



City of Seattle
Community Involvement Commission

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMISSION (CIC)

February 26, 2024

5:00 – 7:00 pm

Webex Meeting & Seattle City Hall Room 370

Commissioners present: Bill Southern (he/him), Ahoua Koné (she/her), Marcus White, Cade Wiger, Heidi Morisset, Nausheen Rajan, Fiona Murray

Commissioners not in attendance: Michael Seo, Jessica Reeves

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

People with pending commission appointments present: Julio Perez, Martha Lucas (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 1/22/24 Meeting Minutes

Dianne Ramsey thanked the commission and staff liaisons for making video recordings of commission meetings available to the public for those who cannot attend meetings. Ms. Ramsey made a plea with the commission to reach out to community with some proposals brought to the commission by the City departments and City Council.

- “There is a lack of transparency by some of the departments to share with the community what is going on in their community.”
- Ms. Ramsey is seeing departments post recaps of outreach and engagement but feels populations who are not online much miss out on providing feedback. She feels that community is being left in the dark on many projects.
- Ms. Ramsey asked the group to reach out directly to community organizations to let them know the Community Involvement Commission exists.

Moxie said that Cooper at Seattle Parks and Recreation helped her access information on upcoming programming. Moxie loves being involved in community activities.

The commission voted to approve the January 22, 2024 Community Involvement Commission meeting minutes with a few minor grammatical updates.

Review agreed upon systems outlined in Group Norms & Values Documents

In relation to Commissioner Julia Jannon-Shields' recent resignation and in a desire to provide more clarity around voting procedures, the staff liaisons wanted to provide space for the commission to review the Group Norms and Values documents the commission created last spring. This was in an effort to make sure everyone is on the same page in relation to what the commission has agreed upon in the past for these norms and values.

Commissioner Ahoua Koné asked for clarification around the recent resignation. Other commissioners confirmed they received Commissioner Jannon-Shields' resignation email. Staff liaisons said they would forward Commissioner Koné the email.

Staff liaison Laura Jenkins provided background on the norms and values documents which were adopted and last updated in April 2023. Commissioners decided at the April 2023 meeting that any commissioner can propose an amendment and the entire commission would vote on adopting that amendment or not. Two-thirds of the commission would need to approve the amendment for it to be added. Commissioners will review these documents every year at the annual commission retreats.

Staff liaison Jenkins scrolled through the documents and highlighted this section: "Utilize Roberts Rules of Order to bring structure to meetings and allow the group to take care of commission business in an efficient and fair manner." The staff liaisons will provide additional materials with more information on Roberts Rules of Order especially for those facilitating votes on the commission.

Commissioner Bill Southern mentioned the commission agreed to send exit survey questions to any commissioner that resigns. He asked if that would be done in this situation and if this procedural decision is reflected in the norms.

- Commissioner Koné said she remembered two components: sending a thank you letter and an exit survey.
- Staff liaison Jenkins clarified that the exit survey is covered in the commission's goals and not in the norms document.
 - Staff liaison Alvin Edwards reminded the group that these goals were just approved in the January commission meeting.
- The commission confirmed that staff liaisons should be responsible for sending out the exit survey questions which include:
 - Reason(s) for stepping down?
 - What were your expectations when you joined the commission and did it meet those expectations?
 - Did you experience a community focused organization or a government focused organization?
 - Do you have any recommendations for the commission you feel would be helpful in advancing its mission?
- There was discussion about what the staff liaisons should do with the feedback from the exit survey. Commissioners agreed that the responses should be shared with the entire commission except pieces of sensitive information. The commission, at that point, would decide how to follow up as necessary to address specific concerns and issues with direct action.
 - Staff liaison Edwards clarified that any email sent to the City is public information.

- The commission will bring up feedback from previous resignations each time a new commissioner resigns to look for any patterns/trends. This will happen at a regular commission meeting.

Commissioners Koné and Southern expressed concern about the specific reasoning former Commissioner Jannon-Shields provided for her resignation. They noted that they believe what she mentioned is a serious situation and should be addressed when they receive more details.

For next steps, the staff liaisons will follow up with Commissioner Jannon-Shields with the exit survey questions in a Microsoft Forms format. They will share her answers back to the whole commission either via email or at the next commission meeting. If the feedback is shared by email, the commission should not discuss it until their next regular meeting due to the Open Public Meetings Act. At that point, the commission would decide how to move forward together.

Commissioner Southern brought up possible repercussions. Staff liaison Jenkins mentioned the commission did not include any accountability measures in the norms and values documents. The commission did decide that the conversation could be revisited at any time to potentially add some.

Commissioner Fiona Murray asked for a specific review in relation to the Roberts Rules of Order. Staff liaison Jenkins screen shared a few different resources and committed to sending them out after the meeting to the commission.

Commissioner Koné emphasized the importance of following the norms and values. She encouraged her fellow commissioners to bring up anything they feel like needs to be revised or changed.

Co-chair White suggested having the CIC co-chairs share the norms and values with the group each meeting instead of the staff liaisons.

The staff liaisons provided an update on pending appointments:

- Commissioner Martha Lucas recently moved to a new City Council District. Since she was in a commission seat tied to Council District 4, her seat is now vacant. The Mayor's Office is moving forward to appoint her in one of the Mayoral-appointed positions.
- Julio Perez's appointment paperwork has been submitted to City Council. His appointment has not yet been scheduled. Staff liaisons will keep the commission updated on this.

Martha Lucas mentioned that she stepped down from being co-chair last year for the same reason Commissioner Jannon-Shields mentioned in her resignation email.

Co-chair White mentioned that Commissioner Jannon-Shields resigned because of him. He believes he is being unjustly attacked. He hasn't heard any additional complaints besides from Commissioners Lucas and Jannon-Shields. Co-chair White invited the commission to let him know if he is "that bad." He said he is here to move the city forward.

Commissioners Murray and Koné mentioned that they don't feel like anyone is saying Co-chair White is a terrible, horrible person. They mentioned there just needs to be more awareness about what commissioners are saying and how they're communicating with each other. Commissioner Koné mentioned that if there is an issue, the commissioners need to put their pride aside and actions and behaviors need to be identified and addressed.

Commissioner Southern brought up that if an issue is hampering the commission's progress, it needs to be addressed so the commission can move forward.

Co-chair White indicated that if the commission would like to go a different direction with co-chairs that they could elect new co-chairs.

Commissioner Koné suggested that maybe a subcommittee can work on addressing the issues discussed at the meeting.

Commissioner Nausheen Rajan recommended the commission explore other mechanisms to address hurt on the commission in addition to a subcommittee.

Co-chair White asked if there was something in the bylaws about this topic. Staff liaison Edwards mentioned that the bylaws stick to guidance around items like attendance and not as much commission culture.

Commissioner Morisset mentioned that she has also felt disrespected by other people on the commission in the same way Commissioner Jannon-Shields had mentioned.

The group discussed possible solutions to move forward with. The commissioners' discussion included:

- Co-chair White asked if this is something another commission could help address. Staff liaison Jenkins mentioned that they attempted to address group dynamics by bringing in consultants (not members of the commission) early last year. With commissions, they already have their own focuses that do not focus on mediation. Staff liaison Edwards agreed that it would not be the right fit.
- A community member in the room, David Piña, provided comment: Community member Piña mentioned that instead of working on personalities, the commission should be working on the agenda. The community member asked if the City of Seattle has any mediators that could talk to all of the parties involved separately.
- After reviewing the norms and values documents, Commissioner Cade Wiger suggested creating best practices for handling conflict on the commission that would be added to the bylaws. Commissioner Wiger thinks that the commission could handle this internally and set up a process for these kinds of conflicts moving forward.
- Commissioner Murray said that the culture of commission and accountability structures are in everyone on the commission's purview. Commissioner noted that she is still undecided on how to move forward and thanked the community member for sharing comments.
- Commissioner Morisset suggested that maybe this work could fit within the pre-existing subcommittee focused on recruitment and retention because she sees a correlation between this conversation and retention. Commissioner Morisset also suggested adding more regular check-ins to see how commissioners are feeling (example: a survey after every meeting).
 - Martha Lucas agreed and emphasized the importance of putting something in place so that commissioners don't feel disrespected in the future.
 - Commissioner Rajan agreed with establishing a regular check-in point (ongoing) of some sort for cultural change.
- Julio Perez asked if the CIC have a complaint form or some other avenue for filing a grievance. Staff liaison Jenkins said not at this time, but staff liaisons have access to Microsoft Forms if commissioners decide they would like to have something like that.

The commission voted to meet with the parties involved in this conflict by way of the Recruitment and Retention committee (Commissioner Southern and Commissioner Seo), along with two additional commission volunteers. The additional members piece was an amendment to the original motion. This collaborative effort aims to gather information and make recommendations to effectively address the challenges with dynamics between commissioners more wholistically. It will be a temporary effort until the matter is sorted out.

- Votes were as follows:
 - Commissioner Koné – Aye
 - Co-chair White – Abstain
 - Commissioner Southern – Yes
 - Commissioner Murray - Aye
 - Commissioner Wiger – Aye
 - Commissioner Morisset – Aye
 - Commissioner Rajan – Aye
- 6 commissioners in favor, one abstention

Staff liaison Jenkins reminded the group that for subcommittee meetings, attendance needs to be less than a quorum of commissioners or a special meeting needs to be called prior to the meeting happening. Otherwise, it would be a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act. Currently, there are 9 commissioners, and a quorum is 6 commissioners.

Commissioner Koné and Commissioner Wiger volunteered to join the subcommittee to work on this topic. Staff liaison Jenkins said that they would follow up with the subcommittee group on next steps by email especially with Commissioner Seo’s absence.

Co-Chair Vote Next Steps

This subject was not discussed due to lack of time.

Subcommittee Updates – Goal Progress

This subject was not discussed due to lack of time.

Staff Liaison Updates

Upcoming Staff Transition

Due to some additional staffing and realignment of commissions within the department, a new staff liaison will be working with the commissions. Staff liaisons Jenkins and Edwards will be transitioning away from their roles as the staff liaisons for the commission over the next few months and bringing the new person on. The transition will be done thoughtfully and there will be some overlap with the new staff liaison to make sure it’s a smooth process.

- Commissioner Koné asked what is prompting the change. Staff liaison Edwards said it’s due to new staff and changes in work portfolios. It has nothing to do with today’s conversation. It will be one person coming on as the staff liaison who is more focused on commission work and civic participation.
- Commissioner Rajan asked if there is a transition plan and if the commission can help in any way with that process. Staff liaison Jenkins said they will get more clarity in March about the

transition and they will be able to come back at a future meeting to let commissioners know if they need any input on the transition plan at that point.

- Commission Southern asked if the new staff person can meet one on one with current commissioners to get to know them better. Staff liaison Edwards said the staff liaisons could check in with the new person to see if their capacity would permit meeting with commissioners one on one.

Documenting Commission Work

This subject was not discussed due to lack of time.

Community Comments & Closing

Moxie mentioned the many programs and activities that she and her children have been able to participate in including programs at Neighborhood House.

The meeting was adjourned.

March Subcommittee Minutes

Monday, March 4, 2024

CIC Subcommittee- Community

Julio Perez, Nausheen Rajan, Martha Lucas

Absent: Cade Wiger

Minutes

Martha reviewed the Subcommittee goal, gave an overview of the Subcommittee's work to date and answered questions from the Commissioners. We discussed the role of the CIC-Community role of acting as an advisor vs. engaging in the community work.

Next steps:

1) Martha to send out a copy of any Community Subcommittee mins we have to help Commissioners learn more about what has been done and the history.

2) We discussed asking the Human Service dept to return to the CIC and ask them to explain the results of their direct Community outreach/engagement programs from. We also ask that they share their timeline and plan for the funds the Seattle Human Service dept has asked to return from the King County Regional authority.