COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMISSION (CIC)

March 21, 2022

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

**Commissioners present:** Carol Redfield (she/her), Martha Lucas (she/her), Jasmine Aryana (she/her), Bill Southern (he/him)

**Commissioners not in attendance:** None

**City of Seattle Staff present**: Alvin Edwards (DON, he/him), Laura Jenkins (DON, 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 voice recording and available upon request.***

# Public Comment

Steve Horvath said he is expecting to join the commission soon when he is confirmed. He wanted to catch up with everything the commission has been working.

# Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Interim Director Greg Wong

Greg Wong is the Interim Director of the Department of Neighborhoods. He started in mid-February. He thanked the commission for their work especially during these trying times, expressed excitement and gratitude for the work the commission has done, and discussed his background. He asked the commissioners to introduce themselves.

Current Commissioners Bill Southern, Jasmine Aryana, Carol Redfield, and Martha Lucas introduced themselves and explained how they came to come to the Commission.

Director Wong thanked all of the people who are waiting on appointments to become commissioners.

Director Wong said his goal in his role as department director is making sure that we're finding ways that we can better connect the people of Seattle together so they're in stronger relationship to each other and have their sense of place. And that all serves the end goal of creating a more thriving, a more just, a more vibrant, and more prosperous city for all.

Director Wong referenced Mayor Harrell and said he speaks quite a bit about One Seattle. That can mean a lot of different things. At the end of the day, it means, how do we as a city come together to address some of the really hard and complex problems that we face. Communities are struggling with some of the same issues, but how do we come together and create community-based solutions so that this City works better. That's not related to any one specific program, it's not one specific strategy, but it's the overall goal that we want to head towards.

Ha said he is being very mindful of how we define community engagement and community involvement. It may look very different in the coming years than it did before the pandemic. Discussion about the possibility of hybrid meetings.

Questions and Comments from commissioners:

* Commissioner Carol Redfield said I just want to also say that my understanding from been having been from the very beginning of the commission is that the main complaints from the community have been that is one-sided. It's going from the City telling the people what's happening--what regulations are happening, what's the new thing--and so very little from the Community going up.
* Commissioner Redfield said there are gaps in terms of what we can do and cannot do. At the last meeting, commissioners heard that they are perceived as a Commission that is not visible and she thinks they need to really look at what structure to make the CIC more visible. Right now, the structure we have in process is not working.
* Commissioner Jasmine Aryana asked what Director Wong is envisioning the commission will look like. She asked if the director would be involved in their brainstorming at an upcoming retreat.
	+ Director Wong says that he wants to allow space for the commission to brainstorm so they can offer a perspective that may be different than what City staff may suggest. He mentioned empowerment over direction.
	+ Director Wong also asked how the commission is currently involved in the City’s overall outreach and engagement approach currently.
	+ Commissioner Bill Southern commented that he would be supportive of having a facilitator at the retreat. Commissioner Aryana agreed.
* Commissioner Martha Lucas said that it would be helpful for the commission to know what is realistically possible so they are not coming up with solutions that may not be implementable.
	+ Director Wong said he is in support of this and wants to make parameters clear ahead of time.

# Updates from Commission Staff Liaisons

* Appointments
	+ Commission-selected appointments
		- Staff Liaison Laura Jenkins outlined the process for a commission-selected appointment without commission co-chairs.
		- The commission would like to move Marcus White forward in the commission-selected appointment process to become a commissioner on the CIC.
		- The commissioners took a vote and designated Commissioner Bill Southern as the signatory for Marcus White’s Notice of Appointment in lieu of a Commission Co-Chair.
	+ Community Involvement Commission potential appointees’ status
		- Staff Liaison Jenkins explained that appointments in queue would be voted on by City Council’s Neighborhoods, Education, Civil Rights, and Culture Committee. And then they'll go to a vote at full Council and they were told that that meeting would likely be April 5. That means about 6 new commissioners would be appointed by the next regular meeting.
		- All of the Get Engaged Appointments ae with the Council President’s Office and are pending approval by City Council.
	+ Term limits
		- Staff Liaison Jenkins confirmed that the commissioners’ current terms count as a full term even though the commission did not meet all of the months during the pandemic.
			* Commissioner Lucas asked if, for historic knowledge, it would be possible to ask a former commissioner to come back in an unofficial capacity.
		- Staff Liaison Jenkins said that the commission would be starting up a recruitment process for remaining vacancies and asked how commissioners would like to be involved in that process.
			* Commissioner Southern asked how people find out about the openings.
* Org Chart
	+ Staff Liaison Alvin Edwards talked about the organization chart for the Department of Neighborhoods. There really isn’t one, but the staff directory was used in its stead: <https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/about-us/staff-directory>
		- Commissioner Redfield clarified that she was looking for these items with an org chart: How does the communications flow between the community and the Commission? How to get the Community Engagement staff involved with the community and the CIC. A need to know who is meeting with residents and businesses in a community, especially those who speak other languages and they’re limited to those areas which are part of the City’s work plan/interest areas.
		- Commission staff liaisons talked through the different divisions at the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.
			* Commissioner Lucas asked if leaders from Seattle Department of Neighborhoods divisions that overlap with outreach could come to the retreat. She wants to create visibility and support the work the department is already doing.
			* Commissioner Redfield would like to hear from community at the retreat.
* Hybrid meetings
	+ The Staff Liaisons will keep the commissioners updated on department policies related to hybrid meetings. For now, the commission will keep meeting virtually.
* Questions about a former commissioner
	+ Staff Liaisons followed up with a former commissioner after a question was asked about him at the last regular meeting. The former commissioner is not interested in coming back for another term.
* Direct Email to Commissioners Question
	+ The commission received a question last meeting through public comment asking if community members can contact the commissioners directly via direct email accounts. We checked and there's a cost upkeep and then there are some privacy concerns as well on the city side so the short answer for now is no. But we will communicate this with the community member who asked the question during public comment.
	+ The community can currently contact the commission during commission meetings through public comment or they can go through the communityinvolvementcommission@seattle.gov email which the staff liaisons have access to.
* Mayor’s Office Representative Attending a Future Meeting
	+ It did not work out with the Mayor’s schedule for him to attend this meeting. Staff Liaison Edwards asked the group if they would be interested him Mayor Harrell or a representative coming to a meeting at a later date.
		- Commissioner Lucas suggested maybe Senior Deputy Mayor Monisha Harrell.
		- Commissioner Southern said that he would like to invite the Mayor for another meeting.
		- Commissioner Redfield suggested that someone from City Council could attend if the Mayor is unavailable like Councilmember Morales.
		- Commissioner Southern suggested Council President Juarez.
		- Commissioner Lucas asked the group what their ask of the guests would be.

# Commissioners Discuss Commission Next Steps

* The commissioners decided to hold a special meeting in March to plan for the April 18 regular CIC meeting. The April 18 meeting will provide background/info for new commissioners and help them get acquainted with existing commissioners and the commission.
* Having a retreat in May or June would allow the new commissioners to come and get oriented—and may allow time to sort out the option of a hybrid meeting. Staff feel waiting later would make for a better use of everyone’s time.
* A question came up about whether the retreat is a public meeting. Staff liaisons will check that over with the City Attorney’s Office in relation to the Open Public Meetings Act guidelines.

Staff will work to determine when the planning meeting and the retreat should be held via polling.

#  New Commissioner Onboarding Handbook Discussion

Commissioners decided this topic will be discussed at a future meeting.

# Public Comment

* Cindi Barker spoke of watching the **c**ommission for years. Talked about how community hasn’t had access to the commission. Cindi said that they try and do work with people in different languages, and we try and do work with people with access and functional needs. And there is nothing that the Department in Neighborhoods has in place it helps facilitate that for community groups. Cindi encourages commissioners to set your goals for how they want to communicate with the communities. And follow through on those.
* Marcus White, a small business owner who is a potential commissioner who spoke about why he wanted to join the commission. Marcus says he just wants to humbly bring workable ideas to make things better.
* Carol Burton talked about how the commission seems to be “blocked off” from the community and felt that the commissioner representing their neighborhood didn’t talk to people.
* Shaun Glaze from District 2 and the Black Brilliance Research Project did a lot of research for that project. They asked community members about Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and other departments. Shaun said they would hear from community members that, on one hand there's a lot of good work that comes out of the department. On the other hand, there was a lot of frustration and mistrust of Department of Neighborhoods. Shaun asked what the CIC’s role is in repairing that trust.
* Cindi Barker suggested that DON look at 1-2 areas where the department has struggled to do outreach for the commission to focus on during the retreat.

The meeting was adjourned.