

MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, April 13, 2021

TITLE: CONDEMNING THE RISE OF ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

FROM:

Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco

Whereas, since the emergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic, media outlets have reported a disturbing rise in racist behaviour toward Asian communities in Canada and around the world. In July 2020, Vaughan Council responded by unanimously endorsing Councillor Yeung Racco's Member's Resolution denouncing the initial rise in anti-Asian racism at the onset of the global pandemic; and

Whereas, new reports have found that nearly 30 per cent of incidents are assaults, representing a 50 per cent increase in assaults early 2020. Disturbingly, women continue to be disproportionately impacted by anti-racism, reporting 60 per cent of all incidents; and

Whereas, verbal harassment – in the form of name-calling, racial slurs, threats and swearing – are the most common type of discrimination, representing 65 per cent of reported incidents; and

Whereas, Vaughan is proudly home to an active, engaged and thriving Asian-Canadian community made up of successful entrepreneurs, committed professionals employed by the City of Vaughan, concerned citizens, dedicated city-builders, compassionate family members, and a growing number of registered seniors and cultural groups, who continue to make positive, significant and lasting contributions to the development of the city; and

Whereas, in February 2020, Ward 4 Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco and Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua joined Catherine Hou, president of the Chinese Cuisine & Hospitality Association of Canada, to visit KUU Sushi, a local restaurant taking part in the Asialicious

Asian Restaurant Food Festival, to show support for Asian-Canadian small businesses in Vaughan; and

Whereas, the City's Cultural Heritage Events program is an opportunity to further enrich, engage and educate all people about the contributions made by individuals of Asian heritage; and

Whereas, each year, Council hosts Lunar New Year festivities that include a traditional lion dance, eye-dotting ceremony and other celebrated cultural performances. In 2021, the first-ever virtual Lunar New Year event took place, inviting people from around the world to watch the celebration online; and

Whereas, the Vaughan Mayor's Lunar Gala, inspired by the Chinese Moon Festival, is a celebration of Asian culture with entertainment, activities and traditional foods, that brings people together to raise funds for important community causes; and

Whereas, the City of Vaughan continues to engage in a number of economic and trade missions to Asia to explore and access opportunities that benefit emerging markets within the local business community; and

Whereas, the City of Vaughan established a Friendship City partnership with Yangzhou, China in 1995, entered into a Twin City arrangement with Baguio, Philippines in 1997, and is currently discussing an international partnership with Sanjo, Japan, in follow up to an initial Friendship City agreement in 1993. These formal relationships further demonstrate how Vaughan cherishes its relationships with the global Asian community.

It is therefore recommended:

1. That the City of Vaughan once again unequivocally denounce all forms of racism, bigotry and discrimination – and especially racism targeted at Asian-Canadians; and
2. The City's Economic and Cultural Development department continues its support of Asian-Canadian entrepreneurs and businesses by working in collaboration with organizations such as the Markham, Richmond Hill & Vaughan Chinese Business Association (MRVCBA) and the Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs (ACCE); and
3. The City's Corporate and Strategic Communications department promote the passage of this resolution on the appropriate corporate communications channels, including issuing a news release to local, national and cultural media outlets; and

4. That this resolution and attachments be forwarded to the City's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force to be shared with members for further discussion and potential next steps about public education efforts; and
5. That this Member's Resolution be forwarded to York Region, all York Region area municipalities, Vaughan's Members of Provincial Parliament and Members of Parliament.

Attachments

1. COVID-19 Anti-Asian Racism in Canada – A National Picture
2. Extract of Member's Resolution from July 15, 2020