

MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 17, 2025

A Regular Meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee convened on Wednesday, September 17, 2025 at 7:01 p.m. in the Council Committee Room, City Hall, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC, with the following persons present:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Councillor Matt Djonlic, Chair
Councillor Brent Asmundson, Vice Chair
Parmis Bagher Zadeh, Citizen Representative
Tina Balachandran, Citizen Representative
Carolina Echeverri, Citizen Representative*
Honore Gbedze, Citizen Representative
Ann Johannes, Citizen Representative
Edgar Sanchez, Citizen Representative
Bibi Singh, Citizen Representative
Lucie Wee, Citizen Representative

ABSENT: Leo Chen, Citizen Representative
Nikki Kasravi, Citizen Representative
Bita Rezaei, Citizen Representative (Regrets)

GUESTS: Abigail Cameron, Associate Director Strategic Initiatives and
Development, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (re Item 2)

STAFF: Victoria Elahi, Planner 1
Alex McLellan, Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER AND TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and provided an Indigenous territorial acknowledgement.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

**1. Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting held on
Wednesday, June 18, 2025**

The Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership

The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Representative gave a presentation entitled “Fostering Inclusive Communities: Immigrant Needs” and referred to slides contained in the Agenda package.

Lucie Wee entered the meeting at this point (7:04 p.m.).

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Importance of immigrants for economic, cultural, and social prosperity, and the importance of leaders at all levels and in all sectors to establish positive language about immigrants for the community to follow.
- Understanding the impact of American politics, misinformation, and disinformation including through social media, and other factors on incidents of hate in the community.
- The need to consolidate efforts across organizations including municipalities, schools, civic organizations, etc. to provide strength and unity of messaging.
- The need to be effective in intercultural campaigns and the use of different media and messages for different audiences by potentially using the press to share stories of immigrants with a suggested target audiences of 40-60 year olds and immigrants who hold anti-immigrant sentiments.
- Misunderstanding of immigration requirements such as the points system.
- The prevalence of underemployment relative to education and experience amongst immigrants.
- The impact of cultural and linguistic loss between generations in immigrant families and value of cultural education and reclamation.

Abigail Cameron left the meeting at this time and did not return (7:58 p.m.).

3. Canada Day Update

The Planner 1 provided introductory comments relative to the Canada Day Update. Appreciation of volunteers from the Committee.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- The success of the map on which community members pinned their origins as an interactive tool.
- Suggestions to further engage the public using cultural food sampling, storytelling, swag, cultural dress, and/or a digital diary for visitors to write in.

- A suggestion to promote the Committee through a photograph of members or City of Coquitlam-branded clothing or buttons to wear at events.

4. Committee Members' Roundtable / Multicultural Communities and Emerging Issues (Standing Agenda Item)

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Immigrant Services Society of BC has a new location on North Road and there are open seats in a range of language classes, a new fast track to citizenship class and a new ASL class.
- DIVERSEcity is launching a Youth Eco Alliance program focused on civic engagement and leadership in reconciliation, inclusion, and climate justice and will offer grants.
- The Coquitlam Public Library is scheduled to host Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation Day events on September 30 and a "Brave Spaces" multiculturalism series through the fall.
- Settlement workers are setting up immigration businesses as a result of loss of employment in civic organizations.
- Reports of employers exploiting the requirement for work permit holders to work 20 hours/week in order to register children in public school by selling falsified letters.
- The Simon Fraser University student groups are scheduled to host a Diwali event on October 10.
- Simon Fraser University international students are looking for English conversation groups.
- Consideration to re-establish "Welcome to Coquitlam" as an event that the Committee can lead in collaboration with other organizations.
- A project is underway to develop a book about the Venezuelan diaspora in Canada.
- The Vancouver International Film Festival, is scheduled for October 2-12 is an opportunity to support local filmmaking.

The Committee Clerk made the following announcements:

- Members are encouraged to promote the campaign to recruit volunteers to other City Boards and Advisory Committees.
- The annual Volunteer Recognition Event will take place in spring 2026, rather than fall 2025, and further information will be provided in the coming months.

OTHER BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING DATE – Wednesday, November 19, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

MINUTES CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Councillor Matt Djonlic, Chair

Alex McLellan, Committee Clerk