



Asian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | October 7, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm
City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Sarah Gilpin, Ha Huynh, Masood Kasim, Athan Lau, Cecilia Nguyen, Sofia Noshay, Bee Paredes, Parisa Pilehvar, Anna Thao, Yi Zhang

Commissioners Absent: Meg Chang, Hieu Lê, Yasamin Nawabi, Vivian Wang

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve September minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Lau made a motion, Commissioner Kasim seconded.
 1. Aye: 8
 - a. Commissioners Huynh and Noshay were not yet present in the meeting.
 - ii. Motion carried, September minutes approved.

III. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin has been involved in a few of the committees' work. AAC is planning two events simultaneously—the Luminary Awards and Tulsa Asia Fest.
- b. Commissioner Noshay arrived at 12:05 pm.
- c. Vice Chair Pilehvar attended Twisted Arts Festival to speak about AAC. This prompted her to give more thought to where and how AAC shows up in the community.

IV. Committee Reports

- a. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy
 - i. Commissioner Nguyen shared there are two tabling opportunities coming up this month and passed out a handout with a list of upcoming events (Appendix 1).
 1. TU's Moon Festival: Thursday, October 16
 2. Hmong New Year: Saturday, October 25
 - a. Chairwoman Gilpin proposed designing a small takeaway card with a QR code, Lexi reminded commissioners that they have business cards. Vice Chair Pilehvar and Chairwoman Gilpin will work together to print more data one pagers.
 - ii. Commissioner Huynh arrived at 12:08.
 - iii. Hmong New Year is also looking for event volunteers.
 - iv. Committee is working on their strategic plan.
 1. Have done well increasing AAC's visibility, but many community leaders from small or newer immigrant groups don't know how to engage and feel



disconnected with the City. Need more two-way communication focused on building relationships.

- v. Commissioner Nguyen proposed hosting leadership roundtable meetings—a recurring space for APIDA leaders to meet with Commissioners. This will help build a network of community leaders who will strengthen AAC’s ability to advise the City.
 - 1. Exchange feedback, ideas, and building alignment on community priorities and needs.
 - 2. Capacity is important, going to start small and build momentum up to Tulsa Asia Fest, then grow in summer 2026.
 - 3. Culture committee is currently small, need extra minds and hands to support. Would love to have more commissioners and community members join who want to support this idea.
 - 4. Chairwoman Gilpin reflected that it’s important to build relationships instead of interacting with folks in one-off situations. Waiting until June to launch this would be wise to allow for time to regroup after Tulsa Asia Fest. This will be a great initiative, thanks Commissioner Nguyen for having vision and seeing the need. Need to clearly align with objectives to be careful with time, resources, and team capacity. Can’t do all community events all the time.
 - 5. Vice Chair Pilehvar noted that it can be helpful to meet with people one-on-one before bringing a group together. Also, this initiative can overlap with the stories project.

b. Workforce and Education

- i. Commissioner Kasim reported that Luminary Awards preparations have come a long way. The event is shaping up to be a wonderful celebration for individuals and organizations making an impact in our community.
- ii. Committee will meet tomorrow (10/8) at 6 pm to select awardees.
- iii. Chairwoman Gilpin will order trophies.
- iv. Commissioner Noshay: How do you feel about the number and qualifications of nominees?
 - 1. Commissioner Kasim: Not sure yet, going to look at this tomorrow. Depending on how things go, might not have final awardees decided tomorrow, may have to verify information.
 - 2. Commissioner Noshay: can those who can’t attend in person be supportive?
 - 3. Commissioner Kasim: It will be difficult to contribute virtually.
 - 4. Chairwoman Gilpin: There were over 30 submissions, great response. May want to narrow down to two to three nominees per category. Want everyone to have a voice in the selection process.
- v. Tickets are on sale, and sponsorships are coming in. Catering is ordered.
- vi. Commissioners can help with event set up so everything is ready before guests arrive. Still solidifying the agenda.



- vii. Commissioner Nguyen asked for a flyer and ticket information to include in the newsletter.
- viii. Commissioner Kasim reminded AAC that any funds that are raised beyond event costs will go to the scholarship fund.
- c. Data and Research
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar proposed submitting the data one pager to the Mayor's Office and City Council, as AAC hasn't made a formal submission yet. The committee has made some tweaks to better cater to what this audience will look for and will share the updated version. This is an opportunity to prompt an official pause and inform City Council and the Mayor's Office about who AAC serves.
 - ii. Stories of Asian Tulsans project (Appendix 2) is ready to pilot with commissioners. Vice Pilehvar hopes that by the next AAC meeting, commissioners have submitted their own story (written or video) and supported two people they know to submit their story. Share feedback on the process with Vice Chair Pilehvar so the committee can roll out on a larger scale in November.
 - 1. Considerations:
 - a. Where should people reach out with issues/questions?
 - b. To upload a video, folks have to log into a Google account, which could be a barrier.
 - c. Tried to anticipate questions/concerns such as privacy but can't foresee everything. Want to have safest, most empowering experience possible before collecting stories from the broader community.
 - 2. Vice Chair Pilehvar will work with Lexi to send a reminder email to commissioners before next meeting to complete this.
 - iii. Chairwoman Gilpin suggested creating an introduction for the project.
 - iv. Vice Chair Pilehvar highlighted the three project goals:
 - 1. Our community better understands each other.
 - 2. City better understands who is included in the Asian community.
 - 3. AAC better understands who we serve.
 - v. These stories could be amazing content for a local documentary maker to create a film or have a series of articles to highlight heritage month. Right now, it is mostly a story bank to use as a launch pad for other projects.
 - 1. It is important to start with individuals' stories to avoid reducing people to only their nationalities or other parts of their identities.
 - vi. Commissioner Lau suggested adding data on how many dollars Asian contribute to Tulsa's economy. Vice Chair Pilehvar considered include the Equality Indicator related to this; however, the committee didn't want to tell one single narrative of the community.
 - vii. Commissioner Noshay: Previously referenced a Black-owned business guide, considered doing something similar for Asian-owned businesses.
 - 1. Vice Chair Pilehvar noted the Asian community doesn't have a chamber of commerce, so AAC can start by reaching out to business owners and asking



them what connections they have to other businesses. Want to ensure the community wants this.

2. Commissioner Noshay: Could commissioners utilize the existing spreadsheet of organizations to start a list as the project unfolds? Noticed a lack of South Asian organizations and the opportunity to include the type of business.
 3. Vice Chair Pilehvar agreed this would be useful, need to convert list to a spreadsheet.
 4. Commissioner Noshay: The story project is an opportunity to activate people at tabling opportunities.
 5. Vice Chair Pilehvar agrees it will be nice to receive and share stories at events.
- viii. Vice Chair Pilehvar offered support as folks are trying out the process.
- ix. Next meeting is online on October 28.
- d. Cultural Event
- i. Commissioner Lau shared there is a lot going on with Tulsa Asia Fest.
 - ii. The vendor application draft is ready and will be finalized soon. Will ask business if they are Asian-owned and what type of business they are.
 - iii. Leaning on community partners to support with marketing. APIDA is hosting a website for Tulsa Asia Fest and will also create a Facebook page.
 - iv. Touring Arvest Convention Center on 10/15.
 - v. Would love to have a dedicated area for Stories of Asian Tulsa.
 - vi. Tulsa Asia Fest will be on Saturday, January 31, 3 – 8 pm.
 - vii. Free parking was secured thanks to PartnerTulsa.
 - viii. Sponsorship packet launched. Williams is secured at \$5k as Visionary Partner. The goal is to raise \$15,000 – 20,000 for the event.
 1. Commissioner Noshay asked about the sponsorship tiers and goals.
Commissioner Lau shared the funds will go towards rental items (ie: tables, chairs, lighting) and festival merch (ie: tote bags). Hope Tulsa Asia Fest can be a space for people to learn, have a fun time, and have a tangible takeaway item.
 - ix. The committee will meet twice monthly October – December. The focus for the rest of October is securing sponsors and creating the Tulsa Asia Fest flyer. Commissioner invited commissioners to join the committee, will share invite with everyone.
 - x. Commissioner Noshay confirmed the event is free to the public, and Commissioner Lau said yes, admission is free.
 - xi. Chairwoman Gilpin asked about food supply, considering it's a five-hour event. Commissioner Lau said they will prioritize reaching out to Tulsa vendors but will also reach out to Oklahoma City vendors. Recently attended Oklahoma City's Asian Night Market with 20,000+ attendees and there were several vendors.
 - xii. Chairwoman Gilpin noted the committee needs to coordinate with convention center staff to understand traffic flow, food truck capacity, and what costs will be additional and what is included in the venue rental.



- xiii. Commissioner Kasim asked if there are licensing requirements. Commissioner Lau noted they will lean on the convention center staff to determine that, will have answers at the tour.
- xiv. Commissioner Noshay noted the committee can use the Data Committee's spreadsheet as a contact list. Commissioner Kasim thinks there will be many businesses that will want to participate.

V. Old Business – no old business

VI. New Business

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin is chairing YWCA Tulsa's 2026 Pinnacle Awards. Important time to elevate women's and Asian women's voices. Encouraged commissioners to nominate an individual or business for awards. Nominations close on October 18.

VII. Announcements / Public Comments

- a. Commissioner Lau wished everyone a Happy Moon Festival.
- b. Commissioner Noshay shared that she's working with Circle Cinema on community events that are AAPI-centered to curate a more robust cultural experience. Will likely do a K-Pop Demon Hunters singalong in February. Welcome AAC's input on events.
- c. Chairwoman Gilpin reflected on how remarkable the work of the commission (collectively and individually) is with only two years in existence.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Noshay seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 12:56 pm.

AAC | ASIAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION

OCTOBER UPCOMING EVENTS



- **Tami Koottam 2025 - Oklahoma Tamil Sangam**
 - **Date/Time:** Saturday, October 11th, 2 PM - 8 PM
 - **Location:** Mary Glass Performing Arts Center, Owasso OK
 - **Event Highlights:** Kollywood dances, Classical Dance Performances, Songs, Dinner
 - Adults \$20, Kids (Age 6-12) \$15, Kids (Age 5 & below) FREE
 - **University of Tulsa - Moon Festival -**
 - ****AAC Tabling Opportunity! Contact cecilianguyen918@gmail.com**
 - **Date/Time:** Thursday, October 16th, 6-9 PM
 - **Location:** Lorton Performance Center (550 S Gary Pl)
 - *FREE* for TU students, \$10 RSVP, \$15 at the door
 - **Oklahoma Hmong New Year Celebration -**
 - ****Volunteers Needed! Contact hmaao.staff@gmail.com**
 - **Date/Time:** Saturday, October 25th - Sunday, October 26th
 - **Location:** 19400 E 630 Rd, Inola, OK 74036
 - **India Food & Arts Festival (IFAF)**
 - **Date/Time:** Sunday, October 26th, 11 AM - 9 PM
 - **Location:** Scissortail Park, Oklahoma City
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- **2025 Asian Affairs Luminary Awards**
 - **Date/Time:** Tuesday, November 18th, 12 PM - 1:30 PM
 - **Location:** 101 Archer
 - **Tulsa Asia Fest**
 - **Date/Time:** Saturday, January 31st, 2026
 - **Location:** Arvest Convention Center

Asian Affairs Commission: Stories of Asian Tulsa

Video Capture Guidance

To ensure a high quality video, please adhere to the following:

- **Video Quality:**
 - Record your video in portrait orientation (holding your phone upright)
 - If possible, do not record as a selfie and use a stand or a friend to record you
 - Try to record in a well-lit room with minimal background noise
- **Video Content:**
 - Start the video with the following script:
 - My name is _____, I am a Tulsan, and I am (how you identify).
 - If you would like to record your video in a language besides English, please include English subtitles or another mode of translation to support us in sharing your story.
 - Keep the video length under 1:30. If you are answering multiple questions, please do so in separate submissions.
 - If you have trouble uploading your video, please contact _____.

Pick at least one of the questions below to answer in the video:

- What's a favorite tradition, food, or custom in your family or community?
- Share a small moment or story that made you feel proud of your heritage?
- What's one thing about your culture or identity you wish more people knew?
- How has your cultural identity influenced your life experience?
- Who or what has influenced your experience in your community the most?
- What's your hope for Asian American communities in the next 10–20 years?

Commissioner Asks:

1. **By our next meeting on 11/4, please engage in the process by:**
 - a. [Submitting your own story in written or video form.](#)
 - b. Supporting **two** Asian Tulsans in your circle to share their story, and
 - c. **Share your feedback** about the process and how to strengthen it in the final question of the survey before a full public rollout (or by emailing parisapilehvar@gmail.com)
2. **Optional:** Join our next Data and Research meeting on Tuesday, 10/28 from 11-12 to share your feedback and help us strengthen the process.



Note: to preserve the ability to upload files directly into the form, Google login is required.