



Newmarket Anti-Black Racism Task Force (NABRTF) Interim Report

Presented by: Jerisha Grant-Hall

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Members

1. Jerisha Grant-Hall, Chair
2. Nadia Hansen, Vice Chair
3. Lori-Anne Beckford
4. Claudius Brown
5. Holly Douglass
6. Gavin Gunter
7. Gary Miranda
8. Opiyo Oloya
9. Maxine Gordon-Palomino
10. Kimberly Roach
11. Leslie Serieux
12. Councillor Morrison
13. Councillor Bisanz
14. Councillor Broome



What is Anti-Black Racism?

The term anti-Black racism was first used by academic and community activist, Dr. Akua Benjamin whose seminal work looked at the link between race and discrimination for Black Canadians.

- Anti-Black racism encompasses a range of policies, practices, beliefs and attitudes that are directed at Canadians of African descent that are discriminatory and anchored in their unique experience of colonialism and enslavement.
- These multilayered systems of oppression impact the social determinants of health like housing, employment, family, culture and education, and have a long lasting impact on mental health and wellness.

Mandate

The Anti-Black Racism Task Force supports the Town's work and encourages positive race relations within the Town of Newmarket by providing advice to Council/the Strategic Leadership Team and being mindful of its focus on anti-Black racism and racial equity within Newmarket by:

- Making recommendations to Council that focus on racial equity opportunities in Newmarket, and on issues or activities that impact the Black community.

Limiting Factors

The work of the NABRTF has been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Adaptation to the constantly evolving circumstances was an integral part of the work undertaken which allowed both NABRTF members and the Town of Newmarket staff to manifest their resourcefulness. Impacts included the following:

- Municipal offices and other town facilities remained closed
- Individual face-to-face interactions were limited
- Institutional and community canvassing engagements were limited
- Regular community activities were disrupted
- Access to community meeting spaces and supporting resources such as the Library was disrupted.

Community Engagement

A multiple-method approach to community engagement was devised to ensure that as wide a cross section as possible from Newmarket's diverse community would be able to inform the NABRTF in its recommendations:

- Conduct individual interviews (named and anonymous).
- Conduct online survey of community individuals.
- Presenters from Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit were invited to share best practices and other resource information.

Policy and Literature Analysis

To meet its mandate to review and assess Town policies and procedures, the NABRTF undertook several steps to determine the best way forward. These steps include:

- Undertake Literature Review
- Engage in an Environmental Scan
- Review of Towns Demographic Information
- Review of Town of Newmarket Policies
- Identification of Best Practices

Emerging Themes from Community Engagement Initiatives

1. Black Leadership (Council representation, employment, recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention)
2. Education (campaign, awareness, training)
3. Black youth (mentorship and pathway planning)
4. Community engagement
5. Representation and recognition
6. Culture change
7. Income inequality/disparity
8. Support for Black-owned businesses
9. Town policies and procedures
10. Cross-municipal and Cross sector work (Town working with York Regional Police, School Boards and other municipalities)
11. Acknowledgement and mechanism for reporting and accountability
12. Periodic townhalls and surveys
13. Internal Town equity, diversity and inclusion committee
14. Policing practices

Provisional Recommendations

1. Education beyond Black History Month
2. Recognizing the International Decade for the People of African Descent, 2015-2024
3. Cross municipal collaboration for Best Practices
4. Cultural and recreational activities that are welcoming to the Afro-descendant community
5. Implementation of a Race Equity Impact Assessment Tool

Conclusion

As the NABRTF presses towards the production of final recommendations, we pause to reflect and provide acknowledgement to all those who have gone before us to pave paths of reconciliation, hope and trust. We understand:

- The work to confront, tackle and dismantle anti-Black racism is ongoing.
- The work of the NABRTF is but a singular step in that journey.
- On the horizon are the efforts from all segments of the community as we collectively seek to build a harmonious space where all are welcomed, acknowledged, respected and loved.

Asante Sana!
Thank you!

