
Meeting Minutes

Anti-Black Racism Working Group

Wednesday, August 13, 2025, 6:30 pm

Location: In-person – Claremont Library and Dr. Nelson F. Tomlinson Community Centre Meeting Room

Attendees: Charmain Brown (Notetaker), Nicole Facey, Romina Diaz-Matus, Teronie Donaldson

Library Staff: Shobha Oza, Sabrina Yung, Jaclyn Derlatka, Brianna Offor

Absent: Salome Odeny, Samantha Adebiyi, Scerena Officer,

1. Tour of Claremont Library
 - Prior to the formal business agenda, members participated in a tour of the Claremont Library.
 - Members learned about the history and services available at Claremont, particularly highlighting the renovation changes and the Extended Access service unique to this branch.
2. Land Acknowledgement and Ancestral Acknowledgement
 - Read by SY and TD.
3. Conflict of Interest Declaration
 - No conflicts declared.
4. Review Meeting Minutes
 - July meeting minutes were reviewed
 - No edits or changes were expressed.
5. Local History, Part 2
 - JD returned to facilitate part 2 of the Local History consultation and collaboration. BO (Local History Assistant Summer Student) joined as part of her learning experience.
 - JD provided a brief overview/refresher of part 1 from the July ABRWG meeting. Digital copies of this presentation were shared with members and printed copies were available.
 - Based on community feedback and ABRWG discussions, the challenges to solve within the Local History services center on a need for more diverse representation within the collection and increased awareness to more diverse audiences.

- Reflecting on these areas of challenge, three themes were identified for potential action items:
 - Local History collection development
 - Local History collection curation
 - Local History collection and services promotion
 - ABRWG Members participated in an ideation and prioritization exercise, with posters and sticky notes set up across the room walls.
 - Key points of discussion for Collection Development – this includes adding things to the library and removing materials that are not circulating:
 - Establish priorities to grow the collection – set realistic targets and themed focuses, so that quality change can be achieved with impacts.
 - Increase diverse voices in the collection and supporting Local History programs that shine light on the collection.
 - Streamline the process for donating personal items to the collection and for how to partner for identifying new, more diverse items for collection.
 - Key points of discussion for Collection Curation – how do we tell the story of Pickering that is thorough and honouring of all communities?
 - Include telling the story of Pickering that reflects the entire community.
 - Be intentional about identifying gaps in representation and working with community to create culturally appropriate formats of storytelling (e.g., oral histories – how might we honour cultures that don't have written history books or materials?)
 - Key points of discussion for Collection and Services Promotion – finding the best ways to share about the Local History collection to the community that doesn't currently feel connected to this service area
 - Increase awareness of Local History collection and services to audiences that are not familiar or as connected to the existing offerings.
 - Increase the accessibility of the collection to the community – hours of services, formats for various user types, and access to safe space for exploration.
 - As the team increases the diversity of the collection, staff should increase engagement with underrepresented communities to bring their voice and connect their lived experiences into the promotions.
 - Discussion took place providing feedback on ideas, success measures, and priorities for each of the three areas of focus for the Local History Collection.
6. Anti-Black Racism Community Survey Update and Promotional Opportunities
- The survey is live and available to the public.
 - The link and paper survey are being accessed – engagement stats are looking good so far.
 - ABRWG members are encouraged to promote and/or distribute the paper/linked surveys amongst their circles to at least 5 people, along with completing the survey themselves.
 - The survey is due in September (tentative deadline is September however we have some room to extend if needed).

- The survey is being promoted throughout all three Pickering libraries with displays as well as Ovee.
 - Outreach and Leadership Team will be attending PABRT's International Day for People of African Descent Community Celebration and Movie Night. Focus will be to offer the survey in different formats for folks to complete on the spot. ABRWG representation is encouraged – SY to send an email for confirming members who can attend.
7. Prepare for September In-library Observations
- Reminder, per the 2025 ABRWG Work Plan, there will be no ABRWG monthly meeting in September to support “in-library” observations by members.
 - SY has sent and will resend an email of the various activities and events taking place at the three Pickering libraries to guide observations.
 - Members discussed coordinating to ensure that all three libraries are visited and observed by at least one ABRWG member. This will ensure debriefs cover more services and feedback can be gathered across a greater variety of experiences.
8. PABRT International Day for People of African Descent
- Information will be shared via email to ABRWG members regarding the details of this annual event.
 - Members are invited to attend and support the ABRWG booth that is scheduled to be at the event.
 - Suggestions on how to make the booth more approachable to those attending were shared.
 - As noted above, the ABR Community Survey will be the main focus of the library booth.
9. October Library Board Meeting – Preliminary Planning
- ABRWG members are encouraged to consider who will provide an update on the work of ABRWG to the Library Board at the scheduled meeting on October 23rd. This is part of the 2025 ABRWG Work Plan.
 - This will be confirmed at the October ABRWG monthly meeting.
10. Other Business
- SY shared that SG has requested to delay start date with the ABRWG due to health reasons (tentatively hoping to join in January 2026).
 - ABRWG members agreed to support this deferred start date.
 - SY will let SG know.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 8, 6:30 pm (online)