



Asian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | May 5, 2026 | 12:00 – 1:00 pm
City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Meg Chang, Sarah Gilpin, Masood Kasim, Yasamin Nawabi, Cecilia Nguyễn, Sofia Noshay, Bee Paredes, Parisa Pilehvar, Anna Thao, Vivian Wang

Commissioners Absent: Ha Huynh, Hieu Lê, Cing Nuam, Yi Zhang

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve April meeting minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Gilpin made a motion, Commissioner Kasim seconded.
 1. Aye: 9, Nay: 0
 - a. Commissioner Paredes was not yet present in the meeting.
 - ii. Motion carried, April minutes approved.

III. Mayor Nichols Delivers AANHPI Heritage Month Proclamation

- a. Commissioner Paredes arrived at 12:07 pm.
- b. Mayor Nichols commended AAC for their incredible work during the first 16 months of his administration.
- c. Mayor Nichols delivered the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month proclamation.

IV. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Tulsa Community Foundation (TCF) Account Report Overview: Current account balance is \$10,459.24.
- b. Tulsa Asia Fest Update
 - i. Commissioners received an Executive Summary of the AAC Chairs meeting discussing future of Tulsa Asia Fest (TAF) (Appendix 1).
 - ii. The Chairs recommend an intentional, strategic pause on the event for 2027 to ensure the event has a strong foundation in the future.
 - iii. Vice Chair Pilehvar reminds commissioners that AAC is primarily an advisory body to the Mayor and City Council. This commission is only two years old and does not have the capacity to plan an annual event for 10,000 people. The incredible events AAC has organized have come at great personal sacrifice. The Chairs are considering what the community impact is and what's most aligned with the capacity of the commission.



- iv. Chairwoman Gilpin adds that pausing TAF allows additional capacity to show up in other community spaces. There are positive and detrimental aspects to quick growth, and AAC can't simply keep going as the commission has been when there's such a hard load on a small number of commissioners and community volunteers. This is an opportunity to recalibrate.
- v. Commission Discussion
 - 1. Commissioner Paredes agreed that it will be good to eventually transfer operations to another organization. This event is needed, the response was amazing, but AAC needs to be intentional with how to support community collaboration. It's important to intentionally communicate the pause to the community.
 - 2. Commissioner Kasim noted AAC needs to step back to sustain such a big event without anyone burning out.
 - 3. Chairwoman Gilpin: The love and curiosity from Tulsans to learn about Asian cultures was there before this event and will still be there in 2028.
 - 4. Commissioner Chang reflected on how many events have recently been created that celebrate the Asian community. This could be an opportunity for AAC to be a true advisory body by supporting those events instead of event planners.
 - 5. Commissioner Wang asked for clarity on if there will still be an event in 2028 to ensure the pause isn't indefinite. Vice Chair Pilehvar shared the intention is to use the upcoming months to develop a clear plan for future operations of the event, whether AAC or a community organization leads it.
 - 6. Commissioner Noshay provided context for her experience thus far on AAC and as Interim Cultural Event Committee Chair. There are three entities: community, AAC, and City. The official responsibility of AAC is an advisory body to the mayor, and she is still growing an understanding of what that means. It's important to be in partnership with the Mayor's Office, City leadership, and community to determine how AAC moves forward. Also need to be mindful of commission and community capacity. This is an opportunity to uplift community events. She agrees that AAC needs to pause TAF and have true strategic planning for the event's future.

V. Possible Action: Vote on Direction of 2027 Tulsa Asia Fest

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to strategically pause Tulsa Asia Fest for 2027.



- i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Kasim seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10, Nay: 0
- ii. Motion carried, Tulsa Asia Fest will take a strategic pause in 2027.

VI. Vice Chair Pilehvar Presents Officer Slate

- a. Vice Chair Pilehvar opened with a review of the nominating and slating process thus far.
- b. Current Officer Slate:
 - i. Chair: Open
 - ii. Vice Chair: Cecilia
 - iii. Workforce and Education: Masood
 - iv. Data and Research: Parisa
 - v. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy: Cecilia
 - vi. Cultural Event: Open
- c. Vice Chair Pilehvar connected with each nominee and heard a desire for a guiding vision for the commission's future that currently felt unclear given shifts in TAF and the rapid growth AAC has experienced in two years. Everyone nominated for chair was unable to accept the chair role, including herself.
- d. The two open spots on the slate need to be filled today so the vote can take place in June, per AAC's bylaws.
- e. Vice Chair Pilehvar shared that she can bring strategic direction and continuity of leadership should she be Chair; however, she did not slate herself because of concerns about representation of the majority of Asian Tulsans and lack of capacity to be present at many events. She felt she couldn't step into this role without the full support of the commission to fill in those gaps.
- f. Vice Chair Pilehvar opened the floor for self-nominations for Cultural Event Chair, Commission Chair, and further discussion.
- g. Commission Discussion
 - i. Some commissioners affirmed Vice Chair Pilehvar's ability to represent parts of the Asian diaspora in Tulsa that are less visible.
- h. Vice Chair Pilehvar paused deliberation and suggested returning to this agenda item after committee reports.

VII. Committee Reports

- a. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy
 - i. Commissioner Nguyễn reported there are 12 AANHPI Leadership Roundtable participants. She hosted the orientation meeting, and the next session will be focused on leadership and cultural identity.
 - ii. Asian American Night Market with Tulsa Global District: Friday, May 15 from 5 – 9 pm at Hannah Hall. Need commissioners to table.
- b. Workforce and Education



- i. Commissioner Kasim recognized Commissioners Paredes and Thao for contributing to the Luminary Scholarship materials. Aim to distribute materials by May 15.
 - ii. Working with TCF to update the donation link to clearly delineate whether sponsors will be donating to scholarships or the awards ceremony.
 - iii. Commissioner Kasim’s fundraising goal is \$20,000.
 - iv. Vice Chair suggested including the AAC data one pager in scholarship materials so educators know who is eligible for the scholarship.
 - c. Data and Research
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar is considering how to embed data & research within the work of other committees.
 - d. Cultural Event – no additional report
- VIII. Vice Chair Pilehvar Presents Officer Slate**
 - a. Vice Chair Pilehvar reopened the floor for self-nominations for Chair and Cultural Event Committee Chair.
 - i. After no additional nominations, Vice Chair Pilehvar accepted the previously submitted nomination for Chair.
 - b. Updated Officer Slate:
 - i. Chair: Parisa
 - ii. Vice Chair: Cecilia
 - iii. Workforce and Education: Masood
 - iv. Data and Research: Parisa
 - v. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy: Cecilia
 - vi. Cultural Event: Open
- IX. Old Business** – no old business
- X. New Business** – no new business
- XI. Announcements / Public Comments** – none
- XII. Adjournment**
 - a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Nguyen seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm.