



**WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
May 6, 2021**

PRESENT: Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair
Christine Qin Yang, Vice Chair
Lilian Barraclough
Tanya Boudreau
Holly Mathias
Mallory LeBlanc
Haneen Al-Noman
Charla Dorrington
Councillor Lisa Blackburn
Councillor Iona Stoddard

REGRETS: Charla Dorrington

STAFF: Caroline Hemstock, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor
Tracy Jones-Grant, Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO
Roberto Montiel, Local Immigration Partnership Coordinator
Haruka Aoyama, Legislative Assistant
Mica Daurie, Legislative Support

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. and the Committee adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and acknowledged that the meeting took place in the traditional and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 1, 2021

MOVED by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Christine Qin Yang

THAT the minutes of April 1, 2021 be approved as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

MOVED by Holly Mathias, seconded by Lilian Barraclough

THAT the order of business be approved as circulated.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

The Chair noted that following motion that was passed at April 1, 2021 meeting of Women's Advisory Committee is out of order and no further action will be taken on this motion.

MOVED by Holly Mathias, seconded by Haneen Al-Noman

THAT the Women's Advisory Committee recommend that the Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council invite Home for Good Project members to present the findings of their housing research project in order to provide an understanding of gendered housing issues specific to HRM.

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS – NONE

7.1 Correspondence

7.2 Petitions

7.3 Presentation

8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE

9. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Local Immigration Project Presentation – Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Roberto Montiel, Local Immigration Partnership Coordinator, Office of Diversity and Inclusion/ANSAIO provided an overview on Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative by explaining its history, what the Halifax Local Immigration Partnership (HIP) is about, main partners, network & working groups, and project plans.

Montiel answered questions on following topics from the Committee:

- Issues that immigrant & refugee students face to adjust to new environment and how those are being addressed
- Halifax Local Immigration Partnership (HLIP)'s work surrounding offering more centralized and easily accessible information to newcomers and immigrants
- Working groups and advisory group
- Platform for sharing stories of immigrants including, but not limited to, success and struggles
- Migrant women with temporary status (i.e live-in caregivers, Temporary Foreign Workers, and International Students)
- Foster children

Tracy Jones-Grant, Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO commented that Halifax Local Immigration Partnership (HLIP) plays coordination and facilitation roles by bringing resources to allow communities to generate their own solutions to issues as well as by offering municipal lenses.

9.1.2 Update on GBA+ from Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Caroline Hemstock, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor provided an update on GBA+ from Office of Diversity and Inclusion by summarizing following activities and achievements:

- Office of Diversity and Inclusion continues to work on creation of GBA+ toolkit for HRM employees
- Providing one-on-one support to HRM staff from different business units who are ready to start using GBA+ in their work

9.1.3 Update on Office of Diversity and Inclusion

The following was before the Committee:

- Diversity & Inclusion Framework of Halifax Regional Municipality

Tracy Jones-Grant, Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO shared activities and projects that the Office engages in, which might be the interest of the Committee to receive more information on or advise using gendered lenses:

- Local Immigration Project: Creation of Immigration Strategy is one of the outcomes that the Office is working on. The staff showed intent to consult the Committee to get input on what Immigration Strategy can look like from the lens of supporting immigrant women in the municipality.
- Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan: Accessibility Strategy report is coming forward to Regional Council in May. The Committee can review the report and have conversation around accessibility strategy through gendered lenses at future meetings.
- Anti-Black Racism Strategy Framework and Action Plan: the staff showed intent to consult the Committee in developing the framework using gendered lenses.
- May 5, 2021 - National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls
- May 17, 2021 - The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
- May - Access Awareness Week
- June - Indigenous History Month
- June 21, 2021 - Indigenous Peoples Day

9.2 COMMITTEE

9.2.1 Follow up to ISANS and IMWAH Presentation on April 1, 2021 meeting

The Committee reflected on presentation from ISANS and IMWAH provided at April 1, 2021 meeting and commented on following points:

- COVID-19's impact on employment for women and importance of COVID recovery plan to bring women back to workforce
- Question for ISANS – what do they consider to be the biggest concerns for their clients regarding housing? Is it about housing size, affordability or neighborhood from immigrant perspective?
- Housing insecurity issues women and children face amid COVID-19
- Inclusion of gender-based lenses for recreation program and public spaces
- Common ground that ISANS and IMWHA and Women's Advisory Committee have on issues such as diverse leadership, affordable housing, and public spaces
- Equalizing credentials for immigrant women for their education and work experience back home

9.2.2 Anti-Asian Racism Presentation Discussion

Christine Qin Yang led the follow up conversation on Anti-Asian Racism Presentation provided at April 1, 2021 meeting of Women's Advisory Committee to discuss action items.

Christine Qin Yang outlined the suggested action ideas for the Committee:

- To recommend that the Executive Standing Committee establish dialogues with local Asian Communities, immigrant and international student groups to understand the issue of anti-Asian racism;
- A statement from WACH to condemn anti-Asian racism and misogyny;
- To recommend that the Executive Standing Committee to recommend HRM to fill the gaps in anti-Asian racism data (including gender specific data);
- To recommend that the Executive Standing Committee to recommend HRM provide information resources to support Asian. For example, provide information graphic on reporting incident in different languages.

Tracy Jones-Grant, Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO clarified that HRM does not conduct data collection. Identifying stakeholders that do data collection might help to move forward with suggested ideas. Office of Diversity and Inclusion has partnered with Engage Nova Scotia to use an intersectional lens to analyze data on women's quality of life in the Halifax region. Analysis will focus on using the data to better understand the needs and barriers of women with regards to municipal programming and services.

A Committee member noted that many suggested ideas can be accomplished at staff level without motion. With regard to information sharing, the staff (Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Communication Team) might be able to work together to circulate infographics in multiple languages through Public Service Announcement.

A Committee member emphasized that moving a recommendation motion to Regional Council is a preferred process as it is a way to bring anti-Asian racism issues to their attention.

A Committee member mentioned that story sharing of experience of racism or struggle, and not only success stories, is important to develop meaningful dialogue to progress and build networks to share resources.

Regarding suggested idea on filling the gaps in anti-Asian racism data (including gender-specific data), Caroline Hemstock, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor suggested that we contact Amy Siciliano, Public Safety Advisor to ask if her office has any data or information.

The Committee suggested that Christine Qin Yang make a request to Regional Council for the opportunity to make a presentation on Anti-Asian Racism as May is Asian Heritage Month.

9.2.3 Women Transforming Cities – Follow up of workshop on April 26, 2021

Holly Mathias provided an overview on Women Transforming Cities workshop and shared key learnings and possible actions with the Women's Advisory Committee including:

- Relationship building with Council members
- Follow what is happening at Regional Council and take proactive approach to discuss topics at Women's Advisory Committee
- Importance of breaking down municipal jargon for greater accessibility at municipal government including advisory committee activities/practices

9.2.4 Update on Halifax Regional Council activities

Councillor Blackburn provided a summary of actions and decisions made at Regional Council in the month of April and at May 4, 2021 special meeting.

10. ADDED ITEMS

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – June 3, 2021

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Haruka Aoyama
Legislative Assistant