



CITY OF
VANCOUVER

RACIAL AND ETHNO-CULTURAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-11

The Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee is an advisory body appointed by Vancouver City Council to advise Council and staff on the development, implementation, and assessment of City policies and services related to strengthening ethno-cultural engagement, addressing racism and racial inequities, and promoting racial justice and equity in the City. The following represents the views of the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee. The Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee is not expressing views on behalf of the City of Vancouver.

September 22, 2022

Dear Mayor and Council,

At its meeting on September 8, 2022, the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee passed the following motion:

THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee send a letter to Mayor and Council addressing their non-apology regarding anti-Black racism.

The Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee have noted the tenuous history between the City of Vancouver and the Black community in Vancouver. To name only a few problems, there have been multiple oversights, destruction of culture and neighborhoods, lack of consultation, and systemic racism in Civic Agencies. We want to make sure that the upcoming Council Report: [“Addressing Anti-Black Racism and Historic Discrimination: Interim Report”](#) is given the proper attention and work it deserves.

The Committee was encouraged by the amendment (I.) moved during debate on the Vancouver Plan in the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting of [July 6 and 22, 2022](#), which stated in part:

THAT the City acknowledge Harland Bartholomew’s public record as a segregationist devoted to enshrining race and class segregation in city planning and acknowledge the long-standing and ongoing harm that has been inflicted on Black communities in Vancouver stemming from the anti-Black racism that the Bartholomew Plan and urban renewal was premised upon.

This amendment was crafted in consultation with the Black community, which was a step to repairing the fractured relationship between the community and the City. However, the Committee considers ensuing comments made by Council members during debate to be unacceptable and creating further distrust between the Black community and the City.

During [debate on the amendment](#), comments from several Council members suggested that the amendment was redundant, that populations other than the Black community needed to be included, and that history needed to represent all communities—implying that “All Lives Matter” and that the Black community does not deserve to be acknowledged specifically. There have been multiple acknowledgements for other communities by the City of Vancouver in the past, which have not been questioned, but the acknowledgement meant to address the unique circumstances of and harm done to the Black community was questioned. While all equity-denied communities have their own experience with discrimination, no other community experiences anti-Black racism.

Following an amendment to the amendment, the final amendment (I.) contained additional acknowledgements of racialized communities other than the Black community, and was approved with no opposition. The Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee strongly opposes this amendment as approved, as well as Council members’ reactions to the original amendment, which was made in consultation with the Black community. It is a shameful reminder that the Black community in Vancouver does not matter and nothing is made specifically for us.

If history continues to repeat itself, as it has for decades, we do not have confidence that Council will give the appropriate attention to the Council Report “Addressing Anti-Black Racism and Historic Discrimination: Interim Report.” We want to ensure that racialized communities are heard and that when they work collaboratively with Mayor and Council, motions and amendments are passed the way they were created with the community. It is not up to Mayor and Council to change, alter, or question communities themselves on work they have done for their own people. Part of Anti-Racism work is taking the lead from racialized communities, and based on the meeting of July 6 and 22, 2022, clearly Council has thus far failed.

The Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee recommends that Council re-examine this amendment, and also apologize to the Black community for the hurt and distress they have caused. The Committee also recommends that Council make a commitment to doing immediate Anti-Racism training, with specific Anti-Black racism training, and that this training be mandatory going forward for any incoming Mayor or Council member.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Kallstrom, Chair
Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee

Copies to: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Tina Penney, Director, Legislative Operations
Kevin Burris, Manager, Civic Agencies