**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

May 18, 2020

6pm-8pm

Zoom Meeting (due to COVID-19)

**Commissioners present:** Alison Turner, Bill Southern, Carol Redfield, Chris Maykut, Emily Kim, Jasmine Aryana, Julie Pham, Karyn Kubo Fleming, Martha Lucas, Robert White, Sharif Mahfouz

**Commissioners not present:** Felix Chang, Thais Marbles

**City of Seattle Staff present:** Andres Mantilla (DON Director), Abesha Shiferaw (Civic Engagement and Leadership Development Team Lead), Teresa Chen (City Attorney Office)

**Agenda and Minutes Approval**

The CIC made the decision to not officially approve the meeting agenda or minutes from the April meeting. This decision came as a result of a recent memo sent by the Seattle City Attorney Office that discourages City boards and commissions from taking any action that is not necessary and routine, and any action that is not related to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This included approving agendas and minutes.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Check-In**

CIC commissioners each checked in to say how they are doing personally.

**Hiatus Discussion**

In mid-April, the CIC Staff Liaison received a memo from the City Attorney Office which provided guidance on operating during Covid-19 and recommends that City boards and commissions *not* take any action unless the action is necessary and routine, or directly related to the Covid-19 public health emergency. This is to minimize the risk of violating the Open Public Meetings Act, which as it stands requires boards and commissions to have their meetings open for the public to attend in person.

The following is a transcription of the discussion:

**Alison Turner:** We now have some more information from the City about how to comply with the Open Public Meetings Act. So, I guess a lot of commission are going on hiatus right now for 60 days until the city can figure out what the protocol or best practices is. So, the Co-Chairs are recommending today that we vote to also take a hiatus. What we’re proposing is that we take a 60-day hiatus, and to reconvene in August. We wanted to just discuss this and answer any questions you may have to try to clarify the things that were shared via email. The co-Chairs had time to discuss this among ourselves with Hilary so we probably have more clarity than you do but this is an uncertain and confusing time so I wanted to open it up for questions and clarification and just make sure everyone’s had a chance to review the information reviewed in the email.

**Hilary Nichols (CIC Staff Liaison):** I could provide a summary if that might be helpful. Thank you, Alison, for the start of that conversation. She pretty much summarized the most key points. If you were at the April CIC meeting, you will remember that I received a document from our City Attorney Office talking about meeting during the time of COVID with the understanding that we can’t be meeting in person, which is a pretty express point of the Open Public Meetings Act, is that you need to have a meeting that people can come to in person. Obviously that’s how it’s written into law, and right now while we can’t meet in person, so it poses a challenge and puts the City at risk of violating the OPMA while commissions and things that are supposed to have public meetings can’t have them in person. It took basically this entire month for me to understand the implications for the CIC. If you remember from the memo, for the commissions to continue meeting, to continue discussing things, to continue acting upon things, the matter needs to be either necessary *and* routine (in the legal sense), or directly related to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

As I was talking with Teresa Chen (City Attorney Office) and Thao Madsen (City Clerk’s Office), and Abesha Shiferaw (DON, Civic Engagement and Leadership Development Lead), and Waing Waing (DON, External Relations Division Director), and lots of other people who are staff liaisons to commissions, what I could understand was that most of what the CIC doesn’t fall under the category of “necessary and routine”. “Necessary” would be something like approving payroll, or being roadblocks in certain design projects. So, from what I could understand the only option for the CIC is to work directly on a COVID-19 related matter. We had talked about different ways that the CIC could be involved in the COVID-19 response. For example, Samantha Stork, who works in the Department of Neighborhoods, came and presented on the Seattle Together campaign. And I also hear from you all that there is interest in having the CIC advising on different bigger City COVID plans, like plans for reopening when that happens. With those things, I did a lot of work to figure what it was that the CIC could work on related to COVID, with the understanding that things in the City right now are moving a mile a minute. Decisions are being made by the hour. Plans are changing by the hour. Situation changes. Science changes. It moves very fast, and as a commission it’s difficult to keep up with that pace in terms of advising on certain things or providing ideas on certain things. It’s just challenging when you only meet once per month.

So the confluence of all of these factors is that it’s going to be hard for the CIC to keep up with the pace of the City with its COVID-19 response, and the very fact of meeting online puts the City at risk of violating the Open Public Meetings Act, especially because right now we don’t necessarily have a standard of what a virtual meeting that satisfies all the commitments of the Open Public Meetings Act.

If you are feeling a little bit confused, that’s okay because it’s been a little bit of a confusing month for me! I am trying my best to explain it all, but there’s a lot of working parts. The conclusion that I could see before me, but ultimately the decision is yours to make, that it makes sense to go on a hiatus for 60-days. There’s precedence for a 60-day hiatus because some DON boards have done the same. The main reason is so that your meetings don’t violate the Open Public Meetings Act, and also so you are saving your own time and energy for your own life right now. As we know, everyone’s lives have gotten significantly more stressful across the board.

So those are the factors I’m considering; your time, your energy, and the Open Public Meetings Act. I think that 60 days, for the City on our end, gives us time to figure out what an online meeting that is open and accessible looks like. And for you all on your end, to have that time and space to breathe into this and be able to come back ready to work on some stuff. It will be two months from now, so who knows what our world will look like but hopefully the City will be able to have come more concrete plans that we can come to the CIC with. What you all have told me in the past is that it works so much better for you when you are presented a concrete plan that you can really advise one, and give specific input on. So, that was very long winded! If anyone has any questions, I’ll take them. Teresa, if you want to jump in and say anything, I’m trying my best to be as accurate to the law as possible, but if you have anything you want to jump in on please do so.

**Teresa Chen:** So just to give a quick recap and some background the OPMA requirements that we have to meet right now are based on the Governor’s proclamation 20-28 which is set to expire at the end of the month. Word on the street is that the state has considered anything from week to week extensions, which would be a nightmare for the City Attorney’s Office and the City Clerk’s Office to figure out what we need to change to accommodate new requirements for open public meetings. We also hear that there’s no guarantee that the current OPMA requirements will sunset at the end of the month. We may see it completely go away, where all meetings are online and the types of items on the agenda are business as usual as they were pre-COVID. There’s also the possibility that the Governor is going to modify the current parameters.

So as Hilary mentioned, we have two categories that proposed agenda items must meet: items that are necessary in response to COVID, and items that are necessary and routine. Because the Governor’s proclamation didn’t define those, the City Attorney Office has determined those “necessary and routine” by plain language. So, when we’re looking at what is “routine”, we’re not looking necessarily at frequency. Some commissions review annual plans, or quarterly plans or reports, and those may be routine even though they’re low in frequency. The part that brings the most questions is whether something is deemed “necessary”, and that is determined by the surrounding facts. Whether there is a grant deadline, or a council project that requires the commission’s advice before a certain time, those are the types of things that will guide the City Attorney Office’s determination on whether an item is “necessary”. So, in a lot of cases even if there are agenda items that don’t very clearly meet the standard of “necessary and routine” we do advise that we comply as directly as possible with current OPMA requirements.

When things are more gray area, the City Attorney Office will advise, but our advice is not always taken. If an item does not meet the criteria of “necessary and routine” it may still go forward, and that’s the call of whoever is finalizing the agenda. And that’s often because certain items are seen as being low risk. So, there are certain items that may not technically meet the criteria of being “necessary and routine”, but without anticipating anyone challenging the commission’s review of that item, a commission may determine to go ahead and proceed. If there is an OPMA challenge on an agenda item that goes forward that doesn’t meet the current criteria, worst case scenario the action on the item is void. And that’s if there’s a vote. Also, the City would be subject to legal fees that result from that lawsuit.

For things that are discussions, deliberations, presentations, there’s no vote to be undone if there is an OPMA challenge. In that case, there would be no reversal of action but the City is still looking at legal fees for that. It’s ultimately a question of whether at this point the item can wait two weeks. Whether or not there is a reason for putting it forward that the commissioners are willing to take on that exposure to OPMA challenges for the sake of moving forward on a certain item. I will provide updates as soon as we get them from the State, but until then we are looking at these parameters being in place until May 31st, 2020.

**Hilary Nichols:** Thanks, Teresa.

**Teresa Chen:** One more thing to note, I was looking at some of your (CIC) past agenda items, and I couldn’t tell for sure what types of items you put forward. If you do decide to go on a hiatus today, that doesn’t mean that you can’t call special meetings if something comes up that you feel is very important to your commission’s work. So it doesn’t mean that you are locking yourself out, especially because your commission advises on civic participation. Once the City Clerk’s office starts putting together a plan, looking at the Governor’s rollout of the phases for in-person meetings, or accommodating maybe a hybrid of in-person and electronic meetings, there may be issues that come up that your commission should advise on. And I’m sure Hilary will track that for you, and I will track that as well. I just don’t want you to feel that by deciding to go on hiatus, or considering a hiatus, that you are going to lock yourself out of important work that you can contribute to as we move forward and see what comes in the next days to weeks.

**Alison Turner:** Thank you Teresa for that clarification, and thanks Hilary for the summary. I would encourage commissioners to ask questions now, if you have any.

**Sharif Mahfouz:** Open question for Hilary and Teresa if you guys know. Which other commissions have gone on hiatus?

**Hilary Nichols:** I’ll just speak for Department of Neighborhoods, the Seattle Youth Commission and the Historic Preservation Boards have gone on hiatus. The Seattle Renters Commission is considering it, but they haven’t made that choice yet.

**Teresa Chen:** And I haven’t worked with any commissions that are on hiatus directly, mainly because when questions come to me they are about OPMA compliance which means that the commission are intending to continue meeting.

**Sharif Mahfouz:** Got it, thank you.

**Alison Turner:** If you have anything that you want to share, it doesn’t have to be a question. It can be feedback, or anything you think we should consider before we decide. Please speak up now.

**Emily Kim:** I think it totally makes sense to go on hiatus, and I would still love to know if Hilary or somebody can keep us updated on ways we may be able to help in the next few months?

**Hilary Nichols:** Absolutely.

**Robert White:** Being new to the commission, my question is if we go on a hiatus, what is the connection back to our own community? Seeing as we are part of the commission and representing our districts, what does that look like for us? And what is that requirement if we’re not meeting?

**Alison Turner:** Teresa, I think this might be a question for you. If the commission is on a hiatus, Robert asked what are our individual roles as commissioners during that time? Is it unchanged, or does it have any bearing on us being commissioners during the hiatus?

 **Robert White:** I can clarify a little bit more. I sit on a board at the King County for Veteran’s Services Levy and a still represent the DSHSL board in the community when I go to events, or I come online. So I’m just trying to understand that that looks like for us as commissioners, do we still have that type of responsibility, do we still have a position that we are able to go those and represent that title?

**Teresa Chen:** Yes, you maintain your position as the commissioners, it’s just that you don’t have any pending items before you at upcoming meetings until you decide to come back.

**Alison Turner:** To piggy back off that, I just want to clarify for those who have a position that is expiring or has already expired, my understanding is that you can still serve in that position as long as it is not seated. For example, I have been sitting in mine for about one or two years.

**Teresa Chen:** Yes, so vacant positions can be seated by commissioners whose terms have expired. There are often holdovers because commissioners have experience with being volunteers and they are invested in the good things that commissions are working on, so we commonly see commissioners serve until a successor is appointed. And if you have any current vacancies, if you have candidates for that, staff can continue to put those appointment packets together to the extent that those prospective commissioners need commissioners vetting or sub-committee interviews. And depending on how many commissioners that involves, a public meeting may or may not be required.

**Hilary Nichols:** So for Martha (Lucas, and Robert (White) and Jasmine (Aryana) I have your appointment packets and getting your council confirmations will be a matter of Council figuring out when they are doing that. Hopefully that will be soon, I’m confident that they will figure out a way to do it, and sometimes they can bypass the need for a full council hearing if they choose to do so. So you three are in the clear around your appointment packets.

**Alison Turner:** Does anyone else have anything they would like to talk about before we move forward with a decision?

**Abesha Shiferaw:** I’m curious if you all had a chance to talk about what the hiatus means and if individuals are individually interested in participating in any activities? I don’t know if I heard it mentioned earlier, I just wanted to see if there is individual interest, I think it was Emily that mentioned it. I am wondering if there are any legal barriers or limits around that, and if there is interest how do we keep involved in that way?

**Hilary Nichols:** From my understanding, and Teresa can confirm, the hiatus prevents the commission as a whole with a quorum coming together and making decisions. So, just like you could still represent yourself as commissioners when you’re out and about, you can still participate in anything that you choose to participate in as individuals. Whether that’s volunteering, doing something for Department of Neighborhoods, or something like that. Is that correct, Teresa?

**Teresa Chen:** Yes, at least in terms of the OPMA. A public meeting is required when a quorum of commissioners meet and discuss commission business. So if all of the commissioners come together and do a community service project, as long as it’s not something that would be an agenda item, that’s fine and it doesn’t trigger an OPMA violation. So you can continue with that type of work. If you had any questions, you could always contact Hilary or me and we would see what’s going on and make a quick call from there. Another thing is, if you receive information that you want to distribute to your fellow commissioners I recommend that you provide that to Hilary so she can distribute that to commissioners via BCC with a reminder not to “reply all”, so that you can still maintain strong communication with your staff liaison and commission roles. Especially if there are issues that come up and you need some background information so that when you convene again you can hit the ground running. So the best way to do that is to run it through your staff member and not put yourself at risk for OPMA violations by sending group emails or group texts that may have “reply all” and open up your personal email accounts or text messages to certain issues if there was an OPMA challenge.

**Andrés Mantilla:** Hilary, does it make sense for me to talk about some of the work that potentially as individuals or smaller groups is going to continue, and then maybe you guys can use that information to decide?

**Hilary Nichols:** Totally.

**Andrés Mantilla:** So, overall thank you Teresa for your analysis. I think as we seek across the board to interpret the Governor’s guidance, we all need to remember that King County is likely going to be the last county. Versus somewhere like Adams, or other counties that have different situations. There are some across the board policies, like the OPMA, that maybe cut across that in terms of our ability to meet once again. But King County will be delayed. So, it’s very unlikely that the end of this month that we’ll be on to the next phases, it’s more likely to be delayed again.

The City is in a position right now where we’re really juggling five key areas. One is the response area, which is rapid response. Which is what Hilary was talking about, with the very basic needs of community members. Whether it be how to feed them, how to house them, how to keep them employed, or access to resources, childcare, maintaining mental health through social cohesion, etc. That’s what we’re referring to in the Response phase. I think, by the way, that there are areas here where the CIC as individuals, should you choose not to have the hiatus as a group, could really be impactful. So that’s rapid response, responding to community needs that are very basic. You all have seen in the news the City providing food vouchers, etc.

Then, eventually, we’re into the reopening phase. And, by the way, these are all concentric circles, they’re not like one phase starts and stops. There is no vaccination, so the response phase is going to be as long as we need it to be, until there’s an ability to do case and contact tracing, until we are able to do, at scale isolation quarantine, etc. At the same time we are looking at reopening. We need to understand and interpret what the State’s guidance means for Seattle and for King County. There’s the City of Seattle’s role, and what guidance we’re taking from public health. Our reopening is going to translate the guidance from the State, and at a department to department level we are looking at how we unwind what’s known as our Continuity of Operations Plan, and then providing guidance for City businesses, for residents, for communities, for non-profits, for arts, to get back to work and to continue living their lives. We are also thinking about guidance for personal behavior that slows the transmission of the virus, while we don’t have a vaccination or contact tracing. What is the City’s role there? What is DON’s role in terms of impacting and influencing and spreading to the community. That’s reopening.

There’s a bunch of key metrics and plans that we are thinking through here: City Government, Community, Personal Behavior. When we then look at Recovery, it becomes a space where the Mayor’s articulated the vision and the value statement. The new normal doesn’t mean going back to what was, or frankly wasn’t, working for a lot of people, it’s really pushing us to think more broadly. But, it’s hard to move into a Recovery phase when we’re constantly being pushed back into a Response phase. The worst thing that we could do is to reopen too quickly, have folks go back to work and then have to close down again. I think you’ve seen in Texas, in Georgia, there are spikes of cases when they open. So we’re thinking though community-centered recovery plans.

I think there is where I would see that the CIC could have a huge interest in the mechanism, the enterprise, of the City going towards a common goal. And what‘ve been thinking is less in terms of departments, and more in terms of functions. And what kind of function we are going to need in a community. What does that mean for our structure? For Department of Neighborhoods? For planning and community development? And then, as we move into Recovery the longer term is going into Resiliency. So again, Response and React, that’s kind of one and two, Reopening, Recovery, and Resiliency. And it’s going to be really important for us to be working nimbly, as Hilary said, decisions are happening really quick so we don’t have a lot of time to do deliberation.

We have to be thoughtful and intentional, we have to rely on training as we center community and Race and Social Justice lens, but right now we are thinking about June 1st is going to come and people are going to need to pay rent, what does that look like. So that’s just a little bit more background, I’m excited if you are all interested as individuals or in small groups that doesn’t violate OPMA for you to come into the advocacy space with us and the strategy space with us. I’m also very cognizant that you have individual responsibilities to yourself, to your families and your communities, and that is also very time consuming and stressful, so I don’t want to overwhelm you all with that. But we’re building the structure if you would like to plug in, it’s available to you. I’ll stop there.

**Hilary Nichols:** Thanks Andrés, that was a really good summary.

**Alison Turner:** Thanks Andrés. So, Julie and I have been talking about how to take a vote on this. And I think we are going to do a poll? And Julie has created the poll. If you’re not a commissioner, please don’t vote in the poll. So, if a poll pops up for you and you are not a commissioner, please do not do the poll, and ignore.

**Julie Pham:** I am going to show the results of the poll. So this shows is that three people said “I’m fine with going on hiatus, and I can’t do anything at this time.” Five people said “I’m fine with going on hiatus, and I want to volunteer independently during the hiatus.” And no one said “No.” I think we have a very clear answer.

**Teresa Chen**: So would it be appropriate for somebody to make a motion, and a second, and then have the vote?

**Alison Turner:** We don’t make decisions that way on this commission, Teresa. We normally make decisions via consensus It doesn’t work quite well in this format, so the poll is our remote version of gaining consensus. So our consensus is to go on hiatus.

**Teresa Chen:** Okay!

**Julie Pham**: Great, well with that, we can move on to our next item which is led by Chris. The question is, what can individual commissioners do during this hiatus, and give commissioners a chance to reflect on their individual experiences.

**Hilary Nichols:** I’ll add that this is time for anyone to share anything about feelings that don’t relate to the hiatus, or anything else that you want to share especially now that we have Andres here as well. Any last comments before closing?

**Andrés Mantilla:** I also want to say that the overview I gave was very high level, I can go one layer deeper if that’s helpful.

**Chris Maykut:** Please do.

**Andrés Mantilla:** So let’s talk about reopening for a minute. I talked about the overall structure, but the City is organizing itself into specific “recovery,” “reopening,” and “advocacy” structure. When I say “advocacy”, that is mainly internal advocacy with external supports for additional State and Federal funding. An example: once the Federal government was here to react for the impact this all was having on the businesses in the CID (Chinatown-International District) and Little Saigon. Somewhere from 50-80% of those businesses have been hit already in terms of loss of business and that translates down to impacts on community, etc.

One thing to consider is that as we look at reopening, how do we bring those businesses back in a way that helps aid also the recovery, and how do we do the advocacy at the Federal level to give us funds to support small businesses, support small community organizations, arts organizations, etc. So that’s what the “Advocacy” bucket means. There’s FEMA, which is has been clear but also very bureaucratic to work with. The City is pairing up with community-based organizations and the County and others who are really pushing us to regional governance. The regional administrators, and Federal government, so that’s “Advocacy”.

On “recovery” the way that we’ve organized ourselves is in four sub-cabinets. The Department of Neighborhoods is Co-Chair in one of these sub cabinets, but also involved at an enterprise-wide level. Because outreach and engagement transcends all of these needs. The first sub-cabinet is “public safety and health”. As we continue to think through and test, who we’re testing and how often, overall public health type of actions. A lot of that is going to be led by King County Public Health but our Seattle Fire and Seattle Police Department will be involved there.

The next one is going to be about “housing and overall human service/homelessness” type of function. Obviously, housing is a huge issue. Rent relief, both for individuals and for small business, for commercial, across the board.

The third one is going to be around “community relief/community resiliency”, which is encompassing all the things I was talking about earlier. How do we transition from a reactive, response mechanism to a recovery structure.

And finally, the City also has to look at its own infrastructure; roads, utilities, other City operations. Those are kind of four major areas, I think that woven through all of that is going to be overall external relations, external stakeholder engagement strategies around the community task forces, etc. I think that in the “community resiliency” bucket, we’re obviously co-chairing that. That is a space where there will be a lot of intentionality around centering the community voice. It’s meant to also be at the center of all the other sub-cabinets. I’m really driving toward more of a vision type of approach, vs maybe operational, “X’s and O’s” type of approach. Any questions on that?

**Julie Pham:** Can you give an example of what “community resiliency” looks like?

**Andrés Mantilla:** Sure. We’ve seen a decimation of a lot of sectors in the economy. The service sector already had low wages within Seattle, and the closure of retail and restaurants, and then you overlay other challenges whether it be underserved communities within that space, we’re seeing a lot of those jobs that were lost aren’t coming back. That’s going to be true about service sector, cultural sector, and in some ways around the manufacturing sector. In our thinking, we have to be able to not just go and say “how do we get that person their job back?” because that job may or may not exist anymore.

We have to look at a broader workforce development and redeployment strategy. That’s an example, what is the new market and opportunities that are coming on? What is the opportunity for training of folks who meet that need, specifically youth that are graduating from Seattle Colleges or four year institutions, or high school graduates? What does their career path look like now?

Seattle has always kind of had dual economies, that were doing really well. You know, the “Starbuck’s” and the “Costco”, and retail/service based businesses. And then we had the broader “knowledge economy”, the tech jobs. There were salary and wage disparities between them, but those were two robust economies. Now, we’re going to be forced into the third economy, which is the online, network based economy. There’s a big training gap there.

Our urgency and need to address that is tenfold. That’s one example. Another example is the City pushing outreach and engagement strategies around building what we call “community wealth.” One of the things within the recession in 2008, a lot of folks had their assets taken from them, either forcefully or by other schemes that their wealth was tied up in. I won’t go into the history of mortgages, etc., but they didn’t have that liquidity of assets. You build your wealth based on the assets you have. So “community wealth” is investing in community and broad community ownership strategies. Some of you are familiar with the Equitable Development Initiative Community Wealth Building program, some of you are working with Office of Arts and they have a cultural districts model. So wealth in communities comes in different ways, either homes or other assets, and as we rebuild can we really center community wealth and ownership of valuable assets. That’s another example.

**Julie Pham:** Thank you.

**Chris Maykut:** Anything else for Andrés? Well then, I want to transition. First, I want to take a moment to welcome all our new folks: Bill (Southern), Martha (Lucas), and Robert (White). I really look forward to getting back to the commission when the time comes to meet again. This is all very different than what we’ve been engaging in as a commission for the last couple of years and we did some really compelling work there. So, stick with us! I want to transition now to elicit conversation about taking a minute to reflect on your experience serving as a CIC commissioner over the past year. What’s that been like? What’s been good? Where do you think we’re going? I think it’s important if we’re going to go on a hiatus to put that out in the open. I’m going to say Alison wants to start.

**Alison Turner:** Thanks, Chris. I guess I want to share that I am so grateful to have been a part of this group. I really enjoy connecting with you all, and also previous commissioners that have served. It feels really amazing to be included in a group of such unique and talented people. And to be challenged in particular ways that I don’t find in other spaces. I conversely want to share that I feel a little disappointed that we’ve come to where we are. I feel like it’s been really challenging to understand our role and we’ve worked really hard as a commission to define that, and find ways that we can engage with the City. There’s been a lack of direction, support, and engagement from City leadership over the entire time I’ve been serving on the commission. And this particular situation was kind of just one more barrier to doing work that is impactful. I think we’re all here because we want to make an impact, and we want our efforts to go somewhere. So I hope that the City will find ways to support not only this commission, but also all the other commissions, and community members who are willing to volunteer their time to make this place more equitable and help the City serve better. I’m glad to be a part of this group no matter what happens.

**Emily Kim:** I can go next. I totally agree with Alison, and I love being a part of this commission. I love everyone on it, and I’ve learned so much about myself by being a part of it. I think that the last year we have worked really hard at being able to bring people together and host roundtables or host events or go out and have our meetings in the community. I really hope that we can figure out a way, even with all this online virtual stuff where things won’t go back to normal for a long time, maybe still trying to do that stuff. We can still bring people together virtually, and still keep the ball rolling that way. It just might be different, but we started some really cool work I think and I want to keep building on it.

**Julie Pham:** Whoever wants to go next, you can either raise your hand or just get in there and speak up.

**Martha Lucas:** I feel like I haven’t been here very long, so the question is what has our experience been? Well, this is my second meeting so it’s been great! I think it’s a great forum and I’ll admit I’m one of the three people because I didn’t read that question all the way, but I’m totally open to volunteer and connect because it’s always good to see what other communities are doing and other ways that we can maybe circle back and share resources with each other. It is a trying time, and you never know what story can uplift you or what resource someone else might need.

**Carol Redfield**: I recall the time when Alison, Felix, Patricia and I had the greatest time in our sub-group. It’s been wonderful. And the larger group, with Felix and Julie and several of the other leaders, it’s been a great experience for me being here. Everyone is coming from very objective, very thought-through input and remarks. A very well-thought group of people. In the beginning, that first year was a little rough, but the last year and a half it’s really been great, until COVID put a bit of a halt to where we were going. But it’s been fun working with all of you, so wherever it takes us it’ll be interested to watch.

**Chris Maykut**: I’ll go next. I still feel like a newbie here, even though I’m starting to gain veteran status. I feel like I’ve been privileged to work with all of you. I feel like it’s a really diverse group of people who come from different places and have so much to offer the City. It’s humbling to be a part of a volunteer effort to try to make our municipality better. I’m really grateful to Hilary for all you do for us, I hope you understand how important you are to us and how you go above and beyond the call of duty of whatever they’re telling you to do to support us. It’s hard that this has happened, because I feel like we were just starting to figure out who we are as a commission, and I’m not trying to offer disservice to those that came before me but we all know we got a really obscure mandate from the City that was hard to figure out, and we were just starting to formulate what we were able to offer the City. I think that we should pick that up when we reconvene, and I’m really excited that we have Robert, Martha and Bill on board and I look forward to sitting down face to face at some point, and getting together to see what we can do to make this City great. One of the greatest cities on earth, and we can all be a part of that.

**Julie Pham:** I’ll go next. One thing I’ll say is that we’ve learned a lot, and one thing I’ve learned is just how slow the government is, and just how much bureaucracy there is. I just didn’t realize how much work it takes, it feels like pushing a rock up a hill. I think a big example of this is how long it’s taken some people appointed, and we still have some people who aren’t officially appointed or renewed. And I think we’ve lost some people because of that too. So that has been frustrating. And I’m also just beginning to understand how government works. I’ve really enjoyed my time, and I enjoy learning alongside you. Out of full transparency, I know my term ends next May and I probably won’t renew. That’s what I’ve got.

**Carols Redfield:** So Julie, you have one more year with us?

**Julie Pham:** Yes. My term ends in 2021. I know we’ve talked about resetting the clock or something like that, and I’ll just say for myself I’m fine with the clock continuing. Alright, anyone else? Karyn?

**Karyn Kubo Fleming:** Yes, I would like to echo a lot of the things that have been said at this meeting, especially what Alison said about the frustrations. I know that as Carol said, the mandate was somewhat nebulous and there was a lot of work put in by the initial commissioners to figure out our direction. I still feel like we don’t have a lot of support from council that other commissions have. I was thinking about how when I came on, and Rani came on, and we had that dinner at Julie’s place and how that’s just not possible now, and we have new commissioners and that was our way to bring on new people. So clearly, we’re not going to be able to do that for a while. And I guess lastly, we had just started going out into the community and we’ve had several already. Two of our meetings were in the community, and we were scheduled for another in March and that was something I was really looking forward to, and something that had been missing in the first year that I was on the commission. That’s a sad thing for us, and a sad thing for our communities as well. That we won’t be able to do that for a while.

**Carol Redfield:** I do have to say that knowing Bereket was very great. I still get emails from Bereket and his association. And they have just been getting out funding for many groups, which has just been fascinating to watch. Thousands of dollars to nine different groups. To be able to see that there is still activity toward the theme of equity and helping the marginalized populations that really need to have the resources. It’s been really great. So there’s been some really good connections made within this group.

**Alison Turner:** Sharif have you shared yet?

**Sharif Mahfouz:** I did not. So, I’m in the interesting perspective of technically, I believe my term expires in August. I feel like my term is far too short. I feel like you can’t really get the gist of things until about six months in, if I’m being very generous, and you don’t have enough time to apply the knowledge. There is a question of whether I will look to come on as a full-time commissioner, and I don’t know what that would look like that. My thoughts are that I’ve really appreciated my time here representing the commission, echoing the sentiments that you said, Alison, and how many others feel. I see a lot of ways this commission can have strong impact, but I feel like all the commissions, not just this commission, work very much in isolation. We very much have an agenda, a goal, no matter how nebulous, but we start to build this institutional knowledge about how we talk about equity. About equitable engagement, and community engagement. And the other commissions don’t necessarily have that perspective. They have different perspectives.

Something that got me excited in the last few months was inter-commission work. I believe that is a huge way forward. I think that, at least from the perspective of where I come from, I come from the tech sector, about equitable engagement and operationalize. It’s the way we can look at it generally, and then it’s the technology. For example, the collaboration we were going to have with the Seattle Design Commission was a huge step forward on that. When you talk about operationalizing equitable engagement, we have a lot of huge wins that we haven’t written down. That we don’t even begin to understand. So the Seattle Design Commission doesn’t necessarily come from the perspective of us the same way as us, but there are so many commissions so any amount of collaboration there is going to be a huge win.

I hope that we don’t lose the institutionalized knowledge you guys have gotten over the last few years. I hope the other commissions don’t as well. And I hope that when we all reconvene, we can all collaborate in that way. I know for me, sometimes we don’t feel connected to the City, we don’t feel like we’re making an impact, but just that cross-pollination of ideas is very valuable. So I’m very optimistic, and I hope you guys do follow up on that front because there could be a lot of huge wins.

**Hilary Nichols:** I think Jasmine you’re the only one who we haven’t heard from.

**Jasmine Aryana:** So I was actually one of the few commissions who got an opportunity to meet every body in person. I feel lucky on that. I was looking forward to the next meeting, which was going to be out in the community. I was looking forward to the Seattle Design Commission collaboration. But we just have to make the best of it, and sort of find ways to reach out to the community and hopefully after the hiatus we can get back into the momentum we had.

**Julie Pham:** I don’t think Bill’s gone yet.

**Bill Southern:** I don’t know what I can say, I’ve only been to three meetings so I’m still trying to get my head around all of this. I’m still trying to figure out what the purpose is. I’m not seeing the prize, for some reason. And I think with this going into hiatus, we’ll lose even more ground. Hopefully, that isn’t the case. My thing is that I want to be quiet until I get a real handle on what we’re trying to do. And I’m interested in some of the things we’ve actually done, what are they? And how do we improve on them? I’m kind of silent right now because I’m still in learning mode. But I do have to say that I’m impressed with everyone on the commission, because you all clearly have an understanding of what you’re doing, and you’re equipped to do it. And that’s very exciting to me, it gives me an opportunity to learn from you. That’s it.

**Andrés Mantilla:** Hey all, I have to jump for another call at 7:30 but it was good seeing you all virtually. And some of you had been emailing and chat boxing directly, but if you are interested in any of the opportunities that we mentioned, please reach out to me or to Hilary or Abesha, and we’ll be happy to plug you in. But I appreciate you all, and stay safe.

**Julie Pham:** So I think with that we are at the end of our agenda. I don’t think there’s any public comment. So this means that this will be the last time we meet until August.

**Hilary Nichols**: And again, there’s nothing preventing us from meeting socially so long as there is nothing talked about related to the CIC. So if anybody has interest in that, you can let me know. You all are really delightful people and that’s probably the saddest part of not meeting. So let me know if it interests you to meet socially.

**Julie Pham:** Abesha has her hand up.

**Abesha Shiferaw:** Hi again! I’m new to the City so it’s been really informative to hear all the work that you are doing. Equity is really key for me, it’s not a check box at the end. It’s the initiation of anything that I do, so I really appreciate you all putting that at the forefront of what you are doing. Selfishly, I would love to hear collectively 3 wins that you all had, I am just really interested in hearing some of those and hopefully document that and remember to circle back on those and get momentum forward when things reconvene.

**Julie Pham:** One is that for the last two years we’ve hosted a reception of City employees and people from other commissions, and they’ve been very well received. The brainstorming that has come out of that has been really good.

**Alison Turner:** As was previously mentioned, building some connections has been a win for us. Starting to find ways to connect and collaborate with other commissions, and also hosting our meetings offsite while specifically reaching out to invite community members individually to attend, I think that’s been really valuable.

**Chris Maykut:** I’ll jump on the back of that and say that the real gist of what we can do, and what we were trying to figure out, it really all has to do with the public. Seeing and reacting to public input, and going out into the community to see what’s going on. What we learned out in the community is that it can feel like they’re really isolated and if you want something to change and you look to the government to change it, and it’s not changing in a way that you feel heard, but meeting with people and letting the know that they are heard, and following up with them can be really valuable. We were about to have our annual retreat right before this happened, and when we do reconvene it will be time to sit down together to define who we are. I think we have a lot of lessons along the way that we can incorporate, and we can really mold who we are and what we do, for not just us but the people who follow us.

**Teresa Chen:** I just wanted to note that what we were talking about before with the hiatus, I just wanted to remind the commission that your work on the civic participation will be particularly valuable and beneficial as the City Clerk’s Office moves forward on the phased meeting participation set up, to maintain consistency with what the Governor is telling us. I don’t want you guys to lose faith that your being on hold and you can’t contribute to what the City is doing. The City Clerk’s Office is actively working with the City Attorney Office on what meetings will look like, and how to allow the public the most access to participate in these meetings. Because we’ve had to jump through so many hoops as everyone’s adjusting to different types of technology, from Skype to Microsoft Teams, to YouTube comments or Zoom. I’ve even heard of WebEx, which I haven’t been familiar with as a participant of webinars, so things are moving fast. If, at some point, something comes up where you feel that your commission needs to meet, you can have a special meeting. If something comes up that your commission believes that you want to joint letter to give to the Council or the Mayor you can do that, just call a special meeting to do it and let me know if you have any questions.

**Julie Pham:** With that, I think we provided our three highlights. Does anybody else want to share anything?

**Carol Redfield:** Can I add something in here? In some far-reaching way it is community engagement. I just want to report that the church I attend, which is a Chinese church and three different congregations of languages, Mandarin, Cantonese and English. Our church has been partnering with U Pres Church, which is a mostly white congregation, and the Damascus church, which is a mostly black congregation. And we’ve been doing different things, called the Kindred project, but May 31st there’s going to be probably a 500-car park at Marymoor park to worship in the way in the old fashion drive through movie. I think it’s worthwhile to think about connecting, especially right now with the social isolation that can lead to loneliness for so many people. I know that community engagement is really engaging between the City and the community, but I think just within community collaboration that’s happening right now it’s important to recognize. Anyway, just a reporting to you folks that there are things happening out there, we aren’t having to defend. I think in the first year we were constantly having to defend against the kind of question like “Why did the district disband? And why are we happening?” and so on and so forth. I don’t hear that anymore, so that’s a win. I think people are recognizing that this commission is going forward with a different purpose, and some of you new folks might not be hearing the purpose as clearly. It is complicated, it is complex. Anyway, I look forward to resuming when we come back.

**Julie Pham:** Alright, so with that we can sign off now.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Adjourn**