

Meeting Minutes

Anti-Black Racism Working Group

Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 6:30 pm

Online – Zoom

Attendees: Romina Diaz, Samantha Adebiyi, Charmain Brown, Stephen Linton, Titi Katibi, Shaibu Gariba, Marsha Hinds Myrie, Nicole Facey

Library Staff: Sabrina Yung, Muhammad Rafeh

Absent: Teronie Donaldson, Bernadette Hood-Caesar

1. Land Acknowledgements and Ancestral Acknowledgements
2. Conflict of Interest Declaration (Standing Agenda Item)
 - No conflict of interest declared.
3. Review Previous Meeting Minutes
 - June meeting minutes are delayed. Review deferred.
 - SA has been the main notetaker since the start of the ABRWG and has requested a change of duties. RD volunteered to take on the main notetaker responsibilities with the group's support. NF will remain as backup.
4. Youth Sub-committee Survey Outcomes Review and Action Plan Progress Check
 - MR presented a summary of the results from the youth survey. MR shared the survey methodology, key results, recommendations from the sub-committee, and next steps.
 - A copy of the presentation will be shared with the group.
 - Staff surveyed teens at St. Mary's and in the library and received a total of 224 surveys completed. Participants were offered food and an opportunity to enter a draw for prizes in exchange for their participation.
 - The intent was to conduct the survey at 3 Pickering high schools, however despite all efforts, permission was only achieved for St. Mary's.
 - Some result highlights from the 224 respondents:
 - More teens visited the Central Library recently (46%) compared to other locations.
 - 67 respondents self-identify as Black.
 - 51% visited one of the library branches within the last month.
 - 119 teens rated their experience when visiting the Pickering Public Library as 'excellent', followed by 86 who selected 'good'.
 - When asked why their experience was excellent or good, 31% selected 'welcoming staff'.

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- 94% of respondents feel comfortable asking staff for assistance.
 - 194 teens said they feel comfortable asking security for assistance, while 25 said no.
 - When asked to rate their awareness regarding various teen services, there was a balance of responses across the awareness spectrum, with many teens noting they are either 'aware and have used the service/space' listed or are 'aware but have not used the service/space'.
 - Sub-committee recommendations:
 - To improve engagement with teens, (continue to) have weekly free programs for teens by staff and partners.
 - Conduct further staff training on how to develop positive relationships with Teens and manage problematic behavior.
 - Dedicate safe space for Teens which allows for increased noise level, play, collaboration and learning opportunities.
 - Increase awareness of programs and initiatives for teens through outreach and marketing.
 - Offer a wider variety of events to increase youth engagement.
 - Next steps:
 - Staff to develop a work plan to implement the recommendations.
 - ABRWG members to visit the library between 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm during the school year to engage with teens more, and to provide another avenue for teen feedback.
 - The Library is also in the process of consulting the community for the new Strategic Plan. This will include further community engagement which will shape the Library's goals for the next few years. All community members are encouraged to participate in the various input opportunities, including teens.
 - As the sub-committee work plan has concluded and the recommendations now move onto to staff for implementation, the sub-committee has officially wrapped up (disbanded). Thank you to all ABRWG members who supported the sub-committee at various stages and to the two teen volunteers who shared their lived experiences along the way as well.
 - ABRWG feedback, comments, questions:
 - It's evident that more physical space (for teens) is needed.
 - The Library does hope to achieve better space arrangements with the new Central Library in the future, however in the short term, staff are working on creative solutions to create scheduled times where certain spaces are designated for youth in addition to enhancing the teen program offerings.
 - Members are in support of the idea of visiting the library during the after-school hours to observe firsthand how youth are using the library's space and services. Members will aim to do this in the fall, the school year is a good time to observe how teens use the library.
 - It's important to note youth perception changes because they're changing at the same time. Their ideas or perceptions can be very different from reality, and/or their input may differ from how they may utilize spaces or services in actuality.
 - Designated quiet zones may help address the noise conflict.

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- The Library currently has a noise zone signage campaign waiting to be rolled out (postponed to September due to the high traffic of the summer months). The noise zone signage was created as a direct result of client feedback. Clearly marked areas for the 'chat zone', 'quiet zone', and 'silent zone' will give clients a more reliable experience.
 - The Library needs to use data to inform the community of how their input was used to better the library.
 - The ABRWG recommendations are currently being summarized into more digestible infographics – aiming for one page per set of recommendations. This will be publicly circulated to improve awareness of the direct link between the community survey and the resulting work.
 - Certainly, more information needs to circle back to the community to enhance trust that feedback does shape changes.
5. Introduction to Collections Marketing and Events Marketing Debrief
- No questions were raised from the Part 1 presentation.
 - The Marketing Team has been brainstorming potential creative ways the ABRWG can get involved with promoting library services and experiences.
 - Members are encouraged to send SY any questions or thoughts, and they can be shared with the team in preparation for the Part 2 discussion (rescheduled to August).
6. PABRT/ABRWG Joint Statement (re: Loblaw's Incident)
- A draft joint statement was circulated to ABRWG members, PABRT members, and the victim's family member (who was in contact with PABRT).
 - Given the time that has gone by, it is feared that the appropriate time to respond has passed and therefore the general sentiment is to no longer proceed.
 - This was a learning opportunity, and the group agreed there is a need to create an ABRWG specific plan/procedure for how to respond in a timely manner, when similar circumstances arise. Further to this, it was identified that there is uncertainty around the scope or role of the ABRWG in broader community incidents. Members do not have shared understanding on this matter and there is concern about a lack of collective agreement regarding what action falls within scope as an ABRWG member or group, versus individual advocacy in the community.
 - Concern arose regarding the pathways to respond as a group versus as individual residents.
 - Shared understanding and resolutions to concerns raised were not achieved, and it was agreed it is necessary to pause the discussion. Further discussions will be deferred to the next meeting.
7. Proclamation Subcommittee Update (ABR Identifier Collaboration with PABRT) – Jury Suggestions
- Discussion deferred.