

Meeting Minutes

Anti-Black Racism Working Group

Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 6:30 pm

In-person – George Ashe Library, Quiet Study Room

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

Library Staff: Shobha Oza, Sabrina Yung

Guest: Akeem Maginley (Library Board)

Absent: Nicole Facey

1. Land Acknowledgement and Ancestral Acknowledgement
 - Read by SY and SA.
2. Conflict of Interest Declaration
 - No conflicts declared.
3. Review Meeting Minutes and Work Plan Revisions
 - July minutes and Work Plan revisions were reviewed.
 - No edits or changes were expressed.
4. Collections ABRWG Recommendations – Implementation Progress Update
 - Library staff from the Collections Team shared a recorded presentation, recapping what the goals were in 2023 and reviewing how the progress achieved on those action plans. Director, CM attended the meeting in-person to answer any questions following the recorded presentation.
 - Highlights from the summary included:
 - DEI goals are part of professional development (webinars, courses, conferences)
 - Staff have continued to work on incorporating DEI centered intentions in the Collections Strategy (still in progress)
 - Diverse materials are being continuously procured and added to the Library's collections
 - Discussion took place regarding the information shared.
 - ABRWG feedback:
 - (From members who have been with the ABRWG since the 2020 start) There has been visible changes in the front facing access to books/resources by Black authors that centre Black Joy or an affirmation stance within the library both in person and online.

- It's meaningful to walk into the physical library and see the "Amplifying Diverse Voices" display front and centre. Having such visibility upon entering the space, increases a sense of welcome and sense of belonging.
- Suggestion was made for the library to offer a training experience (perhaps a workshop) that walks clients through how to navigate the website specifically for the catalogue and diverse loanables. Clients want an easy user experience. Especially youth. Maybe they aren't aware of the ease of use via the website and a walk through could help.

5. Events and Collections Marketing Recommendations – Final Presentation of Work Plan

- The Library's Marketing Team attended the meeting in-person to share a summary of the final recommendations and work plan that will be implemented, in response to the consultation and discussions between Marketing and ABRWG members.
- Discussion of what was shared took place.
- New marketing initiatives were shared including collaborating with ABRWG members to record audio or video (or just static quotes) about their individual recommendations from the Pickering Public Library collections. This may include books, movies, music, and any of the unique loanables. Building on the discussions around awareness of what the library collections offer that people don't know, ABRWG members are encouraged to select items they have personally enjoyed and perhaps its availability is not commonly known by the general public. The recorded content would be published throughout the year across social media posts and future website updates.
- The new library branding will be launched on social media on August 15th. SY shared the new ABRWG magnets with PPL's new branding, to be given away at future ABRWG outreach tables and in the library. This take-home item aims to raise awareness about the ABRWG and remind people to follow the work via the pickeringlibrary.ca/abrwg page.
- ABRWG members noted to the Marketing team, the visible change in representation and diversity across social media. The overall enhancements, with more dynamic and real human content, is noticeable and really improving the user experience.

6. September In-Library Visits – Work Plan

- Per the 2024 ABRWG Work Plan, there will not be a regularly scheduled ABRWG meeting in September.
- Instead, between August 14th to October 9th, ABRWG members will schedule a time to visit the library in-person to observe the user experience and try out a service or location they haven't before. It is also hoped that all members will schedule their visit with SY and complete the Collections recommendations recording with the Marketing team and meet with SY or SO for a check-in chat, as we head towards the end of the year and consider plans for 2025.
- Please send your availability to SY as soon as possible – including two to three dates and SY will coordinate the availability of the Marketing team.

7. October Board Meeting – Planning and Review TOR Requirement for 2025
 - Per the 2024 ABRWG Work Plan, the semi-annual in-person update to the Library Board will take place on October 24th at the Central Library.
 - Representatives from the ABRWG will provide an update to the board during this meeting.
 - Further details about what will be shared and who will share it will take place at the October ABRWG meeting

8. August 1 – Emancipation Day Event Debrief
 - BHC shared about representing ABRWG at the Pickering event and her experience engaging with community and staff.
 - The annual event is hosted by the Region of Durham and takes place at various cities across the region.
 - SY will continue to share about this event and future opportunities to participate.

9. August 31 – International Day for People of African Descent Community BBQ
 - The second annual event hosted by PABRT and community partners, will be taking place at Esplanade Park once again.
 - SA and CB will be attending on behalf of the ABRWG. More members are invited and welcomed – please RSVP with SY if you can help with the table.
 - It was suggested that the event planners expand their community partner booths to include more community agencies, such as the YMCA. Additionally, it was suggested that organizers host more interactive opportunities so that attendees are invited to gather together and interact with each other, and not just independently walk through the event. This could include some dancing with instructions or demonstrations of a skill/craft. SY will share this feedback with the City staff liaisons.

10. September 14 – City of Pickering, Cultural Fusion Fair
 - The annual Cultural Fusion Fair will be taking place in Esplanade Park.
 - SA and CB will be attending on behalf of the ABRWG. More members are invited and welcomed – please RSVP with SY if you can help with the table.

Next Meeting: October 9 at 6:30 pm (online via Zoom)