



RACIAL AND ETHNO-CULTURAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

March 21, 2024

A meeting of the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 5:32 pm, in the Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

PRESENT: Steph Kallstrom, Chair
Naina Varshney, Vice-Chair
Harjot Banwait
Benedicta Bawo*
Victoria Barclay
Jeremiah Rojas
Lydia Tang
Pavandeep Toor

ABSENT: Nimrah Anwar (Leave of Absence)
Alexandra Gunn (Leave of Absence)
Alemu Nenko
Ajay Puri (Leave of Absence)

ALSO PRESENT: April Sumter-Freitag, Social Planner, Social Policy and Projects, Staff Liaison

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Olivia Kam, Meeting Coordinator

* Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

WELCOME

The Chair acknowledged we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples. 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 Victoria Barclay
SECONDED by Jeremiah Rojas

THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee approve leaves of absence for Nimrah Anwar, Alexandra Gunn and Ajay Puri for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Victoria Barclay
SECONDED by Harjot Banwait

THAT the minutes from the meeting of Thursday, January 11, 2024, be amended to strike the words “health justice” and replace with the words “improving interactions with the healthcare system” under agenda item 3. Committee Discussion;

FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the meeting of Thursday, January 11, 2024, as amended;

AND FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the Special meeting of Wednesday, January 31, 2024, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

1. Burrard Slopes Park

Staff from the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation presented the Burrard Slopes Park Plan to the Committee and responded to questions.

2. Committee Discussion

The Committee discussed requesting a media release from Civic Engagement and Communications.

Resolution for the Application of Bill 47 in Chinatown and DTES

MOVED by Lydia Tang
SECONDED by Naina Varshney

WHEREAS

1. The new provincial legislation, [Bill 47: Housing Statutes \(Transit-Oriented Areas Amendment Act, 2023\)](#) and the Vancouver Transit-Oriented Areas Regulation passed by [Provincial Order in Council 676/2023](#), requires the City of Vancouver to upzone regions surrounding transit hubs to a minimum of 8 to 20 storeys in height for residential developments;
2. Chinatown, presently zoned for buildings of 5 to 6 storeys, and the Downtown Eastside, presently zoned for buildings of 4 to 8 storeys, will be affected due to their proximity to the Main Street – Science World and Stadium – Chinatown Skytrain stations;
3. Only portions of Chinatown are purportedly exempt from the effects of Bill 47 by virtue of heritage protection, comprising only three blocks of Pender Street, and the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona do not have heritage area designations;

4. The Downtown Eastside and Chinatown are some of the lowest income neighbourhoods in the country, and are places of special significance for Chinese, Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized groups who have historically resided and continue to reside and build community predominantly in these neighbourhoods;
5. The [Vancouver Charter, section 565.001](#), states, “Despite section 565 but subject to an exemption set out in the regulations, the Council must not exercise the powers referred to in that section to prohibit or restrict a density of use, or a height, bulk, size or floor area of buildings, set out in the regulations in relation to land that is in a transit-oriented area and zoned to permit (a) any residential use, or (b) a prescribed use other than residential use.”

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee affirm:
 - i. The Downtown Eastside and Chinatown have already been threatened through previous “urban renewal” efforts lacking proper consultation with their respective communities and continuing to the present day with gentrification and economic displacement;
 - ii. The wholesale upzoning of the Downtown Eastside will inflate land values, exacerbate gentrification, and economically displace low-income residents, cultural businesses and organizations, and heritage assets;
 - iii. Clan associations and nonprofits who hold heritage buildings in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside, who provide affordable housing and key community infrastructure, and maintain tangible connections to our past that demonstrate diversity in Vancouver’s history, are not equipped to absorb the increase in tax burdens resulting from development-induced inflated property values;
 - iv. It is crucial to promote racial justice and equity, enhance inclusion for racialized communities, and work co-operatively with external agencies and groups whose activities affect constituent communities.
- B. THAT that the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee recommend that City Council:
 - i. Petition the Provincial government to amend the Vancouver Transit-Oriented Areas Regulation in order to clearly exempt Chinatown (as covered by both the HA-1 and HA-1A zoning areas) and the Downtown Eastside from transit-oriented development requirements;
 - ii. Petition the Provincial government to amend section 565.001 of the Vancouver Charter to ensure benchmarks for affordability before developments can be exempted from municipal regulation relating to density or form (i.e., replace “any residential use” with “social housing” or “affordable housing”);

- iii. Work to ensure that amendments would prioritize developments with a higher proportion of social or affordable units or culturally supportive housing as compared to developments outside Transit Oriented Areas, or meet other affordability benchmarks.
- iv. Work to ensure further heritage designations for Chinatown.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Benedicta Bawo absent for the vote)

Anti-racism and Decolonization Education

MOVED by Steph Kallstrom
SECONDED by Victoria Barclay

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver is open with its commitment to anti-racism, decolonization, reconciliation, and dismantling white supremacy.
2. On March 12, 2024, City Council passed a motion directing “THAT Mayor and Councillors receive updated human rights training as part of their regular education sessions with the Integrity Commissioner’s Office.”

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee affirm the importance of ongoing education for City leadership in anti-racism, decolonization, reconciliation, and dismantling white supremacy.
- B. THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee recommend that human rights training provided to Mayor and Council by the Integrity Commissioner’s Office contain specific anti-racism training, including:
 - The role of anti-racism in dismantling systems of oppression;
 - The distinctions between Decolonization and Reconciliation;
 - Mayor and Council writing their settler colonial stories.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Benedicta Bawo absent for the vote)

3. Working Session Updates

The Chair provided an update on the working session held Thursday, February 22, 2024.

4. Liaison Updates

The Staff liaison provided an update on City anti-racism and equity work.

5. Subcommittee Updates

None.

6. New Business

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Lydia Tang
SECONDED by Benedicta Bawo

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: Thursday, May 23, 2024
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall
/ Webex Online

The Committee adjourned at 6:35 pm.

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