

Durham Region Anti-Black Racism Town Hall: Transcript

August 6, 2020

Jodi Shanoff: Hello everyone, my name is Jodi Shanoff and I'm pleased to be your moderator tonight for this important conversation hosted by Durham Region. This session has been organized by the Region to begin a dialogue with residents with the intent of moving toward addressing and eliminating anti-Black racism in the community. The session is only one of the ways in which the Region is opening its doors to hear from residents about how regional policies and programs can help address systemic anti-Black racism in the community. Aside from tonight's discussion, residents are also invited to share stories, questions and ideas with the Region in the following ways:

- [Residents can go online to join the conversation](#) at YourVoice.durham.ca. There, you can register to join the conversation and submit your stories and ideas online; and join with other regional residents doing the same thing.
- Any [residents who wish to share their views](#) and thoughts directly with the Region can send an email to DurhamStrong@durham.ca. That's DurhamStrong, all one word at durham.ca.

Tonight I'm joined by Regional staff, and panelists from Durham's Black community who are here to listen to your stories, answer your questions and discuss your ideas about fighting anti-Black racism in the region. We're all in Durham Region Council Chambers, where we're adhering to social distancing protocols. I'm excited to share hosting duties with Sean Mauricette, an award-winning motivational speaker, artist and youth worker from Durham Region. I'd like to pass things over to Sean to introduce himself, our panel, and to talk about how tonight's session is intended to unfold. Over to you, Sean.

Opening remarks

Sean Mauricette: Very pleased to be here tonight. These are important discussions that are desperately needed if we are to move forward in a way that truly embodies and addresses the needs of a people who have, for the most part, been trying to have their voices heard for quite some time. So I'm very honored to be here. Joining us tonight, we have:

- John Henry, Durham Regional Chair
- Chief Paul Martin, Durham Regional Police Chief
- Celina Caesar-Chavannes, a consultant and former member of parliament
- David Mitchell, Assistant Deputy Minister with the Youth and Justice Division of the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Ann Marie Morrison, the incoming president for the Black Student Success Network at Durham College.

So thank you all for being here. Before we hear from our speakers, I just like to take a minute to set the tone for our discussion tonight. Everyone participating in tonight's call is aware that anti-Black racism is a serious and sensitive issue. We're inviting people to share what may be difficult stories, and we are open to ideas and suggestions about how Regional leaders can help address the systemic barriers that may have contributed to these difficult experiences. However,

what we cannot tolerate tonight are any intolerant and abusive or inappropriate remarks that set back the progress of this discussion. Everyone participating in tonight's discussion is committed to maintaining a constructive and open discussion, where the Region can learn from the feedback from its residents. The people who are technically supporting this discussion will disconnect any caller or any remarks which are considered or deemed to be inappropriate, intolerant or abusive of anyone who was sharing their experiences with us. We will be very vigilant on this point tonight. Beyond the etiquette of this decision, I'd like to pass it back to Jodi, who will cover the technical logistics involved when anyone listening, wishes to join our live panel with a story, question or idea to address anti Black racism in Durham Region. Jodi?

Jodi Shanoff: I will start by explaining how a telephone townhall works. Right now, residents from all over Durham Region are answering their phones and connecting to the discussion. We will hear from the Regional Chair shortly, as well as other panelists who have agreed to share their stories and their time to be part of this important discussion tonight. After that, it'll be your turn. You'll have a chance to share your thoughts, ask your questions and to raise issues that you think are critical at this time. You can get in line to participate at any time by pressing *3 on your phone keypad. You'll then be put through to an operator who will take down your name, the nature of your questions or remarks, and put you in line. For those of you joining us online, please type your question or comments into the question field on your screen. Your questions and comments will be read aloud by me, the moderator. If you have a question about issues discussed during tonight's session, but you don't get a chance to go live during our call, you may submit your comments or questions two ways:

- Residents can go online to join the conversation at YourVoice.durham.ca, where you can register to join the conversation and submit your stories and ideas online; and join with other regional residents doing the same thing.
- Any residents who wish to share their views and thoughts directly with the Region can send an email to DurhamStrong@durham.ca. That's DurhamStrong@durham.ca.

Our emphasis tonight will be on hearing from residents so the Region can better understand the scope of anti-Black racism in the community. Here are a few things to keep in mind when you ask a question tonight. When using your phone to ask a question or submit a comment, please press *3 on your keypad and you'll be routed to an operator who will ask you to provide your name and the nature of your question or comment. We wish to hear from as many residents tonight as possible. There are a lot of people on the line and we want to try and get to as many of your stories, ideas and questions as we can. Please ensure your comments are related to tonight's topic and that you are considerate of the many others like you who would like to share their stories and ideas with our panel. Again, my name is Jodi Shanoff and I'm pleased to be your moderator this evening for this telephone town hall with Durham Regional Chair John Henry; Chief of Police Paul Martin and our panelists members including Celina Caesar-Chavannes, David Mitchell and Ann Marie Morrison. It's my job to keep this conversation moving smoothly and to make sure we get to hear your questions and have as much discussion as possible. Before we start getting to your questions and comments, I'd like to throw things back over to Sean Mauricette to introduce our panel members and hear their opening remarks.

Sean Mauricette: Thanks, Jodi. Tonight we have John Henry; I think I've mentioned this, but once again, John Henry Durham Regional Chair; Chief Paul Martin, Durham Regional Police; Celina Caesar-Chavannes, consultant and former member of parliament; David Mitchell,

Assistant Deputy Minister with the Youth and Justice Division of the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services; and of course Ann Marie Morrison, the incoming president for the Black Student Success Network at Durham College. So with the opening remarks, we'll start with Chair Henry.

Regional Chair John Henry: Good evening and thank you. Good evening everyone. I'd like to start by thanking everyone who is joining us for tonight's important event, either by telephone or through the online stream. Across the communities that make up the Region of Durham, we have been clear in our need to fight racism and discrimination. We work hard to build a region that is welcoming, but we know that embracing diversity and inclusion is not enough. We need to educate ourselves on their realities of anti-Black racism and acknowledge how we have failed in the past to ensure equity for Black residents. That's why your voice is important to this discussion. I'm here to listen to you. Your stories and your feedback, your advice and insight will help us better understand the scope of the situation here in Durham Region, and how Regional programs and policies can help address systemic anti-Black racism in our community.

No form of racism is acceptable, yet sadly people continue to experience unfair treatment because of the colour of their skin or their cultural background—some more frequently than others. I want to be clear that racism has no place in our region. And today we are taking the first steps to tackle this issue. Tonight I'm joined by some of the most accomplished Black leaders and mentors within our community. Our moderator Shawn Mauricette, Celina Caesar-Chavannes, consultant and former member of parliament; David Mitchell, Assistant Deputy Minister, Youth Justice Division of the Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, and Ann Marie Morrison, incoming president for the Black Student Success Network at Durham College. We're also joined by Durham Regional Police Chief Paul Martin. To all our panelists: welcome to this important discussion. Your contributions to tonight's event will help us understand one another, allowing us to create a more inclusive community. We all need to understand that while we have our differences, everyone should be accepted for who they are. It's about working together to help protect the dignity of others. So once again, thank you for joining us this evening. Remember, I'm here to listen, to learn and to take your comments into consideration. With that, I'd like to now turn the town hall over to our moderator, Shawn Mauricette.

Sean Mauricette: OK, thank you Chair Henry; we'll now hear from Durham Regional Police Chief Paul Martin.

Chief Paul Martin: Thank you, Sean, and welcome to everyone here tonight and virtually online. Uh, in reflecting on our community recently it struck me that in my life I have not witnessed a time we have faced so many incredible pressures at once. Nationally, the country has faced, a pandemic whose impact will not be accurately assessed for some time. However, the loss for many has already been great. In addition, this has been a difficult time for many people in our community, particularly those who've been impacted by systemic racism and discrimination. One of the constructive and instructive outcomes of our current context, however, is that it has caused all of us—but particularly those of us in policing—to take a hard look at what we do and how we do it. It is not enough for the Durham Regional Police Service to send messages of understanding without being willing to do that introspection ourselves. I, along with my executive leadership team, developed and endorse the following actions to

address the concerns raised by our community. Over the next several months will be rolling out the following initiatives.

- Collection of race-based data: Currently, the province mandates a collection of race based data for the use of force interactions. Some services have chosen to expand this collection to other interactions with the public. In July, we finalized the DRPS strategy and began the process here. It will be an important one to shed some light on the approximately 500,000 other interactions that we have with the public each and every year.
- Inclusion of community members in interviewing and policy review: This summer we will train interested members of the community to participate in some of our interview processes; to review our internal policies and directives. Is important to open our doors and let the residents of the region, who we serve, see how we make decisions and about who leads, who gets hired, and how we manage our internal processes.
- Bystander and duty to intervene training: We recognize the importance of calling out bad behavior when we see it, no matter the degree. Annually, we will ensure bystander and duty to intervene training, and other equity and inclusion related programs so that we are currently refreshed on these skills. In a demographic census, although we've done it in the past in our service, it has never been robust enough. So in September we will launch an internal demographic census to give us a snapshot of the composition of our organization in order to identify areas of disproportionality and disparity, including in leadership, promotions, opportunities and etc. We need to be able to ensure that we are practicing what we preach in terms of being equitable and inclusive in our own organization. I look forward to the discussion today because I'm sure there are ideas that we as a service can glean from the people in this room, and certainly online tonight. So that we can move forward, better than we were before. So thank you all for your attendance and I look forward to the dialogue.

Jodi Shanoff: Residents who would like to [participate online](#) can find us at durham.ca/VirtualTownHall. The audio feed is available through the Durham website. You can find us there and you'll have an opportunity to input comments and questions in the questions field on the screen. Going to pass it back to Sean now.

Sean Mauricette: Thanks Jodi. And thank you, Chief. We'll now hear from Celina Caesar-Chavannes.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Thank you Sean. I want to first acknowledge that we sit here in Chamber, or sit at home, as visitors on the land inhabited by Indigenous people for thousands of years from across Turtle Island. It is important that we make this acknowledgement as we speak truth and move towards reconciliation.

The heartbeat of racism is denial. Where there is suffering from racist policies, there are denials that those policies are racist. Where there is pain from racist ideas, there is the familiar refrain: I am not racist. This was published today by Ibram X. Kendi, a leading scholar of racism in America. He contributes as a writer to the Atlantic, a National Book Award winner, and a founding director of the Boston University Center for anti-racist research. I use his words today to set the framework for my opening comments. A few weeks ago, the Mayor of Ajax—an area with one of the fastest growing populations of Black

people in Durham Region—put forward a motion that did not mention anti-Black racism. When challenged by his councillors, he stated that the experience of discrimination and racism were based in gender and religion. I can't make this up, even if I tried. When challenged further, he pulled the motion and told council that we were basically lucky that he brought the motion forward because he could have done it on his own. He changed his tune when social media got after him. I mentioned this because ignorance, coupled with denial as Kendi put it, is what Black people face every single day. This, however, was a public display of willful ignorance. Not bias, but blatant willful ignorance. What about those who are not brazen enough to put their ignorance on display? You know what? Black people have to deal with that too.

All that said, I am thankful that the Region of Durham and Chair John Henry are hosting this town hall this evening. Tonight is an opportunity to have an open, honest conversation, and put everything on the table. Only then can we keep the receipts. This is an opportunity for the residents of Durham Region to gather all the receipts. To hold John Henry to account, like you will Mayor Collier and others. Bring the receipts to the ballot box in the next election. But not just Black people. Everyone should hold receipts of what is said tonight, what promises are made and most importantly what action is taken to address and eliminate anti-Black racism, through programs and policies towards the goal of creating a more inclusive society. If our elected officials cannot be held to account in a moment like this. For us; for Black people. Who's next? Who will be willfully ignored next? You, your complaint, your concerns, your angst, your fear, your children, your family. Which community will be ignored next? Tonight is an opportunity for truth, but with truth comes responsibility and accountability. So keep the receipts. Thank you.

Sean Mauricette: Thank you, Celina. Next up is David Mitchell.

David Mitchell: Thank you Sean. I'm gonna keep my remarks very brief. Welcome to the residents of Durham Region that are joining us virtually tonight. I'm not here as the Assistant Deputy Minister of Youth Justice. I'm here as a resident of Durham Region that cares about the community, and has a contribution to make. As a member of the Black community, I'm committed to fighting/challenging racism and attempting to ensure that in Durham Region we have fair, safe and equitable service; that we have access to opportunities; and that we are treated in a respectful manner, especially our children and young people. We cannot be effective as a Region unless the services that support the Region are reflective of its residents. This also includes economic opportunities and looking at the way in which we purchase goods and services as a Region and whether or not the Black community is impacted in a positive way, as we do that with taxpayer dollars. Social, educational and public safety are other areas that we need to be mindful of, in terms of making sure that although this conversation tonight is important, the action that flows from it will be critical. Thank you.

Sean Mauricette: Thank you David and our final panelist to address the call is Ann Marie Morrison.

Ann Marie Morrison: Thank you Sean. Thank you for inviting me to be a part of this conversation tonight. I'm really hoping that with more conversation will become more awareness; will result in sustainable positive action, change and equity that Black

community rightly deserves. The anti-Black racism movement has gotten more recognition recently, and I'm sad and that it took the death of a Black man and the rightful outrage of the Black community for this to happen. I'm noticing that many organizations have published statements in support of the anti-Black racism movement, but we need to remember that four paragraphs posted on your website should not be where this all ends. Another gentle reminder is that properly executed surveys are the best ways to inform policies, and those policies should help to inform your statements, not the other way around. For companies with EDI policies in place, kudos to you and adherence should be your focus.

I represent not only the Black Student Success Network at Durham College, I also represent the immigrants. I'm a Black woman, a Black student, a Black mother to a Prince and my Queen. And with those in mind, there are concerns that I do have. There is a huge disparity between the numbers of students starting college and completing. When we've had conversation with them, they said financing is the biggest problem. What is Durham Region doing to help our Black students in this matter? Another concern is a lack of accessibility to scholarships and noticing that a lot of companies they are awarding students scholarship yearly. But there's not a lot of diversity in the awardees. What is the Durham Region doing about this? Another concern is that the fact that getting a job is twice as hard for Black students graduating college or university. I'm living in a country that says we are for diversity that values inclusion and equity. We should be concerned about this. Even more troubling is the amount of Black people who, though qualified and are hard workers, will not be promoted to supervisory or managerial positions due to the melanin of their skins.

I have noted the number of positions that have been advertised recently for EDI. Much has been done. Much had not been done to protect these positions, and I suggest that the Region of Durham look at this thoroughly. As a human resource management student, I believe more can be done with regards to the recruitment process of various organization to making hiring more inclusive for all. I suggest this tool as another matter for you to address. We have to recognize that negative biases and stereotypes of the Black community helps to feed a lot of injustices our people are experiencing for decades. Conversation is a good starting point, but it should not be where it ends. Saying Black Lives Matter may be fashionable right now for some. But as a mother, a student, and a Black Queen, I'm here to ensure it becomes a genuine reality for all. Thank you.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much to all of our panelists. For those of you who are just joining us, my name is Jodi Shanoff and I'm your co-moderator for this evening's telephone town hall with Sean Mauricette. I'm pleased to be here with Region of Durham Chair John Henry, Police Chief Paul Martin, and members from Durham Region's Black community, including Celina Caesar-Chavannes, David Mitchell, and Ann Marie Morrison. They're all here to hear about, discuss and address issues of systemic anti-Black racism in Durham. The Region has organized this call tonight to start a conversation with residents. To hear your stories, your questions and your ideas about how the region can address anti-Black racism in the broader community. Just a reminder, those of you joining us on your phones can press *3 on your phone at any time to get in the queue to ask a question, share a story or share some ideas. Participants who are online can type comments into the question field on your screen and those will also be brought forward as comments and questions for our

panelists this evening. We're going to get to our first caller now, and now is the time to hear from you all.

Questions

So the first question that I will bring forward was submitted online. So a resident who's listening through the online stream and her name is Christina; and Christina asks the following: what other affirmative action is the region taking to address anti-Black racism and racism in all its forms by the criminalization of mental health?

Sean Mauricette: Over to the panelists.

Regional Chair John Henry: It's John Henry the regional chair and I'm very proud to say that at last Wednesday's Council meeting, Council addressed this issue by moving a motion forward that would put enough mental health workers in our community to have 24/7, 365-day response. It's gone back to staff for review and costing. It will come back into a report for council in September. I'm hoping that council does pre-budget approval and that we will move that project along as quickly as possible so that we can get the mental health workers into our communities to work with our police officers and in partnership with the work that's going on with the two Lakeridge Health mental health workers that work with our Police Department now. So the goal is complete coverage, 365 days of the year and around the clock.

Jodi Shanoff: As reminder if you'd like to get in line to ask a question, please press *3 on your telephone keypads at any time during this call. Again, if you would like to ask a question, please press *3 on your telephone keypad. The call resume momentarily. Thank you for your patience.

The next question that was submitted to us online is from Terry. Terry's listening to the live stream and Terry would like to know, will the Region be establishing any type of anti-racism unit, within the Region, to address long-term solutions to these issues ongoing?

Regional Chair John Henry: So it's John Henry again, the Chair. And yes, we're working internally through our CAO's office now to address those very issues. We're pulling a team together and are working very hard to make sure that we have a thorough understanding of our building and our employees within the Region of Durham. I'm incredibly proud of the work that's been done already, an ongoing and the team is working at it, and the reports will be out very shortly.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you for bearing with us as we deal with our technical issues. I'm going to keep asking questions that are being submitted online. If you're listening online, you can submit your question by typing it into the question field at the bottom of your screen. Callers who would like to speak live with our panel to share a story, share ideas, or ask a question of our panelists this evening, can do so by pressing *3, and you'll be routed to an operator who will ask you to provide your name and the nature of your question or comment.

Our next question coming to us online is from Dominique, and Dominique would like to know what is the Region doing to increase hiring of more visible minorities.

Regional Chair John Henry: Hello, it's Chair John Henry again that has been a unique topic of discussion for the last couple months. I know that the police services are reviewing their practices now, and I'll get Chief Martin to comment on that. And for us at the Region we had we have started to look at all of our policies here at the Region and we haven't—data is not been something that we have openly collected. The last report we did here at the region was in 2014 and those that is being updated again so that we have an accurate relationship with our employees. Somewhere close to 5,000 people work for the Region of Durham.

Chief Paul Martin: Well, just to follow on what the Regional Chair said, is as far as the police service goes, it has been very much a topic of interest with our police service as well as many police services across certainly GTA and the province, and quite frankly across the country. From our perspective over the past five years we have increased the proportion of our under-represented groups in our recruiting through a variety of initiatives. We've gone to diversity recruiting drives, female-only preparation sessions, and this has resulted in approximately a 40 to 50% of our new recruits—hires over the past five years—being from under-represented groups. Is it a destination? Far from it. It's a constant. It's a competition for recruits at the best of times at every police service, so we are always open to new suggestions and new ideas with respect to recruiting. We've improved, but we haven't improved to the point where we would be satisfied with that. So we're continuing that journey. Thank you.

Ann Marie Morrison: A quick question with regards to recruitment processes. I know, you know, we were all prepared about coming to this meeting tonight and so I just wanted to ask you, what was the ratio of Black students that were hired last year or the year before, to the Region of Durham's office and what are the plans for next year? I know we're in COVID, right, so what are the plans next year for the hiring process with regards to students to reflect, you know, the new, your new direction that you're going to.

Regional Chair John Henry: So I think that one of the challenges with Regional government is that we are an employer where people tend to have long careers. And as we have gotten as we're moving along now and you're seeing people retire, the demographics of our buildings are changing. And that's a good thing. When you look at our communities when everyone was hired 25 years ago, they're now coming up to that retirement time and now the representation of our community has changed so much the representation within our buildings, in our staffing, is changing so much. And that's one of the challenges with government is that because people tend to stay for a career, it cycles in in years. But now we're starting to see a very different mix of people coming in through the door of this building, and I'm happy to say that it's not just in policing, it's through our entire process.

For hiring students, we do hire students in the summer time. I can't give you the exact answer. I know that we have our students have to leave early this year because they have to deal with the COVID issue before they go back to school. But we did have to—during this process we had about 230 people that we had to hire—just to deal with the challenges in our long-term care facilities with COVID, because we lost the volunteers in the family members who came in to look after their families. So while I can't have that answer for you tonight, I will have that answer to the best of my ability within it within a few days.

David Mitchell: Chair I don't want to beat up on you tonight, and I'll take my shots at the chief later, but I think it's important, so I'm going to frame this in the context of advice. We have to ensure that the pieces within the Region that we're looking at, whether it's the human resources pieces or the service delivery pieces, because we've had two questions now. One around affirmative action went around mental health, and I want to bring it back to the issue of anti-Black Racism. So it's important to make sure that the people that are having these conversations and making an assessment in terms of what we need have the appropriate lenses.

So when the caller asked about are we planning on having capacity, i.e. similar to the city of Toronto, where they have the fighting anti-Black racism office so there's embedded capacity that any department within that municipality can draw on for assistance. I think that's where people wanted to go. So it's going to be important to make sure people are trained or that you bring the expertise in in terms of what you're looking at in order to get to where we need to get. Because I would submit that had we had that previous lens—and once again this has nothing to do with intent—we might not be experiencing some of the challenges and barriers that we are currently experiencing, right? And we don't want to repeat that. So it's going to be important that you skill up the people that are looking at it and having those conversations; that you reach out to the community in terms of where that expertise lies in understanding of how that manifests itself in terms of whether it's access to opportunities, the economic pieces in terms of the Black businesses here in Durham, and even the opportunity for summer students. And that if we're not... The Chief talked about data collection. If we're not collecting the data and analyzing, and I say this all the time: if we don't know what we have, how are we going to know what we need? And then at what point will we know that we have enough of it if we're not collecting and analyzing?

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much for those comments. We are still working to resolve some technical issues, but we have many opportunities to hear from community members, especially people who are listening to our online live stream right now through the Durham website. You can submit questions, comments, stories, ideas by typing them into the comment question on your screen. Anyone who would like to go live once we have our technical issues resolved can please press *3 on your phone keypad. You'll be routed to an operator who will ask you to provide your name and the nature of your question or comment and we'll get you live on the line.

I'm going to read another question that was submitted online. This is from Jackie and Jackie's question is the following: In addition to the call for a minimum 10 per cent divestment from the Durham Region Police Services, what other resources, financial included, has the Region set aside to support local community organizations?

Regional Chair John Henry: So it's John Henry, the Chair of the Region again, so we do have a grants program within the Region that applications can be made a made for funding; but I'm also very proud of the fact that when we put our paramedic response unit out last year we were taking services to the most vulnerable people in our communities. We've partnered a paramedic, and a social worker who travel throughout the entire Region of Durham to deliver services as needed. They actually use an unmarked vehicle, so they have been able to do great things. So we are working with every organization that touches our office. We do our best to help them, including a raising money through the Office of the

Regional Chair and our former Regional Chairs, including Roger Anderson, to make sure that bursaries are available for students at college and university here in Durham Region. We raise money to make sure that it goes into programs and they're funded through the Regional Chair's golf classic, which is will be carrying on again once COVID is gone and I'm proud of the fact that we're able to raise money and part of that money is divided and goes to Ontario Shores for the great work that they do as well; and I have made a commitment during my term in office to continue to raise as much money so that we can work with Ontario Tech, Durham College and Ontario Shores.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much for that Chair Henry. Our next question was submitted online from Sarah, and Sarah asks the following: will Durham Region be completing employee audits from marginalized and equity-seeking groups employed by public entities and services that they fund?

Regional Chair John Henry: So I'm very lucky tonight, I am joined by our CAO Elaine Baxter-Trahair, and I'll let her answer that question because she's been working on that and she can give you the progress report.

CAO Elaine Baxter-Trahair: Thank you Mr. Chair. There are a number of initiatives going on within the region that Chair Henry and I have launched this year. This initiative tonight is intended for us to learn what is going on in the community of Durham, and to understand at what we need to do as a community development organization to assist that. Within the government, you've probably seen, we are in the process of hiring a Manager for Diversity and Inclusion within our Human Resources Department. We've already reviewed human resources with respect to eliminating barriers, and will be further work done on that as soon as that person's on board.

We're also proposing in the next budget to be adding an individual through my office, in our strategic initiatives unit, that will specifically look at community development to address issues of anti-Black and other racism within the community. And also to ensure that we strengthen our ability to do social development within the community of Durham, which is something that would be a new function for the municipality. The final thing we'll say, as you heard the Chair mention we have not done employee survey in a number of years and it is on our work plan to launch a survey for 2021. It will be part of the budget and that will get into a variety of issues, including the makeup of our staff. We are in the process of recruiting another facilitator to begin an anti-racism and anti-Black racism strategy within the government so that we do understand what our current employees are experiencing and what we need to do to address any issues.

Ann Marie Morrison: Thank you so much. The initiatives are to be commended. I'm happy to hear about that. I have two questions you mentioned that you're looking at hiring a manager for the agitative diversity and inclusion positions. What are you doing? What things are you putting in place to protect that position? The person that you hire for that position will now need to address certain uncomfortable situations, and I believe a lot of managerial positions are not, they're not unionized, they're not secured, so that person coming into that position may be a little bit nervous about addressing those situations. So can you tell me what things are being put in place to give that person more job security? The second thing that you mention. OK, so you know what go ahead with the first question.

Elaine Baxter-Trahair: Yes, and just a friendly reminder that we want to hear more about what is going on within the community of Durham. As I mentioned, we are in the process of recruiting a consultant that will assist us with addressing barriers and issues within the government that are being experienced by our staff and certainly that position that consultant will still be on board when we retain the manager. That process is ongoing. There will be lots of support. We know that it's going to be a challenging job, but the person is being recruited knowing that it is a challenging job and knowing what our expectations are.

Ann Marie Morrison: OK, so thank you for that. I recognize that that will be a challenging job. The second question I had in mind was, what are you doing with regards to the inclusiveness? I know you're hiring a manager for EDI but sometimes when we go into a work place, and we're seeing a manager/supervisor that that person is representing, you know, person, the minority. They are not persons who that we could relate to. I wonder if you understand what I'm saying. So I go into a workplace and you say OK, this person is there representing, they are representing the Black community, but they're not a person who is Black. What are you doing to ensure that?

Elaine Baxter-Trahair: We know that we need to ensure that the person that we hire to assist us in developing the anti-Black racism strategy has to be from that community and have lived experience. We also have the same expectation of the individual that will be hiring to address diversity and inclusion in general.

David Mitchell: I guess, and this is just generally, we need to begin to think about how we situate the conversation that drove the question. Because I don't think the questions been answered. And that question had to do with whether or not we are as a Region prepared to audit organisations that we fund to deliver services, not from the philanthropic, in terms of so that where we have tax dollars funding secondary organisations to deliver services in the region. Whether it's home care, whether it's whatever it is that is out that we don't directly provide as the Region that we're providing funds to provide some type of social service. And the whole concept of: what does that organization look like, that is taking public dollars to deliver that service, to ensure that we are not facilitating anti-Black racism by proxy. So we pay X to pick up the garbage and X doesn't work here, but X has no policies, no representation or different problems. But yet, we're funding it, right? So that's what that conversation is, and we're beginning to talk about that in different spheres, where: we give funding taxpayer dollars to deliver a service, even if it's disaster relief to the Red Cross for instance, right? What does the Red Cross look like? Right? What are their policies so that we're not by proxy allowing it to happen and we're facilitating with public funds? And that conversation needs to get centered because I believe that's where that question came from on the line.

Because every question is going to end up going to the Chair, but I think as part of the conversation maybe that we need to begin to sort of narrow those things in so we appreciate the answers. But based on our experience, our lived experiences as Black people, as residents of the Region, right? So if I get services from whoever that's being funded, but there's no Black people on the board, there's no Black people in management or whatever, but their source of funding is public dollars—we need to be able to leverage our influence in order to ensure that the barriers are removed and that we're not perpetuating by proxy, systemic racism.

John Henry: So, and I absolutely understand the clarification that you've given now and there is a step when organizations come in to apply for funding. They turn in their financial statements. The due diligence that we put forward needs to be different than what it has been in the past. And I absolutely agree with you. So I absolutely heard what you've just said; and you know you ask for a financial statement then maybe we should be asking for some other stuff as well, and I think that's a conversation that we will have very shortly to address that issue. And there again, I do want to recognize that there was a time during the Region where there was a no grants policy. Now there is a grants policy, so we're doing some really good things, but we can do better. We can do much better.

David Mitchell: We need to begin to look at what they're doing another jurisdiction. So for instance in New York City, the city has a rule in terms of minority business. How? What percentage of that business where we are purchasing goods and services must go to the Black community, must go to the Latino community. It's not just a matter of looking at that, because the economic imperative in terms of being able to provide opportunities with the collective dollars of the community, right? And so that's what we're looking at. So I think that's more of where people want to see is what does that mean in terms of fairness and equity? And that community that's been disenfranchised, not having access.

Jodi Shanoff: And Speaking of the community, we're going to try to take a call from the community. Joelle has been on the line and is waiting with a question. Joelle, please, what's on your mind? Share your question or your thoughts with us this evening.

Joelle: Hi yes I'm calling to offer a suggestion, a comment. Start by saying that my impression is that the primary focus of Black Lives Matter has been police reform. And I just wanted to say that we can have nice policies and we can deal with cultural change within the institution, but none of that's going to work. It's going to be just nice policies on paper until you change mechanisms within the police service for processes for complaints and feedback from the public that go directly to the Chief of Police and the Police Services Board. Right now, there is no such thing. I was speaking from experience to a very bad experience two years ago in which, I won't go into the details, but I pursued it up the line in the police services up to, you know, Oshawa headquarters to the staff Sergeant and got nowhere. You know basically just kind of contempt. And it was a very serious issue, and I was told to go to the independent police review director of Ontario. So I compiled a very detailed submission with complaints about specific officers and specific procedures. Send it in. They responded immediately and said, well, I wasn't the victim so they couldn't deal with my complaint. But the victim actually was so intimidated in the situation that she wouldn't stick her neck out. So I was acting on her behalf. And other people, including myself, so that was it, full stop. It's been almost two years and it went nowhere. So I'm so glad we're having this discussion, but I want to say we got to change the internal mechanisms of the police service so that there's a simple, well-known accessible process for complaints and feedback directly to the Chief of Police and Police Services Board. And it needs to be not just from the public, but there's gotta be one internally so that conscientious officers can also participate in improving it without worrying about being isolated by their colleagues. I have a little story: a friend of mine 15 years ago became a prison guard at Kingston Penitentiary. At one point he observed a serious infraction by another guard that could have been dangerous consequences. He reported it to the appropriate authorities. In response, his fellow guards

ostracized him and made work life so difficult he had to quit. So I think that political leaders need the courage to tackle the intransigence of police unions that stand in the way of accountability of their members and to provide conscientious officers with mechanisms to help them do their part to improve the quality of their solution from within. So I'd be happy to, you know, participate further and share those detailed issues that I had brought forward. But anyway, I think that you know the issue we're talking about now is racism, but....

Sean Mauricette: OK, I think we might have lost you. But that's an excellent question. I'm wondering if Chief Paul Martin might want to speak to, is there any changes that are coming or anything being looked at with regard to the complaint process? I think part of what she was talking about was within the police force itself, for other police officers to speak up and have that process, that channel.

Chief Paul Martin: Specifically with public complaints, the issue has been is that more of that voice has been louder to say that the responsibility for investigating ourselves be taken away and that would be provided to independent review agency. So in the case of criminal offenses, it's the Special Investigations Unit or the SIU. In the case of public complaints, is the OIPRD or the office of the independent review director, so they have to receive the complaints in those cases. I have very limited ability to do otherwise under the current legislation. Now, as you may be aware that the Police Services Act is changing and is in the process of changing, through the "Cops Act" as its been referred to. It's been delayed because of COVID, but things are starting to move again, so we'll see what comes out of it. I would suggest you that it's going to be more independent review as opposed to less. It doesn't stop this particular lady, or any complaint quite frankly, from writing to the police services board or to myself or trying to get in touch with me and see what we can do. But we do have to notify the OIPRD in this case would have to be involved in a public complaint and they would deal with it.

Third party complaints as I understand it, are acceptable why they chose to screen it out is up to them, and certainly I have no authority over the SIU or the OIPRD or can answer for that. So by all means, it doesn't preclude anyone from getting in touch with me or getting in touch with the Police Services Board, but those other agencies, depending on whether it meets their mandate, would have to be included as well. Internally, I'd like to address that quickly. We as a service have. I tried to do a number of different things to remove barriers and allow people to come forward with their complaints and the one that was described by the caller is not uncommon unfortunately throughout policing or other agencies quite frankly. So the one thing that we are trying to do that is different from any other police agency that I'm aware of right now is that as of September 8 we will be launching an independent ombuds office; that people now have another venue to anonymously go forward to make complaints if there's issues within the work environment. So it's something new, it's new to policing. It's certainly new to the Durham Regional Police Service and we're going to attempt to create that so that people within our service have an opportunity to have their voice heard.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much for that Chief. A reminder to our listeners this evening. If you have a story you'd like to share, a question you'd like to ask of our panelists this evening, any ideas you'd like to share on the topic of anti-Black racism in Durham Region, we ask you to press *3 on your phone keypad and you'll be routed to an operator who will

take some information from you and then you'll have an opportunity to speak live to us. Residents who are participating online, listening to the live audio stream can type questions and comments into the question field on your screen and will have a chance to read those allowed as well. This evening we will try to get to those.

We're going to go back live to the phone. Katie has been waiting and Katie has a question about police handling of wellness. Katie, go ahead with your question please.

Katie: Good evening everyone. I have two questions actually. My first one is for Chief Martin. As we all know in May of last year and interaction between the Durham Regional police and a young, 16-year-old boy went viral because of the actions of your officers and how they handled a wellness check. Clearly no wellness check should be have handled with such force. Officer Martin how do you plan on changing the policy regarding wellness check? Is there not a crisis intervention team to call that is properly trained to deal with people with mental illness?

Chief Paul Martin: While building on what the Regional Chair talked about, we do have mental health support. In fact, we have, I believe it's—I can check the figures—but it's somewhere in the neighborhood of 179 of our officers, or 178 of our officers have been trained as mental health response officers. That's not all of our frontline officers, but it is a large contingent of them. And then we have specialists. Our mental health response unit. Currently, we have two nurses and two officers that work; they are not 24/7. This is an issue where mental health is really been downloaded to police with really without the funding and without consultation. And we've tried and have struggled—not only our service but number of services across Ontario—have struggled with the whole issue of responding to people in mental health crisis.

Can we do better? Absolutely, we can. In in the case that you're speaking of, that was a mental health check. It led to some violence. Violence never looks good on video, no matter if it's legally justified or not. And that is really the litmus test for officers. And as you're probably aware, this was investigated by the OIPRD or certainly the investigation is overseen by them. So you're right, I think we can always do better with mental health response, and I think the steps that the Region's taking to add more nurses; and our discussions with Lakeridge Health, who have supported us with mental health response, I think can only improve the situation better. I do believe, in my humble opinion, that the money should move upstream and that mental health and people with that lived experience should be treated with respect. It should not be criminalised; and that we deal with it long before it becomes a crisis situation. Unfortunately, we're still dealing with crisis situations. In some cases, armed people. And police are still needed. I hope there is a day that that will not be the case.

Jodi Shanoff: Thanks for that, Chief. Our next question comes live to us from Matt. Matt has a question about employment to support the Black community; Matt, Go ahead.

Matt: Hello, thank you for having me. Hello, Chair Henry. Hello panelists, my name is Matt Cardwell. I'm the owner of the two Royal Oak Pubs in Whitby. We've been employing local residents for the last 10 years and I know we've always had representation of the Black community on staff; and you know that's wonderful. But I'm wondering from an industry that

typically employees young adults, when we when we get young people off the Black community—and of all of all cultures—is there anything, panelists, that we can do to empower young adults that are just kind of starting into their adult lives and starting into this journey, things we can do is employers to make them feel maybe that they don't experience systemic racism in Durham? And is there anything we can do to just, without kind of making them feel in a position where we're asking them differently than we would anyone else; can we empower young people so that maybe they don't experience systemic racism and I'll leave the question at that. Thank you.

David Mitchell: Thank you caller. I think what's going to be important is that you create an environment or an atmosphere where people are comfortable. That is created by the questions that you ask all employees to ensure that they are going to subscribe to your very inclusive, harassment-free environment that you want to create. And then you won't need to sort of ask them special things. You know what you're trying to achieve. You make sure that your screening people in a way that gives you a good sense of whether or not their behavior, the way in which they conduct themselves, is going to be consistent with what you're trying to achieve in terms of a harassment and discrimination free environment where any employee—but in this case in terms of the house that's on fire now, Black young people—can feel comfortable. And it's as simple as asking all of your employees when you're hiring them, your managers in particular, no, tell me one systemic issue that you see that affects Black people, right? And then what you would do about it. It is not about you as the employer, right? So they have some power in there, you're hiring them, right? And you should be hearing things like: model the behaviors that you expect. You know, being an ally. All of these things. So if you're not going to dig deep to see what it is that you're getting because that is what is going to really dictate the culture of your organization and whether it's a small business, large municipality or police service, right? So we need to begin to put the onus back on people to say what have you—when we talk about anti-racism—what are you doing proactively to fight it? So the first thing is to recognize and acknowledge it. So if you ask somebody about that, and they can't tell you, is that really the best? And it doesn't matter where they come from, you know what you're trying to create and they can't tell you about that. Is that the best employee, or the most competitive, or best qualified employee for you to hire knowing what you're trying to achieve?

And then there's the stuff around clear rules and expectations of customers or patrons. I've been here. My daughter plays hockey—twice, and I know this is not a Regional responsibility—but in the local towns where she's and she's been called the N word on the ice playing hockey. Right, there's nothing when you walk in that says you're not allowed to do XYZ. It talks very generally. But people, when they decide to go overboard, it's there. So what are your clear expectations and how do you hold people accountable?

Sean Mauricette: OK I think Celina wanted to join in.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Yeah, so, thank you, I believe it was Matt. I think first of all there has to be a policy. It can't be on the onus of the individual who's coming into your place of work to then decide that this place; you want your establishment to have an anti-racist policy that has to be established right from the beginning. An anti-racist policy, an anti-racism policy allows individuals within your space to hold you to account. In the same way that you'll have a harassment policy, you could have a policy around racism, which provides

clear, specific reporting guidelines and accountability guidelines, and consequences for bad behavior. I think next, there has to be a sense of inclusivity of a place where people belong. If the culture of your organization is toxic. And you don't have a sense of that, bringing people in to work in an environment that is that is toxic, will not have them have a sense of belonging, and they will leave. When we look at some of the research around this, McKinsey put out a report in 2019 around the impact of barriers in the workplaces, towards the US economy. And barriers, inequality or the racial wealth gap cost US economy will cost to use economy 1 trillion to 1.5 trillion dollars over the next 10 years. That is a representation of 6% of their GDP. When you think about that on a scale of your local workplace, what are the barriers that you have in your existing establishment costing your company? Because at the end of the day, is that individual that comes in that is 100% themselves in a culture that allows them to thrive and belong. That is going to impact, positively, your bottom line. So I think there really is an opportunity here to look at how you work within your organization. Establish those policies, establish a culture that allows people to feel that they belong, because culture eats strategy for breakfast. So if any strategy that you put forward is not steeped in a culture that is positive, it's you, the business owner, who's going to end up paying for it. Because that employees going to leave, and your return on that investment of training or whatever that they put forward is going to be lost. And like the US economy, if you remove those barriers, that economic benefit will return to your organization.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much. Thank you for that. Our next live caller is Michelle and Michelle a has a comment and some questions about what kids are learning in schools these days—when they're in school that is.

Michelle: Hi, first of all, thank you for holding this town hall. My—well just outside of the questions are there meeting minutes being taken with like actions and everything? Because excuse my naiveite, but this is the first town hall I've ever been too, so...

Sean Mauricette: So the question is are minutes being taken for today.

Jodi Shanoff: This session is being recorded, and formal report from the session will be generated, yes. Michelle, did you have another question that you wanted to ask the panel?

Michelle: Yes, sorry I'm not live right now? **[You're live.]** Yeah, so one idea is looking at the history that our schools, are public schools, are teaching kids, so I know that there's been a push recently for Aboriginal history. So like I'm not really involved in the school system, but I I'd like to see what our kids are being taught, and if it accurately reflects, our Canadian history for racism.

Sean Mauricette: OK, so she's essentially asking for a little more information as to what the youth are being taught in schools as it pertains to racism within Canada. Celina?

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: So thank you very much. I think that's a topic that is very relevant when, especially when, we look at our school systems. You'd have to be living under a rock to not see what's happening in Peel Region and the blatant racism that's happening there.

I think we need to understand that throughout our formative years, from JK to Grade 12, very little is taught about the Black experience in Canada. And I think this may not be for the Region to deal with—the province certainly needs to do that—but that needs to be addressed so that the curriculum better reflects the Black experience in Canada—and the Black experience does not start at slavery. That needs to be reiterated. It was long before that, and we need to have a richness of that history, that allows our kids, especially Black kids, to understand their identity within the school system from JK to 12. But I think we need to be understanding of where the North American public education system is rooted, and it is heavily influenced by John Dewey who himself was influenced by German philosopher named Hegel. And Hegel wrote that education is the art of making man ethical, and that sounds really good... except for the fact that Hegel also wrote that the continent of Africa is an unsubstantiated mass that has contributed nothing to civilization. Our North American public education system is built on this person's ideology, and he knew that this was untrue, but wanted to justify and rationalize a system of chattel slavery. When the poison is so deep in a system, you need to understand why that system at present day is experiencing symptoms which cause our kids to be suspended at rates higher than everybody else; that cause our kids to not be able to move forward in terms of making choice for university. And I know Ontario has destreamed, and no longer suspends kids in Third Grade.

But I think we really need to look at the system, and how the system further perpetuates anti-Blackness through not teaching it through its hiring processes; through its actual practices. So there's a lot of things that have to happen within our education system to create better outcomes for Black children. And I think that people know a lot of these answers—reports have been done for years and years and years—and they sit on shelves and when something arises, somebody says to the author who wrote the report 25 years ago: Hey, can you help me find the answer again? And I think that is where we need all community members to push for change so that we're not having this conversation 25 years from now.

Ann Marie Morrison: So I just want to comment on what Celina said, and what the member was asking when she called in about asking if notes are being kept about actionable items, about reports that have been done that have been kept on shelves and so forth. We could do a lot of reports, we could do surveys—but if there's nothing coming out of it then it makes no sense. So I want to back up what the caller was asking please to make sure that the notes that are being kept; that some of the things that we are asking, the promises that you've given me Chair Henry, you know making sure I have some details. Please make sure that there's something coming out of this town hall meeting and that it's just not a fad. It's not just us having a conversation and nothing happens after this. Thank you.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much. Thank you for the question and thank you to panelists for your responses and follow-ups. Our next caller is live and her name is Sandra. And Sandra has question about the relationship between Durham Police and the Region's Black community. Go ahead Sandra.

Sandra: Hi, thanks for taking my call. I just wanted to know if there is any plans or anything that's going to take place in strengthening the relationship with the Black community, and especially the young Black boys and men, and the Durham Police.

Chief Paul Martin: Yeah, thank you for that question. Well, when we're talking about accountability and action, the one thing that that Durham Regional Police Services has had, is it's had a diversity, equity and inclusion plan since 2005. We are currently operating under the 2020-2022 plan, which is on our website and is publicly available.

The other thing that the police service does, is that we are held accountable because we report to our Police Services Board. So you can actually see our report card of how we're doing, what we're doing and how fast were doing it. With respect to the improvements, the one thing that we talked about—and I think Celina talked about it—is really having people come in and take a look at those systemic barriers. Those things within our policies, the fundamental pieces that we may be blind to, and quite frankly, we probably are. So we're starting with that, that's already begun. That was a commitment we made it a round table last December that got slowed up a bit with COVID, but we've re-initialized that. So we're starting there, but yes, and our four-point plan that I outlined at my opening remarks, talking about collecting race-based data; having people involved in our interview process from the community; interviewing and policy review; the bystander and duty to intervene; and then our demographic census within our own organization: those things are going to happen. They are enshrined with our executive leadership team. They have committed to it. They're behind it, and these are things that we will be doing in attempt to fundamentally improve the relationship that we have with the community. We know that our relationship is fragile and it doesn't take much to damage any progress that we've made to this point. So we are actively working towards that, and I would certainly encourage you to read that plan. And if you have any further suggestions, I'd be happy to hear them. Please send them to me. But that's our guiding principle and guiding post right now. Thank you.

Ann Marie Morrison: May I make a suggestion Chief Paul Martin, Sir, may I make a suggestion please? I'm from the small island of Jamaica, and we have had issues there when I was younger with the police, and you know the young persons in a community. And they had initiatives like police youth clubs that seek to bring that communication between the police and the young persons in a community. It didn't touch everybody, but it seemed to work a little bit. I don't know if that was one of your initiative and I think the caller was asking for, you know, specific programs. I know you probably don't want to speak to one or two in particular, but that was a great thing. I don't know if small community things will work here, but that's just a suggestion that you may want to take into consideration.

Chief Paul Martin: I appreciate that. I can be quick as far as some of the initiatives that we have in place. So one of the things, thanks to the Province, we have our Youth in Policing program and it is a very, very diverse group of young folks that run that program. They run it themselves. The youth run it for youth, and we get a lot of insight from them, through the Youth in Policing program. And they get some insight of what policing is all about, what we're about and we get to know each other on a human level. We have our diversity advisory committee within the service, as well as a youth committee that's being formalized, and it's going to be more formal going forward. So it's really about taking the advice of the community. I think it's best that we take the lead from the community, because the community knows best what they want. I think we've talked about customer service, and customers; and quite frankly we provide a customer service, and who better to listen to than the customers to be able to shape our policies, our programs and our future going forward

So we are doing that. Those are just a quick snapshot of some of the programs; I would be happy to discuss them in more detail, or others in more detail, with you at some point in time. I know we just don't have time for that tonight, but thank you.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you for that. A reminder to our listeners this evening: if you have a question you'd like to ask of our panel, a story you'd like to share, a comment or idea you'd like to share, please dial *3 on your phone keypad and you'll be put into a queue when you'll have the opportunity to speak live with us. Residents who are listening to the audio stream live online, there is a question field on your screen and you can type your comments, questions, stories in there and they'll be brought forward to be read live as well. I'm now going to hand it over to Sean, who's going to read a question for our panel.

Sean Mauricette: Our next question is an online question from Tanya, and she writes: on June 5, 2020, during an Uxbridge Black Lives Matter peaceful stand in, our families experienced a hateful act involving the Confederate flag. Will Durham Region take action to prohibit visible symbols of hate and racial intolerance?

Regional Chair John Henry: The question is an excellent question, Tanya. I'm sorry that that actually even took place. It is...it is disgraceful that someone would do that and it's upsetting that, in a region where we have come together in so many different ways, that this simple act that one act puts us back months, years. It is just wrong and it is hurtful. To answer that question, I will have a conversation tomorrow with a series of leaders within the organization to see what we can do about that. It's the first time that I've heard this question. And actually, I'm a little shocked. In all honesty, I didn't know that that it happened till tonight. And it's wrong, and terrible, and I'm not sure if we can if we can ban it, but we can find a way to deal with it. And it's upsetting.

David Mitchell: Once again I think it's important that we build frameworks that provide us with the trending and intelligence that we can act in a proactive manner around these things. So this is not new, not quite sure—and my fellow panelists are shaking their heads and especially people that are working with young people—and we're seeing that happen in other places in Canada, so we're not talking about the states anymore, we need to begin to think about in a very proactive way what we plan to do. So we should be all aware of the recent issue of the nooses at the construction sites. What's the plan in Durham if it happens, from the perspective of an investigation, from reassuring people all these other things... and I don't expect an answer. But that's the type of thing, so, where this Confederate flag business, in terms of it being a symbol of basically backlash or racist backlash, to say that your life doesn't matter because this is what's important and we know, individually and collectively as Black people what that stands for in terms of history and repression. So I think that, you know, and it's not just from a law enforcement and policing perspective, because right now, what the callers asking for within the legislative or the by-law making power of the Region, is there by law that could be made, is there a policy, is there, can we deny permits to things where any of those things happen. But it's around thinking: if it's happening there, what's our plan if it makes it here? I've got a friend in Texas and what he says is you learn nothing new the second time a donkey kicks you. So if we watched the donkey kick other people, why are we waiting for it to kick us?

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: I just want to add to David's remarks, is that we need to really set expectations around this. I've had families throughout my tenure as a Member of Parliament who say people having their windows of their house in, you know, in their vehicles and other areas. And this is in Whitby, so families in Whitby. So we need to set expectations on what you are capable of doing as a Region, and I certainly hope that many parts of this conversation Mr. Chair, goes to your colleagues. Either Mayors, or to Regional Councillors and to the Province, and even up to the feds. You're well connected. There are mechanisms to do everything that's being asked for here, but we need to set expectations on what the Region can do, and what needs to be done by a collective effort.

Ann Marie Morrison: I'm just reiterating what my other two panelists said. I've been to that area in Durham Region, facilitated workshops, and I've had students in my workshop who are residents there refer to me as a Brown lady. Even though I have one of the simplest names possible, I've got into businesses and have been totally ignored, so I want to just reiterate exactly what the two panelists have said. I don't know how shocking this, maybe it's you, but I've seen it. So I mean, as somebody who's been around in Durham Region. Let me not say you must have seen it too, but you must have heard something about it. So please, there needs to be some kind of plan going forward with regards to this.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much for that, our next live caller is Carwin. And Carwin looks like would like to share a story with us about his son's education. Carwin, go ahead, please.

Carwin: Hi good evening everyone. Thank you for allowing me to speak. I'm an immigrant and I'm the father of four Black boys. 15, 12, six and five. Of the four sons, three have experienced serious issues of racism here in Durham Region. My eldest son has been asked lots of times, could I call you the N word? Alright, by, students, fellow students. And he ignores. As a Christian, we learn to you know, walk away, sometimes from some of these things. And this is overwhelming in his in his school. The second son, in fact the oldest son as well, was punched his temple. On the ground, in another racist, move by students. The second son didn't experience that much, and my third son experienced this as a result of a teacher. I will tell you all three of my sons are high flyers; or were top students in the country from which we came. Very brilliant students, even my youngest, now seven-year-old son, alright; very smart when he came to Canada, I understand. And we put him in a French immersion school in Durham here; they tried to make a list of, I think there's a list that they make up of students who are special needs. And because my son had a little slower in his speech—all of my son were like that—this particular teacher tried to force to say that there was an issue at home. She had someone speak to him and try to make it look at this, that he was was being abused at home and all of that. I had social protection persons came to my home. And they came, they interviewed our kids and all of these things and they were surprised—said “you have a great family”. You know, they didn't see anything wrong. They were disappointed, alright, but at the school because I know there is some list, I think of 150 students. Schools get money to put students on this list. I think it's 1.5 million they get or something like that. This teacher was intent on put my son on that list and, because we objected, the teacher spent every single day making my son an enemy. She went as far—my son is one of the most loving students; quickly let me try to wrap it up—to say that he touched her places that she shouldn't. When this little five year old kid just raise up his hand and try to reach out to her, alright? Some false accusation she tries every day because she

couldn't understand what he were saying; he wanted to ask her for help to explain what she was saying and she would put him in a corner and having there every day. Basically it was affecting and hurting my son. We went through so much, the school sent us though psychologists or I can't remember what the speech therapist and so on. We have to pay those monies past. The results were our son is very smart and they don't see a problem. You just need to do certain things etc. As a result of the experience in three to four months with this teacher at this school, my son is so traumatized that it doesn't want to see school again. And this young man was so brilliant and so smart. In fact, he has had his own YouTube channel calling, saying that he wants to become a scientist. And you should listen to my son to the things he can do. And now we're fighting and struggling as a family to build his self esteem and to help our son. We have to put him in a new school. We wrote letters to the Superintendent and we got no response. We have nowhere to go. In fact, our son was also physically abused by that teacher. We went to the police station. We called someone. They said that the station may not do anything because they all look out for each other. Those are the words they said. We went there and we asked questions because we didn't want to put our son in a position where police are questioning him and doing certain things before it's traumatizing and affects him. Um, eventually we got some good advice from this station, but nothing really—no action really was taken against this teacher. As a result, my family is moving our son to another school. We moved to another area so that he will get new school. And I believe that the school system is messed up. The school system is allowing racism. Thank you.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: So, sir, this is Celina here and I would like to respond. First of all that this experience that you've had with your four boys are terrible. And one of the things I want to say is that you as a parent should not have to validate how smart your son is, or your sons are, to not have these experiences. It doesn't matter. But I know that we have to do that. I have similar experiences with my son who has been called the N word. He's now 12; when he was 11 he had to deal with that. He is a gifted boy but would not be tested by the school, and became irritable and didn't want to go to school. And when we had to privately test him, found out that he's off the charts gifted young man. I share this story with you because it happens far too often in our education system, where as parents, we have to constantly be advocating for our children because they are streamed; they are mistreated; and I believe every single word that you're saying about how they are being treated. Because I've had similar experiences with my children and how teachers have treated them and how students have treated them as well. I think that there is the Durham Black Educators Network, it's a group of highly experienced individuals throughout the school system that I think is a shoulder that you could tap on. I'm sure that your experience with your sons is not a unique experience, and having that network, or tapping into that network, could really help navigate that system of unknown when it comes to what you need to do. But I think more importantly, as we're seeing what's happening in Peel; I think some of these same practices need to be replicated here in Durham Region where it's not just parents that have to be, you know, sort of stick handling our children or moving them to different schools. This system needs to be held accountable and we need to have a blueprint of what is going right in Peel Region, had that same thing happen here. But we need to call on our MPPs to do that, to make sure that that happens so that no child has that experience in a school system within Canada. And I think that that's particularly important. We also have to make sure that that we're looking at or that in holding people to account, we're looking at the

research. The research, again, as I said earlier, is there about the disproportional impact on Black children; the disparity within what happens to Black children. And that needs to be consistently brought forward. So I would advise to connect with the Durham Black Educators Network, and to continue to call for action like has happened in Peel and probably connect with some of those individuals that have seen that change happen in Peel and Vaughn as well.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much. Thank you for sharing your story. Thank you so much to our panelists for sharing your stories and comments and responses as well. Just a reminder to our listeners this evening if you'd like to participate in the conversation. If you have a story, or a question, or an idea you'd like to share with the people on our panel this evening, you can dial *3 on your phone keypad and you'll be put into a queue and an operator will take some information from you and then we'll try to get to live on line. People who are listening to the live stream through the Durham website, you can submit comments in the comment field; comments, questions, ideas. And we'll look for an opportunity to bring those forward in our discussion this evening. We've had over 7,000 people participate with us this evening so far through the various channels open to this discussion. So that's really exceptional, and we still have lots of time here together to address questions and stories and ideas, so please stay with us and share with us. Speaking of sharing, the next up is Ella. Ella has a story that she would like to share live with us about policing. Ella, go ahead, please.

Ella: Thank you very much for taking my call. I had a question. What's the, due to the recent events and Black Lives Matter movement, was the Durham Police Department defunded? How much; what services did the money come from? From what police services was the money allocated for that defunding?

Sean Mauricette: So I'm trying to understand the question she's asking. It has to do with the allocation of money, or the reallocation of money from Durham Police. It was a a little hard to hear that one.

Ella: Yeah, I'll repeat the question. Was the Durham Regional Police Department defunded? By how much? And where did the money come from? Which police services was the money taken from?

Sean Mauricette: OK, so I think the question is. How much was the Durham Region Police Services defunded and where did the money come from?

David Mitchell: Yeah. I think it's important to understand the concept of defunding. And one of the complexities of this is that we've been trying to apply a very simplistic label to a complex issue. I think that if you talk to police leaders and people in law enforcement, they understand that there may be things that we're doing in mental health in other areas that should be done elsewhere. So we're talking about de-tasking and re-allocating. So there has been, and that would be in Durham where we live, that would be a Regional decision. With respect to whether or not there would be any de-tasking and reallocation, and to the best of my knowledge—and the Chief can speak—there has been no re-tasking or any reallocation of funds as it relates to frontline policing.

Chief Paul Martin: You are absolutely correct. Other than the initiative that Chair Henry spoke about, with respect to funding some future nurses to work with police officers and mental health support unit—which we already have in place, but just not a 24/7 operation—that is a real issue of re-tasking. The issue of defunding, I think probably the best analogy I can provide is it's like a relay race. The other agencies have to be at a run. And we have to be able to hand the baton off on the run because people aren't going to wait for these services, and in some cases these crisis services are needed immediately. So I think you're right. I think this discussion has to go on, and I think there's a misunderstanding about defunding. It is about re-allocating funds, and I've already indicated throughout this conversation tonight is that I do believe that at some point in time with proper re-tasking, that money should be pushed further upstream to deal with a number of these issues. Specifically, mental health response, much before, long before it ever becomes a crisis. So I do agree with that, and I think it's definitely a conversation that has to be had.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much for that question. Our next live question comes to us from Maureen and Maureen has a question, or is going to share an experience that she had on public transit. Maureen, please go ahead.

Maureen [transcribed as heard]: Yes, that about, say, little before, no, after September 11—so about 12 years ago, but I didn't say anything right because sometimes I like to let things go by and pass by, right? So they didn't hit me or nothing like that, but I was on the bus coming from Bowmanville, I was in Bowmanville and I just use language, I was talking, I usually talk. But this time when the driver said we're leaving with; the driver get so mad and angry. He was even like it; he showed a different face. And then I ask another jockey too, one who start passes on to the drivers. Um, you know, that lady, don't let the trouble on the bus. She's leaving, she's leaving, what's the matter with him? Is he sick in his head or something? I asked if he sick in his brain, because I don't know why he why he should get mad if I tell my language of [unknown] because it is true. Cause I could prove it, you understand? And then he get angry, he said that lady said she did [unknown]; why should they hire Black people [unknown]. And in fact, there's a man in anger and also she shouldn't her, they shouldn't hire her. I am a suitable person. If I am suitable. You understand? You want to take me. I don't think the bus drivers—I don't have no problem with nobody in New York. I would say after [unknown] and before. And with Black English we didn't have no problem. We don't have no problem with nobody in in in the states, but we just want to go to talk a little early. And when the train went to leave yet, you still leave at 7 o'clock in the morning, and then eventually after talking so long, and giving some joke with the [unknown] officer we held up, we forget, we don't realize all that oh, it's seven o'clock do you want to leave; and then come come come and officer had to phone the train, and they held up the train. The train left at 7:30 in the morning from Penn Station. There's no way; I never have no problem with nobody. Those bus drivers. I want know if they don't like to drive a bus. They can drive dogs, and they think they're going to keep on driving dogs. They're not gonna talk; I'm not telling nobody nonsense. None. I just wouldn't want anyone with [unknown] clear the border and I'm going to see my sister work in government. I'm not bragging to rove you, I could prove it then I will not teach assaulting over there. I have a decent family. Who careless whether I was a thief or generally; I'm not gonna tolerate for no body nonsense. I'm not good, I just sit in the [unknown]. And I'm going to go over to see my family. OK, and my family hate me. Why do you think I'm leaving the house [unknown]

somebody in America. And the living in this house. Because I'm a clean, sensible person, OK? I'm not a woman to have, I don't have long time, I'm not that. I work very hard. I like the Chief of Police to tell the drivers: do not interfere in my life.

Sean Mauricette: Let me see if I got that. So my understanding is the lady takes the bus from Bowmanville into the train station on a regular basis. She has a conversation with the driver, and the conversation turned to representation and asking about why there aren't more Black bus drivers. And the driver got upset and I guess that there was an exchanged and she just felt that she was disrespected and says that you know I'm a resident here, I have a good job. I'm not a nobody and I shouldn't be treated disrespectfully, and I think this is just, you know, Chair, another piece in terms of public transportation and what we do with people. And we're seeing more and more of this as it relates to civility. So you say good morning to me, I say good morning, I say good morning to the Chief, and the Chief doesn't answer me. Right, what not that you would—COVID or no COVID, I'd pull your tie. But then I'm thinking OK, why did the Chief not say good morning to me? Is it the skin I'm in? Simple things that people don't understand, especially in this time where, and obviously it's not the driver or any other public servant in a Regional public servant to understand everything that this woman's gone through.

But it's just that one more thing when they tell you about microaggressions, right? The last thing you explained it from, you know, I tell some of our folks. If you're in a bad mood and you're going to upset people today, call in sick. Don't come to work. Don't upset me and don't upset the public and don't upset everybody else that we're responsible for. So it's just once again, driving that piece around civility so you minimize the misinterpretation that somebody that's uncivil as bad customer service is all the sudden equated with being racist, because the person knows nothing different than everything else seems to be going fine until we had the conversation about Black people. I think that's what she said.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: This is Celina. If you interpreted that correctly, David, I wan to distill that down further and bring it back to one of the first points that David brought up earlier: If the central focus of this conversation is anti-Black racism, with the goal to address and eliminate anti-Black racism through programs and policy towards the goal of creating a more inclusive community, then we need to start in our own house. And we need to understand what is happening within the Region of Durham and your 5,000 employees. What is happening here? So if she's saying where are the Black transportation workers, then we could have that question as well for every organization as well. As David said earlier, the proxy organizations that the original color was talking about, in terms of who the Region funds to do with services? Are they also representative? So I think the caller brings up a really good point. It brings us full circle. If we're not starting in our own house and recognizing who was working here, and if there is actually a representative sample of individuals who looks like the community within this building. This is the big elephant in this massive room. Who works here? What do they look like? And what levels of management are they at? Not just not just at a percentage of, but what does that look like when you stratify it across upper management? Middle management? And worker at the door? Who is who is here and are we represented? Are we represented in communities, in organizations that you fund? And that is critically important when you're thinking about putting out a mandate for anti-Black racism? If you don't have people at the table who understand

fundamentally what that means through experience, as well as expertise, then you are going to be here in 25 years—or probably not you I don't know—but somebody is going to be here having this conversation about anti-Black racism because you didn't do it right in the first place. And it can't be just one person that you hire tomorrow and say, well we got the one person and that person is supposed to be it. It has to be throughout the organization. It has to be intentional. It has to be sustained and has to be such that person like, Ann Marie said that person is able to thrive in this job and do it well.

Ann Marie Morrison: And just to add, you know with conversation we become more culturally aware. I mean, you know be aware that as a woman and a woman from the Caribbean when I speak loudly, it doesn't mean that I'm angry, it just means that I'm just like this and very vocal. Don't get afraid when I raise my voice. Don't think that I'm stupid when stutter, it just means that I'm trying to let you understand more clearly what I'm saying because I'm aware that I have an accent and I'm aware of the audience that I'm speaking to. So the more that your employees, the more that other races are aware of the cultural differences; the more that they are aware of the biases that they hold, the stereotypes, the better it will be. Because I believe that because there is misunderstanding, misunderstanding breeds hate. And hate is the basis of racism. I firmly believe that. Thank you.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you everyone. Thank you for the stories and the comments. Our next caller who's going to go live is Mary, and some people may remember that Mary was the very first person, who we wanted to bring live on the call this evening and we had a couple technical issues, but she's still with us. Thank you so much, Mary. We'd love to hear your story if you can share that with us now.

Mary: Thank you so much for accepting my call again. I really appreciate that. I will make it very short. I'm from Africa, a single mom of two kids; bright, beautiful kids. And I'm a frontline worker, which I'm really proud of. Worked as a frontline over 21 years. My major concern is since I moved to Durham Region, I've had a lot of issues about critical accent. When I speak, it's like—ohh you have African accent and we don't understand you. And I'm like why is it just on this side? Uhm, no matter how you communicate to the point. I tend to like, swallow my voice. But I got to the point that I had to like speak up. And it became that I am being rude which is not the way it is. But when you try to like explain something and nobody seems to like, we get what you're saying within a group you know; causing very low self esteem which we were not brought up that way. I wasn't brought up that way. So this time around, I had to like raise my voice and no matter how much I complain of how this is affecting me, the managers I complain to brush it aside and never address it. Because they look at it, it's a racial issue which needs to be addressed. As much as I'm making my comment to this group. I strongly believe that people understand what I'm talking about. They understand what I'm saying. I don't have to repeat myself, but it's an ongoing concern that people will laugh at your work, even after you put all your effort and, you know, strength to communicate. With my position, I have to like give record and communicate with that. But because of the way they want to just ridicule you or just like make fun of it, I'm not even appreciated. And at the same time you brought that to a manager, you've been brushed aside because oh you know why, you need to speak clearer because maybe they don't understand you. No, it's not because they don't understand, it is because they don't want to

understand me. That's how I feel. But it won't stop me for being who I am. But at the same time. It's just that when you complain... as a matter of fact, I look today: what I complained was brushed aside, I did report it, and was suspended, actually with no pay for three days because I ignored that they said in the world I wasn't being fair at work, I wasn't being professional, I was just trying to like ignore the fact that I don't want to get upset, but it's been taken at the different meaning. So this.... and you can tell the other fellow person is a white person that has a voice. I don't have a voice.

Sean Mauricette: OK. Mary, thank you by the way, I think of a beautiful voice I might add. You spoke very... I understood everything perfectly clear. I think I think Celina had a comment and then David.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: So I really want to thank you for your testimony, and this was actually brought up earlier by Ann Marie, so we've had someone speak to it. I just want to acknowledge what you're saying and say that I completely understand. But there is also a negative impact, and I think this is what I want the Regional Chair to understand. There is an impact when we look at Toronto's Children's Aid Services, and I'll go back to where I talk about hiring people who understand the experience and the expertise of being Black. When we look at Toronto's Children's Aid Services, we see that Black children in Children's Aid represents 40% of children in Children's Aid—down the street. 40% of those children are my children. And there is no way that that should be a number of children in a system. The issue is that there isn't individual... there are not enough individuals who have that cultural sensitivity to understand that when Anne Marie raises her voice, she's not violent, mad. She's not upset. She's passionate. She might be a little energetic. But that doesn't make her a bad worker. That doesn't make the call someone that should be dismissed. That doesn't make a parent someone that should get their kids removed from them. This is the impact of anti-Black racism in our systems. And our system it destroys people, so this caller now will likely, you know, feel so frustrated with her job that she leaves, which speaks to the economic impact of someone as brilliant as her leaving an organization. Which speaks to why, again, you need to have individuals who understand that. The willful ignorance of people to not say they just don't understand what she's saying is nonsense in 2020; it's absolute nonsense. Because there is a negative consequential impact, not just for our communities, but for the economy of Durham Region as well.

David Mitchell: So let me give you two examples, and this is important as it relates to the accountability pieces when folks are discriminated against or they experience a micro aggression in relation to their accent, which is then generally once again connected to their race. So in this case, she speaks, somebody says they don't answer, she complains to a manager and manager, writes down the complaint says, OK, I'll investigate. It goes back to the person says hey, this person complained that you didn't treat them well. He said, well, you know, I couldn't understand her and they'll go back and they'll write the complaint off and say no, OK, that's fair enough, that's reasonable. Would we not say? You couldn't understand her? So that's it. Well, as the manager, how did you understand her to take her complaint? But yet you are willing then to say that the employee that or the service provider that she was complaining about didn't understand, right? And then we allow people to escape accountability. When I first started working frontline in Corrections, we had, I'm not going to name the ethnicity or social identity, we had particular officers that spoke with a

heavy accent and people would always complain “I can’t understand them on the radio.” But yet, when individual prisoners from that ethnic group came in, their English was good enough for you to translate. We can't have it both ways. We have to hold people accountable, and we need to be professional. And professional sometimes means sitting there and listening carefully because it's intolerance based on, or impatience based on, colour. Right, some people we will listen to right? And I know the Chief has done some work here because we've had these experiences with the Speak Up Durham. And where people are actually say, OK, I actually got what you said because I spent the time. Right, and this some of this comes back to the civility piece, so some of it is also holding the managers accountable. You're prepared to write off a complaint as being unsubstantiated because you claim that the individual who is the respondent didn't understand. But you understood exactly what they said as you took the complaint down in writing. You didn't ask them too, and that's acceptable? And this is how insidious it gets. So I think that it's important that we drive—it's those little things that just build and build and build. And then we have the explosions.

Ann Marie Morrison: I completely agree with my two panelists. I'll tell you a lot of reasons why we have Black persons, and especially persons from you know parts of the world, Africa, the Caribbean, that don't speak up; that accept certain abuse: it's because we're scared. Very scared that we may lose our jobs. And then when we lose those jobs it's three times more harder for us to get another job. So when we're in a certain job we will take it: Oh, she's stupid. How did she get that position? What is she saying? Why is she even here? We hear them, we know, we understand, but we don't say anything because we're scared. And there isn't a lot of job security for persons like myself. And I wish that we would do something about this, because then, if we were able to speak up, you'd understand us much better. You would know where we're coming from. You would know that we are hard working people, hard working individuals who just want to be heard. That's it. Just understand us more. Thank you.

Jodi Shanoff: Thank you very much for that. Our next live caller is Suzanne and Suzanne would like to ask a question or share an experience about police services. Suzanne. Go ahead, please.

Suzanne: OK, first of all, I'm in tears because I feel so badly for all these people that are out here in Durham. That man with four kids that is having to deal with teachers treating his children that way; and the lady that just spoke, I had no idea it was that bad out here in Durham. And so I am so sorry that exists. I'm retired. And if any committee wants to get set up with, anything to do with helping with anything with the Black people, I would certainly be on it. I'm great at paperwork. I would do any of it. And then next, uh, Durham Regional Police Services. 95% of them are wonderful. I thank them for their service. And God bless them for what they have to put up with. However, I had a very horrible experience 18 years ago when my son was 27. And they were called the Durham Regional Police Force at the time. And the good old boys taught the new boys how to take care of the young teenagers, whether they're Black or white. And at that point they were mostly white. County boys. And they were beaten and thrown in the fields around here. And my son happened to be one of them. We moved out here 30 years ago and he was about 15 when he moved out and 27 he really wasn't doing anything wrong that night and got brutally beaten. In a parking lot, the

police station, and we sued. And his life has been hell since then. I'm very thankful for Officer Friendly. Who, when my son ended up with mental health illness because of it, was awesome and led the police force to help me and his dad get him to the hospital. So there's a whole lot of things out here in Durham. We need help with. And I would gladly help on any committee for anything.

Sean Mauricette: OK, thanks for that. That was 17 years ago. Quite some time ago. 2020 now, but it shows that that there are some significant strides that have happened. We still have a ways to go, but some of the trauma that people are inflicted with stays with them for life. And that's something that we need to remember as we take steps towards creating a better future.

Jodi Shanoff: We're going to go live to our next caller, thank you very much for that. Sasha is live with us and Sasha has a story about a professional experience she had with racism. Sasha, go ahead, please.

Sasha: Hi there, thank you for taking my call this evening. Um, the panel has been amazing. I just wanted to say that, with information, support, and experiences as well. So I wanted to share a professional experience that I had. I work for the Region of Durham and I am a proud member of the workforce in in Durham. I live outside of Durham. And when the death of George Floyd and Ahmaud Aubrey came about, you know, there was some tensions happening and my first instinct was to check on my colleagues to make sure that they were supported, and to know that if they needed anything that we were here for them. So I voiced, I guess I asked, if we could perhaps distribute a message of solidarity throughout our department, just to show that we are here for whatever support is required, and I was told that due to Durham Region having a police department within our regional strategy, that that would be discouraged. And I was really disheartened. I have, you know, I'm 40 years old and I have two children who mixed. They also have had experiences racist, racist experiences within the school system in my children are quite young. And so all of this just kind of flooded me with... OK professionally, where do I go with this? Is this something that I push for? Is this something that I step back and say, is this my place? But I was disheartened so I kind of took another route and I went through our professional organization and we started doing some work from there. I guess what I wanted to share was A) I was disappointed because regardless if we have a police service within our region, this isn't only about police brutality. This is systemic. This is institutional. It goes into our school system as we know, as we've seen and beyond that; professionally, I wanted to know that I didn't have to feel—as most of my Black colleagues I'm sure have felt many times over the years—dismissed; thought of as you know this is not important because it is very important and I was quite disappointed for those reasons. So I wanted to share that experience. I don't know that much has happened since then. I do see people kind of hopping on board now and with all the attention that you know Black Lives Matter movement has been getting, which they surely deserve an deserved along time ago. I just feel like it was a really slow response and I still feel like I'm sure if you asked our staff how they feel. Our Black staff, they would probably tell you, you know all of their experiences and share that they don't feel supported and I wanted to make sure that we talk about this. This isn't something that should be kind of swept under the rug, or people are afraid to talk about; if that means that we need to integrate some learning into our professional days, our

professional lives, that's what we need to do. And I just wanted to show support and solidarity for all of our Black colleagues within the Region of Durham. And I thank you so much for listening this evening.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: So has the Region put out a statement.

David Mitchell: A statement on anti-racism in solidarity with the Black community. So we know the Chief has, right, and spoke to his officers about that. Was a statement issued to your employees of Durham.

Regional Chair John Henry: Actually, I made a statement during the, not our last council meeting the council meeting before that, and during council about exactly what we were doing and how this was coming together tonight. So there has been a statement made and, to the CAO?

Elaine Baxter-Trahair: So sorry, yes. Thank you Mr. Chair. Yes, I also did a statement and it was a topic of conversation and one of the town halls that we had with all stuff. We've been doing them regularly throughout the COVID crisis.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: So I mean, I appreciate the caller coming forward and actually, I feels sort of blindsided here. That we're at a town hall on anti-Black racism and the Region hasn't publicly put out a statement. Is that what I'm hearing? Is there something on your website? Is there something on your website that says solidarity to the community, related to anti-Blackness.

Elaine Baxter-Trahair: I'm looking at the Chair and it's just because it's not top of mind because we did our statements early on; as soon as at the issue became prevalent. We did a statement to staff and I think we also said something publicly, Mr. Chair, if I remember correctly.

Regional Chair John Henry: Again during our council meeting I made a very, I made a very... I made a statement during council meeting to bring the issue to council. What was going on. So, I'm a little bit off guard just because of the timing, but we've done a number of things.

David Mitchell: In fairness, I think Celina is asking based on what the caller and employee is saying. Basically what we heard was she wanted to do something to demonstrate solidarity at this time and going forward and whoever, not necessarily you, within that immediate circle of authority said no, because we have a police department we don't want to offend them because one of the drivers has been obviously the policing situation. So we're just trying to get our heads wrapped around. That's why we were just sort of Googling over here, so I know the Chief did, and we know in other municipalities people have done things or the CaO's made a statement to the all of the employees. So we're just trying to sort of, balance that out.

Celina Caesar-Chavannes: I think David you are being quite generous with time here. It's either they put out a statement or they did not. If you have a community that is that has Black representation in it, or not, there is a global movement around anti-Blackness and did

the Region of Durham put out a statement? And I'm not going to expect an answer because clearly there is... you need to look or confer to your notes. The point I want to make, is back to my original point in my opening statement, Mr. Chair, and to the person that called and I hope to the listeners is that receipts need to be kept from this meeting. And I think it is important when you think about—and I appreciate the town hall—but having things can find that you cannot publicly post on a public space not within here, and maybe a few people hear it and maybe a few people may pick it up, but publicly posts to the people of Durham who look like me, that we do not tolerate anti -lack racism in any form on any day, especially Sundays. Then I feel like there might be a slight problem. I feel blindsided here. That needs to be done is not good enough to just hold a town hall. It's not good enough to just make a statement within these walls. You need to put it publicly and then you need to follow up with action. Maybe I'm wrong here, but I really feel blindsided that that was not public.

David Mitchell: so we were trying to reconcile that. In fact, I live in Pickering. I know when you're coming in North on Altona, there's a big sign there and their sign says Black Lives Matters. And we are against racism like. So that's an actual road sign, a lit road sign was there and actually I was shocked to see it.

Regional Chair John Henry: So there was a number of press releases put out for this evening tonight that put the position forward and I'm...

Elaine Baxter-Trahair: ...And we certainly did extensive communication with all staff across the Region, but there was a public statement.

Closing remarks

Jodi Shanoff: As the moderator, I'm going to jump in at this point because we have come to the end of the discussion that we had planned for this evening, but obviously much discussion left to be had. Channels for other residents to participate in the discussion with the Region. Whether it's through yourvoice.durham.ca or DurhamStrong@durham.ca that's DurhamStrong, all one word at durham.ca; and I'm going to pass things over to our moderator Sean, who's going to wrap up for the evening.

Sean Mauricette: Thank you Jodi. Given the times that we are living in, we have two important choices to make. We can either choose to be reactive and respond to issues once they arise, or we can be proactive, preparing to respond to potential issues in advance. The key here, in my opinion, is to do both. We need to react immediately to the plethora of issues affecting the Black community, but also to take preventative measures for the future. The data is there and can no longer be ignored. It is my hope that the Region of Durham will take the information tonight, that comes to us directly from the people within the Black community, and other communities, and continues to take important strides towards laying important foundations that can build a stronger tomorrow. But the change has to start now. As Doctor King said: have faith. We don't need to see the entire staircase. Just take the first step. Tonight was definitely a step. It was an important step, but it cannot be the only step. I'm hoping that this discussion can continue. On behalf of everyone here, thank you. And Goodnight.