



CITY EXPERIENCE
Mayor's Office of Resilience and Equity

Asian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | February 4, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Masood Kasim, Athan Lau, Hieu Lê, Cecilia Nguyen, Bee Paredes, Parisa Pilehvar, Vivian Wang, Yi Zhang

Commissioners Absent: Meg Chang, Sarah Gilpin, Ha Huynh, Anna Thao, Tina Tran

I. Call to Order and Introductions

- a. Meeting called to order at 12:03 pm by Vice Chair Pilehvar.

II. Guest Speaker: Jesse Guardiola, Tulsa Area United Way

- a. Jesse introduced himself and shared about his role at Tulsa Area United Way. Prior to TAUW, he was the Hispanic Outreach Director for Tulsa Police Department and served on the Greater Tulsa Area Hispanic/Latinx Affairs Commission. Passed out a TAUW brochure.
- b. Jesse offered attend community events to share information and resources available through TAUW.
- c. There is currently a lot of fear in Oklahoma in the immigrant community. Tulsa Public Schools and Union Public Schools are seeing students not attending out of fear. There is misinformation in the community, and leaders are trying to spread accurate information.
- d. Jesse posed the question: How do we build coalition across communities, including the Asian community, and align Asian and Hispanic communities on common issues?
 - i. Commissioner Paredes: What have you experienced works with the Hispanic community?
 1. Jesse: Building trust. Need to go beyond showing up at festivals.
 - ii. Commissioner Kasim: The Hispanic community often reaches out asking about their rights. How do we give them quality information?
 1. Jesse: YWCA Tulsa, Mexican Consulate, Tulsa Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Catholic Charities are good resources.
 2. Commissioner Kasim: Do these organizations have information on power of attorney?
 3. Jesse: The Consulate is working on this. Important for immigrant families to have in place.
 - iii. Vice Chair Pilehvar: The Asian community doesn't have shared language or identity. The Human Rights Commission's 2SLGBTQIA+ Committee hosted a Know Your Rights forum, and doing something like that for Asian



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community requires language access (City has experience with this). Many in the Asian community have different paths of arriving to the US, Afghan refugee status has an uncertain future. Important to recognize this impacts more than Asian community.

1. Jesse will forward a know your rights resource to Lexi for translation.

iv. Jesse reiterated his offer to be a resource, can reach out through Lexi.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Vice Chair Pilehvar entertained a motion to approve January meeting minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Paredes: Last name is spelled wrong on page three.
 - ii. Commissioner Kasim made a motion, Commissioner Paredes seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 8
- b. Motion carried, January meeting minutes approved with one edit.

IV. Guest Speaker: Maricarmen Mitchell, Tulsa Public Schools

- a. Maricarmen passed out a packet with information about AAPI students in Tulsa Public Schools.
- b. About 3% of TPS students are AAPI. Most students were born in the US, Micronesia, or Afghanistan. Many different languages spoken: Chuukese, Hmong, Marshallese, Pashto, and Dari are largest.
- c. Working to ensure current 8th graders have access to information about enrolling in high school.
- d. Family engagement initiatives from TPS:
 - i. Welcoming sessions for recently arrived families: Offered twice monthly to all families new to the district, accessible in top six languages (5 Asian plus Spanish). Mostly Spanish-speaking families attending, would love to see more turnout from AAPI families. Provide important information about the education system and how to advocate for their student. Opportunity to double check language access information and contact information.
 - ii. New family orientation
 - iii. Community connections: Invite organizations to present information on services available to immigrant communities.
 - iv. FAFSA nights
 - v. Multilingual parent advisory committee: Provides information about district services available to families, opportunity to provide feedback to help improve services.
 - vi. Language assistance: Document translation, live and phone interpretation. "I speak" cards help families request assistance in their language.
- e. Provide refugee-focused supports to all schools with Afghan students. Have hired five refugee liaisons and are assigned to schools with highest Afghan enrollment.
 - i. Commissioner Kasim: How are these services funded?
 - 1. Maricarmen: Grants through DHS, have not been interrupted or suspended. In fact, have recently welcomed two new Afghan families.
- f. Maricarmen expressed desire to collaborate to support AAPI students.



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- i. Vice Chair Pilehvar: The commission has an education committee with ideas about school-facing supports, will be in touch. Would like to attend family engagement events. Many challenges ahead and lots of hope in our community.

V. Vice Chair Report

- a. Vice Chair Pilehvar shared an update from last Human Rights Commission meeting, during which she presented on literacy rates. The average reading proficiency for third graders in TPS is 26%, the Asian community is 30%, and Pacific Islanders is 4%. Opportunity to meet range of needs AAPI students have.
- b. Building coalition with other communities – bring know your rights information to our community. What raises up one community, raises up all of us.
- c. It's been one year of the AAC.
 - i. Mailing list now has 170 people on it.

VI. Lunar New Year Debrief

- a. Vice Chair Pilehvar shared a message of gratitude from Chairwoman Gilpin, submitted via email prior to the meeting.
- b. Commissioner Lau said thank you to commissioners who helped at the event.
 - i. Almost 2,000 attended, with a few hundred more in line who had to be turned away. Looking forward to next year's event.
 - ii. Sign thank you cards for sponsors.

VII. Discuss 2025 Goals

- a. Chairs met last week to discuss 2025 focus: leadership development, mentorship, and community empowerment
- b. Lunar New Year Festival was a top-notch production. Vice Chair Pilehvar received questions about other cultural events celebrated in the Asian community, such as Diwali. The commission's role to advocate and represent the community, paired with this year's focus on leadership development, can lead to standing up capacity and access to resources for Asian community leaders. Then, the Commission doesn't have to plan events, but other community organizations can plan events reflecting their communities.
- c. Bee will share additional thoughts with Lexi and Chairs via email.

VIII. Committee Reports

- a. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy
 - i. Commissioner Lau shared the committee meets on 4th Mondays of each month from 5 – 6 pm virtually.
 - ii. Oklahoma Hmong Association invited the commission to Superbowl Sunday event at Hannah Hall.
 - iii. Leadership Tulsa Intergenerational Summit focused on AAPI community: March 17 from 9 – 2 at Hannah Hall. Opportunity to orient us in future leadership development
 - iv. Discussed supporting the Tulsa City County Library to establish an Asian Resource Center.
 - v. Goal of doing one or two community events per month.



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- vi. Will schedule a Lunar New Year debrief meeting.
- vii. Received an invite to the University of Tulsa's Lunar New Year event on February 21. Requested sponsorship. Commissioners Lau, Paredes, and Nguyen volunteered to attend.
- viii. TU's South Asian Student Association inviting commission to Mock Desi wedding, opportunity to talk about the commission. More information to come.
- ix. Commission Kasim: Lunar New Year was an amazing event, proud to be part of it.
- b. Workforce and Education Committee
 - i. Commissioner Kasim: Committee held first meeting for this year, will be 3rd Wednesday every month at 5:30 moving forward. Will have new committee members joining.
 - ii. Focus for 2025: youth accomplishment, mental health, empowering Asian women
 - iii. Working to make next Luminary Awards event very impactful with clearer criteria for the awards
 - iv. Discussing a back to school initiative.
- c. Data and Research Committee
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar: Launching research project to inventory resources in the community. Want to strategically meet with partners. Don't want to reinvent the wheel, opportunity to partner with other commissions rather than only make available to Asian community.
 - 1. 211 currently has most comprehensive list, translation is available.
 - ii. Don't have many umbrella groups in the community, need to determine how to get on the ground to reach people.

IX. Announcements / Public Comments

- a. Commissioner Kasim thanked Krystal for her work.
- b. Leadership Tulsa Connect (Feb. 25 at Hannah Hall): Cecilia is leading this event, six organizations with immigrant services will be present, including Hmong Association of Oklahoma.
- c. Asian Americans Advancing Justice Coalition, based in DC, is looking for Oklahoma partnership to plug in and provide resources. Will have another meeting regarding education advocacy (ie Asian American history in schools), any commissioners who are interested reach out to Cecilia.

X. Adjournment

- a. Vice Chair Pilehvar entertained a motion to adjourn.
 - i. Commissioner Lau made a motion, Commissioner Nguyen seconded.
 - ii. Aye: 8
- b. Motion approved, meeting adjourned at 1:03pm.