



Asian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | March 4, 2025 | 12:00 – 1:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Sarah Gilpin, Ha Huynh, Masood Kasim, Athan Lau, Hieu Lê, Cecilia Nguyen, Parisa Pilehvar, Yi Zhang

Commissioners Absent: Meg Chang, Bee Paredes, Anna Thao, Tina Tran, Vivian Wang

I. Call to Order and Introductions

- a. Meeting called to order at 12:01 pm by Chairwoman Gilpin.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve February meeting minutes.
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Nguyen seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 7
 - a. Commissioner Huynh was not yet present in the meeting.
 - ii. Motion carried, February meeting minutes approved.

III. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin recognized Cecilia for her work connection with outside resources.
 - i. Commissioner Nguyen has connected with national organizations that want to learn more about the Asian community in Oklahoma and is serving as the main point of contact to connect to Tulsa resources.
 - ii. Upcoming meetings:
 - 1. National AAPI Mental Health Association: Tomorrow, March 5. Opportunity to receive mental health first aid training, if at least ten individuals are interested they can offer a session virtually.
 - 2. Asian Americans Advancing Justice Education Advocacy Team: Met with litigation team last week. If interested in attending the next meeting, contact Commissioner Nguyen.
- b. Vice Chair Pilehvar's report is covered in the Data and Research Committee report.

IV. Committee Reports

- a. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy
 - i. Commissioner Lau noted two community events the committee attended in February: TU's Lunar New Year and the Oklahoma Chinese Language Speech Contest at Holland Hall
 - ii. Inquired with Tulsa City-County Library about steps to establish an Asian Resource Center, learned this is already something they have discussed internally. Commissioner Nguyen will serve as the primary point of contact between AAC and the Library.

- iii. Discussed AAC's purpose related to event planning. Main purpose is to advise the City and Mayor, not to plan events. Can build capacity with other community organizations and play an advisory role.
- iv. Lunar New Year debrief: If AAC would like to do another large event, could consider an Asian Festival instead of a Lunar New Year event to be more inclusive of the full Asian community.
- v. Upcoming events:
 - 1. City of Tulsa Naturalization Ceremony – contact Commissioner Lau to volunteer.
- b. Workforce and Education Committee
 - i. Commissioner Kasim shared that more community members have joined the committee. Committee members will select what programming they want to lean into throughout the year.
 - ii. Next meeting: March 17
 - iii. Established timeline for Luminary Awards, will open nominations soon. Will create a google form to receive nominations from the community.
 - iv. Considering supporting a back to school event.
 - v. Committee member Nancy is leading a women's empowerment initiative.
- c. Data and Research Committee
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar: Data & Research committee sought out resources translated into different languages.
 - ii. Last commission meeting, outlined a research process to gather data. Not only wanting to collect data but also build a relationship. May culminate in creating a resource guide, need to see what already exists in the community before creating something new. Each committee member will have one conversation
 - iii. Next meeting: March 11 on zoom.
 - iv. By learning from organizations, AAC can better understand what information is missing. Can lead to a recommendation to the City to leverage an existing study or conduct a survey.

V. Discussion and Vote: 2025 Goals

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin framed that she'd like to solidify and vote on AAC's 2025 goals so the commission can move forward with a focus.
- b. Vice Chair Pilehvar grounded the commission in why establishing goals are important. Reviewed discussions from January and February AAC meetings.
- c. Umbrella: leadership development, mentorship, community empowerment
 - i. Chairwoman Gilpin: having an overarching goal that is broad is ok, and good to focus in on one thing for the next year. The commission won't cease to exist after 2025, can do more things in the future. Drawn to the leadership development piece, could start a scholarship fund for Asian students and designate two or three high school students.
 - ii. Vice Chair Pilehvar: Who are the leaders in our community, and how do we build relationship with them? Establishing this now will help tackle other issues moving forward.
- d. Chairwoman Gilpin opened the floor for discussion.

- i. Commissioner Lê: Love the idea of a scholarship, need to strategically embed commissioners in the community to show who AAC is to the community. For example, tabling at the Night Market—great, but only one opportunity. Must show up in non-Asian focused spaces.
 - 1. Chairwoman Gilpin: Building awareness in the community will be an ongoing focus for the next five years, Lunar New Year helped with this, need to keep momentum. Get published in Tulsa People, Tulsa World, have a commissioner focus on marketing.
- ii. Vice Chair Pilehvar: Data committee's work ties into leadership development, how to build up leaders who can take into account such a broad and diverse community. Tulsa World did an op-ed series for Black History Month, could consider something similar for Asian Heritage Month in May. Spotlighting community members is a form of leadership development, could be through APIDA's Instagram. Not always clear for where current and future leaders can plug in.
 - 1. Commissioner Lê noted the commission should incorporate qualitative and quantitative data. How do we go deeper with connecting with the community members who don't have literacy or time to read Tulsa World articles?
- iii. Commissioner Lau: AAC has momentum, how do we continue integrating into the community sustainably? Could require outreach efforts from each commissioner, set a number of engagements per month/quarter. Develop talking points or introductory letter to equip commissioners with a way to approach people who are unfamiliar with AAC.
 - 1. Vice Chair Pilehvar reminded that the Data and Research Committee has developed an elevator pitch already, will share with Commissioner Lau.
- iv. Commissioner Kasim: The commission encompasses many different communities, need to get information out to all of them.
 - 1. Commissioner Zhang suggested using social media
 - 2. Commissioner Huynh asked what happens to resilient emails, Lexi shared that she monitors the inbox and forwards relevant messages to commission chairs.
- v. Commissioner Lê suggested connecting with an Asian-serving organization and equipping/training them to build up their leadership capabilities, will expand the reach of the commission.
 - 1. Commissioner Nguyen manages APIDA's social media. There are opportunities to connect commissioners to national organizations.
 - 2. Chairwoman Gilpin noted that providing training requires people power.
 - 3. Commissioner Lau: hesitant for AAC to preference collaboration to one organization (ie: APIDA) over another (ie: Hmong Association).
 - 4. Commissioner Huynh would like to see AAC take a more proactive role in establishing connections with organizations, rather than waiting for them to come to us. Leaders are already serving the community and commissioners can meet them where they're at.

- vi. Commissioner Kasim suggested that commissioners develop a list of current and future Asian leaders to connect with.
 - 1. Vice Chair Pilehvar noted this is her main goal when connecting with other two committees, need to know what relationships already exist.
- e. Chairwoman Gilpin: 2025 Goal is Leadership Development. Sub-goals are:
 - i. Connecting with community leaders (organizations and individual).
 - ii. Raising up future leaders (ie: scholarships, awards).
 - iii. Increasing awareness of commission as an advisory group in Tulsa's AAPI community.
- f. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve the 2025 Commission Goals.
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Lau seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 7
 - a. Commissioner Huynh left the meeting prior to the motion.
 - ii. Motion carried, 2025 Commission Goals approved.

VI. Old Business – no old business

VII. New Business

VIII. Announcements / Public Comments

- a. Ramadan has started, ends March 28/29. Commissioner Kasim shared there is an event on Sunday, March 16. Eid Festival will take place again as well.
 - i. Chairwoman: Would like to see more commission presence at the Eid festival, Commissioner Kasim is working on sponsorship so commission can bring food and gifts.
- b. Leadership Tulsa Leading Generations Summit (March 17): Commissioner Nguyen has been planning this, focused on APIDA community. Commissioners Kasim and Lê and Chairwoman Gilpin are speakers.
- c. AAPI Night Market at Hannah Hall (May 16): Led by APIDA Tulsa and Tulsa Global District. Opportunity for AAC to table.
- d. Persian New Year (March 20): Also first day of spring, 13 days after is a nature holiday (April 2)
- e. Chairwoman Gilpin thanked community members for attending.
 - i. One public comment from president of the Philippian American Association. Several other community members were attending an AAC meeting for the first time.

IX. Adjournment

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to adjourn.
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Lau seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 7
 - a. Commissioner Huynh left the meeting prior to the motion.
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.