

COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

3. Standing Up to the Rise in Anti-Asian Racism, All Racism & Hate Crimes

Submitted by: Councillor Kirby-Yung

WHEREAS

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted significant negative impacts on the residents of Vancouver including on their economic, physical and mental well-being;
2. Critically, COVID-19 is giving rise to a number of negative social consequences, including an alarming and deeply disturbing increase in Anti-Asian Racism and Hate Crimes that are being reported across the City;
3. Victims of these incidents are often some of the most vulnerable people including seniors and women;
4. People of Asian descent are citing fears of going out for dread of being attacked, and Asians of other cultural backgrounds are citing fear of being mistaken for being Chinese. Indeed, a young person of Indigenous heritage was mistaken for being Chinese and attacked while walking a dog;
5. Vancouver Police Department has stated they have opened 29 investigative files for Anti-Asian crime compared to four during the same time last year, equating to a 640% increase. Given that hate crimes can often go unreported, it is likely this underrepresents the prevalence of racist incidents in the City;
6. In addition to assaults, hateful graffiti has been perpetrated on landmarks that hold great cultural significance including the majestic lions more than once and on the Millennium Gate in Chinatown;
7. The death of George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man in Minneapolis, has triggered multiple protests across the United States that are now being staged in Canada also, including one on May 31 in Vancouver, that was thankfully peaceful and did not result in any harms to people;
8. BC Provincial Attorney General David Eby has stated a commitment to the Crown Prosecutors Independent Prosecution Branch ensure they have the right resources to assist police in prosecuting these crimes. Eby said the public "*need to have confidence incidents will be taken seriously and prosecuted*";
9. Racism, xenophobia and hate speech have no place in Vancouver. While the VPD has implemented several measures to combat the disturbing increase, such as foot patrols and placement of the public safety trailer and cameras, there is a growing call and need for all levels of government to condemn these incidents and help work to combat them. There is a need for a concerted focus on education towards combatting incidents, as well as to educate bystanders how

they can help calling out and reporting of crimes. A focus on supports available to the targets of racism and hate crimes is also critical;

10. Left unchecked, hate is insidious. Currently, anti-Asian racism is most publicly reported, but racism impacts other racialized communities and it spreads like a virus and it impacts us all;
11. Race and ethnic identity are a social determinant of health. The impacts of discrimination and hate activity can include physical and emotional trauma and ongoing mental health concerns;
12. Vancouver City Council and the City of Vancouver continue to embrace collective human rights and the values of an inclusive community and are committed to remaining vigilant in upholding the values of equity, justice, and well-being for all to ensure that we learn from the past, and that we remain proactive in preventing discrimination;
13. Much work has been done towards ensuring an inclusive and welcoming City and country and more needs to be done at this critical moment in time. Hate can only be overcome by education, increased awareness-raising efforts, strong political condemnation, and enforcement of relevant laws;
14. In recent decades, all orders of government in Canada (federal, provincial, and municipal) have taken steps to formally apologize for past discrimination against various groups and have embarked upon a number of processes and actions in support of reconciliation. The following are illustrative examples:
 - a. In 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper on behalf of the Government of Canada, issued a formal apology to Chinese Canadians for the race-based Chinese Head Tax and for the exclusion of Chinese immigrants to Canada from 1923 to 1947;
 - b. In 2008, Prime Minister Harper apologized to former students of Indian residential schools for Canada's role in the system, which separated over 150,000 Aboriginal children from their families and communities;
 - c. On May 15, 2014, Premier Christy Clark issued a formal apology to Chinese Canadians on behalf the entire B.C. Legislature for the historical wrongs imposed on them by past provincial governments;
 - d. On May 18, 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau formally apologized in the House of Commons for the Komagata Maru incident in 1914 in which -3- hundreds of Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu passengers were denied entry to Canada and forced to return to an uncertain and ultimately violent fate in India;
 - e. On November 1, 2017, Vancouver City Council received a report summarizing historical discrimination against Chinese people in Vancouver and unanimously supported the recommendations contained therein. The report noted that "The key learning from the initiative is to ensure that this

history will not repeat and we remain vigilant in upholding the values of equity, justice and well-being for all”;

- f. In April 2018, the City of Vancouver formally apologized to Chinese Canadians for historical discriminatory legislation, regulations, and policies that discriminated against residents of Chinese descent, and noted that “Through the process of reconciliation we consolidate and embrace our firm beliefs and values of being an inclusive community; one that embraces our collective human rights and prepares us to be proactive in preventing discrimination”;
- g. In 2019, the Government of Canada announced its 2019-2022 Anti-Racism Strategy which includes a diverse range of measures from education to crime prevention including supporting funding;
- h. In early 2020, Council unanimously supported motions to officially mark the Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia and International Holocaust Remembrance Day;
- i. In late May, 2020, the BC Lieutenant Governor launched the #DifferentTogether campaign asking leaders in government, business and social services to join in pledging to uphold the Canadian values of diversity and inclusion and to oppose racism and hate in all its forms; and
- j. On May 28, 2020 the City of Vancouver declared May 28, 2020 to be a Day of Action Against Racism with a multilingual proclamation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the Mayor call upon the Federal Government on behalf of Council to advance work on Canada’s Anti-Racism Strategy initiated in 2019, noting the increasing incidents of racism and hate crime in Vancouver and across the country, and write to the Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage & Multiculturalism stressing the importance of prioritizing this work, particularly in the areas of education and bystander awareness as well as supporting victims, given the unique challenges of COVID-19.
- B. THAT the Mayor thank the Provincial Government on behalf of Council for the early work and recent initial funding announcement towards combatting racism, and call upon the Province to further advance and expand work on Anti-Racism in order to ensure safe and welcoming communities, noting the increasing incidents of racism and hate crime in Vancouver and other communities across the Province;

FURTHER THAT the Mayor on behalf of Council, write to the Premier and Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture stressing the importance of prioritizing this work, particularly in the areas of education and bystander awareness and victim support, given the unique challenges of COVID-19.

- C. THAT Council direct staff to deliver a public awareness campaign that condemns all racism and hate crimes in our city, shares info on available resources for victims, and provides clear information for bystanders who observe racially motivated incidents.
- D. THAT staff report back on the development of a broad Anti-Racism/Anti-Hate Strategy for the City of Vancouver.
- E. THAT Council direct staff to engage with the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee for their information and input into the issue of rising Anti-Asian hate crimes and racially motivated crimes.
- F. THAT staff engage with the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee as well as the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee with respect to a broad Anti-Racism/Anti-Hate Strategy for the City of Vancouver.
- G. THAT Council direct staff to identify funding opportunities from senior levels of government that may be available to support this work.

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