

Received Date	April 28, 2021
Meeting Date	May 03, 2021
Open or Closed	Open Session

Deputy Mayor Shirley McAlary and Members of Common Council

Subject: Direct Racial Discrimination

Background:

In June of 2020 thousands of people gathered in King Square to honor George Floyd and demand action on systemic racism and racial discrimination. In July of 2020, a motion was supported unanimously by council, calling on the Federal Government and the Provincial governments to make racial discrimination illegal. Furthermore, the motion directed the city manager to explore options available to the city of Saint John, to take tangible actions at the local level.

In September of 2020, a report was brought to council by the city solicitor, that explored the complexities, legislative authorities, and options for the city to act. That report was received and filed.

The City of Saint John must recognize the reality of systemic racism in New Brunswick and the city must mitigate systemic racism because systems are how racism lives on. To do this it must operate according to the values of openness, transparency, accountability, and public trust.

In the last two weeks, we saw another issue receive swift action from staff and council, after two citizens asked us to join a movement, calling on the eradication of nuclear weapons. This was unanimously supported by council and I agree with that decision.

I am asking council to revisit the issue of systemic racism, racial discrimination, and act.

Over the last year my office has continued to dialogue with community leaders, all levels of government and explored options for commitment and action by municipal governments. For example, UNESCO (Canadian Commission for UNESCO), has developed a Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination.)

Listed below are sample actions from the coalition.

Common commitments and sample actions against racism and discrimination

Municipalities are urged to develop their own plan of action in keeping with these ten Common Commitments addressing three areas of municipal responsibility:

- The municipality as a guardian of the public interest
- The municipality as an organization in the fulfillment of human rights
- The municipality as a community sharing responsibility for respecting and promoting human rights and diversity



In undertaking these Commitments and in developing unique plans of action for addressing racism and discrimination, municipalities are encouraged to take a participative approach that will engage Aboriginal peoples and initiate dialogue among diverse communities.

The municipality as a guardian of the public interest

Increase vigilance against systemic and individual racism and discrimination.

Sample actions:

- Support or establish, in collaboration with community organizations, a monitoring and rapid response system or network to identify and respond to acts of racism, hate crimes and incidents, including bringing such incidents to the attention of the appropriate authorities.
- Support or establish a mechanism for consultation with a network of groups and individuals involved in the struggle against racism and discrimination (e.g., NGOs, Aboriginal organizations, youth, artists, police services, the judiciary, provincial and territorial human rights commissions *etc.*).
- Report regularly on the incidence of hate crimes and responsive actions taken.

Monitor racism and discrimination in the community more broadly as well as municipal actions taken to address racism and discrimination.

Sample actions:

- Make use of existing data and research or initiate or facilitate appropriate collection and use of data, on incidents of hate activities, racism, and discrimination in the community, and share results in a manner that advances human rights.
- Collect and evaluate data and information on racism and discrimination in specific fields of municipal endeavour, such as housing, recreation, culture, and other social programs.
- Define achievable objectives and apply common indicators to assess incidents and trends in racism and discrimination, such as racial profiling, as well as the impact of municipal policies and programs.

Inform and support individuals who experience racism and discrimination.

Sample actions:

- Use awareness materials and campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and obligations, including available resources and mechanisms for prevention and redress, as well as penalties for racist acts or behaviour and other forms of discrimination.
- Establish or enhance existing complaint mechanisms within the municipality's authority (ombudsperson, anti-discrimination unit, *etc.*) to deal with allegations of systemic and individual acts of racism and discrimination.
- Establish protocols to liaise with organizations such as human rights commissions, legal clinics, and community advocacy or counselling services that can help facilitate prevention, interventions, and remedies for those who experience racism and discrimination.

Support policing services in their efforts to be exemplary institutions in combating racism and discrimination.

Sample actions:

- Consult with local communities to hear concerns and receive input on responsive measures.
- Establish or enhance a comprehensive anti-racism and anti-discrimination vision statement and implement effective policies and procedures (including a complaints mechanism), as well as staff training



to help prevent and respond to issues of racism and discrimination in policing services and in the community.

- Implement measures or programs to promote accountability of, and public confidence in, policing services, as well as ensure appropriate representation of Aboriginal and racialized groups in recruitment and at all levels of the organization.

The municipality as an organization in the fulfillment of human rights

Provide equal opportunities as a municipal employer, service provider, and contractor.

Sample actions:

- Develop, implement, promote, and enforce anti-racism strategies, policies, and procedures, including complaints and dispute resolution mechanisms, within the municipal organization.
- Examine equity at a systemic level, such as auditing different aspects of the municipality's operations, including corporate planning, policy and program development, and procedures and practices with respect to employment, service delivery and contracting, as well as organizational culture; take steps to eliminate barriers; and finally, measure progress.
- Educate and sensitize elected officials and civil servants on mutual respect, citizenship, and the obligation to protect and promote human rights.

Support measures to promote equity in the labour market.

Sample actions:

- In partnership with local chambers of commerce, set up a certification program for businesses, organizations, and professional bodies to integrate mechanisms into their own organizations for combating racism and building inclusive and respectful workplaces.
- Facilitate monitoring and removal of systemic barriers that impede fair and equitable access for full participation of Aboriginal and racialized communities in the economic life of the municipality, as well as access to professions and trades for foreign trained professionals.
- Make business licensing renewals conditional upon non-discriminatory policies and practices.

Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in housing.

Sample actions:

- Examine housing and urban planning policies and practices and address systemic barriers that have a discriminatory effect on Aboriginal and racialized communities, including the further marginalization of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Work with landlords and social housing providers, with the assistance of tenant associations and community organizations, including legal clinics, to adopt equitable policies and practices with respect to qualifying applicants and selecting tenants for market rent units consistent with human rights principles.
- Work with homebuilder, realtor, rental, hotel, tourist, and hospitality associations to draw up anti-discrimination codes of practice for their respective industry businesses and organizations.

The municipality as a community sharing responsibility for respecting and promoting human rights and diversity

Involve citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.

Sample actions:

- Take steps to facilitate and increase the representation of Aboriginal and racialized communities on municipal boards, commissions, and committees.
- Organize regular community forums in collaboration with existing organizations and mechanisms to offer citizens an opportunity to discuss and be heard on issues of racism and discrimination in the municipality, including effectiveness of local policies and programs.

- Empower local NGOs and civil society to share information and act against racism and discrimination.

Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in the education sector, and in other forms of learning.

Sample actions:

- Encourage the development of teaching materials that promote respect for dignity, human rights, intercultural understanding, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence.
- Support partnerships between educators and front-line community organizations to reach out to vulnerable youth whose access to education is adversely affected by bullying and violence or discriminatory discipline policies or practices.
- Create a program to recognize schools for their anti-racism and anti-discrimination initiatives.

Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Aboriginal and racialized communities into the cultural fabric of the municipality.

Sample actions:

- Provide equitable support to cultural projects, programs, events, and infrastructure so that the cultural diversity and heritage of the community can be preserved and diffused in a fair and representative way.
- Support initiatives that increase expertise and capacity within ethno-cultural organizations to effect change in their communities and enable their members to participate fully in society.
- Promote awareness of the fact that integration of a community's cultural fabric, together with its economic, educational, social and security interests, strengthens and benefits the whole community.

Appendix. PDF Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination handbook.

Motion:

Direct the City Manager to investigate and report back on the City of Saint John, joining on as a member of the UNESCO Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination. Furthermore, that the City Manager through his resources, follow up for a progress update, with the appropriate Federal and Provincial governments on our requests from July 2020, to make racial discrimination a criminal offense.

Respectfully Submitted,

(Received via email)

Don Darling
Mayor
City of Saint John



SAINT JOHN

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