



## **Greater Tulsa Area Hispanic/Latinx Affairs Commission**

Regular Meeting | September 11, 2025 | 5:30 – 6:30 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

### **Meeting Minutes**

Commissioners Present: Carlos Bejarano, Chriss Chavez, Daniel Gomez, Jackiez Gonzalez, Jose Bamaca Hernandez, Fatima Linares, Jessica Lozano-Alvarez, Mark Ohnesorge, Diana Pennington, Amanda Peregrina, Angelica Reina

Commissioners Absent: Amy Ariza, Mimi Martinez Herrera, Jacob Parra

Liaisons Present: Andy Little

Liaisons Absent: Riley Howard, Ivan Patino-Cortez

#### **I. Call to Order**

- a. Chairman Bejarano called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

#### **II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- a. Chairman Bejarano entertained a motion to approve August meeting minutes.
  - i. Commissioner Chavez made a motion, Commissioner Peregrina seconded.
    1. Aye: 11, Nay: 0
  - ii. Motion carried, August minutes approved.

#### **III. Guest Speakers: Kaitlin Williams and Alfredo Marcelo, Growing Together**

- a. Growing Together (GT) formed in collaboration with residents in 2011.
- b. GT's Mission: Eliminate inequalities that stand in the way for families in vulnerable neighborhoods to succeed.
- c. Wholistic, inclusive neighborhood development. People typically think of buildings as neighborhood development, but it also includes community aspect, people, and access to opportunities.
- d. Kendall-Whittier neighborhood history: Tulsa's first suburban shopping district. There was an influx of Latinx immigrants in the 90s, who helped bring stability to the neighborhood after a decline in the economic corridor starting in the 50s.
- e. Kendall-Whittier neighborhood data:
  - i. Approximately 12,000 people.
  - ii. 50% white and 32% Hispanic.
  - iii. 64% of households earn less than \$50,000 per year.
- f. Social connectedness provides essential resources, especially among newcomers.
- g. As new folks move into the neighborhood, GT considers how it is affecting current residents so they can help combat gentrification.



- h. GT identified residents' main priorities through their Flourishing Neighborhood Index, which engaged 400+ residents.
  - i. Economic challenges, inability to save money or purchase a home.
  - ii. Sense of disconnection and/or mistrust of leaders and lack of civic engagement.
    - 1. There is power in this room individually and as a commission body.
    - 2. Residents want to know where decisions occur that affect their neighborhood or the Latino community, and where is community-level support.
    - 3. Want to know community leaders and community-level decisions.
  - iii. Safety & security, lack of investment in lighting, sidewalks, etc
- i. Alfredo distributed a handout with resources (Appendix 1).
- j. GT's main priority: Help parents access resources to advance their family's economic opportunity.
- k. GT faces challenges with implementing programming due to larger societal barriers such as transportation, community trust, and safety.
  - i. 742 participants in community programs from June 24 – 25.
- l. Creating closer connections between neighborhood residents and leaders. Working with City Councilors and School Board members.
- m. Community Leadership Institute: Fellowship to train people in financial literacy and building generational wealth. 43 residents trained so far.
- n. Mentorship opportunities for students who need role models, especially male students.
  - i. 6,000+ hours served per year from 39 mentors in schools, providing support to teachers and students.
- o. Kendall-Whittier Neighborhood Trust: Preserving long-term affordability with mixed-income housing
  - i. Conscious rental of single-family homes. Families in neighborhood need larger homes and long-term rental opportunities.
  - ii. Breaking ground next year on an apartment/town home development.
- p. Commission Discussion
  - i. Vice Chair Gonzalez: Can you speak to the Market District development's impact on your strategy?
    - 1. Kaitlin: Yes, there is growing concern in neighborhood about gentrification (not necessarily purposeful). What happens when external investments are not aligned with community vision? Developments have impacted property affordability in a short period of time. Community has expressed lack of consultation before development took place, and it's important to make thoughtful investments to improve the neighborhood.
  - ii. Commissioner Chavez invited GT to participate in Council for Safe Neighborhoods.
  - iii. Chairman Bejarano: What is the feedback loop from program participants and data you collect on program satisfaction?
    - 1. Kaitlin: It's different program to program, mainly trying to align around main purpose of program. They measure the likelihood participants will recommend a program to someone else and how much a program



contributes to a participant's goals. Long-term community metrics GT wants to track include: How large the community's network grows, how long do people stay with us, are they seeing improvement or growth, activation in community role.

- q. Opportunities and Events with GT:
  - i. Community Pumpkin Patch: October 18 from 2 – 5 in Kendall-Whittier Square. Addressing the affordability of fun
  - ii. Volunteer for Future Not Finance at Will Rogers Middle and High Schools on October 29

#### **IV. Chair / Vice Chair Report**

- a. Chairman Bejarano shared that GTAHLAC is signed up to table at La Fiesta de Tulsa this Saturday. He and Vice Chair Gonzalez will be there, need two more people volunteer.

#### **V. Committee Reports**

- a. Executive Committee
  - i. Chairman Bejarano noted that next month's speaker will either be from the Financial Empowerment Center or Municipal Court.
  - ii. With Governor Stitt's operation involving the Oklahoma Highway Patrol (OHP), there is an influx of officers in Tulsa. Keep in mind that individuals who are stopped by OHP and go to jail will go to county jail which brings in other considerations related to immigration.
  - iii. Commissioner Chavez asked if commissioners should send guest speakers recommendations to Chairman Bejarano, who said yes.
- b. Education Committee
  - i. Commissioner Linares shared the committee will meet the third Wednesday of the month from 11 – 12 moving forward.
  - ii. Commissioner Pennington will join the committee.
  - iii. Central Library is reserved for Tomás Rivera and will start planning next month.
  - iv. Connected with the new Hispanic Resource Center Coordinator, and Chairman Bejarano mentioned she may be interested in participating with event planning.
  - v. Chairman Chavez: In contact with engineers at TU and they have money to do a Noche de Ciencias with Tulsa Public Schools. Would like to connect Commissioner Linares with them. The programming will be paid for and planned and can be for any grade level.
    - 1. Vice Chair Gonzalez asked if there's an opportunity for them to work with GT, Commissioner Chavez said yes.
    - 2. Commissioner Chavez can also enlist ORU students to help at Union, connect with Amanda.
- c. Community Advocacy Committee
  - i. Vice Chair Gonzalez referred commission to the draft version of the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment Workplace packet. At this point, text is pretty set, working on design next. Still incorporating local resources and an FAQ section. Will have a Spanish version as well.



- ii. Reminder this is a resource for business to understand rights when federal agents arrive for search.
- iii. Vice Chair Gonzalez reviewed different sections of the packet with the commission.
- iv. Several commissioners have expressed interest in helping with distribution, have leads from business community on printing.
- v. Commission Discussion:
  - 1. Chairman Bejarano asked if the packet will also be available electronically. Vice Chair Gonzalez said it will, though she is still determining the best place for it to live.
  - 2. Commissioner Pennington: Is there a shortened version that organizations can post that links to the full document? Vice Chair Gonzalez said there isn't, but that's a good idea.
  - 3. Commissioner Chavez asked about the title, and Vice Chair Gonzalez clarified that it's a work in progress. Don't want to cause alarm, so need to find the right informative title.
  - 4. Commissioner Chavez would like to present the resource to the Council for Safe Neighborhoods when it's ready. Vice Chair Gonzalez said it will likely be ready for print by the end of the month.
- d. Immigration Committee – no report
- e. Public Safety Committee
  - i. Commissioner Chavez shared they did not meet last month.
  - ii. 34 people signed up for Spanish Citizen's Police Academy (30 spots available).
  - iii. Community Safety Fair: September 25 from 6 – 8 pm. Opportunity for the commission to table. Topics covered will include cybersecurity, fire protection, firearm safety, medication disposal, CPR, and more. All in Spanish.
  - iv. Law Enforcement Appreciation Day: September 20 at 6pm. Another opportunity for the commission to table.
  - v. Andy Little reported that the Oklahoma state legislature passed bill 2459, changing safety inspections for food trucks, which goes into effect on November 1. If they don't have the Fire Marshall and LPG Commission sticker, then they will be shut down and can't operate.
    - 1. TFD won't patrol looking for stickers, this is outside of TFD's jurisdiction.
    - 2. There is an event on September 22 and 23 to receive the inspection. Folks can also call the state Fire Marshall to schedule an inspection.
    - 3. Vice Chair Gonzalez offered to attach a flyer with this information to the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment Workplaces packet.
    - 4. Commissioner Bamaca Hernandez: Food trucks have to have the fire suppression system? Andy shared it depends on what type of cooking equipment they have. If they have petroleum, they have to have the LPG sticker.
    - 5. Commissioner Lozano-Alvarez: Will TFD share what they need to do if they don't pass an inspection? Andy: Yes, will educate them on what's needed to pass inspection.



6. Commissioner Pennington asked about the LPG sticker, Andy shared if they have a petroleum tank it needs to be placed and protected properly or they can be unsafe. Must have a fire suppression system in the truck.
7. Commissioner Bamaca Hernandez noted there are only three or four companies that install the fire suppression system for hundreds of food trucks in the city.
8. Andy reiterated that TFD will not actively be patrolling for the stickers; however, they have to address any safety issues with LPG tanks.
9. Commissioner Linares asked Lexi if the City send out a mailer to those who have permits for the mobile businesses. Lexi will inquire.
  - a. Commissioner Chavez underscored that this is a city-wide issue, want to be proactive in supporting small businesses

**VI. Old Business** – no old businesses

**VII. New Business**

- a. Commissioner Chavez extended an invite to the Mexican Consulate event tomorrow night in OKC. If you didn't get a personal invite someone who did receive an invite can register for you. There is also a second event at La Fiesta de Tulsa.

**VIII. Announcements / Public Comments**

- a. Public Comments:
  - i. Alex with Gilcrease Museum: Gilcrease has a large collection of historical and recent Latin American art, a portion of the museum's collection that has been understudied but that will change. Hiring an assistant curator of Latin American culture, on TU's employment portal.
  - ii. Councilor Dutton introduced herself. Would like to have closer with commission on ways to construct policy that is reflective of the Hispanic/Latinx community.
  - iii. Michelle Lara, Executive Director of Padres Unidos: Hosting a literacy assessment event on October 4.

**IX. Adjournment**

- a. Chairman Bejerano entertained a motion to adjourn.
  - i. Commissioner Lozano-Alvarez motioned, and Commissioner Chavez seconded.
    1. Aye: 11, Nay: 0
  - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.



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