



**ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2015**

The Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 at City Hall in Austin, Texas.

Vice Chair Vince Cobalis called the Board Meeting to order at 06:07 p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Aletta Banks, Nu Chanpheng, Vince Cobalis, Janki DePalma, Richard Jung (arrived at 6:22 PM), Sonia Kotecha, Thuy Nguyen, Shubhada Saxena, Kirk Yoshida, Richard Yuen

**Staff in Attendance:** Rey Arellano, Sarah Chen

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Three citizens signed up to speak at this meeting.

- 1) Ms. Kim Nguyen – in support of AISD bilingual education program for Vietnamese as a foreign language at middle and high schools.
- 2) Mr. Phil Hoang, VP of VACAT (Vietnamese American Community of Austin, Texas) – in support of item 5(C) AISD bilingual education
- 3) Mr. Gi Kim, Chair of Austin Korean School – requested assistance with securing special rate for use of AISD facilities for the Austin Korean School and Austin Great Wall Chinese School. Commissioners suggested approaching the AISD Board and requested discussions with Mr. Kim individually or setting up a working group, since item was not on agenda.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There was one change/correction to the October 20, 2015 meeting draft minutes. Recommendation to approve the October 20, 2015 meeting minutes as presented in draft form with correction of Commissioner Cobalis' name in 3(c) was approved on Commissioner Richard Yuen motion, Commissioner Sonia Kotecha second on a 10-0 vote.

Commissioner Thuy Nguyen requested moving New Business item 5c before Old Business. Vice Chair Vince Cobalis stated to allow New Business item 5c follow Old Business item 3a.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Update on the AAQOL Initiative**

Executive Liaison Rey Arellano reported progress on the initiative and community outreach. Dr. Jang's survey had 2,511 responses, and most recently focused on Filipinos, hoping to reach 300 by December. City of Austin Tea-in-a-Box design completed, and guided conversation at the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce on January 20, 2016. City demographer will have the score card ready by the end of year. Data gathering portion will conclude in December and analysis will be conducted in the first quarter of 2016.

Vice Chair Vince Cobalis turned over meeting to Chair Richard Jung who apologized for being late due to other obligations and thanked the community members who spoke on bilingual education concerns.

Prior to hearing presentations in New Business item 3c, Commissioner Thuy Nguyen recused herself and left the room due to conflict of interest.

Continued after completion of New Business item 3c:

**b. Discussion and possible action on by-laws**

Staff Liaison Sarah Chen reported that the Audit and Finance Committee met on November 16, 2015 and recommended approval of the universal changes and Article 7H of the AAQOLAC by-laws. However, Article 7F was not approved since the language approved by the board was in direct violation of City code and was not recommended by staff. The board is asked to revisit this section to reflect “Eight members constitutes a quorum.”

Recommendation to adopt the entire by-laws as presented was approved on Commissioner Vince Cobalis motion, Commissioner Thuy Nguyen second on a 10-0 vote.

**c. Discussion and possible action on community stakeholder commissioners**

Chair Jung stated he received the phone numbers of the top four candidates today and will contact them to get their consent tomorrow, then forward to Council. Sarah Chen reported appointment of Ann Okamura as the 11<sup>th</sup> Commissioner. Chair Jung asked her resume be sent to Commissioners.

**d. Discussion and possible action on nomination of commissioners for joint committee assignments**

Recommendation to nominate Commissioner Sonia Kotecha to serve on the Joint Inclusion Committee was approved on Commissioner Richard Yuen motion, Commissioner Shubhada Saxena second on a 10-0 vote.

**e. Discussion and possible action on proposing names of Asian Americans for AISD school renaming**

Chair Jung put this item on hold till the next meeting. Commissioner Chanpheng will send AISD student data to Sarah Chen to forward to Commissioners.

**4. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

There was no staff briefing.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**c. AISD Bilingual Education**

Commissioner Nu Chanpheng introduced Olivia Hernandez, Director of Bilingual/ELL at Austin Independent School District (AISD), who presented AISD’s bilingual education program, including Dual Language (DL) One-Way and Two-Way, English Language Learners (ELL), Emergent Bilinguals, and Limited English Proficient (LEP), and Language Other Than English (LOTE); study data on student achievement and benefits of bilingual education. Commissioners asked about the basis of the Thomas study quoted in the presentation, and years to reach level of achievement. Chair Richard Jung stated the current controversy was on what program to use and that some Hispanic parents viewed the bilingual program as inhibiting their children’s progress.

Commissioners were interested in how LOTE and DL were conducted, and the budgetary difference between the two for a Vietnamese program. Ms. Hernandez replied the DL program would require 1) teacher to teach the course content in Vietnamese, 2) teacher to teach advanced Vietnamese, and 3) an additional teach to launch the program, plus resources for Vietnamese text

books. Commissioner Kirk Yoshida asked if AISD would expand DL program to Spanish and Vietnamese, and also include Arabic as a third language. Ms. Hernandez replied Spanish was expanding to middle school and LOTE for Vietnamese. Commissioner Shubhada Saxena asked if teachers could be shared across middle schools or be connected with other institutions. Ms. Hernandez replied tutors were needed. Chair Jung thanked Ms. Hernandez and asked her to send a list of tutor requests and copy of the presentation.

Mr. Thuan Tran, a third grade teacher at Summit Elementary School, presented the Vietnamese DL Two-way program at Summit. Chair Jung asked for an electronic copy of the presentation. Commissioners Kotecha and Banks commended Mr. Tran's passion for the program, and that AISD was providing DL program on a language other than Spanish. Commissioners asked about bilingual programs in other schools and the benefits of learning core courses in a non-English language. Commissioner Banks questioned the issue at hand. Chair Jung explained that during an AISD meeting on DL program, native English speakers opposed to DL teamed up with Spanish speaking parents and asserted that DL was inhibiting their children, not understanding that cognitively having the capacity in two languages was better for children's learning. Commissioner Chanpheng suggested viewing the public comments for the AISD Board Meeting on 12/26/2015 for further insight. Commissioners discussed drafting a letter of support for Vietnamese LOTE in middle and high schools.

Recommendation for the Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission to provide a letter of support to AISD in favor of a Vietnamese LOTE with Pre-AP at Murchison Middle School was approved on Commissioner Nu Chanpheng motion, Commissioner Kirk Yoshida second on a 9-0 vote (Commissioner Nguyen not present).

Commissioner Saxena suggested that AISD explore additional language programs such as Arabic, and Commissioner Kotecha proposed educating the community on community advocates in schools. Chair Jung suggested discussing with the various Asian communities, asking Ms. Hernandez facilitating the programs. Ms. Hernandez replied that community input is important but that lots of factors needed to be considered, since it takes time to build the program and needs enough students to sustain the Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade program. Commissioner Yuen asked if there was data to target the schools. Chair Jung asked that the information be sent to Sarah Chen.

**a. Working Group Reports**

**Community Assessment Working Group** – Commissioner Richard Yuen reported project preliminary numbers. Of the sample, 90% was foreign born, 83% non-English speakers, 74% limited English proficiency, and Filipino sample increased from 6% to 10%.

**Human Resources Working Group** – Commissioner Nguyen reported the working group did not meet. Commissioner Yuen stated HRD sent an email asking for cultural sensitivity training resources, and suggested forwarding to Commissioner Kotecha. Commissioner Kotecha stated that HRD employee Aakash Patel reached out to her for targeted advertising. Chair Jung and Vice Chair Cobalis met with the City Manager. There was discussion of HRD/AAEN meeting on Friday. Chair Jung stated working group discussions to not become general discussion.

**Community Outreach Working Group** – There was no meeting, waiting for the appointment of the 4 community stakeholder commissioners.

**AARC Working Group** – There was no report.

**b. Discussion and possible action on business plan and budget timeline**  
This item was tabled.

**c. Information Sharing (Standing Agenda Item)**  
**There was no information sharing.**

**6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**Commissioners discussed agenda items for the December 15, 2015 meeting. Items tabled today will be discussed.**

**7. ADJOURN**

**Recommendation adjourning the meeting was approved on Commissioner Vince Cobalis motion, Commissioner Janki DePalma second on a 10-0 vote. Chair Richard Jung adjourned the meeting at 8:34 p.m.**

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