Community Involvement Commission

August 24, 2017

Seattle City Hall 6-8PM

Meeting Minutes

**Commissioners present:** Alex Hudson, Alison Turner, Ben Mitchell, Felix Chang, Jenna Franklin, Julie Pham, Mark Mendez, Natalie Curtis, Patricia Akiyama, Sonj Basha, Thais Marbles

**Commissioners not present:** Bereket Kiros, Emily Kim, Jeniffer Calleja

**Staff Present:** Danielle Friedman, Kathy Nyland, Leslie Daniels, Maureen Sheehan, Sara Belz

**Welcome from Kathy Nyland, Director of the Department of Neighborhoods**

* Background: The Community Involvement Commission (CIC) was created when Mayor Ed Murray asked that an equity lens be applied to how the City does outreach and engagement. In the 1980’s Department of Neighborhoods (DON) was asked to staff the District Council System. When the CIC was created, the District Councils went from a required model to a requested model. (Note: The District Councils still exist. And this is not referring to the Council Districts that have representation on the City Council. These are completely different groups.)
* Danielle Friedman works at DON and will be the Staff Liaison to the CIC providing support and resources.
* There are 2 more seats that the commission needs to fill. What perspective is missing that needs to be part of this conversation?
* This commission is what you want it to be. Staff is here to support the commission. You have the framework created in the legislation but the commission gets to fill in the details.

**Introductions** (Preferred Gender Pronouns= PGP)

**Natalie Curtis:** (PGP: She/Her) Capitol Hill – VP of the Capitol Hill Community Council. Wants to be a voice that funnels the needs of the community to the City. Renter’s issues and safe consumption sites are important. Wants to ensure racial equity and social justice are happening rather than just being talked about. Grad student at Seattle U and works at Fred Hutch Cancer Research Center.

**Ben Mitchell:** (PGP: He/Him) Greenwood - Involved in Greenwood Community Council. Not active in it right now. Similar kind of profile on the community council as on many district councils. Excited when he read about CIC and intentionality of balancing power and applying an equity lens to engagement. Housing affordability is an interest. Doesn’t expect CIC to change the world but hopes to have some concrete accomplishments.

**Patricia Akiyama:** (PGP: She/Her) Lower Queen Anne - Got involved after the election in order to give back. Would like more infill and density in the City. Commission could help single family homeowners understand the need for density which will bring more diversity. Representing middle age women who haven’t been as involved in community efforts.

**Alex Hudson:** (PGP: She/Her) First Hill – ED of First Hill Neighborhood Association. Dream job making her neighborhood safer, more welcoming, vibrant, affordable and accessible. Many people think neighborhood groups are dog whistle for race and classism and that is the opposite of her approach to representing the people of First Hill. Recognizes her privilege as a white woman and wants to dismantle systems that create those inequities.

**Julie Pham:** (PGP: She/Her) International District - Identifies as perhaps the most conservative person on the commission. Small business owner/pro-business and believes business is not the opposite of social justice. Works advocating for tech industry. Likes questioning norms and looking at things in new ways. Hopes CIC can think high-level and long-term and not be reactive.

**Sonj Basha:** (PGP: They/Them) Grassroots, community organizer, advocates for LGBTQ community, artist. Cares about racial inequity and who holds the power; who is being pushed out of Seattle and what demographics are shifting? Has worked with immigrant/refugee populations. Immigrant from Pakistan. Identifies as a non-black person of color.

**Mark Mendez:** (PGP: He/Him) Representing the north end and Lake City. Perception that north end is white and wealthy but it has changed a lot. Lots of immigrants and refugees have moved there. Works for Seattle Parks and Recreation and works with teens from all over the world. Believes in getting youth involved and empowered to make a difference. Would like to ask each department to have a youth advisory council to help guide work. Was co-chair of the North District Council. People involved didn’t represent the diversity of the area but were good people trying to do good things. One barrier was that the City didn’t provide resources to conduct outreach in other languages.

**Jenna Franklin:** (PGP: She/Her) West Seattle – Has lived in lots of places in Seattle and worked in community engagement. Interested in transit equity, urbanization of poverty to outlying areas and why that is happening, loss of diversity, countywide accessibility. Public agencies see that playing out when losing the voice that built them. Works at King County in transportation projects.

**Alison Turner:** (PGP: She/Her) Eastlake - Just got degree from UW in Community, Environment and Planning. Represents young adults and students. Lots of passion in age range but sees they are not as engaged because of barriers.

**Thais Marbles:** (PGP: She/Her) Lives in Skyway, raised in Beacon Hill, goes to church in the CD.   
Works at DSHS. Labor activist. Active in Urban League and several other organizations. Likes being a voice for people. Wants to make sure communities are safe and we all look out for each other.

**Felix Chang:** (PGP: He/Him) Capitol Hill - Raised in Missouri. Work as a design research consultant. Likes learning about people and seeing how to can best engage with them. Passionate about research that is action-oriented.

**Ground Rules/Expectations**

CIC members listed some agreements about how to participate in the commission and in the meetings. List can be amended and updated at any time.

* Be aware of airtime
* Respect everyone’s opinion
* Be generous. Assume best intent.
* Come on time. Be prepared.
* Active engagement/listening
* Use “I” statements. Speak from own experiences; even when representing others.
* Encourage community members to attend
* Have fun

**Creating Commission Structure**

* Known tasks before the commission:
  + Select 2 additional commission members
  + Determine how to make recommendations on City policies and programs
  + Elect a chair and a vice chair
  + Establish bylaws
  + Establish meeting schedule and accommodations
  + Encourage ongoing involvement of community members
* Thoughts from the conversation:
  + ***Inclusion and transparency.*** Do not want this group to have a closed structure or feeling. Need to think of ways to bring the process out of this room. Needs to be accessible and transparent or else we are not doing what we are charged to do.
  + ***Meeting location.*** A question was proposed about moving the meeting locations around to different places. Rotating locations may pose a problem for Commissioners and community members getting to the meeting yet moving around might make it more accessible for some and would enable commission members to visit other areas of the City.
  + ***Accountability.*** How will the Commission hold itself accountable?
  + ***Representation.*** What is the balance between district representation and city-wide advocacy? How will that take shape? Who are the commission members representing? How and why?
  + ***Gathering Information.*** Need to have more information about City government and its functions. Inventory of every department in the City and their directors? What does each department’s community involvement work look like? What are all the City commissions and boards? What services do the other commissions offer and what responsibilities do they have? How does the CIC interact with other departments or programs? Like the Community Engagement Coordinators? Would like more information about RSJI. Would like to have other commissions come to the meeting to talk about their experiences. Have other DON programs come to speak to the commission to talk about they are doing. From DON, what questions do you have about community input? What policies is DON trying to inform?
  + ***Goals and Outcomes.*** Need to concretely define the outcomes the CIC is setting out to accomplish. What change do we want to occur? Maybe a facilitator can come to help create a workplan, mission and vision.
  + ***Communication.*** How do we envision communication happening between the CIC meetings? Do we want a platform for taking notes and sharing information? Have to be careful not to make decisions over e-mail. Working groups can meet but need to make sure to bring back the information to the commission for input and voting.
  + ***Who is not at the table?*** Observed that there is no one on the commission who is unhoused/homeless. Suggested that this may be an unrepresented demographic on the commission. Other demographics missing: seniors, someone who is differently-abled. Could we do some cohesive analysis?

**Action Items:**

* CIC Staff Liaison will research how other commissions communicate.
* CIC Staff Liaison will send out calendar invites until the end of the year.
* CIC Staff Liaison will gather information about City departments and programs for the next meeting.
* CIC Staff Liaison will invite other commission representatives, DON representatives and other relevant City programs to speak to the CIC.

**Working Groups**

Commission members decided to create two ad-hoc subcommittees expected to last 1-4 months, as needed. Meetings can happen in-person or on the phone. CIC Staff Liaison will initiate the subcommittee meetings.

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| Subcommittee name | ***Commission Members Selection Workgroup*** | ***Commission Structure Workgroup*** |
| Members | Thais, Jenna | Alex, Alison, Patricia, Felix |
| Responsibilities | * Identify process for selecting additional CIC members * Capture the broader groups’ interests * Identify voices missing from the table and propose outreach strategy for | * Draft commission bylaws for full CIC review * Help identify process for setting goals and outcomes * Help identify process for electing a chair and vice chair |

**Next Meetings**

Meetings will take place third Mondays from 6pm-8pm in Seattle City Hall.

**Public Comment**

No members of the public provided comment.