

# Meeting Minutes

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

Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 6:30 pm

In-person – Central Library, Boardroom

**Attendees:** Romina Diaz, Samantha Adebiyi, Charmain Brown, Shaibu Gariba, Nicole Facey, Teronie Donaldson, Marsha Hinds Myrie (via Zoom), Stephen Linton (via Zoom)

**Library Staff:** Sabrina Yung (Notetaker), Shobha Oza, Joel Sutherland, Muhammad Rafeh, Shahin Dashktian

**Absent:** Titi Katibi, Bernadette Hood-Caesar

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1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
  - Read by Sabrina and Sam.
2. Conflict of Interest Declaration (Standing Agenda Item)
  - No conflict to declared.
3. Review Last Meeting Minutes
  - No edits or omissions were raised.
4. Events Submission Form Feedback Exercise
  - As part of the implementation of the 2022 events-focused recommendations, Shahin joins the group this evening to facilitate a feedback session on the public events proposal submission form.
  - Shahin provided a detailed walkthrough of the current [library website page for event proposals](#) and provided a brief refresher on how priority is given to events that complement the Library's collections, service goals, and [Strategic Plan](#), and on the [Programming Policy](#).
  - With respect to timelines, the group gained understanding that staff finalize event plans roughly two months prior to the implementation date. However, the planning process (researching, sourcing potential experts/presenters/partners, designing, etc.) is months prior.
  - For this discussion, ABRWG members were encouraged to review the form considering:
    - How might the form be a more inclusive experience for users submitting proposals?
    - How might the library collect pertinent information about the representation/identity of the submitting user, from a data point of view, to allow meaningful assessment of the level of representation across all incoming submissions?

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- Many suggestions for edits were gathered during this feedback session. Some key highlights include:
    - Consider alternative phone service solutions for submitting users who may not have traditional telephone service (e.g., WhatsApp or other calling apps) if the phone contact remains a requirement. Note, the library does not currently use alternative phone app communication tools, but will look into this suggestion.
    - Remove the price range noted, as that may be misleading.
    - Reconsider the requirement for submitting 'References' at this point in the proposal process. Consider moving this requirement to a later point in the proposal discussion cycle. Also consider how this requirement may be a barrier for someone who has not presented for and may not have a reference, or a newcomer who may not have a local reference that speaks English.
    - Reduce the length of the form. Current length is labour intensive, especially if the proposal is not accepted. May be a barrier and/or deterrent to participation in this proposal process. Consider moving some requirements to a second step only the proposal staff select for further consideration.
    - Add a field/section for the submitting user to optionally disclose how they may identify, what equity seeking group they may be representing, and how the content of their proposed program/event may benefit the target audience. This may be helpful to identify topic relevant identities, lived experience supporting the proposed topic, and this may also help identify who are we seeing applying and who is not submitting ideas?
    - Event staff could facilitate a quarterly open house where community members can come and learn about the application process in person.
  - Evaluation of the submissions – questions that arose and need further staff consideration:
    - How will we be transparent about decisions? How is this communicated to the submitting user.
    - Is there a feedback mechanism for the submitter to give about the process? Consider survey or debrief opportunity.
  - Continuous feedback loop with the ABRWG
    - Shahin to provide ABR related event updates and opportunities for ABRWG members to provide feedback via email. ABRWG members are invited to directly send Shahin their thoughts and suggestions.
5. ABRWG 2021 Recommendations - Client Experience Check-In
- The ABRWG had a meet and greet with the library security guard, Chris. Chris shared some information about his professional background and his observations engaging with youth in the library during his time with the library so far.
  - A consideration was tabled, pointing out that youth are overprogrammed during the day at school currently and their resistance or hesitation to participate in library programs after school is understandable. Youth engagement and staff-to-youth relationship building may need to look different as a result of this consideration.

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- RFP update: ABRWG recommendations were brought forward to the City during the RFP writing process and made an impact. The DEI assessment considerations were applied during the latest RFP cycle and brought about great discussions.
  - Roving update: The feedback around experiences of surveillance and monitoring were further explored. As a result, beginning in the fall of last year, we moved from all desk staff roving to in-charge staff doing the roving. The main reason for this was that we noted the difficulty of staff balancing focusing on helping client questions that come to the public service desk and roving. Instead, we now have dedicated in-charge staff who rove and take the time to more intentionally engage with clients while roaming around. These staff have completed the compassion client service training. They rove, say hi, build positive interactions, have a finger on the pulse of the building that day. Compassionate approach to roving means take your time. These dedicated staff are not pressured to rush back to the service desk in fear of a lineup waiting for them. We have found the result to be positive so far. Next step – we are working on introduce vests for the dedicated staff, to make them identifiable and as reflected in the ABRWG recommendations, add to the transparency of the intention of roving staff.
6. Youth Subcommittee Update (Youth Consultation Survey)
- Survey results review deferred to future meeting.
  - There has been some difficulties accessing permission to conduct the youth survey in the two outstanding high schools due to some policy/procedure changes at the school board.
    - Sam suggested partnering with the YMCA, as they have permission to conduct engagement activities in the schools at this time.
    - Stephen to explore a possible solution with Black Graduation Coaches and will get back to the subcommittee members.
  - Staff will also promote the survey in-library.
7. Proclamation Subcommittee Update (ABR Identifier Collaboration with PABRT)
- Update deferred to next meeting.