



## RACIAL AND ETHNO-CULTURAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### SPECIAL MINUTES

JULY 16, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, July 16, 2020, at 5:51 pm, by electronic means, for the purpose of discussing two motions.

**PRESENT:**

Ignatius But, Co-Chair  
Naz Gurbuz  
Bindy Kang-Dhillon  
Naomi Kronitz  
Sonia Medel Borja  
Amal Rana  
Juggy Sihota  
Yaron Stern  
Kevonnie Whyte

**ABSENT:**

Felix-Marie Badeau  
Nikki Koutsochilis  
Anabel Lopez  
Alexandra Gunn (Leave of Absence)

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Councillor Sarah Kirby-Yung, Council Liaison  
Trustee Allan Wong, School Board Liaison  
April Sumter-Freitag, Social Planner, Staff Liaison  
Marie Lopes, Recreation Services Coordinator, Park Board  
Staff Liaison

**CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:** Tamarra Wong, Meeting Coordinator

### WELCOME

The Co-Chair welcomed members and acknowledged we are on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and we thank them for having cared for this land and look forward to working with them in partnership as we continue to build this great city together.

## Leave of Absence Requests

MOVED by Naz Gurbuz  
SECONDED by Naomi Kronitz

THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee approve a leave of absence for Alexandra Gunn.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

### 1. **Support for Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives**

Amal Rana introduced the item and the Committee engaged in discussion.

MOVED by Amal Rana  
SECONDED by Juggy Sihota

#### WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver, and the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee are both committed to using an equity lens on social issues and have recently renewed a commitment to particularly prioritize the fight against Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black racism at this time;
2. Current policing practices disproportionately criminalize Black and Indigenous communities, as reflected in street check data, as well as rates of incarceration in provincial and federal prisons;
3. The recent murders of Regis-Korchinski Paquet, Chantel Moore and Ejaz Choudry, and before them many others, due to police violence during wellness checks have underscored the urgency and necessity for community based alternatives to keep our communities safe in times of mental health emergencies or other social needs;
4. There is widespread recognition that calls related to social issues, including mental health would be better served by peer, health, social and community based programming instead of local police, specifically the Vancouver Police Department. Evidence suggests that criminalization and policing are not effective solutions or harm reduction strategies for these concerns; and
5. A number of reports have made recommendations regarding the criminalization of Indigenous people, people who rely on public space, and people who use illicit substances, including *Red Women Rising* (Martin & Walia, 2019) and *Project Inclusion: Confronting Anti-Homeless and Anti-Substance User Stigma in British Columbia* (Bennett & Larkin, 2018).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee ask Council to make clear its commitment to racial equity by approving the motion entitled "Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives" being considered at the July 21, 2020 Council meeting;

FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee ask Council to ensure that work on the above-noted motion is woven into the current and urgent work being done by staff on reconciliation, anti-Black racism and equity, and that this work is appropriately resourced in the City of Vancouver's 2020 Budget and beyond;

AND FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee request that Council direct staff to meet with the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee and the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee as soon as possible to discuss next steps regarding the above-noted motion, and that information is shared with other advisory committees.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **2. Support for Ending Street Checks in Vancouver**

Kevonnie Whyte introduced the item and the Committee engaged in discussion.

MOVED by YarOn Stern

SECONDED by Naz Gurbuz

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver, and the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee are both committed to using an equity lens on social issues and have recently renewed a commitment to particularly prioritize the fight against Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black racism at this time;
2. Current policing practices disproportionately criminalize and take the lives of Black and Indigenous communities, as reflected in police violence, street check data and rates of incarceration in provincial and federal prisons;
3. Communities and civil societies globally, including Vancouver, are calling for the defunding of police forces;
4. Organizations and community groups, including the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, Black Lives Matter Vancouver, and the Hogan's Alley Society, are calling for ending street checks, the practice of stopping a person outside of an investigation, and often obtaining and recording their personal information;
5. Data released by the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) in 2018 showed almost 100,000 street checks conducted by the VPD between 2008 and 2017, with Indigenous and Black people being significantly overrepresented in these checks compared to their proportion of the population;
6. Following the implementation of new provincial guidelines in January 2020, VPD reported a 91% reduction in street checks;
7. Street checks are a pervasive form of entrenching systemic racism (in particular Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black racism) and targeting low income communities. This

was made even more starkly obvious when during a visit to Vancouver, highly esteemed Black Canadian author and activist Desmond Cole, who has written prolifically on the issue of street checks, was himself the subject of a random street check and racial harassment by local police while simply walking in Stanley Park;

8. The Vancouver Police Board has the authority to end the practice of street checks in Vancouver.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee ask Council to make clear its commitment to racial equity by approving the motion entitled “Ending Street Checks in Vancouver” being considered at the July 21, 2020 Council meeting;

FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee ask Council to ensure that the issue of how police violence impacts racialized communities is woven into the current Equity Framework being worked on by staff, and that this work is appropriately resourced in the City of Vancouver’s 2020 Budget and beyond;

AND FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee request that Council direct staff to meet with the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee and the Urban Indigenous Peoples’ Advisory Committee as soon as possible to discuss next steps for ensuring that the impact of police violence on racialized communities is woven into the city’s current work on equity and that information is shared with other advisory committees.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Kevonnie Whyte  
SECONDED by Naomi Kronitz

THAT the Special Meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Next Meeting:**

DATE: September 24, 2020  
TIME: 5:30 pm  
PLACE: WebEx Online

The Committee adjourned at 6:28 pm.

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