



City of Seattle

Community Involvement Commission

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMISSION (CIC)

January 30, 2023

4:30 – 6:30 pm

Webex Meeting & Seattle City Hall L2-80

Commissioners present: Saba Rahman (she/her), Julia Jannon-Shields (she/her), Ahoua Koné (she/her), Martha Lucas (she/her), Fiona Murray (she/her), Bill Southern (he/him)

Commissioners not in attendance: Marcus White

City of Seattle Staff present: Alvin Edwards (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, he/him), Laura Jenkins (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, she/her)

(Transcriber's Note: The notes shown below are summaries of statements provided. They are not transcriptions and have been shortened and edited to include the major points raised. Full comments are retained in the files in video recording and available upon request.)

Community Comments and vote on 11/21 & 12/19 Meeting Minutes

There were no community comments during this portion of the meeting. The 11/21/22 meeting minutes and 12/19/22 meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Finalize Subcommittee Participants and Next Steps

- 1. Subcommittee on Strengthening CIC relationships & visibility with City of Seattle stakeholders, which include City Council, Mayor & City departments.**
Subcommittee Chair: Commissioner Marcus White
Subcommittee members: Commissioner Fiona Murray, Commissioner Ahoua Koné
 - Commissioners confirmed.
 - Marcus White confirmed as subcommittee chair.
- 2. Subcommittee on Strengthening CIC's relationships with the city of Seattle communities by building trust, being seen as a committed advocate acting in on the community's best interest.**
Chair: Commissioner Martha Lucas
Subcommittee members: Commissioner Saba Rahman, Commissioner Julia Jannon-Shields
 - Martha Lucas confirmed as subcommittee chair (Acting as commissioner not co-chair).
 - Commissioners confirmed.
- 3. Subcommittee on Retaining Commissioners and recruitment.**
Chair: Commissioner Bill Southern
Subcommittee members: None
 - Commissioner Southern Confirmed as subcommittee chair.
 - No sub-committee members currently (will work with Laura and Alvin).

Additional Co-Chair Vote



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It was recommended to add a 4 commissioner to the co-chairs.

- Commissioner Lucas – Contacted Carol to get an idea to see how the commission functioned previously to get an idea of if the current group is on track.
 - 4 commissioners – Were able to work well together and get things accomplished.
 - Feels like if the commission leadership can't get through an agenda in 4 months, it could be time for a leadership change.
 - Feels like leadership isn't functioning well.
 - Doesn't feel like it's a matter of numbers, but more the values and principles of the people at the table and if they actually fit.
 - Wants to vote for new co-chair and would like to step down as a commissioner.
- Commissioner Rahman – Appreciates Martha's honesty in leadership.
 - Something we can talk about - adding new co-chairs or a different combination of co-chairs.
- Commissioner Kone – Seconds what Saba said. Asked for clarification (stepping down from commission or just the leadership role).
 - Heart must be in a leadership role. Respects the decision but committed to seeing this commission do well.
 - If there is dysfunction in one group, (leadership) it will affect both sides (full commission).
 - What is the individual commitment? Do we agree with the mission and vision that we developed?
 - Thinks that the subcommittees should satisfy the work that we all intend to do.
 - Group shouldn't rush to replace Martha but see what we can do as a group to get the subcommittees running and then revisit later.
- Commissioner Murray – Potentially a good idea to think how we structure the leadership of the group (seems like mostly just providing facilitation and accountability).
 - Maybe we need to have an interim solution as we think about how we restructure the leadership team.
 - Also, curious to know if Martha is interested in stepping down from the subcommittee chair role as well?
- Commissioner Lucas – Doesn't mind facilitating on some level for subcommittee, just doesn't want to continue the co-chair role.
- Staff Liaison - Laura – Recap of past co-chairs and bylaws
 - Between 2 and 3 co-chairs
 - Can be as few as 1 and as many as 4 co-chairs (according to the bylaws)
 - Mentions a max, not sure if it mentions a minimum.
 - Co-chairs elected on an annual basis.
 - Per City Attorney, other commissioner can be elected for the remainder of previous commissioner's term (current co-chairs elected in Aug 2022).
- Commissioner Southern – Started with 3 co-chairs.



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- Now that we have a functional commission, the test is not about assigning the subcommittee, it's about getting the work done.
- Works better to have 3 co-chairs, not 4. This makes decision making more concise if there is a split. (3rd chair deciding factor).
- Co-chairs aren't the ones to dictate what this commission is supposed to do. Every commissioner's vote counts. Something may be put forth by the co-chairs, but all commissioners would need to vote to action.
- Don't want to stop progress that we already made. If we need to move forward with the 2 co-chairs, so be it, but would prefer to have 3 co-chairs.
- Sorry that Martha is stepping down from co-chair because she is valuable.
- Commissioner Lucas - Doesn't disagree that 3 co-chairs is a good number, so with stepping down, this will make room for another co-chair who is interested.
 - Someone could fill the role for the remainder of that term as Staff liaison Laura mentioned.
- Commissioner Kone – would like to suggest that we move forward with 2 commissioners so that we can continue to move forward and not derail.
 - 2 co-chairs continue to lead.
 - If one of the other commissioners decides to step in, they can verbalize, and we can start the process.
- Commissioner Rahman – Sound good to move forward with 2 co-chairs as well.
 - Have this as an agenda topic for next month's meeting, so we can revisit in case someone is interested.
- Commissioner Lucas – what is critical to success will be group norms.
 - With the 2 co-chairs, if there is a proper system in place, decisions can still be made with the full group.
 - If there is no structure or norms it will be difficult to get things accomplished.
 - We should take time on the group norms because that will dictate how we operate successfully as commission.
- Staff Liaison Laura – if someone is interested in nominating someone or nominating themselves, they would need to let the staff liaisons know.
 - Confirm in writing that they accept the nomination and interested in moving forward with co-chair vote.
 - Staff Liaisons would need to put that vote on an agenda ahead of time, so community is aware that this change is taking place.
- Commissioner Kone – add an agenda item for next month to see if remaining commissioner would be interested in a co-chair position.
- Staff Liaison Alvin – Will have a facilitator for February meeting for group norms.
 - May not have time to discuss the co-chair position. Might need to table that conversation for March meeting.
- Commissioner Kone – do we have a draft of the norms? Martha submitted to co-chairs (an example)
 - Staff Liaison Laura – we can also share Renter's commission Rules and norm (an example)



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- Commissioner Southern - is everyone in agreement with subcommittees and assignments?
- Commissioner Murray – fine with committee.
 - Can these be posted in the team’s workspace?
 - Commission should take some time to read though both documents.
 - Co-chair vote – recommend that anyone who want to nominate or self-nominate, send to liaisons in the next 2 weeks. So that they have time to process and accept or reject.
 - Staff Liaison Laura – we can upload both norms’ documents.
 - Been advised that the whole commission can’t work on the document collectively, only review.
- Commissioner Southern - Would like us to keep the 3 subcommittees voted priorities.
 - Laura – Staff Liaison can work with Bill on recruitment committee.
 - Saba – keep the subcommittee, any issues bring to the full group.
- Staff Liaison Alvin – 27th will be facilitator discussion, not sure how much time will be available to talk about that.
 - Commissioner Southern – Would hate to lose time.
 - Commissioner Lucas – very important to have the norms discussed before we start the sub committees.
 - Commissioner Kone – Would like to continue with the subcommittees before the norms to brainstorm ideas. Waiting for 2 months could be discouraging.
- Group voting on beginning when to start the subcommittees.
 - Commissioner Murray – suggest that the groups meet in the month leading up to the March meeting. Would only be one month.
 - Commissioner Kone – Recognizing that it takes so much time to complete group norms and its possible that we may not come out of the next meeting with the norms finalized. We should agree that if we don’t complete them, we should take steps to continue to move forward on the subcommittee groups. (Retracted – will go with consensus vote).
- Proposal is that we wait to start the subcommittee discussion and start in March.
- All commissioners in favor
- 5 min break

Commission Norms/Agreements Introduction

Staff liaison updates

Appointments

- We are still waiting to hear back from multiple City Council Offices on City Council District appointments. We have connected with our department’s City Council liaison who has elevated this concern to the Mayor’s Office Council Liaison.
 - Commissioner Southern - Is there anything we can do to help move this along?



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- Staff Liaison Laura – That may be something we can work on as the Recruitment and Retention committee.
- Commissioner Southern – Many city council aren't running for reelection, how does that effect the commissioners?
 - Staff Liaison Laura - Will need to look back at what was done in the pasts. There are 10 months until that election, Its possible that a council member may put a name forth for reappointment. They may also want to leave it for whoever in coming in next. Not sure about timing. Can follow up.

Resignation

- Robert Radford informed us that he would be resigning from the commission immediately. So, we currently have 7 active commissioners. Quorum is still 5 commissioners. The co-chairs and appointing party signed a thank you letter for the last commissioner who resigned. Would you be interested in doing that again? It would be prepared by the staff liaisons, reviewed by the co-chairs, and signed by the co-chairs and the Mayor's Office.
 - The commission is interested in preparing a letter to send to the former commissioner.
 - Commissioner Southern – thinks this is a good idea. Also would like to see if we could do an exit interview.
 - Commissioner Southern - Would like to make it a policy.
 - Staff Liaison Laura – It may be more appropriate to ask the commissioner if they would want to do an exit interview. This may not be feasible depending on the conditions they are leaving under.
 - Commissioner Southern – Talked to Robert about this and he was very frank about his reason.
 - His reason was lack of progress by the commission.
 - We should look at this under the subcommittee.
 - Commissioner Kone – Should send the thank you letter and do an exit interview as well.

Answers to Commissioner's Question About Writing Op Eds

- Reminder: If a Commission/Committee wants to issue a public statement, then the contents of that statement should be approved by a majority of the members at an open and public meeting. Without approval of the majority of the members at a meeting, any single member lacks the authority to issue a public statement as if they were speaking on behalf of the entire Commission/Committee.



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- It is okay for the commission to write an op ed if it aligns with guidance we have already shared. As for content, it will be important to avoid taking a position on a ballot measure. You should also avoid a "call to action" directed to the public urging them to contact their state legislators to advocate for or against state legislation, which would be grass roots lobbying prohibited by state law. The staff liaisons can share proposed op ed content with the City Attorney's Office to review for possible legal violations.
 - Commissioner Murray – Want to make sure that applies to the body of the commission as a whole. Does that apply to individuals?
 - Staff Liaison Laura – as a commissioner or individual acting on behalf of the commission, you cannot advocate for legislation. You can only do this on your own personal time. Would need to be explicit about not acting on behalf of the commission.
 - Commissioner Rahman – Legislation is a barrier, but could we make recommendations to the city.
 - Staff Liaison Laura - The language the City Attorney was in relation to State legislation.
 - Commissioner Rahman - Planning commission has put out guidance and recommendation to the city regarding policy.
 - Commissioner Southern – Went to a public meeting on housing. Identified myself as a member of the CIC but declined to speak on behalf of the commission. Are there any guidelines around this? I made it clear I was just there to listen.
 - Should I send questions to the Staff Liaisons to address?
 - Staff Liaison Alvin – Yes, commissioners should take note and bring back to the commission for transparency, vote, and or to forward to Staff Liaison to address.
 - Commissioner Southern - Would like info regarding the Commission budget. In case this is requested by community.
 - Staff Liaison Laura - We've asked our supervisor – Checking to see what the budget would be and if we can have a card made with the generic commission email.
 - Review of 3.3 of bylaws (expectation of commissioners)
 - Commissioner Southern – Updates on the Department of Neighborhoods Director position?
 - Staff Liaison Alvin - In the interview stage – Have 3 candidates in mind. Working on selecting.
 - Commissioner Southern – Is there a way that the commissioner could sit in on this process?
 - Staff Liaison Alvin – We can take this back to leadership to ask.
 - Commissioner Rahman – That would be interesting to know around DON hiring processes (any positions).
 - Commissioner Kone - Lots of rumors of City Council and not running for reelection. Curious if that is something this commission would like to talk about.



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- Commissioner Lucas – Are you thinking in terms of having someone from council coming to speak.
- Commissioner Kone – This could impact us. If there isn't much stability. Are we at risk of not having the best people in those positions?
- Commissioner Murray – This feels like beyond the scope of the commission to make a political comment.
- Commissioner Southern - Still interested to know. If someone is stepping down, they can recommendations as to what can we do as a commission (from that council members perspective).
- Commissioner Rahman – This is good context and recognizing the turnover and who is on the council who may be supportive of some of the recommendations we may put forward. Its important for us to have a pulse on it.
- Commissioner Southern - Discussion about having meeting in different neighborhoods- in the notes it said we would revisit in 2023.
 - Commissioner Rahman - Was this dependent on budget?
 - Staff Liaison - Yes – still looking at what will be available. This could also be a task for the subcommittee. We can let you know when we know more. There may also be opportunities, to do hybrid set up in no cost meeting spaces.
- Commissioner Southern – Who would we like to bring in (diversity, skills, and talent wise)?
 - Commissioner Lucas – General request – All of us should be recruiters in a way. We should be examining what skills they bring to the table and are they team players.
 -
- Group agreed to dedicate the full meeting to Group Norms on 2/27.
 - Commissioner Kone - Not clear on the outcome (of group norms).
 - Commissioner Lucas
 - Main objective to walk out with:
 - A decision-making process.
 - Acceptable communications
 - Professional decorum
 - Consequences for actions
 - There is a need to have boundaries for everyone to feel safe.
 - Commissioners should commit to reviewing documents sent from Facilitators.

Community Comments & Closing

There were no community comments during this portion of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.