

# Meeting Minutes

## **Anti-Black Racism Working Group**

Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 6:30 pm

Online – Zoom Web Call

**Attendees:** Romina Diaz, Samantha Adebisi, Nicole Facey, Charmain Brown, Bernadette Hood-Caesar, Marsha Hinds, Teronie Donaldson, Shaibu Gariba,

**Library Staff:** Sabrina Yung, Joel Sutherland,

**Absent:** -- Titi Katibi, Stephen Linton (Chair),

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### **1. Welcome! Land Acknowledgement and Ancestral Acknowledgements.**

- Sabrina did the Land Acknowledgement and Marsha did the Ancestral Acknowledgements.
- Sabrina welcomed back Joel the Manager of Client Experience at the Library.
- We took a moment to introduce new members and old member to Joel.
- Joel shared a little about his role at the library.

### **2. Conflict of Interest Declaration**

- No conflicts of interest declared.

### **3. Review May Meeting Minutes**

- No omissions or errors to flag.

### **4. 2021 Client Experience Recommendations- Progress Update from Library Staff (Joel S)**

With respect to recommendations from ABRWG on Client Experience – Security, Surveillance, and Client Engagement

- **Security updates:** Mohammed meets with the team weekly to go over security updates. Permanent guard will be someone from the BIPOC community.
  - Library working to prepare their own training for substitute guards, along with providing having intake staff support if the guards have questions.
  - Mohammed created a document that outlines what the guards need to follow and it supports the DEI strategies. When guards arrived for their shifts, they will need to check in with a manager and go over what they will be doing that day.
  - The current company's, (Paladin – that the City of Pickering/Pickering Public Library uses for security), contract expires this year. The management team will be working with the City's leaders to prepare for the new contract. The library will be making recommendations for the RFP with the intention to require applying companies to demonstrate DEI

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- focused training for their security guards. The library wants to make sure that the companies we are hiring demonstrates putting DEI as a priority.
- When assessing service providers, we want to make sure that their practices are up to date and align with our anti-Black racism and DEI goals.
  - Suggestion on having security guards create emergency plans: Sabrina shared that security guards are trained on their role during an emergency, but our leadership team is responsible for creating the emergency plans for different types of emergencies and seeing them through.
  - ABRWG Member Question: Does the current security company currently has a DEI strategy? Joel response: Yes, but we don't have details on what that is, but Mohammed would be able to share more about this.
- **Youth voice in the matter of surveillance and security interactions:**

Focusing on the goal of clarifying the understanding around staff roving at the library. We are working on ways to better communicate this to users of the library the intention behind roving, so that they know the intention which is to always have staff available if they need help with something.

    - Library staff working with the ABRWG group members (as the Youth-focused subcommittee to support this work. We did a lot of brainstorming and discussion and created a document of key points we wanted to address.
    - The participating youth have been very active in giving feedback.
    - During the meetings we identified the priority for conducting a youth focused survey/consultation. We will use the one the library sent out 2 years ago and tailor it to youth who have not used the library or have not used it in a while.
    - This survey is almost ready, and once it is ready the plan is to visit all the Pickering high school during the lunch hour break near local fast food or coffee shop. We will introduce ourselves, tell them what we going to do and what we hope to gain, and what our objectives are. In appreciation for sharing their time and thoughts we will buy participants their meal (food or coffee). We are looking at early fall (September) to complete the survey and send it out to the community.
    - We had discussions on having some online component and running a positive event in the library that will be put on by the sub-committee and team members. Some suggestions that were thrown out were, motivational speakers or local young social media celebrity. This will fit in line with some of the exiting events already held at the library.
    - We also discuss conducting a focus group that is open to the public
    - ABRWG Suggestions to Joel's Update:
      - Having raffle prizes for participation that resonate more with the youths like a PlayStation (Teronie) (**Joel response:** We are also thinking of prizes like iPad, laptops)
      - Having a talent show (Teronie)
      - Having a space to invite a musician and we can teach a session or make a music. (Teronie)

- Utilizing the maker space: Renting out the library's equipments like camera each month to a group, and they can display their work in the library. (Teronie & Romina) (**Joel Response:** One of the staffs did an introduction for the sound boot, and as we been reopening, we have made space for the maker space again. My goal is also to open this space to the public where they can create their own videos)
- Making sure that in our plans to create and deliver events that it is sustainable and there is a budget to help support the events. (Sam)
- We want to make sure that in doing these events that we are still making the library a sage space (a peaceful space, where one can study and work as per Marsh's son)
- We want to make sure that these events bring in racialize youths to the library. Also, in thinking about the sustainability piece, utilizing social media. Having students talking about the library in TIC TOC style with different background and accents will really highlight and utilize those micro influencers. (Charmain)
- Using youth voices in advertising an event, new resources or events instead of adults. (Charmain)
- Sabrina shared that we have rolled out organization wide staff training regarding the 2021 Recommendations and 2022 Work Plan. This involved leadership hosting learning and reflection conversations with their respective teams to discuss the community feedback, ABRWG insights, and the 2021 recommendations. Team members with action items have their specific recommendations captured on their individual performance plans which are part of their performance review accountabilities for the year.

## 5. UN International Decade for People of African Descent Proclamation

### Application Follow Up.

- There is a meeting happening at 7:00 pm for a follow up with the Pickering Anti-Black Racism Task Force (PABRT). Stephen, Teronie, and Marsha will be joining that meeting.

## 6. (Deferred from April Meeting) Determining Vice-Chair

### Action: Group to table nominations and vote

Each group member shared their nomination name and shared their reasons for their nomination.

- Sam nominated Romina
- Marsha nominated Teronie – seconded by Romina.
- Charmain nominated Marsha
- Sabrina requested confirmation from all nominees that they accept their nomination. All the nominated candidates accepted the consideration.
- The group directed Sabrina to setup a voting poll which will be emailed to the group and requested that Sabrina inform Stephen (Chair) of the voting results first for his endorsement, since the Chair works closely with the Vice Chair.
- Vice Chair to be announced at the July meeting.

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## 7. ABRWG Proposal for DEI 'Officer' Role

- Sabrina looked to the group for guidance on how we want to proceed with regards to the proposal, as this needs to be completed by the end of the month for 2023 budget consideration.
- The group previously discussed the role and had some questions.
  - What is the main priority of the role?
  - What aspect of the library should this person be sitting on?
  - What is the scope of the office work?
  - Should this role be considered from an ABR lens or DEI lens or should it be black a black focus role?
  - Would it be more focus on staff training?
- ABRWG current feedback: In the beginning of the group, we felt that a DEI officer would be important for the library. However, that was without clarity about how the group would proceed to collaborate with library staff on the various priorities. Now, we do not feel that there is a need for this role at the library because we have seen the work that the library is doing that are in line with an anti-Black racism and DEI lens. Library staff engagement with the working group has demonstrated there is work being done across different departments, and staff held accountable to move anti-Black racism considerations forward. The group is satisfied with this current format and model and want to continue in this way.
  - Sabrina noted that we can also revisit the concept in the future, should the group feel different at a later point.
  - Consensus reach regarding removing this action item from the recommendations and work plan.
- Also, the group acknowledged that the City of Pickering has a DEI advisor role which is similar to the DEI officer role originally considered. There is interest to explore ways for the library to work more closely with that person.
  - Library staff are in contact with the City's DEI advisor and have already collaborated on various initiatives, but certainly there is room for growth.
  - Sabrina will try to get Jaclyn to attend an ABRWG meeting (will need to look at Jaclyn's availability and the schedule of ABRWG meetings to pair opportunity to host the meet and greet).
- Additionally, ABRWG members met the external consultant (Goss Gilroy Inc) during the focus group meeting and feel that the conversation dug deep into the anti-Black racism and DEI insights shared. The group feels the focus group outcomes will contribute to the overall work as well.

## 8. Debrief of the Pickering Public Library Collections Presentation

- Marsha: The staff are in the right place in terms of intention. However, I think there are some challenges, in working with established publishers. We need to look at this in terms of being diverse (try to establish some other collections like Caribbean collections).
- Sam: I also agree about the list of publishers the library use. The staff are very dedicated to creating an experience for everyone who will be using that library that has a DEI lens.
- Charmain: When it comes to the collections, it must engage the broader audience. We want all readers to be interested in the collections that highlight

Black authors and Black stories and normalize these materials for all readers. We would like to see collections represent and highlight Caribbean and African authors. When selecting for a collection, such as the children's collection, think about some key indicator on what to look for in children's books that honors ABR, and books that honour Black joy instead only Black history.

- Teronie: I agree to the content that focus on black joy and not just slavery.
- Shaibu: What stood out for me was the collection staff's openness to our ideas. However, they are under resourced, and they need to ensure their collections reflect the demographic changes in the community.
- Marsha: The point is having a contact where we can bridge the gap.
- Sabrina: Reflecting on the insights shared in the conversations so far, I think there is an opportunity to collaborate on developing what the key indicators are for the library assessment and/or curation processes. I hear a desire for the library to enhance how our collections are being marketed and how we may spotlight new or (as mentioned) 'obscure' titles or materials. Also, a theme that stands out to me is an interested in seeing the library examine other publishers, different from the conventional or existing publishers, to extend our reach of authors and materials that conventional or popular publishers may not carry.
- Sabrina: I will be taking all this feedback to Rebeca and the team, and we will collaborate and build some draft recommendations together. We will look at what work needs to go into establishing those key indicators and how do we fill the gaps in the collections through collaboration.

## **9. New Business**

- Sabrina: A reminder that August is when the event team will join the group to talk about events/events planning at PPL, covering what the process is like and the opportunities for growth.