



**ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015**

The Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 15, 2015 at City Hall in Austin, Texas.

Chair Richard Jung called the Board Meeting to order at 06:10 p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Aletta Banks, Nu Chanpheng, Vince Cobalis, Janki DePalma, Richard Jung, Sonia Kotecha, Ann Okamura, Shubhada Saxena, Kirk Yoshida, Richard Yuen

Staff in Attendance: Sarah Chen, Taja Beekley

**1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS**

There was no citizen communication at this meeting.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

There was no change to the November 17, 2015 meeting draft minutes. Recommendation to approve the November 17, 2015 meeting minutes as presented in draft form was approved on Commissioner Richard Yuen motion, Commissioner Sonia Kotecha second on a 10-0 vote.

There were two updates to the minutes from the AAQOLAC meeting on October 20, 2015, to reflect the following:

- 1) Item 3b, "... Recommendation to put forward the top 4 candidates (**amend on 12/15/2015: Pramod Patil, Rajani Ramachandran, Charles Lu, Kara Takasaki**) to City Council ..."
- 2) Item 5e, "Commissioner Saxena shared Foundation Communities will provide training to volunteers to (**amend on 12/15/2015: to enable people to get health insurance**) ~~ask people to vote~~. She will send information to Sarah Chen to disseminate."

Recommendation to amend the October 20, 2015 minutes to include the four nominees for community stakeholder commissioners: Pramod Patil, Rajani Ramachandran, Charles Lu, Kara Takasaki, was approved on Commissioner Aletta Banks motion, Commissioner Vince Cobalis second on a 10-0 vote.

Recommendation to amend the October 20, 2015 minutes Information Sharing section regarding Foundation Communities and change "ask people to vote" to "to enable people to get health insurance" was approved on Commissioner Shubhada Saxena motion, Commissioner Aletta Banks second on a 10-0 vote.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Update on the AAQOL Initiative**

Commissioner Richard Yuen reported on progress in community needs assessment:

- 1) Interviewed interns for community engagement, all candidates spoke Asian language(s).

- 2) Actively engaged City staff to volunteer for the project. Employee will receive training on purpose and goals prior to going out to the community.
- 3) City demographer Ryan Robinson to complete scorecard by 1/15/2016.
- 4) Next work group meeting on Friday (12/18/2015) at 1PM, Austin Java by Cityhall.

Dr. Yuri Jang provided update on the research project, progress on the survey. She reported that the logo was enthusiastically embraced by the community, and there were sufficient number of translators and validators. Last Day of data collection was 12/12/2015, with 2,600 final samples and 48% using non-English instrument. Indians topped the ethnic background, followed by Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino and others. All surveys were entered in statistical program. Chair Richard Jung requested a copy of the presentation which Dr. Jang would send to Sarah Chen.

Commissioners asked about data breakdown and participation of seniors in the survey. Dr. Jang replied initially difficult to reach Vietnamese speaking population but after hiring a Vietnamese speaking Research Assistant, received very good response rate and referrals. In terms of data analysis, preliminary outcome will be available in early spring. Commissioners also discussed process for presentation and reporting to Council. Taja Beekley who had experience with the Hispanic Quality of Life report stated that the consultant made an oral presentation at a regular Council meeting under the standing staff briefing item. Commissioners discussed options for both oral presentation/briefing and written report with executive summary. Chair Jung thanked Dr. Jang and UT students who used their own time and efforts for the project.

Commissioner Vince Cobalis requested that item 3(c) working group reports be moved before item 3(b). Chair Jung moved item 3(c) before item 3(b).

#### c. Working Group Reports

##### 1) AARC Working Group

Commissioner Vince Cobalis stated there was no complete statistical data or new information in the previous month and deferred reporting on operations to Taja Beekley. Ms. Beekley reported there was an overall delay in the commercial kitchen completion, which would have an end of January or early February construction. Senior meals contracts expired and would be under a 120-day holdover. Major solicitation for new contractor will be posted 12/21/2015 and closes on 2/2/2016, and will market the solicitation through the Asian chambers of commerce. Commissioner Cobalis stated during this time period, the senior meals program will extend to 4 days a week from the current 3-day offer. Taja Beekley reported that expanding to Monday will mean hiring a second shuttle driver for transportation services. Commissioner Shubhada Saxena advised to advertise in ethnic media to reach restaurants not on City's vendor list. Ms. Beekley replied the City's Purchasing Office would advertise in Asian language media and other newspapers in the January issue. She also stated that there is a Senior Holiday Luncheon on 12/16/2015 which Commissioner Nu Chanpheng will attend. A total of 120 meals will be served and a second van had been rented to transport seniors. Commissioner Ann Okamura asked if seniors had to pay for the meal. Ms. Beekley replied as long as they met the program guidelines which followed the Meals on Wheels guidelines, it is free, otherwise a \$5 fee is charged. Commissioners discussed participation, the merits of the program, and suggested getting volunteers to transport seniors and work with Meals on Wheels to get drivers to deliver ethnic appropriate meals to homebound Asian seniors.

##### 2) HR Working Group

Commissioner Sonia Kotecha reported that the working group met in November and December. During the last meeting, Julia Joseph, Chair of AAEN presented good information related to marketing and revisiting internal processes. There will be an AAEN workshop in January to discuss projects within the City for employee participation and relationship building. Commissioner Kotecha met with Sheila Balog [HRD Organization Development

Manager] to discuss Ms. Balog's request for resources on diversity inclusion and shared her abundant personal experience on diversity inclusion which requires cultural shift. One discussion was about education workshop to City management regarding understanding the model minority myth and perceptions, to facilitate outreach and advancement for Asian employees. The Working Group's priority is to get someone from HRD to attend the meetings. Chair Jung appreciated the start of dialogues. Commissioner Aletta Banks stated that the Working Group requested data from [Acting Director] Joya Hayes regarding the number of applicants of Asian descent who applied for positions, interviewed, and hired. The purpose is to understand if there is interest in City jobs and also to address the myth that 50% of City jobs were already decided. Request was also made for a list of all local papers that HRD places advertisements to know what languages jobs were advised in. Chair Jung asked if the information requested would be presented when HRD reports back in January [2016]. Another topic discussed with Ms. Joseph was recruitment and Asian American employees' desire for promotion, their needs in terms of training and support, as well as perceived barriers. Chair Jung suggested the Working Group provide a list of newspapers and training resources to HRD to help facilitate. Commissioner Richard Yuen stated that Dr. Jang and Marion Sanchez have established data point sets for the survey and that resource could be accessed for networking purposes within City departments. Chair Jung suggested that the Commission help filter the results objectively for HRD in terms of which channels are effective to ensure effective use of financial resources. Commissioner Kotecha hopes to meet with HRD representative to formulate outreach methods and strategies. Commissioner Banks stated that timing was essential to advertise to the Asian community the City Job Fair in which AAEN has been invited to serve as ambassador. Chair Jung also asked if HRD is getting assistance in reaching the new immigrant population to apply for entry level positions. Commissioner Kotecha replied that had not been done due to time constraint, but a lot of HRD management recently went through the Undoing Racism training which impacts workplace inclusion and outreach. Commissioner Kotecha created a Google folder containing all the notes and would send the link to Sarah Chen to share with Commissioners.

**3) New Working Group**

Chair Jung asked if new Commission members were interested in creating an Education Working Group. Commissioners Nu Chanpheng, Kirk Yoshida and Janki DePalma expressed interest. Recommendation to create Education Working Group and allow group members to define mission was approved on Commissioner Shubhada Saxena motion, Commissioner Richard Yuen second on a 10-0 vote. Chair Jung appointed Commissioner Chanpheng as Chair of the Education Working Group and advised her to seek Commissioner Thuy Nguyen's interest in joining the group.

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

Chair Richard Jung shared that AISD took a vote last month to make it possible to change names of schools. There were other compromises, such as renaming schools is very expensive, and consideration of alumni sentiment (example, Robert E Lee Elementary), as well as which school had high Asian American population. Commissioner Chanpheng sent the AISD demographics report to Sarah Chen who will forward to Commissioners. Chair Jung will continue to provide updates until all Commissioners are on board. Commissioner Cobalis asked if any Asian American was on the AISD Board. Chair Jung stated there is an opening now and encouraged Commissioners to find qualified Asian Americans to serve on this unpaid full-time elected job.

Chair Jung announced that Commissioner Richard Yuen has been put forward by the Health and Human Services Committee to serve on the Central Health Board (a taxing authority). He encouraged Commissioners to write to Council members to appoint an Asian American on the Central Health Board. Since this is unofficial and not on the agenda, Chair Jung will discuss with

individual Commissioners interested in this matter after the meeting. Vice Chair Cobalis added that Council was scheduled to make the appointment on the coming Thursday.

Chair Jung provided update on the community stakeholder commissioners. All four confirmed they will serve and may be able to come on board in February.

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

There was no staff briefing.

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

##### **a. Discussion and possible action on business plan and budget timeline**

Commissioners discussed the need to have objectives and goals, as well as strategic plan, in order for the Commission to prepare and make recommendations to Council on budget items related to services to Asian Americans. Recommendation to create Business Plan Working Group was approved on Commissioner Richard Yuen motion, Commissioner Nu Chanpheng second on a 10-0 vote. Chair Jung appointed Commissioner Kirk Yoshida as Chair of the Business Plan Working Group, as well as Commissioners Vince Cobalis and Aletta Banks to the group. Sarah Chen passed out the FY16 Budget Process Calendar for reference. Commissioner Cobalis indicated stakeholder meetings usually occur in March.

##### **b. Information Sharing (Standing Agenda Item)**

Chair Richard Jung shared that the Municipal Court has vacancies for Associate Judge, part-time and full-time, and one Asian American attorney scored at the top and was being considered.

Commissioner Sonia Kotecha shared that IACT is hosting the annual Republic Day celebration on 1/23/2016 at the AARC, and invited Commissioners to the event. She will send the invitation to Sarah Chen to disseminate.

Commissioner Sonia Kotecha shared Book Talk with Deepa Iyer community conversations on 2/20/2016 at the AARC. In light of anti-Muslim immigration/refugee sentiment, Commissioners discussed a working group or resolution. Chair Jung asked Commissioner Kotecha to draft a resolution and put this item on the agenda for review.

Commissioner Shubhada Saxena shared past events including the 12/5/2015 gala to fundraise for education, the first Asian American and Pacific Islander Health Summit in Houston in which civic engagement discussions occurred and there was talk about an Asian American Civic Day. Commissioner Richard Yuen suggested participation and outreach after the Outreach Working Group is formed.

Commissioner Janki DePalma shared that on 1/11/2016 there will be a ground breaking for the Independent, a joint venture with Frank Lam of the tallest residential building in the City.

Commissioner Vince Cobalis shared HHSD discussions about language access and disparities, and that an RFA in the amount of \$700,000 was issued. However, very few non-profits specifically serve the Asian American groups. He will send the link to Sarah Chen to send to Commissioners for referrals to Asian American services. Chair Richard Jung stated that the City of Austin has no ability to provide assistance to non-English speaking citizens who are also tax payers, for access to help. Commissioner Cobalis stated this RFA has \$100,000 for immigrant mental health. Commissioner Sonia Kotecha said she read the RFA and Asian Americans was not mentioned at all. Chair Jung said he indicated it to HHSD Director Shannon Jones. Commissioner Aletta Banks stated this is the time to revise the language, and that she has experience making the City revise publications. Chair Jung advised to discuss the matter later.

Commissioner Shubhada Saxena is hosting an event at her house on 12/29/2015 and will email details to Sarah Chen.

**6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Commissioners discussed agenda items for the January 19, 2016 meeting. One item has been moved to Old Business on the agenda:

1) Update on AISD school renaming

One new item has been placed on the agenda:

1) Discussion and possible action on a resolution to support threatened immigrant communities

**7. ADJOURN**

Recommendation adjourning the meeting was approved on Commissioner Ann Okamura motion, Commissioner Janki DePalma second on a 9-0 vote (Commissioner Shubhada Saxena was away from the room). Chair Richard Jung adjourned the meeting at 8:14 p.m.