group.
- Services – Ages 3-6:
 - *RSL* – Ministry supported early literacy opportunities for children aged 3 years.
 - *Welcome to Kindergarten* - family literacy event held at 35 elementary schools for incoming Kindergarten students.

- *Full Day ESL K* – the district supports 83 full day ESL K classes focused on providing enriched English language learning experience.
 - *Spark* – ESL K programs run Spark as part of support language development in the home.
 - *The Inter-Generational Literacy Project* – to partner this project with UBC currently at Hjorth Road Elementary. The program focuses on teaching functional literacy skills to immigrant mothers.
- Services - Ages 6-19:
 - LST – Learner Support Teachers – Surrey School District provides resources and staffing to schools to support focused English language instruction in addition to classroom practice.
 - LST helping teachers- the district employs four LST that provide support to the professional development of teachers and EL programs.
 - ESL board approved courses – we have a number of Board approved English second language courses at the secondary level.
 - ESL Transition Programs – for 16-18 years olds reception level English language learners.
 - Multicultural workers in schools – the SSD employs 15 multicultural workers to support schools in the understanding of cross-cultural education related issues.
 - Settlement workers in schools – a new support program that provides first year settlement needs to families.

Discussion ensued and the following comments were provided:

- ESL classes should be provided in the schools.
- Funding from the government is really important to ensure equal education opportunities.
- In Surrey, ELSA provides a broad range of ESL assessment packages that test and evaluate the people to ensure they meet the English language skill levels standards.
- ESL methodology or learning disabilities courses are not mandatory to becoming a teacher. SFU have a grad program that focuses on this issue. Would like to see SFU provide courses in ESL and English language learning.
- Parks, Recreation and Culture are involved with community schools in city schools and community centres. There are three hubs that currently provide opportunities for Parks, Recreation and Culture to connect with other settlement services: Whalley, Guildford, Newton, and expanding to Cloverdale.
- Pius Ryan invited the members of the committee to contact him.

Pius Ryan continued his presentation:

- Improvement Initiatives 2007-08 - high lights:
 - ESL steering committee – Principals and teachers.
 - Principal Advisory Committee – consists of 30 Principals from across the school district.
 - Community Advisory Committee – meets quarterly.
 - Professional development opportunities for teachers.
 - SFU training.

- The Welcome Reception Centre:
 - Immigrants will go to the centre for assessment. Hub coordinators (multicultural and settlement workers) will be there.
- Challenges:
 - The balance of social housing
 - ESL is greater than 50% in a school.

Pius Ryan noted they are trying to be more thoughtful in how they bring ESL and multiculturalism to the community. The school district will share and continue to look to how to do things better for the kids.

Chairperson Councillor Martin requested that committee members submit any questions they may have for Pius Ryan to herself or Laurie Cavan, lacavan@surrey.ca. These will be brought to the next committee meeting for review. The Chairperson thanked Pius Ryan for his presentation and extended an invitation to him to return to a future meeting of this committee.

2. Community Grass Roots - Multi-Cultural Sharing:

Wally Sandvoss provided a presentation regarding community grass roots. Following are the comments provided:

- At the September 2007 meeting of the Multicultural Advisory Committee we worked on identifying where we are and where we would like to be with regards to multiculturalism within Surrey.
- The true meaning of multiculturalism is that we must nurture it within the grass roots of our communities.
- The City is doing a great job with multiculturalism, as in the Fusion Festival and various elements of multiculturalism altogether.
- The definition, according to the Multicultural Advisory Act:
Equality of all, pride of ancestry, feeling of belonging, openness and acceptance of multiculturalism; discourages hatred, discrimination, racism and violence.
- The creation of the MAC has been a step in the right direction.
- Multiculturalism needs to be shared in the community. The Fusion Festival will share that. Need to ensure enough initiative and strength comes from the community to ensure multiculturalism stays alive.
- A copy of the list of Ratepayers Groups was provided to committee members.
- In Surrey we have 27-28 ratepayer group community associations. Each person is an advocate of multiculturalism. Wally suggested that each person approach the association in their area and go to the meetings to discuss multiculturalism.

Discussion ensued and in response to queries to following information was provided:

- A list of the grass roots communities will be provided by staff at the next meeting.

3. Respectful Workplace Training

Nicola Webb, GM, Human Resources provided an overview on Human Rights and Respectful Workplace Policy Training - DEFERRED to next meeting.

D. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

1. Craig Amundsen, Manager of the Mayor's Office, provided a brief overview on Advocacy. The following comments were provided:
 - Steering Committee for Funding and Support for Immigrants and Refugees is a community initiative spearheaded by Attorney General Wally Opal.
 - This steering committee asked Surrey to request two MAC members, Muhammad Malik and Connie Hong, to attend three preparatory meetings. \$5 Million to be provided for funding and support for immigrants and refugees.
 - There is a desire to engage the communities to get feedback at a Forum for Dialogue at the Wosk Centre.
 - March 27, 2008 will be the first meeting. Craig Amundsen, Connie Hong and Muhammad Malik to attend.
 - The push is to advocate for refugees and to ensure that Surrey gets the appropriate share of the funding.
 - 8 cities – Delta, Surrey, Richmond, Vancouver, New Westminter, Burnaby, and City of North Vancouver.

E. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

1. Fusion Festival '08

Laurie Cavan, GM, Parks, Recreation & Culture provided an update regarding the Fusion Festival '08. Following are the comments provided:

- The Parks, Recreation & Culture are working with Fusion Committee and treating this festival with a high level of importance.
- Have had two meetings since the last MAC meeting. . Currently working on site layout.
- Will be held at Holland Park, July 18, 19, 20th.
- There will be two main stages and three smaller stages for various community entertainment.
- Entertainment not yet booked but are considering the following and more over the coming weeks:
 - Use the Main Stage as a world music stage with music from all around the world, both traditional and contemporary.
 - A Celebration of Dance stage – entertainment that showcase various cultures and communities.
 - Pavilion stages – each cultural group to showcase through music and dance.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

1. **Kathleen Summerfield**, Farmers’ Market in North Surrey, e-correspondence, dated January 17, 2008.

It was Moved and seconded
That the Multicultural Advisory Committee
receive the correspondence as information.
Carried

2. **Vincent Gonsalves**, Fusion Festival Community Coordinator, e-correspondence, dated January 29, 2008.

Laurie Cavan, GM, Parks, Recreation and Culture introduced Vincent Gonzales as the Fusion Festival Community Coordinator and thanked him for attending the meeting today.

Vincent provided the following information regarding the Fusion Festival ’08:

- o He has met or corresponded with many committee members already.
- o He has met with 32 different ethnic groups and has sent another 15 ethnic groups the Fusion Festival information.
- o A map of event locations is available and pick of location will be on a first come first pick basis.

Discussion ensued and in response to queries the following information was provided:

- o It was suggested that the Multicultural Festival be used as a venue to promote such things as: Hydro – how to conserve water; ICBC – safety in children’s chairs, etc.
- o Connie Hong is the contact person for the Resource tent that could potentially house these types of displays.

It was Moved and seconded
That the Multicultural Advisory Committee
receive the correspondence as information.
Carried

G. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting of the Multicultural Advisory Committee scheduled for May 20, 2008 at 9:00 am at Pondside.

H. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by MaryAnn Thompson

Seconded by Sandra Scott

That the Multicultural Advisory Committee

meeting do now adjourn.

Carried

The Multicultural Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:37 am.

Margaret Jones, City Clerk

Chairperson, Councillor Martin
Multicultural Advisory Committee