



# City of Seattle

---



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 21, 2019 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Senior Center of West Seattle

4217 SW Oregon St, Seattle, Washington

**Commissioners Present:** Michael Garrett, Kari Lerum, Nate Higby, Sabel Roizen, Byram Simpson, Deepa Sivarajan, Joseph Suttner, and Manuel Venegas

**Commissioners Absent:** Latosha Correll, Jessi Murray, Katrina Sanford, and Wayne Rocque

**SOCR Staff:** Janet Stafford

**Meeting Minutes recorded by:** Deepa Sivarajan

**Guests:** Brett Pepowski, Stacy (Alki Beach Pride)

### Welcome and Introductions

1. This is our first meeting outside of City Hall! Thanks to the Senior Center of West Seattle for allowing us to use their space.

### Public Open Comment

1. Stacy (Alki Beach Pride): Alki Beach Pride has been going on for 6 years, started in Stacy and her partner's apartment but now has grown to 1,200 participants in 2019!
  - a. Pacific Northwest Black Pride will be collaborating with them on next year's event
  - b. Likely date is August 23, 2020 – please attend!

### Approve October Minutes and November Agenda

1. Motion to approve November agenda with below edits. **Motion passes (100%)**
  - a. Change lead of report-out from 5-chairs meeting to Manuel
  - b. Change lead to Byram wherever else Jessi and Katrina were listed to lead
2. Motion to approve October minutes. **Motion passes (100%)**

### Seattle Office of Civil Rights (SOCR) Report – Janet Stafford

1. SOCR staff received briefings on Census 2020, would like to give those briefings to commissions
  - a. Census group would like an hour to present to us
  - b. Potentially could present to our Community Outreach committee instead of to the full Commission – Janet will send info to Michael
2. Recruitment updates: we interviewed 17 applicants last month and have put forward 7 recommendations to Council and Mayor’s Office, for 8 seats
  - a. Goal is to get paperwork to Council next week, with potential to have Council hearings on appointments as early as December
  - b. Will hold another call with Commission interview team to discuss filling the eighth seat (a mayoral seat)

### Committee Reports

1. POC Stakeholders Committee: Report from Deepa Sivarajan
  - a. Alphabet Alliance of Color (AAoC) event
    - i. New date is January 31, 2020 – request from POC Stakeholders Committee to work with Community Outreach Committee on supporting the event
    - ii. Motion to sign on to AAoC letter asking for organizations to co-sponsor. **Motion passes (100%)**
  - b. Deepa to be engaging with Queer the Land
  - c. No updates from SOCR on our budget ask for funding for a QTPOC needs assessment survey
2. Commission Operations: Report from Deepa Sivarajan
  - a. Google Drive is down! Deepa will work to restore
3. Community Outreach: Report from Michael Garrett
  - a. Meetings in community:
    - i. First meeting in community today!
    - ii. Looking at Beacon Hill Library for first quarter in 2020, and at a location further north for later in the year
  - b. Ambassador program
    - i. Currently generating a list of organizations we want to be involved with
  - c. Census 2020: engaging with populations that are underrepresented in the census
  - d. Sex workers rights
    - i. City Council not yet ready to make a commitment to repeal harmful procedures against sex workers

### HB 1551 – HIV Law Modernization

1. WA Rep. Nicole Macri (43<sup>rd</sup> LD) has asked us to support a house bill intended to reclassify knowingly exposing and passing HIV from a felony charge to a misdemeanor
  - a. Bill sponsors are trying to get organizations such as Planned Parenthood to reiterate that this is not a “soft on crime”
  - b. Would be easier to move towards full decriminalization of sex work with a push from organizations like us
2. Discussion from commissioners:
  - a. Kari Lerum: We should be pushing towards full decriminalization, rather than reclassification as a misdemeanor. Criminalizing matters of health don’t reduce the adverse health impacts, they are just punitive. Historically these kinds of measures have

been used to punish Black and brown people. This also perpetuates this idea that there are people who are “contaminated”.

- b. Byram Simpson: Laws like this serve to perpetuate outdated stigmas about HIV; there are other proven, effective, meaningful ways to reduce the spread of HIV.
  - c. Michael Garrett: Laws like this also demonizes queer people of color, fraught with having law intersect with ideas of morality.
  - d. Nate Higby: I work in healthcare, and we’re working towards what you talk about.
  - e. Deepa Sivarajan: I agree on decriminalization, and I think we should be pushing for what we believe in, not to worry about putting forward a message that is politically “palatable”.
  - f. Joseph Suttner: I think it would be more meaningful if we push for what we believe in and put together a letter that outlines our stance on decriminalization.
  - g. Wayne Rocque: I do feel strongly about decriminalization, but I also want to add, is it possible to invite someone to come to the Commission to talk about this? I also want it to be on record that a healthcare professional has come to talk to us about this. I want to see that we’re doing this with intentionality.
  - h. Deepa Sivarajan: Since I think there is some urgency to this, perhaps people who are knowledgeable about issue could send out some resources or research for the rest of us to read, instead of waiting until we can get a briefing in person?
  - i. Wayne Rocque: That would be great.
  - j. Kari Lerum: Could also combine thinking about this with an upcoming bill on comprehensive sex education.
3. Motion to write a letter that supports decriminalization of HIV. **Motion passes (100%)**
    - a. Aim to have letter out by December 1, which is World AIDS Day

### **Report Out from 5-Chairs Meeting**

1. Proposal for 5-Commission group to work through the policy process of getting Council approval to increase the yearly budget for commissions (currently \$2,000 for SOCR commissions)
  - a. Will be spearheaded by Seattle Human Right’s Commission, who is asking for about \$90,000 for their commission
2. Discussion on future events for the 5 commissions
  - a. If we have any future events, send to the other commissions to promote as well, e.g. Pride Flag Raising
3. Human trafficking policies: the next day included the meeting the Human Rights Commission’s Human Trafficking Task Force, who had recently met with Councilmember Herbold

### **Retreat Planning**

1. Overall proposed retreat topics:
  - a. Workshop on how to engage with Council and the budget process
  - b. Reviewing committee structure and potential new roles on Commission
2. Motion to add agenda item on using remaining budget. **Motion passes (100%)**

### **Budget Votes**

1. Motion to spend up to \$400 on food and beverages for the January retreat. **Motion passes (100%)**
2. Motion to donate \$200 to the Alphabet Alliance of Color. **Motion passes (100%)**

3. Motion to spend up to \$591 on audio-visual equipment for commission and committee meetings. **Motion passes (100%)**

#### **Follow-Up on Letter Re: Encampment Removals**

4. We've received no response to our previous letter to Council on encampment removals – do we want to do some kind of follow-up?
5. Discussion from commissioners:
  - a. Kari Lerum: Can we add to our retreat agenda a discussion on how our communications go with Council overall? How can we engage with them besides through letters etc?
  - b. Byram Simpson: Let's table this discussion until the retreat anyway – there is urgency to this, but we also need to be strategic.

#### **Cancel December regular meeting**

1. Motion to cancel the full Commission meeting in December 2019. **Motion passes (100%)**

#### **Announcements, Reminders, & Roll Call**

1. Dominique from Mayor's Office sent an email to co-chairs regarding follow-up on Seattle Police Department consent decree, Byram will share with rest of commission
2. No follow-up yet from Councilmember Herbold's office on hate crimes legislation
3. Acknowledgement that Transgender Day of Remembrance was yesterday; 300 transgender people have been murdered this year, and most of those people were transgender women of color
4. Michael Garrett has been appointed to the Critical Incidents Task Force which is under a consent decree around policing; not attending as a commissioner specifically

**(END 8:41)**