

PSAC BC Mainland Human Rights Committee

Minutes

March 15, 2016

In Person: Todd Smith, Ferzana Samnani, Vic Johal, Jen Horsely, Sandra Wasilowski, Kulwant Jassal.

On Teleconference, Jennifer Chieh-Ho, Ruby Langden.

- 1) Call to Order: 18h05
- 2) First Nations Acknowledgement: The committee acknowledged that we are meeting on unceded Coast Salish territory.
- 3) Approval of the Agenda: Added the Harassment Statement and the Terms of Reference.
- 4) Syrian Action and Planning:
 - a) ISS BC is overwhelmed by those wishing to volunteer to help.
 - b) Jennifer C-H suggested that we support a NWDLC even on June 25 in New Westminister. She is looking for volunteers to help co-ordinate. The time of the event is from noon to 16h00 at Friendship Garden which is close by to the New Westminister Skytrain station.
 - c) Also suggested was a drive by our committee to fill a Welcome to Canada Family Basket. This basket helps to welcome refugees to British Columbia and contains basic toiletries, household items and food which will be delivered to our new neighbors when they arrive. The committee approved of this initiative. The event is to cover over four weeks. A poster will be created and sent out to all locals. We will use Patrick Bragg and hope to be able to use the PSAC logo. March 21 is the Persian New Year and the international day to eliminate racial discrimination. We will run from then to April 14. Todd to draft poster and send out. Shane to confirm that his work site can be used as a drop off point. (UPDATE: Shane confirmed that his work place can be used.) A report back at the next meeting will be done. We will use the Regional Council week-end as the close of the campaign. We hope that the Regional Council members will bring in

items as well. Also the Regional Women's Committee will be held on March 31. An email will also go out for others to act as collection points.

- 5) Surrey Pride Festival (Sunday June 26, 2016): The committee would like to support this event and that would require someone to staff a table and coordinate the event (for our committee participation). A volunteer would need to commit only for two hours. It is at Holland Park by the King George Skytrain station. Contact Jennifer C-H and Todd if you want to volunteer.
- 6) Terms of Reference for this committee: It was approved as amended. (see attachment)
- 7) Asian Heritage Month (May): May 21 at UNIFOR Hall in New Westminster. Light refreshment will be served. From 13h00 to 16h00. Volunteers needed and can contact Jennifer C-H. Jennifer is requesting help for this event so please help.
- 8) Mental Health Awareness Month: Stay tuned. Leslie said she wanted to organize something so we are asking her to take the lead on this. It was suggested that she/we get in contact with the Canadian Mental Health Association of BC and the Mood Disorder Association of BC.
- 9) May 17 is Anti Homophobia Day. We will discuss this next meeting.
- 10) Ruby Langdon asks us to welcome and encourage their aboriginal members to be part of this committee and to contact her to get involved with the PSAC.
- 11) Jennifer Chieh-Ho asked us to get active in lobby of our MP. To fight Bill C-24. The committee agreed to put the lobby on our next agenda. We need to research bills that are passed by the Trudeau Liberals so that we can lobby for and against those that conflict with our Human Rights Agenda.
- 12) Adjournment at 19h30.

Report from Jennifer Chieh Ho

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Chieh Ho
PSAC BC Regional Co-Ordinator for Racially Visible Caucus
March 15, 2016

The Racially Visible caucus met between Nov and February, they helped organise three events; the Canadian Labour International Film Festival (CLIFF), the annual Dec 6 Candle light vigil in Surrey and recently to celebrate February, Black History Month. There will be more meetings being scheduled between now and end of the year.

Feb 13 - For the Black History Month event in New Westminster, there was a panel of three speakers which included Marie Clarke Walker from CLC, the Honorary Consular member from Jamaica and Warren Williams, President of CUPE15. There was entertainment by a group from SFU students and a grade 12 high school student. The panelists shared their personal experiences and their hopes and vision being Workers of Colour.

At the beginning of February, posters and bookmarks representing current black labour leaders from the CLC, BC CUPE15, and PSAC were created.

Feb 14th - Annual March for Murdered and Missing Women, Vancouver. I had the honour to be invited to join the Elders, victims' families and drummers to drum with them during the march. It was an empowering and emotional experience to have been part of the drummers group.

The caucus is working on two upcoming events; May Asian Heritage Month (tentatively May 21) and June Multiculturalism Day on June 25 (Theme: Welcome Canadians). The June 25 event is an event which will be held in New Westminster and organised jointly with the New Westminster District Labour Council (I sit on their Community and Social Action Committee). Since the PSAC Lower Mainland Human Rights committee is hoping to be involved with the Refugees situation, I would like to suggest that the committee volunteer to help with organising of this event. Currently, there are only four active members on the organising committee. We will be meeting on Sunday, March 20th at 12 noon in New Westminster.

March 4th Meet with MP of Surrey/Newton as his constituent and as a PSAC member, with two other West Fraser Valley Area Council members. We raised concerns on Reverse job cuts and Bill C4.

As per Bill C-4 info on PSAC website: <http://psacunion.ca/budget-implementation-bill-c4>

This is on the PSAC website: Bill C-4 takes away the democratic rights of federal public sector employees and seriously undermines the health and safety protections in the Canada Labour Code covering workers under federal jurisdiction. PSAC is challenging the constitutionality of Bill C-4 in the courts but wants the Government of Canada to fix the problem itself rather than spend citizens' money on costly litigation.

March 7 and 8th – I had the opportunity to lobby at the BC Legislature Building with a group of women leaders from BC Federation of Labour, raising concerns on three issues; Sexual Assault Services, Childcare and \$15 minimum wage campaign. All three issues are absolute serious Human Rights and social justice issues.

Update on PSAC BC Regional Racially Visible Conference
Theme `Race Forward; Our Union, Our Community, Our Future`

- Organising committee is representative of the Racially Visible Community in the Lower Mainland. I would like to thank everyone for the work they have put in to date.
- Conference dates are May 13 – 15, 2016 tentatively at Hilton Vancouver, Burnaby (pending the outcome of negotiations between the hotel and UNITEHERE Local 40)
- Call out for registration has gone out and deadline is April 7
- The objectives of the 2016 PSAC Regional Conference for Racially Visible Members are to:
 - discuss, strategize and mobilize on issues impacting racially visible members in their region;
 - share experiences and network with other racially visible members in the region;
 - empower and inspire racially visible members to become active in their union, community, and workplaces

There are lots of events (pushing for PSAC issues as well as social justice/human rights issues) taking place from here on, please stay tuned and contact me if you would like to volunteer and take part in any of the events.

Thanks.

Jennifer