



RACIAL AND ETHNO-CULTURAL EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

May 29, 2025

A meeting of the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 5:42 pm, in the Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

PRESENT: Steph Kallstrom, Chair
Harjot Banwait
Victoria Barclay*
Sophia Li
Alemu Nenko
Jeremiah Rojas
Naina Varshney, Vice-Chair*

ABSENT: Young Joe (Leave of Absence)
Ajay Puri (Leave of Absence)
Lydia Tang (Leave of Absence)
Pavandeep Toor (Medical Leave)

ALSO PRESENT: Victoria Jung, Vancouver School Board Liaison
April Sumter Freitag, Social Planner, Social Policy and
Projects; Staff Liaison

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Sonia Lotay, 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 Naina Varshney
SECONDED by Harjot Banwait

THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee approve leaves of absence for Young Joe, Ajay Puri, and Lydia Tang for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Sophia Li
SECONDED by Alemu Nenko

THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee approve the minutes from the meeting of Thursday, March 13, 2025, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

1. Anti-Racism Action Plan

Staff from Arts, Culture and Community Services provided a presentation and responded to questions and comments.

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VARY AGENDA

MOVED by Sophia Li
SECONDED by Jeremiah Rojas

THAT the Committee vary the agenda to discuss agenda Item 3 before Item 2 due to technical issues with Item 2 video.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY

Note: For ease of reference, the minutes are recorded in chronological order.

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3. Supportive Housing Motion

Request for Further Exploration of Supportive Housing Freeze

MOVED by Steph Kallstrom
SECONDED by Naina Varshney

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver, per the 2023 Homeless Count (snapshot) identified 2,420 people as homeless (605 unsheltered and 1,815 sheltered) and 33% of unhoused people in Metro Vancouver are Indigenous while Indigenous people only make up 2% of the population;
2. The Council Members' Motion submitted by Mayor Sim entitled "Temporarily Pausing Net-New Supportive Housing Investments in Vancouver to Prioritize Replacing Existing Stock and Promoting Regional Equity" approved by Council at

the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on February 26, 2025, asserts that Vancouver has taken a leading role in providing supportive housing to individuals facing homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance use disorders and Vancouver has an aging supportive housing infrastructure that is in need of updating and replacing;

3. The 2023 City of Vancouver Low-Income Housing Survey estimated that there are about 6,500 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) rooms (48% privately-owned). Vancity Community Foundation found that the number of privately-owned SROs available at shelter rates (\$375/month in 2023) decreased from 1,700 in 2003 to 52 in 2023;
4. The Vancity Community Foundation estimates that in addition to a demand for improvements to existing supportive housing units of at least 4,000 homes, there is a demand of at least 5,800 net new homes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee expresses its concern of the potential risks caused by the temporary pause of City of Vancouver contributions of land or funding for homelessness response and supportive housing developments, except for projects focused on replacing existing Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings or Temporary Modular Housing (TMH) projects;

FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee agree that the existing supportive housing supply needs to be updated and/or replaced, to ensure that it is free of hazards, meets safety and seismic standards and offers dignified living conditions;

AND FURTHER THAT the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee recommend that City Council request that the Vancouver Housing Development Office provide an assessment of the supportive housing supply gap for the City of Vancouver.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Advisory Committee Motion

The Committee agreed to defer the preparation of an Advisory Committee motion to a future working session.

4. Working Session Updates

None.

5. Liaison Updates

The VSB Liaison and Staff Liaison provided updates on upcoming projects and events.

6. Subcommittee Updates

None.

7. New Business

The Chair suggested reconsidering the motion titled “Request for Review of School Liaison Program,” approved at the March 13, 2025 regular meeting, to provide additional recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Harjyot Banwait
SECONDED by Naina Varshney

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: Thursday, June 26, 2025
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Cascadia Room, 3rd Floor, City Hall
/ Microsoft Teams Online

The Committee adjourned at 7:14 pm.

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