

**MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, May 18, 2022**

A Regular Meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee convened on Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC, with the following persons present:

- COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Councillor Brent Asmundson, Chair  
Councillor Steve Kim, Vice Chair  
Amandeep Sangha  
Ann Johannes  
Honore Gbedze  
Iris Sun (left at 8:11 p.m.)  
Michelle Taylor  
Njeri Watkins
- REGRETS: Carolina Echeverri  
Pam Garcia  
Zahra Zaker
- ABSENT: Simin Ahmadian  
Bita Rezaei
- STAFF: Andre Isakov, Manager Economic Development  
Demian Rueter, Community Social Development Manager  
Torill Gillespie, Social Planner  
Misty Temple, Legislative Services Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**1. Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

The Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee meeting held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 were approved.

**NEW BUSINESS****2. Economic Development Strategy Presentation**

The Manager Economic Development provided a presentation, utilizing on-screen slides titled as follows:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Agenda
- Background
- Planning Principles
- Components
- Coquitlam in Context
- Emerging Vision Based on Values
- Emerging Themes / Areas of Focus
- Potential Goals / Strategies to Explore
- Questions to Discuss
- Next Steps
- Thank You

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- The importance of adequate employment availability for community residents
- The challenging commutes that many residents experience as a result of having employment in other municipalities
- Support for an increased availability of mid-level employment opportunities in the city
- The City's success in the improvement and beautification of its many local parks
- The COVID-19 pandemic's influence on remote and hybrid-remote options in the workplace
- How the City would be able to assist residents in the transition to a post-pandemic workforce
- The belief that the pandemic accelerated many pre-existing trends, such as pressures on social support systems
- Coquitlam's vision in relation to what types of industries it would like to focus on for the future
- The new tools and opportunities that could be utilized to safeguard future generations in the event of a global pandemic

In response to a question from the Chair, the Manager Economic Development noted that multicultural diversity across the City had afforded significant opportunities to augment the workforce with new skills and talent. He noted the importance of connectivity with multicultural populaces to continue to effectively build the community.

Discussion continued relative to the following:

- The ongoing challenges associated with a limited availability of childcare in the Lower Mainland
- The continued growth of home-based and self-employed businesses and the various avenues to support them
- The challenges associated with a limited availability of commercial work spaces
- Expressions of appreciation for the City's work to meet the needs of evolving community demographics
- How the City could potentially improve the resources available to local immigrants as they establish themselves in the community
- The various grant opportunities that exist in order to support local businesses and to connect them with the workforce
- The City's potential opportunity for tourism as a viable industry to promote economic growth
- Concern that a disproportionate focus on tourism could have a negative impact on those industries that attract potential residents

The Manager Economic Development spoke to staff's attention to shifting demographics and the new Statistics Canada census release expected later in the year. He further noted the City's focus on product development relative to the community's diverse populations, and encouraged the Committee members to complete and promote the survey included in his presentation.

### **3. Canada Day 2022 Event Planning**

The Social Planner provided a presentation, referring to on-screen slides titled as follows:

- City of Coquitlam – Canada Day
- Agenda
- Canada Day in Coquitlam
- MAC and Community Planning Booth
- Discussion

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- The proposed new considerations and initiatives to be utilized at the MAC event booth to foster multicultural inclusivity
- Expressions of support for including reconciliation opportunities during the event
- That Committee members would be welcomed as MAC event booth volunteers
- Clarification that the City's displays would not disproportionately emphasize red and white colour schemes
- The belief that Canada Day should also recognize and celebrate the international roots shared by many of its community members
- Appreciation for the inclusion of social connections and the belief that such connections are more readily facilitated through in-person celebrations

- The desire that event-goers be encouraged to leave feedback to identify avenues in which to improve the celebration in future years

In response to a question from the Chair, the Community Social Development Manager responded that although it was traditional for Canada Day to emphasize red and white colours, staff would seek to reduce that focus in light of reconciliation and diversity initiatives. He further noted that such a decision would only be applicable to City displays, and attendees should feel comfortable wearing any colour.

Discussion continued relative to the following:

- The understanding that the Canadian flag's colours are red and white
- The desire that attendees would feel comfortable wearing the colours of their choice
- Recognition that Canada's history predates colonialization

#### **4. Cultural Understanding Project Sub-Committee – Update**

The Vice Chair provided an update relative to the work of the Sub-Committee. He noted that, to generate new ideas going forward, there had been productive discussions during the Sub-Committee's review of previous years' Project documents.

At the invitation of the Vice Chair, the Sub-Committee Leader spoke to the following:

- The Committee's decision to utilize prior research and planning materials and to create the new Sub-Committee
- The salience of updated census data as it related to the City and its community members
- Expressions of interest in the receipt of new census data as soon as it became available
- The belief that reviewing festival calendars from prior years could be advantageous in the identification of potential Sub-Committee partners
- The possibility of using social media promotions to advance the Cultural Understanding Project work
- That the Sub-Committee planned to finalize an updated Phase 2 of the project work plan and provide key success metrics to the Committee during a future meeting

In response to a question from the Sub-Committee Leader, the Chair encouraged the Sub-Committee to continue its work and to report back during upcoming Committee meetings. He spoke in support of those interested in reapplying to serve on the Committee in future, and described how, after an advisory committee's work paused for the year, outstanding agenda items could typically be added to the Committee's next work plan by staff for consideration. The Sub-Committee Leader noted that the Project would take a hiatus after the Committee's September meeting, and expressed the hope that the Cultural Understanding Project work would restart in 2023.

The Community Social Development Manager noted that updated demographic information was expected to be available from Statistics Canada in early fall 2022, and undertook to share that information with the Sub-Committee once it had been received.

In response to a question from the Sub-Committee Leader, the Chair noted that the Manager Equity, Diversity and Inclusion had reviewed the Sub-Committee's communications with a view to facilitating inclusive, welcoming verbiage as part of the Project. The Vice Chair noted that he had briefly met with the Manager Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and planned to have a deeper discussion with her in the future.

The Chair thanked the Sub-Committee for its work on the project to date.

#### **5. Multicultural Communities and Emerging Issues Updates (Standing Agenda Item)**

The Chair invited Committee members to share details regarding upcoming events or emerging issues in their communities. The following information was shared:

- The weekly Farsi and Korean story times held at the Poirier Branch of the Coquitlam Public Library
- Concern that many public libraries lack children's reading events on multicultural topics.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, June 15, 2022**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

MINUTES CERTIFIED CORRECT

\_\_\_\_\_ CHAIR

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Misty Temple  
Legislative Services Clerk