



## **RACIAL AND ETHNO-CULTURAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

**March 13, 2025**

A meeting of the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 5:39 pm, in the Business Centre Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

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

**ABSENT:** Alemu Nenko  
Ajay Puri (Medical Leave)  
Pavandeep Toor (Medical Leave)

**ALSO PRESENT:** April Sumter-Freitag, Social Planner, Social Policy and  
Projects; Staff Liaison  
Sophia Li, Alternate member

**CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:** Olivia Kam, Meeting Coordinator

### **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.

### **Approval of Minutes**

MOVED by Jeremiah Rojas  
SECONDED by Naina Varshney

THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the meeting of Thursday, January 30, 2025, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**1. Working Session Updates**

The Chair provided an update on the working session held Thursday, February 20, 2025.

**2. Liaison Updates**

The Staff Liaison provided an update.

**3. Subcommittee Updates**

The Policing Subcommittee provided an update.

**4. New Business**

Request for Review of School Liaison Officer Program

MOVED by Jeremiah Rojas  
SECONDED by Victoria Barclay

WHEREAS

1. The School Liaison Officer (SLO) program in Vancouver was previously eliminated in 2021 after careful consideration.
2. The Vancouver School Board's review of the School Liaison Officer program conducted by Argyle Communications (the Argyle study) was completed and due to predominantly Indigenous and Black voices articulating that they felt unsafe and/or it did not foster a safe environment school, it was eliminated.
3. The current SLO program has been revised but continues to raise concerns. It is understood that officers are now plain clothed, have concealed weapons and must engage in special training such as de-escalation techniques with special considerations towards mental health, while recognizing that student safety is a priority.
4. As per the Argyle study 60% of Black students disagreed or strongly disagreed that SLO contributed to a sense of safety in schools.
5. As per the Argyle Study 33% of Indigenous students disagreed or strongly disagreed that SLO contributed to a sense of safety in schools.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee express its concern regarding the renewal of the School Liaison Officer Program in Vancouver Schools without a full review;

FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee recommend that City Council request the Vancouver School Board conduct a new independent review of the SLO program, by a neutral organization with expertise in equity and policing with a focus on centering equity-deserving communities who have historically expressed distrust towards police (particularly Indigenous and Black communities).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Harjot Banwait  
SECONDED by Jeremiah Rojas

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **Next Meeting:**

DATE: Thursday, May 29, 2025  
TIME: 5:30 pm  
PLACE: Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall  
/ Microsoft Teams Online

The Committee adjourned at 6:50 pm.

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