
Meeting Minutes

Anti-Black Racism Working Group

Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 6:30 pm

Online – Zoom

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

Library Staff: Shobha Oza, Sabrina Yung

Guests: Akeem Maginley (Library Board), Clara Addo-Bekoe (City of Pickering Human Resources), Soula Christou (City of Pickering Human Resources)

Absent: Teronie Donaldson

1. Land Acknowledgement and Ancestral Acknowledgement
 - SY welcomed the group and read the Land Acknowledgement
 - RDM read the Ancestral Acknowledgement
2. Conflict of Interest Declaration
 - No conflicts declared.
3. Review Meeting Minutes
 - April minutes reviewed.
 - No edits were tabled. April minutes were approved.
 - Note, there were no May minutes to review and approve, as members did not meet. Instead, members were to use this time to visit Pickering Public Library locations to observe the current day user experience.
4. People and Culture Recommendations Progress Report and Introduction to City of Pickering Manager of Human Resources
 - CAB shared a brief overview of how the current ABRWG People and Culture recommendations are still very much aligned with PPL's new strategic plan's values and priorities.
 - The group reviewed some historical context – recalling that the 2020 Community Survey results yielded community concerns regarding:
 - A lack of visible diversity in the library's workforce, particularly on the front lines.
 - A lack of visibility or access to job postings.
 - Staff training and accountability (for applying their learning).
 - CAB's progress update today focuses on the staff training and accountability components of the recommendations. Particularly, about the 2023 design,

implementation and collection of staff DEI goals and year end perform review assessments.

- From the 2023 results, we can see there has been measurable intentionality for going beyond learning about DEI, as the DEI goal setting practice is building accountability for internalizing and actualizing the work in daily practice.
 - 67% of staff completed the required 2 DEI goals and 26% of staff completed at least 1 of their 2 DEI goals.
 - Organizationally with all staff setting 2 DEI goals, that meant there were 94 possible learning opportunities and impacts that could have been made. 70 out of 94 goals were achieved.
 - Note – due to some staffing departures/changes throughout 2023 which impacted some of the incomplete goals.
- It's important to recall that the DEI goal setting model was created directly because of the ABRWG's feedback and input, particularly around utilizing scenarios and a desire to see impact being measured. In 2024, the model is being further evolved/adjusted based on lessons learned in the first year. Two significant adjustments:
 - FT staff will be required to complete 2 DEI goals, whereas PT staff will be required to complete 1 DEI goal (due to work time constraints).
 - Staff will still have to demonstrate impact across 2 or more categories to obtain the 'achieved' assessment (there are 3 possible categories – personal impact, group impact, or organizational impact). We will be adding a data collection component to better track the volume of DEI goals that had an impact across each category.
- The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for the City of Pickering was passed by council during the April Board meeting. The City's EDI Strategy prioritizes education and awareness, structure and resources, community consultation, engagement and outreach, policies, practices and programs, and measurement and accountability. Appreciation was expressed for the ABRWG's role in the consultation process during the development of the City's EDI Strategy. Special acknowledgement for TK, though no longer with the ABRWG, wanted to express appreciation for TK's representation of the ABRWG at the EDI Strategy Advisory Committee table. Additionally, we want to acknowledge the ABRWG's continued impact beyond the Library, as the Library's staff DEI goal setting tool has been shared with the City's Human Resources Team for consideration as part of their EDI Strategy implementation.
- As part of the merging of the Library's People and Culture team with the City's Human Resource department, there are some new points of contact to introduce to the ABRWG. Soula Chistou, City of Pickering, Manager of Human Resources, will be collaborating with ABRWG moving forward. One of the areas under SC's responsibilities is recruitment and since many of the ABRWG recommendations are recruitment focused, SC will be providing progress updates going forward.

5. ABRWG May In-Library Observations Debrief and Action Planning

- Many, though not all members, were able to visit at least one of the library's locations during the past month. The next observation period, per the ABRWG 2024 Work Plan is September.
- Observations shared:

- When placing books on hold at the Central Library, one more than one occasion the books were not there when arrived in person for pick up.
- When inquiring about the backpack park passes, staff had said these were not being offered (however they are).
- At the Central Library front desk, a Black male youth was observed seemingly apprehensive about asking staff for help. He looked at the women at the desk but didn't get in line. He seemed to approach a woman coming down the stairs who walked away and then approached the ABRWG member instead (asking about how to use the printers).
- Members visited Claremont Library for Extended Access (after getting the feature activated on their accounts) and were not able to enter through using the PIN pad. (Note from SY, the power had been out the day of this visit and unfortunately the PIN pad was not connecting properly with the system for verification as a result).
- Questions were raised about accessibility in multiple languages, considering many clients being new to the country along with wanting to ensure young children see themselves reflected in the library through signage, displays, and programming. Still think visual experience needs to represent different learning (and information receiving) styles. Could more signage or art be incorporated so that multilingual interactions are more prominent upon entry?
- Storytime is amazing – however there is a lack of offerings (frequency of program).
- It was noted that some ABRWG members see (repeat or) regulars in the library feeling very comfortable in the space, as if they feel at home.
- There is a positive change in the social media and in the racial/cultural make-up of the staff represented, both online and in person.
- Able to find brand new DEI focused materials that are not found in school library.
- At George Ashe, there is a feeling of nature and the environment that could support increasing the presence of Indigenous (community) perspectives (and representation).
- Teens were observed gaming at the Central Library – looked settled (comfortable).
- Clients were observed looking for quiet space, and were happy to be directed to the collaborative rooms.
- Second floor was full (all study carrels were in use) and it appeared as though people generally found a spots where they felt most comfortable (reflecting there are different seating options for clients with differing preferences and/or needs).
- Like the kids play area being tucked away from all the gaming and computers, and that it's spacious. There was a kid and his mom enjoying the space together.
- There were plenty of staff and they were ready to help us with what we needed.
- The space around the Local History Room, there could be more done there to expand the use of these areas as a multipurpose space.

- Claremont is a big distance and tucked away far. Perhaps it will have to be advertised more in order to get more people to visit but the concept is nice.
 - At George Ashe, had great interaction with staff who encouraged visiting the Seed Library and promoted upcoming library events.
 - Would like to see more programs that run at the Central Library only, offered at George Ashe.
6. August 31, International Day for People of African Descent Community BBQ
- PABRT will be moving forward with an event on August 31 to recognize the International Day for People of African Descent. The event time is still to be decided and communicated.
 - PPL and ABRWG will continue their support and collaboration with PABRT by hosting a table at the event to raise awareness about library services and the ABRWG. As well, ABRWG would like to additionally host a children's/family focused activity station. ABRWG members to think about what that activity could be, for discussion at the July meeting.
 - Members would like to see more inclusion of community partners (e.g., YMCA) offering tables and more active live demonstrations to get participants engaged together. SY will share this feedback with the PABRT staff liaison.
7. July Meeting
- Per the 2024 ABRWG Work Plan, July's meeting will focus on the ABRWG's Events recommendations. Staff from the Events Team will join the meeting to provide a progress update for both the Events recommendations and the Youth Survey Action Plan. If there are any questions you'd like the team prepare in advance, please email SY.

Next Meeting: July 10, 6:30 pm (online)