
Meeting Minutes

Anti-Black Racism Working Group

Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 6:30 pm

Online via Zoom

Attendees: Bernadette Hood-Caesar, Charmain Brown (Notetaker), Marsha Hinds Myrie, Nicole Facey, Romina Diaz-Matus, Samantha Adebisi (8:15)

Library Staff: Shobha Oza, Sabrina Yung

Guests: Clara Addo-Bekoe (City of Pickering, Manager, People & Culture), Jaclyn San Antonio (City of Pickering, Senior Advisor, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)

Absent: Teronie Donaldson, Titi Katibi

1. Land Acknowledgement and Ancestral Acknowledgement
 - Read by SO and RDM.
2. Conflict of Interest Declaration
 - No conflicts declared.
3. Review Meeting Minutes
 - January minutes reviewed.
 - No edits were tabled. January minutes were approved.
4. City of Pickering, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy Update
 - CAB shared greetings and department overviews.
 - JSA shared the ongoing work of the City of Pickering Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy from 2020 to today.
 - Themes that emerged from internal and external consultations for the EDI Strategy with Council, City staff, residents and community partners were shared, including the following:
 - Addressing the lack of diverse representation on Council and the City.
 - Systemic barriers based on bias and stereotypes continue deficit thinking about communities that the employees are serving.
 - The community and diverse City staff are sharing their sense of distrust and uncomfortableness within the workspace and community in general knowing and experiencing negative comments and thinking regarding various identities and community groups.
 - The priority areas of focus to address EDI include:
 - Education and awareness.

- Structure and resources.
 - Community consultation, engagement, and outreach.
 - Policies, practices, and programs.
 - Measurement and accountability.
 - Moving forward, CAB and JSA will continue to keep the ABRWG updated on the City's work and initiatives and encouraged the group to reach out with any questions, concerns, and/or suggestions.
 - Copy of the presentation slides to be shared with the ABRWG group via email.
5. Self-Evaluation Feedback Review
- SO guided the group through the various survey questions and those areas that had lower scores were discussed.
 - A comment made in the survey was shared regarding Library Liaisons/staff preventing or directing the group in ways that do not honour EDI and may be influencing the ABRWG members in ways that prevent meaningful and impactful ABR/EDI work within the library. Discussion regarding the comment took place. It was expressed that the Library and ABRWG welcome further clarification and/or feedback regarding the comment to support the individual and maintain safety within the group to continue moving forward with the work of the ABRWG.
 - MRM brought forward that not all ABRWG members agree with the current Terms of Reference and wants to ensure recognition that there is consensus with the TOR but not necessarily agreement with the TOR. She stated that she will move forward with the consensus of the group but not in agreement with it as it relates to the TOR.
6. March Library Board Meeting Presentation
- SO conducted a month-by-month review of the ABRWG work plan and Year-End Progress to ensure that they are still reflective of the group goals.
 - A brief discussion took place regarding the monthly foci.
 - This review was in preparation for sharing the ABRWG work plan with the Library Board during the March Board meeting.
 - Further discussion will take place during the March ABRWG meeting.
7. Terms of Reference – Clarification and/or addition consideration request
- SO shared that there are times when members need to pause their active participation in the group. SO shared that this would be considered on a case-by-case basis and that quorum would need to be honoured. Discussion took place and, in spirit, the members agreed to allowing a maximum three-month pause in active participation for any one ABRWG member. Further discussion and clarification will need to take place regarding timelines, honorarium impacts and criteria for pausing active participation.
8. City of Pickering Review of Capital Projects Debrief
- SO thanked RDM for attending city council and allowing community voice to be heard through the letter she wrote on behalf of the ABRWG supporting the building of a new library as part of the City Centre plan.
9. City of Pickering Council Meeting – February 26

- There was time to reflect upon and share about recent comments made by a Pickering Councillor regarding Black History Month.

10. ARAO Framework – Ancestral Acknowledgement Subcommittee

- SO stated that there was discussion at a previous ABRWG meeting regarding developing and personalizing the African Ancestral Acknowledgement (AAA) for ABRWG meetings.
- After some discussion, it was agreed upon that the group would revise the current AAA. SA agreed to work on a subcommittee with SO to begin developing a revised AAA to bring forward to the group for further review and development.

Next meeting: March 13, 2024, 6:30 pm (online)