



**ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016**

The Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2016 at City Hall in Austin, Texas.

Vice Chair Vince Cobalis called the Board Meeting to order at 06:10 p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Aletta Banks, Nu Chanpheng (arrived at 8:35PM), Vince Cobalis, Janki DePalma, Richard Jung (arrived at 6:10PM), Charles Lu, Thuy Nguyen, Pramod Patil (arrived at 6:30PM), Rajani Ramachandran, Shubhada Saxena, Kara Takasaki, Kirk Yoshida (arrived at 6:21PM), Richard Yuen

Staff in Attendance: Sarah Chen, Marion Sanchez, Taja Beekley

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Anna Bradley with the City of Austin Art in Public Places shared three open calls to artists with deadlines ranging from February 18<sup>th</sup> to March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016, calling for submission from artists.

Chair Richard Jung took over the meeting at 6:13PM, and asked Commissioners to introduce themselves due to new Commissioners joining the meeting. Vice Chair Vince Cobalis asked Staff Liaison Sarah Chen to send Commissioners' resume to all. Chair Jung shared that Commissioner Richard Yuen chairs the Asian American Quality of Life Initiative working group and has been working closely with UT Professor Dr. Yuri Jang on the quantitative research; has been appointed to the Central Health Board and due to the workload on that Board, may leave the Commission as soon as his replacement is identified. Chair Jung called for recommendations of candidate with health issues and academic background to fill Commissioner Yuen's vacancy.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There were two changes to the January 19, 2016 meeting draft minutes. Commissioner Thuy Nguyen's name was added to Board Members in Attendance, and Commissioner Pramod Patil's first and last names were reversed. Recommendation to approve the January 19, 2016 meeting minutes as presented in draft form with the two corrections was approved on Commissioner Richard Yuen motion, Commissioner Vince Cobalis second on a 10-0 vote. (Commissioners Kirk Yoshida, Pramod Patil and Nu Chanpheng arrived after minutes were approved.)

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Update on the AAQOL Initiative**

Marion Sanchez provided update on the community engagement (Community Conversation) results to date. Twenty-one sites were visited and 560 post-it notes were collected. The information on the sticky notes will be in open data next week, with a different code for each language. Chair Jung asked about the difference between this effort and Dr. Jang's survey. Commissioner Yuen responded that Marion's survey is more in depth on City of Austin department resources and is a complementary qualitative tool to reach the Asian American community on what Dr. Jang's

survey does not cover. Chair Jung had question about data of the two surveys merging. Commissioner Yuen stated if the quantitative data is lacking then the qualitative data will be used to compliment it, and that the final report will incorporate both sets of data. Chair Jung asked who would oversee all the data. Marion replied Dr. Jang oversees the survey data, Executive Liaison Rey Arellano and Marion oversee the City data, and that in addition, the GIS team is working on a map with data points on address, business, Capital Metro, school district, recreation centers, non-profit and zip code information. To date, 185 surveys have been compiled in the database and 15 more will be done by hand the next day. Commissioners discussed future scheduled community engagement events and the “Conversation Over Tea” for small private groups. The surveys reached very diverse groups in terms of ethnicity and religious affiliation. Measure is also in place to ensure no repeat data is collected. Participants are asked if they had completed a survey conducted by Dr. Jang’s group. Some participants made very modest requests [on the post-it notes], and most don’t want to give address so zip codes are used. Commissioners asked about timeframe and number for “Conversation Over Tea”. By the end of next week, 150 boxes will need to be assembled.

Commissioner Yuen stated that Dr. Jang has a meeting with Executive Liaison Arellano and Marion on 3/7/2016 and will present preliminary outcome in the 3/15/2016 Commission meeting. He reported that Dr. Jang has worked out a no-cost extension until 6/30/2016, to add layer of statistical analysis to project future trends. Commissioner Charles Lu asked about goal of number of surveys for the engagement piece, Marion replied internal goal is to have 1,000 sticky notes with comments, and 300 surveys completed, on a very narrow target market. Commissioner Kirk Yoshida volunteered to help with coding. There were discussions on transportation data, and Marion stated Council wanted staff to listen to the community on transportation issues.

Item 3(c) is moved up for discussion due to staff participation in Mayor’s State of the City event.

**c. Working Group Reports**

**1) AARC Oversight Working Group**

Commissioner Vince Cobalis shared minutes from the working group’s meeting this afternoon, year to date statistics and recommendations for budget to improve services at the AARC. About 3,000 people visit the AARC monthly, with the majority being adults and 20% seniors. Kitchen renovation encountered permit and construction problems. Taja Beekley suggested inviting the project manager to next month’s meeting, and is working on a gap bid for transitioning the vendor for the Senior Meals program. Chair Jung suggested calling the project manager to the Working Group meeting first. Commissioner Cobalis discussed budget recommendations for the AARC. As transportation was an issue, he and Commissioner Saxena met with Jennifer Scott of the Austin Area for Aging and realized their funding for transportation was very limited and could not fund another program. Chair Jung suggested asking the County Commissioners Court for funding. Commissioner Cobalis asked Commissioners to review the Visitor Survey which was translated in different languages, and that the Working Group suggested a list of languages to collect and group data demographically. Commissioners discussed questions on the survey and made suggestions on wording changes and focus. Commissioner Yuen suggested that Commissioners email Sarah Chen with their proposed changes for final edits. Commissioner Cobalis will make changes and email to Sarah Chen for dissemination to Commissioners for further changes and bring it forward next month for votes.

**Return to Item 3(b) Old Business.**

**b. Update on proposing names of Asian Americans for AISD school renaming**

Chair Jung met with AISD Trustee Paul Saldana who chairs school renaming. The AISD Board will hear from the Lee Elementary CAC regarding school renaming on 2/29/2016. There is no particular new name put forward and no other groups formally opposing name change. Commissioners discussed naming new schools and no possibility in 3-5 years. There's one in the Mueller area, a new high school in south Austin and middle school in southeast Austin. Summit Elementary was brought up as having the largest Asian population. Commissioners were encouraged to attend the 2/29/2016 AISD Board meeting. Currently there are four schools to be renamed and Asian Americans is 7% of the population, and in addition, no school in Texas is named after an Asian American. The AISD Board has put in place to allow for school name change, but there is no action item for voting on the 2/29/2016 agenda. Commissioners discussed whether to propose a school to be renamed and an Asian American name that all agree with. Chair Jung will recirculate the list for all to learn about the different communities. There was also discussion about the 5 AISD Board positions up for election in November and Commissioners were encourage to identify potential candidates after this meeting. Also on the 2/29/2016 agenda, AISD Board will officially adopt a HUB program. Chair Jung stated that Paul Saldana expressed no Asian American groups showed up in the past two discussions and encouraged the Asian chambers to attend this meeting. Commissioner Aletta Banks will email Sarah Chen the time and agenda item number.

**Continue to Item 3(c) Working Group Reports.**

**c. Working Group Reports**

**2) Business Plan Working Group**

Commissioners Yoshida reported the group met two weeks ago, went through the City budget, and pulled out as many items to prioritize as areas of interest. Minutes from this meeting was distributed and discussed. Chair Jung suggested adding AFD and EMS under public safety, and stated that AARC Non-Profit works closely with PARD. Commissioner Yoshida discussed minority hiring and Chair Jung suggested working with the HR Issues Working Group, since for the past 15 years the percentage of Asian American employees did not go up with the population growth, and that HRD has nothing to show on Asian American recruitment. In addition, Asian American officers are not interfacing with the community. Chair Jung expressed that in 2-3 years, there will be full data and infrastructure set up by the Working Group to address budget issues in a timely manner by FY17. Commissioner Yoshida also mentioned the facility issues the Chinese and Korean schools need to resolve with AISD.

**3) HR Issues Working Group**

Minutes from the working group meeting and poster sites was distributed. Commissioner Nguyen reported that three HRD staff (Jeff Burton, Interim Assistant Director, Rod Crain, Talent Acquisition Manager, Aakash Patel, Business Process Specialist) showed up at the February 4, 2016 meeting. In general, nothing has been done regarding low Asian American representation. Chair Jung asked about the permanent liaison and Commissioner Nguyen replied HRD did not want to provide a permanent liaison and that the Commission's questions will be answered by specific staff. Chair Jung asked Sarah Chen to discuss with Rey [Executive Liaison] regarding HRD not assigning a permanent liaison and set up a meeting with the City Manager about it, since the Commission is offering resources to HRD. Commissioner Nguyen stated that HRD was taking the working group's recommendations seriously and meeting with AARC tomorrow. Chair Jung asked how the Commission can make sure that HRD is following through our recommendations. Sarah Chen explained that communication from HRD suggested that the department was trying to address specific requests initially such as the data interpretation question, thus the Interim AD, Talent Acquisition Manager and staff having knowledge in data came to the meeting; and that other questions will be addressed by appropriate staff later. In addition, the department is in a transition state. Commissioner Nguyen stated that HRD is not in charge of department hiring and promotion. Chair Jung shared that Victoria Li who was the highest level Asian American executive and retired from

the City recently, is willing to work with the HR working group to share her insight. There were discussions regarding HRD not reporting back in January or February as previously scheduled. Sarah Chen stated she asked both months and HRD was not ready to present, and that the March agenda already has Neighborhood Housing presenting. Chair Jung stated they could still report to the Working Group instead of the full Commission, and that we can put them on the April agenda and ask why they did not meet their self-imposed deadline. Sarah Chen explained HRD was not ready last month due to the Interim Director taking a 6-week leave and has just returned, and that the department was not ready for the report this month. Commissioner Nguyen stated she would like to hold one more meeting with the Employment Specialist to understand their process and after March, present a list of recommendations for HRD. Chair Jung explained the reason for the formation of the HR Issues Working Group to new members in the Commission. Due to Asian American employees' frustration in the City's hiring, recruitment and retention practices and lack of advancement opportunity compared to other groups, the Commission wanted to explore causes without wholesale blaming the City. Thus far, there is no program in place nor planning to put a program in place, though there were efforts for other ethnic groups. Commissioner Nguyen stated that AAEN reported 38 Asians were hired in 2016. Chair Jung questioned why the report came from AAEN and not HRD. Commissioner Banks stated information regarding the number of Asian applicants, the number hired by department would provide a better picture. Chair Jung stated that HRD may not be comfortable discussing everything with AAEN, an employee group, present; therefore acknowledge that the Commission does not need to have all discussions with AAEN, and they need to help the Commission understand the boundaries and the Commission to respect the inherent conflict and boundary lines. Commissioner Nguyen stated overall movement and that staff at AARC was to provide media contacts. Commission Pramod Patil asked whether it was about disparity and what data was to be shared and Chair Jung replied the original intent was to address the problems with Asian American employees' hiring, promotion and retention issues; thus data analysis was conducted and questions regarding programs were asked with the realization that HRD did not know how to do it, thus the two-prong approach to 1) continue analysis of data for recommendations, 2) provide resources regarding media outlets to HRD along with other resources to help with training.

**4) Education Working Group**

Commissioner Kirk Yoshida reported the Working Group met but did not have resolutions, since the chair was not present today, will bring ideas for discussion in the next meeting. There were discussions about liaison with AISD, curriculum or supplemental materials on Asian Americans, immigrant children integration issues, language classes, translation needs, and Asian population data. Chair Jung suggested inviting an AISD Board member or management to address the Commission on our prepared short list of questions.

There were discussions about Working Group membership. Commissioner Kara Takasaki wanted to join the AAQOL Initiative Working Group. Sarah Chen will send the Working List to all Commissioners for any edits or revision.

**5) Community Outreach Working Group**

Chair Jung shared the purpose is to reach out to communities that aren't connected, 1) to invite less represented communities to speak to the Commission about their communities 2) and have the opportunity to see what we're doing and become advisors, be part of the working group, and to attend AAQOL Commission regular meetings; to help bring forward new leadership for the community. Commissioner Rajani Ramachandran was appointed by Chair Jung as chair of the working group.

Commissioner Kara Takasaki mentioned culturally sensitive mental health support resources issue and an UT student who works in education policy, reviewing large data sets on learning disabilities

diagnosis, and suggests inviting him to the Education Working Group. Commissioner Janki DePalma suggested emailing his information to Sarah Chen and inviting him to join the working group. Chair Jung stated that working group is flexible and can have as many community participants the Commissioners need.

d. Discussion and possible action on a resolution to support threatened immigrant communities  
Sarah Chen distributed the revised draft resolution Commissioner Sonya Kotecha sent for discussion and action. Commissioners reviewed and edited/amended language in paragraph five. Recommendation to approve the resolution to support threatened immigrant communities as amended in was approved on Commissioner Charles Lu motion, Commissioner Pramod Patil second on an 11-0 vote.

#### **4. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

There was no staff briefing.

#### **5. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Discussion and possible action on a resolution in response to SMBR's MBE/WBE Disparity Study Report

Commissioners Banks shared that the report was 706 pages which was posted online. The study details businesses in the 5-county area and in all areas, Asian vendors were below average. Commissioner Yoshida stated timing was the issue to support the acceptance of the report. Chair Jung stated some aspects of the report was unfair to Asian Americans, which Commissioner Banks explained the technical aspect. Two factors were used, utilization and availability. The weighted availability method, using dollar amount instead of available vendors in the category, showed Asian vendors over utilization. Overall, Asian owned businesses were underutilized. Commissioner Cobalis read the draft resolution. Commissioner Banks recommended accepting the study for program to continue for the next 5 years, instead of allowing it to default back to State HUB rules. The study is to back up Council ordinance, without it the City could be sued. Chair Jung asked if we support it now, would we have another chance to address the concerns of many contractors and professional services. Commissioner Banks stated it is on 2/26/2016 Council agenda. She provided statistics for Asian vendors, in the past 4 years, out of 100 registered vendors, only 25 got paid. Recommendation to approve the resolution in response to SMBR's MBE/WBE Disparity Study Report in current draft form was approved on Commissioner Vince Cobalis motion, Commissioner Richard Yuen second on a 9-0 vote, with Commissioners Aletta Banks, Janki DePalma, Kirk Yoshida abstained.

b. Discussion and possible action on resolutions related to the City Budget

Commissioner Cobalis read the three resolutions proposed by the AARC Oversight Working Group as presented in the 2/16/2016 working group minutes items 4A, 4B and 4C. Item 4A was submitted by Taja Beekley as a need in the financial forecast process. Recommendation to approve the resolution on budget recommendation for a new Public Event Leader position at the AARC in current draft form in item 4A of the minutes was approved on Commissioner Kirk Yoshida motion, Commissioner Richard Yuen second on a 12-0 vote. Recommendation to approve the resolution on budget recommendation for addition of a ¾ time driver position and an additional van at the AARC in current draft form in item 4B of the minutes was approved on Commissioner Pramod Patil motion, Commissioner Shubhada Saxena second on a 12-0 vote.

Commissioners discussed and edited language for the resolution listed in item 4C.

Recommendation to approve the resolution on budget recommendation for to encourage the City Manager to increase the available budget for translation and interpretation services for all City Departments which interact with the language minority communities as amended in item 4c of the

minutes was approved on Commissioner Janki DePalma motion, Commissioner Charles Lu second on a 12-0 vote.

**c. Information Sharing (Standing Agenda Item)**

Commissioner Nu Chanpheng shared that the Celebrate Me event at Carver Museum on 4/9/2016 will feature Thailand.

Commissioner Thuy Nguyen shared the Vietnamese Chinese New Year celebration with night market will be this weekend at Chinatown Center.

Commissioner Kara Takasaki announced she will not be at the March meeting.

Commissioner Shubhada Saxena shared an age friendly initiative by the Austin City Council will approach the Commission for input.

Chair Jung encouraged new members who joined a working group to participate.

**6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Commissioners did not discuss agenda items for the March 15, 2016 meeting.

**7. ADJOURN**

Recommendation adjourning the meeting was approved on Commissioner Rajani Ramachandran motion, Commissioner Janki DePalma second on a 12-0 vote. Chair Richard Jung adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.