

Seattle Human Rights Commission August 6 Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order and Labor and Land Acknowledgement

Quorum was established. Commissioner Tibbs called the meeting to order and read the Land and Labor Acknowledgements. We also acknowledged that Commissioners McCullough and Smith had resigned, and expressed thanks for their many contributions to the Commission.

II. Roll Call

Commissioner Tibbs took the roll call. Present at the start of the meeting were the following Commissioners: Bailey, Duston, Gonser, Isaak, Lewis, Kkwafkwao, Leyden, Monser, Quander, Styllanides, and Tibbs. Later in the meeting, Commissioner Adams joined, and Commissioner Duston subsequently lost signal and left the meeting.

III. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Lewis moved to approve minutes from the April 2026 and July 2026 Commission meetings, and Commissioner Quander seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

V. Guest Speakers: Ariel Schneier, Assistant City Attorney, and Mike Chin, Interim Director of the Office of Civil Rights

A. Assistant City Attorney (ACA) Schneier

ACA Schneier clarified the process for filling the current vacancies created by the resignations of Commissioners [Avery], McCullough and Smith. It is up to the remaining member of the Executive Committee (E.C.), Commissioner Tibbs, to appoint new E.C. members. Because the current bylaws stipulate a three co-chair structure, Commissioner Tibbs should appoint a Treasurer and three Co-Chairs. We will need to amend the bylaws before we are able to implement a chair and vice chair

ACA Schneier also discussed who is authorized to represent the Commission or its Task Forces in an official capacity. The Co-Chairs are automatically granted that authority in the bylaws. Other Commissioners may be authorized by a simple vote of the Commission. ACA Schneier recommended contacting Wayne Barnett, Seattle's Director of Ethics and Elections.

B. Interim Director Mike Chin

Interim Director Chin expressed gratitude for the Commission and its work. He emphasized the role of the Office of Civil Rights in supporting that work and encouraged us to reach out with suggestions about how OCR can support us, or to connect with him on related issues.

VI. Unfinished Business

A. Best Practices for Community Engagement

Commissioner Isaak discussed the Best Practices for Community Engagement document that was distributed with the meeting materials. After a brief discussion, the topic was tabled.

B. Open Commissioner Roles

Commissioner Tibbs asked anyone interested in filling the open Commissioner roles (Treasurer and three Co-Chair positions) contact him. While he has the authority to appoint these Executive Committee members, he expressed a preference for a transparent and collaborative approach.

C. HRC Buddy System

Commissioner Gonser discussed the proposed Buddy System (pairing new Commissioners with more experienced Commissioners), and referenced the intake form distributed in the meeting materials. Commissioner Gonser moved to adopt the Buddy System as a formal program, and Commissioner Quander seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. New Business

A. Renaming the Criminal-Legal System Reform Task Force

This discussion was tabled. The Government Relations and CLSRTF will continue with Commission-authorized engagement with Councilmember Rinck's office.

B. SOCR Appeals Findings Language

Commissioner Leiden expressed gratitude for the collaboration with Assistant City Attorney Schneier and discussed the new language

proposed to the Seattle Office of Civil Rights with respect to Appeals. The Commissioners provided broad endorsement and thanks for these revision, and Commissioners Adams and Bailey hope to propose additional revisions.

- C. Because of the resignations of Commissioners McCullough and Smith, the Intent to Move for Officer Removal was not discussed.

VIII. Committee and Task Force Reports

- A. Policy Review – Meredith Stone, SOCR
Ms. Stone had been working with Commissioner McCullough to examine data on the demographics of city employees who are not retained after the initial probationary period, and a proposal to provide stipends to Commissioners for their work on the Appeals Committee.
- B. Communications – Commissioner Quander
Commissioner Quander identified a focus on Human Rights Day outreach
- C. Appeals – Commissioner Leyden
Commissioner Leyden expressed appreciation for Commissioners who have served in this capacity, and identified that four slots remain for the rest of the calendar year.
- D. Events – Commissioner Quander
Supporting Human Rights Day, scheduled for December 13, is the top priority for the remainder of the year. We need support from all Commissioners. The theme for this year's even is "Resilient Communities."
- E. Housing and Homelessness Task Force – Commissioner Bailey
The Task Force plans a series of community meetings to gather information and perspectives from groups of people impacted by encampment clearance – unhoused people, service providers, and police. These meetings will be used also to identify potential panelists for a keynote discussion during HRD.
- F. Government Relations – Commissioner Lewis
The Government Relations Committee, in conjunction with the Criminal Legal System Reform Task Force, has been meeting with central staff, and Councilmember Rinck and her staff, on proposed legislation that would help support people affected by police violence.
- G. Human Trafficking – Commissioner Monson
This Task Force has recently re-formed and is looking for a time to meet.

H. Executive Committee – Commissioner Tibbs

We engaged in an extended discussion about how the Commission can rebuild. We expressed grief that Commissioners McCullough and Smith have left the Commission, and gratitude for the work they did on behalf of our city, and discussed the possibility of a series of strategic planning sessions, potentially led by SOCR staff members. There was broad support for strategic planning.

At present, our three main areas of focus will be Human Rights Day, the community conversations about encampment clearances, and the initiative on repair of police violence.

In the interest of transparency and communication, we established a best practice of distributing notice of Task Force and Committee meetings and activities in advance, and minutes shortly afterward.

Commissioners interested in filling one of the vacant Executive Committee roles are asked to email Commissioner Tibbs. We will vote at the Commission meeting in September.

IX. Announcements

- A. Meredith Stone, OCR: OCR is happy to assist with strategic planning process.
- B. August 15: Big Day of Play, noon – 5:00 at Rainier Playfield
- C. August 19: Race & Social Justice Summit for all OCR Commissions. Commissioner Lewis will serve as a panelist to represent SHRC.
- D. Council Recess will take place in August, followed immediately by the budgeting process
- E. Stabilization for trans community aid has been funded through a supplemental budgeting process
- F. The Do Not Solicit homeowners' list initiative introduced by Council Member Foster was approved by City Council
- G. Interim Director Chin expressed gratitude for the Commission's work, and our ability to engage with courage in hard conversations. He encouraged the Commissioners to view our current changes as a time of opportunity.

X. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.