

## **Status Report - Toronto Police Association Poster and Stereotyping of the Hispanic Community**

*(City Council on November 23, 24 and 25, 1999, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)*

**The Administration Committee recommends that the Chief General Manager, Toronto Transit Commission, be requested to allocate advertising space for anti-hate promotion and hate crime information as part of a City-wide anti-hate campaign; and that staff of the Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Working Committee continue to monitor this matter and report the results of the inquiry to the Ontario Human Rights Commission and Anti-Hate Crimes Unit.**

**The Administration Committee submits the following report (October 15, 1999) from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

Purpose:

This report summarizes the response to the resolutions embodied in Clause No. 2 of Report No. 1 of the Administration Committee as adopted by the City Council at its meeting July 6, 7, 8, 1999 with respect to the Toronto Police Association Poster and the stereotyping of the Hispanic community.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

Background:

At its meeting of July 6, 7, 8, 1999, City Council adopted the following recommendations from Clause No. 2 of Report No. 1 of The Administration Committee:

(A) the adoption of the following resolutions embodied in the communication (June 10, 1999) from the Interim Community Co-Chair, City of Toronto Community Network on Policing, Anti-Racism, Access and Equity:

- “(1) Toronto City Council join with the Mayor in formally expressing condemnation of the Toronto Police Association poster which promotes racist stereotyping and hostility against the Spanish speaking community, and tenders its apology to the Hispanic community and to the community at large;
- (2) Toronto City Council express its concerns to the Toronto Police Association and that they be encouraged to adopt an anti-stereotyping policy and guidelines and the provision of anti-racism training;
- (3) the Toronto Transit Commission, in conformity with existing municipal policy on the portrayal of the diverse community in all information and communications, be urged to implement with the support and assistance of the Access and Equity

Centre, rigorous procedures in monitoring advertisements before being displayed on its properties;

- (4) the Police Services Board be urged to clearly disassociate itself from the Toronto Police Association poster and also tender its regrets and apology to both the Hispanic community and community at large; and
  - (5) the Hate Crimes Unit of the Toronto Police Service, or an alternative independent judicial body investigate whether the Toronto Police Association poster is a chargeable offence under existing hate crimes legislation”; and
- (B) that the Access and Equity Division, within the office of the Chief Administrative Officer, be requested to facilitate a meeting with representatives of the Hispanic Community and the Toronto Police Association to find a resolution to this matter that is acceptable to all parties.

Comments:

Recommendations A (1-5) have been acted upon through the circulation by the City Clerk of a formal communication to all the organisations identified in the recommendations. The Chair of the Toronto Police Services Board and the Chief of Police have also expressed their regret to the Hispanic community. This was formally considered by Toronto Police Services Board at its meeting of June 24, 1999 (Appendix A). The Hate Crimes Unit of the Toronto Police Services and the Ontario Human Rights Commission are presently reviewing this matter.

Recommendation B, requested me to facilitate a meeting between representatives of the Hispanic community and the Toronto Police Association through the Access and Equity Unit. The Toronto Police Association has declined my invitation to participate in any meeting. A copy of their correspondence is attached. (Appendix B).

In addition, at its meeting of July 21, 1999 the Toronto Transit Commission, with the assistance of the Access and Equity Unit, has adopted a revised set of advertising guidelines and procedures. These are attached as Appendix C. These guidelines are based on pre-existing Municipal guidelines on the portrayal of communities in the City’s communications. In 1983, the former City of Toronto published a guide on detecting and eliminating bias and stereotyping in its communications. In November 1992, the former Metro Council adopted a set of principles and guidelines that included the principle that all sectors of the community be sensitively portrayed and all bias and stereotyping be avoided. These guidelines have applied to all.

Departmental communications and to information and communications programs of non-City agencies who use City properties or facilities.

In addition to the above, a set of policy principles was adopted on September 24, 1997 by the former Metro Council with respect to principles of good practice and conduct for political campaigns. In particular, the Council adopted commitment requires that “all those who are involved in election campaigns should undertake...not to publish, or in any way endorse any

election material, including pamphlets, leaflets and posters which cause or invite hostility or division between people of different racial or national groups, or which might reasonably give rise to hostility or division”.

Conclusions:

Toronto City Council and its special purpose bodies have used this incident to take a proactive role in demonstrating their leadership and commitment in the fields of access, equity and race relations.

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(A copy of Appendices A to C attached to the foregoing report was forwarded to all Members of Council with the November 2, 1999, agenda of the Administration Committee and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)