

**MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, April 19, 2023**

A Regular Meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee convened on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 7:02 p.m. in the Council Committee Room, City Hall, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC, with the following persons present:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Councillor Brent Asmundson, Chair  
Councillor Robert Mazzarolo, Vice Chair  
Simin Ahmadian, Citizen Representative  
Shannon Alves, Citizen Representative  
Silvia Camolese, Citizen Representative  
Carolina Echeverri, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:04 p.m.)  
Honore Gbedze, Citizen Representative  
Arun Ghag, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)  
Ann Johannes, Citizen Representative  
Nikki Kasravi, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:06 p.m.)  
Ching Hang (Heidi) Ng, Citizen Representative  
Bitia Rezaei, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:06 p.m.)  
Lucie Wee, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:03 p.m.)

STAFF: Zeralynne Te, Community Social Development Manager  
Torill Gillespie, Social Planner  
Miryana Heath, Planning Data Analyst  
Caley Amundsen, Committee Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

**1. Welcome and Roundtable of Introductions**

The Chair and Vice Chair welcomed those present to the first meeting of 2023.

Arun Ghag and Lucie Wee arrived to the meeting at this time (7:03 p.m.)

Carolina Echeverri arrived to the meeting at this time (7:04 p.m.)

Nikki Kasravi and Bitia Rezaei arrived to the meeting at this time (7:06 p.m.)

The Committee members and staff participated in a roundtable of introductions.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**2. Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee held on Wednesday, September 21, 2022**

The Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee meeting held on Wednesday, September 21, 2022 were approved.

A Committee member advised of an error in the Minutes noting that the Anti-Oppression Capacity Building Project will be held between January and March 2024 instead of 2023.

The Committee Clerk undertook to follow-up regarding a correction of the Minutes.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **3. Committee Orientation**

The Committee Clerk provided the Committee with an orientation of its structure, mandate, and responsibilities by referencing an on-screen presentation and utilizing slides.

### **4. Review and Adoption of the 2023 Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Work Plan**

The draft 2023 Work Plan was presented on-screen and the Community Social Development Manager provided an overview of the proposed Work Plan items.

The Chair expressed desire to reestablish a sub-committee for the Cultural Understanding Project and for work on this project to resume as soon as possible.

The following Committee members volunteered to participate on the Cultural Understanding Project Sub-committee:

- Simin Ahmadian
- Ann Johannes
- Bita Rezaei.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Current Sub-committee members providing a brief presentation at the next Committee meeting regarding the Project to inform other Committee members in case they wish to participate
- Establishment of the Cultural Understanding Project Sub-committee at the next Committee meeting

The Committee endorsed the 2023 Work Plan and a copy is attached hereto, and forms a part of, these minutes.

The Committee recommended:

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the 2023 Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Work Plan.

## 5. Census / Demographic Presentation

The Planning Data Analyst provided the Committee with an on-screen presentation entitled “Coquitlam’s Ethno-Cultural Diversity” that covered the following topics:

- Coquitlam’s population growth compared to other municipalities
- Immigration statistics
- Definitions of landed immigrant, non-permanent residents and naturalized Canadian citizens
- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigration
- That half of immigrants to Coquitlam between 2016 and 2021 are in the labour cohort (age 25-44)
- Canadian fertility and population replacement rates historical trends
- Population decline in countries that restrict immigration
- Immigration classifications (i.e., economic, family, refugee, and other classes)
- Number of landed permanent residents by province/region
- Data regarding ethnic or cultural origin of Coquitlam residents
- Languages spoken most often in Coquitlam homes
- Official languages versus non-official languages data for Coquitlam
- Indigenous language data

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Difference between economic and family class of immigrants and how they are prioritized
- Desire to ascertain specific breakdown of Canadian immigration class data over time
- Loneliness of immigrants in Canada
- Whether immigrants stay in the regions of Canada where they initially land
- That data does not reflect numbers of where immigrants land and where they settle
- Contributing factors for declining population levels
- Impact of costs of living on the birth rate
- Rationales for fertility rate decline and differences in birth rate between egalitarian and less egalitarian countries
- Looking at other municipalities for best practices and support systems for immigrants
- Desire to look into Cultural Integration Project and learn from it
- Canada’s and BC’s reputation as being expensive and unaffordable
- Current efforts to assist immigrants constitute “Band-Aid solutions”
- Coquitlam’s diverse multicultural population and its perception as being a “bedroom community”
- Post-secondary campuses and their effects on population growth and settlement
- Housing density, current and future projects, and affordability crisis in Coquitlam
- Canada’s immigration point system and requirements immigrants must meet
- Provincial Government’s recent changes involving admission and licensing of doctors

- Immigrants' access to work opportunities in rural and urban environments and labour shortages across Canada
- Immigration rates and projections by Federal Government
- That data determines programs immigration groups can offer
- Volunteering opportunities not being available to newcomers who want to volunteer
- Positive impacts of volunteering on newcomers
- Mentorship opportunities for newcomers
- New Federal Government policy involving work permits for Iranians immigrating to Canada
- Data sharing between immigration organizations and City of Coquitlam
- Correlation versus causation for official languages decline and immigration
- Generational impact on native language retention and pressure for immigrants to assimilate
- Importance of preserving native languages and cultures
- Providing opportunities for residents to learn new languages within Coquitlam

#### **6. Committee Members' Roundtable / Multicultural Communities and Emerging Issues**

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

- 2023 Caribbean Days Festival to be held on July 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> at Town Centre Park
- The Committee will have a booth at Coquitlam's Canada Day celebration on July 1<sup>st</sup> at Town Centre Park
- Bullying in schools and racism towards newcomers
- The importance of building bridges between cultures in schools
- School District 43 oversight of anti-bullying programs within schools and minimal involvement from the City

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, May 17, 2023**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

MINUTES CERTIFIED CORRECT

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CHAIR

I hereby certify that I have recorded the Minutes of the  
Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting  
held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 as instructed,  
subject to amendment and adoption.

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Caley Amundsen  
Committee Clerk