



## City of Seattle

Community Involvement Commission

### Community Involvement Commission (CIC) May 2024 Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2024

5:00 – 7:00 pm

Webex Meeting & Seattle City Hall Room 370

**Commissioners present:** Ahoua Koné, Martha Lucas, Heidi Morisset, Fiona Murray, Julio Perez, Nausheen Rajan, Michael Seo, Marcus White, Cade Wiger

**Commissioners not in attendance:** Bill Southern

#### **City of Seattle Staff present:**

Alvin Edwards, Laura Jenkins, and Lydia Faitalia (Department of Neighborhoods)

Staff Liaison Laura Jenkins announced the resignation of Commissioner Reeves as co-chair and from the commission. An exit survey was submitted; the responses are available for viewing on the SharePoint site, and staff will send out the link.

*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 video recording and available upon request.*

#### **Community Comments and Vote on 4/15 Meeting Minutes**

The commission voted to approve the April 15, 2024 Community Involvement Commission meeting minutes.

#### **New Co-Chair Work Plan & Check-in**

Commissioners Morisset and Wiger had their first meeting as co-chairs with Staff Liaison Jenkins last week to discuss co-chair responsibilities and a work plan, each sharing their vision for CIC accomplishments.

- Commissioner Wiger is hoping to get momentum going in the next month or two to begin moving forward with sub-committee work, and to determine where sub-committees could use more support.
- Commissioner Morisset's goal as co-chair is helping to make the meetings more efficient by doing more of the backend work prior to the full commission meeting. That way, commissioners will have sufficient information to vote on action items and/or designating what could be given to sub-committees for additional work.

Commissioners Morisset and Wiger also discussed the co-chair position vacated by Commissioner Reeves, stating that since there hadn't been interest expressed by other commissioners, they would continue with two co-chairs. At a future date, they could implement the executive committee to discuss how to move forward.

- Commissioner Wiger said he and Commissioner Morisset are drafting a thank you letter for Commissioner Reeves, and they hope to share it with others shortly.

Commissioner Wiger also asked if anyone wants to express their goals or what they'd like to see the commission to work on for the remainder of this year.

- Commissioner Perez said he'd like to revisit what can be done to increase voter turnout, citing a decrease last year.
- Commissioner Murray spoke about her meeting with Staff Liaison Lydia Fitalia last week. She mentioned how the commission had previously advised on specific items like the challenge of obtaining grant money: organizations generally have to expend their own funds, then seek reimbursement, which continues to pose a hardship.
  - Commissioner Wiger asked how the commission came to know about this issue.
    - Commissioner Murray said the subject came up during her initial interview.
    - Staff Liaison Jenkins said staff from the Neighborhood Matching Fund program had come to one of the CIC meetings, and she recalled there was some feedback expressed about the process. Staff Liaison Jenkins couldn't recall all the details but indicated staff could go back through the meeting notes to find out. She recalls there was a question from commissioners about whether community agencies could obtain funds up front. When other grant programs were being developed, such as the Food Equity Fund and the Duwamish River Opportunity fund, they were able to provide a percentage of funding up front. Staff Liaison Jenkins believed it was 10 or 15% but will review the files for details.
    - Commissioner Perez heard some nonprofits say they are understaffed and without staff to do grant writing. He asked if the City offered grant writing resources for these organizations.
      - Staff Liaison Jenkins responded there is some grant writing support available from Department of Neighborhoods Neighborhood Matching Fund staff in terms of guiding organizations through the application process, advising what is feasible for a given project, and what could possibly be funded.
      - Commissioner Lucas said she had applied and received a Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) grant and the project manager did provide considerable technical assistance. There was awareness in the community that the NMF was designed

for nonprofits with limited staffing capacity and is considered to be more user friendly than other programs.

- Staff Liaison Edwards said that this year the NMF is going back to a community review process. And it's even more imperative for groups to meet with the project managers, who will provide applicants with recommendations on where to seek community involvement for their projects.
- Commissioner Koné expressed her desire to see the commission become more active, recalling some of the comments from the last retreat where some had said they weren't sure if the commission was making a meaningful difference.
  - She would like to see more uplifting activities to show the community that this commission is an active body.
  - She would also like to see the group supporting each other to work as a team, expressing agreements or disagreements respectfully.
  - Commissioner Koné would also like to have a thank you note sent to Commissioner White, in recognition of his service in the co-chair role.
    - Commissioner Wiger expressed his thanks and said he hopes to work on this letter with Commissioner Morisset to have the draft to share by the next meeting.
- Commissioner Lucas expressed her agreement with Commissioner Koné in bringing us back to the commission's purpose of advising departments and bringing in the voice of the community. With the current budget deficits, many want to know specific impacts and what can be expected. She'd also like to see new leaders at the sub-committee level.
- A question was asked if there was a document that tracked issues the CIC worked on or provided advice for.
  - Staff Liaison Jenkins said there was a tracking document for requests made to speak with the commission but was not aware of a document since the creation of the commission to track work items.
- Commissioner Rajan suggested the CIC be tactical in identifying two or three goals to work on for the remainder of this year, such as extending access to voting; she advocated using the monthly meeting times to make decisions on action items related to those goals.

### **Subcommittee Topics and Membership Poll**

Commissioners Wiger and Morisset met with Department of Neighborhoods staff to review subcommittee activity, assess members' interests in remaining or changing to a different committee, meeting frequency, and for general feedback.

- The current sub-committee assignments were shown on screen.
- Commissioners can expect to receive a form from the co-chairs to obtain their feedback and areas of interest on the various sub-committees. Commissioners are asked to respond to the survey before the end of the month.

- Commissioner Morisset said co-chairs and staff also discussed whether the existing subcommittees were beneficial for the CIC moving forward or if restructuring the subcommittees themselves is desirable to become more effective. Heidi found a 2018 workplan she felt could be beneficial for the CIC, and wondered whether those work groups resonate with current members. She views those work group descriptions as more actionable.
- Another suggestion was to add an accountability feature; for example, anyone missing a meeting reviews the minutes with someone who was in attendance to get caught up on activities and avoid taking time at commission meetings to recap.
  - Accountability for punctuality and being on camera were also seen as demonstrating engagement and moving work forward.
- Commissioner Lucas expressed an observation that the subcommittee formations were based on what the original goals of the CIC were. She would want these goals to continue to be in alignment with any potential restructuring of the subcommittees/work groups.
  - Commissioner Wiger confirmed these were the goals resulting from the CIC retreat; Commissioner Lucas was not present then. Staff Liaison Jenkins said either she or Commissioner Wiger would ensure everyone received links to these relevant documents.

### **In-person Meeting Proposal**

Commissioner Wiger brought this up at the co-chair meeting last week, as he was thinking about how effective the retreat had been in terms of getting to know commissioners better. He's proposing having an in person meeting soon and wanting to solicit feedback.

- Commissioner Koné thought this was a great idea, although not sure if a Monday afternoon meeting would work for everyone; she would support a once per quarter in-person meeting.
- Commissioner Lucas suggested having refreshments at such a meeting, perhaps everyone would be willing to sign up to bring something.
- A consensus to include scheduling an in-person meeting be added to the survey previously discussed.

### **Five-minute Break**

### **Special Subcommittee Updates**

Commissioner Seo reported on the CIC experience survey that will go out to everyone before the next meeting to allow time to collect the results.

- The survey is only two questions, and not to be confused with the exit survey.
- Commissioner Koné expressed her appreciation for the work done in drafting this survey by Commissioners Seo, Wiger, and Southern; the goal was to strengthen the group and improve working relationships.

## **Staff Liaison Updates**

- Parks CommUNITY Fund follow-up
  - Staff Liaison Edwards reported that staff are currently engaged in the review process; they may reach out to the CIC later in the year if needed.
- Roberts Rules/Parliamentary Procedures Training
  - Staff Liaison Faitalia reported that Thao Madsen, the City's Boards and Commissions Manager, is currently offering training for up to 40 people, and it's only being offered to staff liaisons. If this training will be recorded, Staff Liaison Faitalia asked if commissioners were interested in watching the training in person. Staff Liaison Faitalia hasn't received a response yet from Thao; updates will be provided to commissioners as soon as available.
- Recruitment updates
  - Staff Liaison Jenkins reported on the recruitment efforts in early May; there are currently 8 positions open.
    - There are still a few weeks left to apply, Laura believed the deadline was June 3. Some applications have been in the portal since before this effort. Staff Liaison Jenkins plans to send reminder emails to city staff liaisons to ask them to send out recruitment notices to their networks.
    - The YMCA is working on scheduling interviews for the positions that will come up this fall; they have five applicants interested in the CIC. Commissioner Seo has expressed his interest in attending those interviews as a representative of the recruitment and retention committee.

Staff Liaison Jenkins also wanted to mention upcoming two events. One is being offered tomorrow from 3-4pm by the city's Information Technology department's digital access team on their technology access adoption study. City staff and the community are all invited. The event will be recorded, and Laura will send out the WebEx link to commissioners who may not be able to attend in real time.

The second opportunity for commissions staffed by the Department of Neighborhoods and the Office of Sustainability & Environment is for Racial Equity Training offered June 25 and 27 (two parts), and again in September. The first two trainings will be in person and held in the Seattle Municipal Tower. Food and parking will be provided for participants. Laura will send out the information for these sessions to commissioners.

## **Last Meeting for Commissioners Southern & Murray – Thank You!**

Commissioners expressed their thanks to both commissioners Southern and Murray.

## **Community Comments & Closing**

No community comments.

## **June Subcommittee Minutes**

None submitted.