

Fraser Valley Human Dignity Coalition

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 20, 2018 • 6 – 8pm

Jasbir Saran Room • Abbotsford Community Services • 2420 Montrose Avenue

PRESENT (12)

Eyerusalem Abebe

Lia Bishop

Michelle Murray-Schlitt

Marc Forcier

Bharathi Sandhu

Balbir Gill

Hernek Toor

Tanya Jeske

Alvina Kumar

Melissa Salter

Devan Cosens

Kaidan Clayton

MEETING OPENING AND INTRODUCTIONS

Opening

- Land acknowledgement- (Unceded Traditional territory of the Stó:lō First Peoples). Welcome to Abbotsford Community Services and the Fraser Valley Human Dignity Coalition (FVHDC).
- Brief history and purpose of the FVHDC; FVHDC's mandate read to attendees.

Roundtable introductions

- Attendees share their names, reasons why they are involved with the coalition and the names of organizations, community groups and agencies they are representing (if they are representing one).

Michelle Murray-Schlitt – President of UFV Amnesty

Marc Forcier – Co-founder and vice president of Black Connections

Bharathi Sandhu – Chair of the Indo-Canadian Business Association

Balbir Gill – Member of the Abbotsford Local Immigration Partnership and is also representing the Fraser Valley Regional Library

Hernek Toor – community member who wants to be involved in more community initiatives

Tanya Jeske – representing Community Police in Abbotsford

Alvina Kumar – representing herself and joined the meeting to share her story (incident report)

Melissa Salter – UFV Amnesty member

Devan Cosens – UFV Amnesty member

APPROVAL

Agenda approved

June 8th Minutes approved

NEW BUSINESS

Critical Incident Reports

- Review of purpose and importance of incident reporting
Group discussion of the lack of support for victims of discrimination and hate in the Fraser Valley; FVHDC is one of the only places that referrals and support can be offered.
Normally, incident reports are presented to the coalition by staff but a community member requested to attend meeting and present her story herself. Staff introduce community member.

Case 1: Abbotsford Regional Hospital

- Community member shares her story with the coalition. She was mistreated by nurses in the triage room while visiting the Abbotsford Regional Hospital. Alvina tried to correct the nurse to pronounce her name right. The nurse said “why does it matter if the same person stands up”. She continued to be mistreated by hospital staff based on her ethnicity/race and felt no one was helping her to keep the nurses accountable.
- Upon contacting staff, an incident report was completed. Staff also sent her a link to the Patient Care Quality Office and discussed further options, such as filing a complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal and getting a lawyer.
- Attendees tell personal stories which relate to her experience of “racial trauma”. The questions “where are you from? Where are you *really* from?” are commonplace in our community when it comes to people of non-white backgrounds. Even though, they have grown up here and/or have spent a considerable amount of time in Canada, they feel like they are not normalized. Canada likes to celebrate that it is a multicultural community but people of various racial, ethnic, cultural backgrounds are still treated as exotic/outsideers.

Case 2: Racism in Churches

- Staff were contacted by a community member who has been affected by racism and discriminatory activities taking places in Mennonite churches. Staff have had contact with this community member in the past and will continue to work with her and provide resources to the appropriate sources.

Roundtable Updates

Marc – Black History Month put on by the Black Connections club at the Reach Gallery Museum was successful. Its purpose was to create a platform for all people to come together to gain a better understanding and appreciation of “black mentality”, black cultures and spaces.

Michelle – the Open Mosque event went really well and was well attended. It was great to see lots of families. It addressed Islamophobia and created a space for interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

Bharati – The Indo-Canadian Business Association does a Vasakhi Luncheon which also promotes a space for interfaith and intercultural dialogue. It seeks to raise awareness of the Sikh faith and build bridges with all members in the community. This event is open to the public. Guests are encouraged to bring an item of food to be donated to the Food Bank. Bharati will send info about the upcoming event to Eyerusalem for dissemination to all coalition members.

Balbir – The Abbotsford library has been actively working to make settlement easier and successful for newly arriving immigrants and refugees. It has made some organizational change such as lifting the requirement of showing a BC ID to get a library card. Immigrants and refugees have a much easier access to library resources.

(General) There has been some disturbing developments with the Chilliwack Trustee Barry Neufeld who has been making homophobic public statements since the SOGI curriculum was introduced. Abbotsford Community Services had sent a letter of support to the Abbotsford School District regarding the introduction of SOGI123. Lia discusses the potential of having a SOGI123 101 workshop for the community (teachers, youth workers, etc.) to clear up misconceptions and provide accurate information. Diversity Education staff will look for funding and support opportunities, and will connect back with the Coalition.

Devon and Michelle – Chilliwack needs to be more active in addressing issues of discrimination. There is a lack of community spaces to get a group like this one (FVHDC) going. Michelle and Devon, residents of Chilliwack, to look further into this and seek out opportunities to invite interested community members to the next FVHDC meeting.

FVHDC Updates

Updating Community Response Protocol

- Staff explain one of the Coalitions' goals is to update the Community Response Protocol, particularly the contact details and info for agencies listed in the document.

Youth Ambassador Program

- Lia announces received funding through OARH (Organizing Against Racism and Hate) for anti-racism project.
- Project will give diverse youth leadership tools and explore issues related to racism, building healthy racial identities, respecting differences, and responding to discrimination.
- The curriculum for the series will also focus on building a sense of positive building their sense of belonging regardless of differences in backgrounds, and promoting diversity and friendship among the group.
- Coalition members are invited to join a project committee to help develop the curriculum. Anyone who is interested is asked to contact Diversity Education for further details.

CLOSE