



Asian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | September 2, 2025 | 12:00 – 1:00 pm
City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Sarah Gilpin, Athan Lau, Hieu Lê, Yasamin Nawabi, Cecilia Nguyen, Sofia Noshay, Bee Paredes, Parisa Pilehvar, Vivian Wang, Yi Zhang

Commissioners Absent: Meg Chang, Ha Huynh, Masood Kasim, Anna Thao

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve August minutes.
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Nguyen seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 8
 - a. Commissioners Paredes and Nawabi were not yet present in the meeting.
 - ii. Motion carried, August minutes approved.

III. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin noted there is a lot to discuss regarding Luminary Awards and Tulsa Asia Fest.
- b. Vice Chair Pilehvar reminded the commission that she represents AAC on the Human Rights Commission (HRC).
 - i. HRC is part of the human rights ordinance, which protects Tulsans against discrimination in City employment, contracts, housing, public accommodation, and ADA compliance. If someone were to feel discriminated against in these areas based on race, there is a process to bring that complaint forward. AAC represents communities that can and should utilize this process when needed. If you hear of anything, reach out to Vice Chair Pilehvar for information on how to file a complaint.
 - ii. HRC working to make the complaints filing process easier and more accessible. Overseen by City's Compliance Officer, who shares an update with HRC on a regular basis.
 - iii. HRC is primarily an advisory body to the Mayor. Currently focusing on two goals based on Equality Indicators #49 and #50.
 - iv. Vice Chair Pilehvar noted that there has recently been work done to update and unify protections across sections of the human rights ordinance. Lexi helped explain those proposed updates, which include adding veteran status as a protected class in housing and public



accommodations and adding sexual orientation and gender identity protections under public accommodations, in addition to some housekeeping clean up. Vice Chair Pilehvar shared this has been a big topic of conversation in City Council, protections mean you can have your complaints heard and see due process.

- v. If you have things to elevate to HRC, share them with Vice Chair Pilehvar.

IV. Committee Reports

a. Cultural Event

- i. Commissioner Lau shared the committee focused on event branding, want to have an identity that's unique to Tulsa Asia Fest. Passed out a handout with two potential identifiers. Committee likes Concept B.
- ii. Partnership with APIDA Tulsa is helping with social media.
- iii. Sponsorship structure:
 - 1. Williams is a presenting sponsor with a \$5,000 donation.
 - 2. Discussing how to integrate sponsorship recognition throughout the event, such as tote bags.
- iv. Sharing the vendor registration form in October.
- v. Discussed potential programming items. One committee member is passionate about an Asian fashion show.
- vi. Sub-team meetings will take place in late September.
- vii. Commission Discussion
 - 1. Vice Chair Pilehvar recommended an Islamic tile pattern instead of crescent moon in Concept A.
 - 2. Chairwoman Gilpin would like to see sponsorship asks to go out late this month or early October. Will want the event branding set before then. Encouraged commissioners to be involved in the event. Huge capacity at Arvest Convention Center.
 - 3. Commissioner Noshay: It's smart to think about the longevity of the event. Have you talked to German American society and others that host pillar events?
 - a. Commissioner Lau would like to talk to them formally.
 - b. Commissioner Noshay suggested thinking about iconic Tulsa events that also generate a lot of revenue.
Worthwhile to look at those organizations to see if there is something we can learn from.
 - 4. Chairwoman Gilpin: want to submit this event for a national Anvil award, need documentation for planning and budget. Appreciates Commissioner Lau's attention to detail.
 - 5. Commissioner Nguyen: What does the partnership with APIDA look like?



- a. Commissioner Lau: APIDA will help spread the word, fill in gaps based on what AAC can and can't do with marketing.
- viii. Commissioner Lau: Call to action – spread the word for the event
 - 1. Paving the way for other Asian cultural celebrations.
- b. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy
 - i. Commissioner Nguyen provided a list of upcoming events.
 - 1. Hmong Listening Session hosted by APIDA Tulsa: Opportunity to hear directly from the Hmong community about their strengths and needs. Would be great to have commissioners attend and listen, especially from Data & Research Committee.
 - 2. Twisted Arts Film Festival: Theme is queer love, AAC is sponsoring. Two Asian films are screening on Saturday, September 13. Invite to AAC to set up a resource table and have a commissioner speak before the screening.
 - a. Vice Chair Pilehvar volunteered to speak and set up the resource table.
 - b. AAC received 10 free tickets to film screenings throughout the festival. Reach out to Commissioner Nguyen if you are interested.
 - 3. Welcoming Week Kickoff Event: September 12
 - ii. Updates from recent events: India Fest
 - 1. Commissioners Nguyen, Noshay, and Lau tabled. Big event, great connections with organizations and individuals in attendance and had 14 individuals sign up for the newsletter.
 - 2. Elevated the disconnect between AAC and South Asian/Indian community. Great diversity within South Asian community, gained new connections. Don't want AAC showing up to be a one-time situation.
 - iii. Canceled appearance to table at Tulsa Drillers game. Thinking about if we were doing something because it was a preference, requirement, or tradition. Helpful to think through moving forward.
 - 1. Chairwoman Gilpin reminded commissioners that AAC is new, need to focus on building awareness among AAPI community first before building the capacity for at-large Tulsa awareness.
- c. Workforce and Education
 - i. Commissioner Wang reported on Luminary Awards in Commissioner Kasim's absence.
 - ii. The nomination deadline was extended to September 15. Don't know how many nominations have been received yet.



- iii. The committee is working on solidifying the event agenda, thank you letters, and other materials. By end of the month, the catering and entertainment plan will be finalized.
- iv. Seven sponsors and 40 tickets sold so far.
- v. Commissioner Noshay asked if the nominations numbers can be shared so commissioners can help fill in gaps. Chairwoman Gilpin will reach out to Lachelle to get that number and Lexi will send a follow up
- d. Data and Research
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar: The committee will be launching two projects.
 - 1. 211 Eastern Oklahoma Marketing
 - a. It will take some time to have a meaningful product for the community.
 - b. Provide Tulsa Area United Way/211 with a one-pager of recommended languages, messaging, and tools so in a year there will be an increase in translated calls to 211 in those languages.
 - c. AAC can have a concrete role in ground-level change.
 - d. Five languages the committee is focused on: Arabic, Vietnamese, Burmese, Dari/Persian, and Pashto
 - e. What do these communities need? Where is the best place to market to these communities?
 - f. What tools can support anyone who uses 211? Examples: video walk-through demonstrating language selection, website translation, and more.
 - 2. Stories of Asian Tulsa
 - a. Will create a vision for storytelling, schedule of interviews, standard questions, structure for story submissions, and more.
 - i. Build a repository of stories to use in a variety of ways. Opportunity to further engage folks when tabling, can use for op-eds, feature at Tulsa Asia Fest.
 - ii. Need to determine how stories will be used and establishing privacy systems. Recognize the vulnerability in telling your story.
 - b. Help Tulsans understand range of experiences within Asian community. Help Asian Tulsans see what bonds us.
 - c. Chairwoman Gilpin: Circle Cinema could be a good partner, feature stories in their gallery for AAPI Heritage Month



- d. Vice Chair Pilehvar proposes starting with commissioners telling their stories. Welcome ideas from commissioners on how to utilize stories.
- e. Chairwoman Gilpin reflected this is a great opportunity to capture video and photo.

ii. Next meeting: 9/18 at 6pm

V. Old Business

- a. Chairwoman congratulated the commission for willing a PRSA Tulsa Silverlink Award for Lunar New Year 2025.

VI. New Business – no new business

VII. Announcements / Public Comments

- a. Neon Fest is this week at Post Oak.
- b. Oklahoma Tamil Sangam: Tamil Kootam on October 11 at Mary Glass Performing Arts Center (Owasso)
 - i. About 200 – 300 families in Oklahoma are part of this organization.
- c. Bengali Association of Greater Tulsa: Durga Puja on September 27 at LaFortune Park
 - i. Biggest annual event in the Bengali community.
- d. Public Comments
 - i. Dr. Manju Kaul shared her appreciation for making the connection with AAC, look forward to more work together.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - i. Commissioner Lau made a motion, Vice Chair Pilehvar seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.