



City of Seattle

Ed Murray, Mayor

**Seattle Women's Commission**

### **MINUTES**

Seattle Women's Commission  
Boards and Commissions Conference Room L280  
600 Fourth Avenue, City Hall  
**Monday, April 17, 2017, 5:30 –7:30 p.m.**

**Commissioners Present:** Michele Frix, Jacquee Kurdas, Teresa Springer, Morgan Beach, Tracey Whitten, Alyson Palmer, Nicki Olivier-Hellenkamp, Idabelle Fosse, Erica Soelling, Tara Cookson

**Commissioners Calling In:** Ruchika Tulshyan, Loida C. Erhard

**Commissioners Absent/Excused/Leave:** Jaron Reed Goddard, Honey Jo Herman, Elsa Batres-Boni, Mergitu Argo, Xochitl Maykovich, Keisha Jackson, Alison Mondy, Rokea Jones

**Start time: 5:35PM**

#### **Announcements:**

- Denim Day Proclamation
- Jacquee – met with organizer of Seattle Womxn's March on May 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Event at Town Hall – Volunteer Recruitment Fair with lightening talks, tables, volunteer sign ups
  - Action Item: Seeking new programs who serve women (or overwhelmingly serve women) in need of volunteers
- Ruchika: women entrepreneurs panel. Doors at 6pm at General Assembly downtown
- Minutes approved

#### **Past Commissioner Panel**

**Michele Frix**

- **Maha Jahshan**
  - **Time on Women's Commission:** City Council immigration resolution was started by the SWC in 2013
  - **Working/Broader Engagement with Seattle Government:** Be a separate entity from Seattle government, but use them to get work done
  - Home in on what you want, ask questions, use voice to amplify issues
  - City government 101 – e.g. have someone from budget office to give budget 101
  - **Things left on the table after term ended:** how to do outreach with women who aren't usually at the table. How to create a space that is truly accessible for all women.
- **Olivia Robinson**
  - **Time on Women's Commission:** Homelessness Issues. Met with women at Mary's place and other places and discussed ways of helping with women experiencing homelessness
  - **Working/Broader Engagement with Seattle Government:** have Commissioners adopt a Council Member. See them 2x/year; build connections; go in with a brief agenda complete with asks. Follow up with them, before leaving meeting, ask "when's a good time for me to check back in?"
  - **Things left on the table after term ended:** more on homelessness. Be connected with people already working on issues in the community. Don't start things that other people are already doing!

- **Mercedes Elizalde**
  - **Time on Women's Commission:** Worked on full blown study on food access in Seattle with Council member O'Brien's office; started conversation around equitable development in Seattle in terms of people's access to all kinds of resources
  - Women's Commissioners have a lot of lived experiences to bring to City Council
  - **Working/Broader Engagement with Seattle Government:** have relationships with Council Member staff. "Taking a meeting with a staff member is not a step down from seeing the Council Member." Safer space to throw around ideas (e.g. if don't have solution/ask already)
  - Determine for Council Members: who wants to build something with you and who wants to get you over the finish line – figure this out by working with staff
  - "Play the Council and Executive branches like mom and dad" – if one says no, ask the other! They are separate entities.
  - **Things left on the table after term ended:** Building an outside base of people who should be stakeholders/invited to the table for certain issues
- **Abigail Echo-Hawk**
  - **Time on Women's Commission:** Led breast feeding legislation, came from the community, especially women of color told to cover up when breast feeding in public. SWC works best when community voice informs the work the SWC does.
  - Do not base measures on mayoral or city council expectations of what should be measured; base it on community needs
  - The commissioners who make the biggest impact are the women representing the community faithfully
  - **Working/Broader Engagement with Seattle Government:** build staff relationships. Be ready to build relationships and compromise. Always moving and changing, helped adapt to political movement at the time
  - Gender pay equity: Got City to commission study into gender pay equity study in Seattle. Discovered huge discrepancies
  - Have debriefs when people are leaving!
  - Wear your nametag! Hand out business cards! Deploy people using their strengths!
  - **Things left on the table after term ended:** Gender pay equity – but knew people were carrying it on. Got to participate as a community member. Can stay in contact with other ways; keep Commission work going even after no longer a Commissioner
  - Power, privilege, and racial identity in the Commission. Recognize what we have on the commission! How has privilege prevented certain people from being at this table or speaking at this table if they are here? CALL OUT PRIVILEGE!
  - How to ensure people that sit around this table truly represent the community?
  - Make it inclusive, elders need to be represented.
  - Run things by the ethics office!
  - Not the Mayor's Office, not the City Council
  - History of the SWC: started by Jeannette Williams in early 70's out of civil rights movement. Lack of women's voices in Seattle. 4 full time staff who worked with 18 Commissioners working through issues. Make sure to advocate for staff time!!!! Live up to this legacy!
- **Roslyn Kagy**
  - **Time on Women's Commission:** be in community spaces listening and representing stories and inviting women to speak at the Commission meetings
  - What spaces am I not in and whose voices am I not listening to?
  - Be visible as a Commissioner
  - Paid Sick and Safe Time campaign – longer win, very involved. Brought young people and undocumented folks into the campaign.
  - Ban the Box for employment and campaigns
  - "Poke holes in your own plans"

- **Working/Broader Engagement with Seattle Government:** figure out what your own capacity is and don't take on too much. Figure out what you can and can't do and be honest about it
- Identify a mentor for institutional knowledge transfer, growth
- How are committees keeping track of their progress?
- Coach members: especially members who aren't comfortable being in City Hall spaces – those are the people who should be in those spaces!
- Work with other city departments! Think bigger than Mayor and City Council.
- How to make space in City Departments: use staff liaisons! Have agenda! Here's my skill set, here's what I'm interested in, here's what I can offer you. Help them figure out how you can insert yourself. Also, show up to community events and community events and be visible as a Commissioner. Have chairs help move things forward. Have multiple levels of interaction. Don't just meet in formal space – helps keep Council Members aware of our presence; fosters accountability!
- **Things left on the table after term ended:** domestic violence
- How to assign Commissioners to Council Members: Commissioners picked them or were assigned by the Co-Chairs. Based on who people wanted to know, issues, or where there were vacancies. Use personal relationships that exist already as well.
- Any onboarding systems/SOP for knowledge transfer: quarterly orientation with history, what you can and can't do as a Commission (done by a former Commissioner) at SOCR office.
  - PPT available by Abigail Echo-Hawk!
  - Think about allowing Commissioners to join only at certain times when there can be support, including orientation so Commissioners can hit the ground running
  - Look at other boards and commissions – where can you leverage what other groups are doing and partner together (e.g. Human Rights Commission, Best Starts for Kids); look at structures and don't rebuild structures that already exist. Advance together!
- Committees needed. Organize around a work plan item/project; and idea isn't enough! Work happens outside of meetings. Need commission set up that allows you to work outside of meetings. How can committees facilitate work getting done outside of Commission meetings? Attend boards you have seats on! NEVER eliminate DV or sexual assault seats! Be flexible with how committees are organized. Can restructure at retreats as needed. Things that work well at sometimes won't work well at others. When asked to look into a topic by the Mayor or City Council – follow up! Build those relationships and cultivate that kind of behavior. Take time to get to know each other as Commissioners; know why we're each here.
- Use the City lobbyist! Put recommendations forward that they will represent!
  - Lobby for reproductive health services right now!

### **Updates from Policy Leads**

### **Policy Leads**

- PFL: Councilmember Gonzalez introduced plan to introduce plan for universal PFL! Includes tentatively all the things we want as a part of it; taxing structure is still in question and how this affects the people it benefits and small business employers. Will happen after decision about state wide legislation for paid family leave is made. Keep on City Council no matter what the state-wide decision is

### **Co-Chair Election Timeline**

### **Nicki Olivier Hellenkamp**

- Can have up to 4
- Nominations are for May – come ready to nominate!
- Must be on commission for at least 6 months and can't be a Get Engaged Commissioner
- Terms are for 1 year
- Current Co-Chairs happy to discuss with any interested parties!

### **Denim Day Update**

### **Idabelle Fosse & Michele Frix**

- April 26<sup>th</sup> is Denim Day!
- Proclamation for whole month of April!

- Began in 1999 in Italy, woman raped by driving instructor. Judge said since she was wearing tight jeans, she must have helped remove them and was therefore consensual. Became an event in LA in 2001. Proclamation done around it, some sort of campus events planned around it. Big concert in LA, speak-outs for sexual assault awareness.
- Idabelle has materials for campaign. Facebook banner, info sheets, statistics, ways of raising money and awareness around sexual assault
- Wear jeans and get workplaces involved in doing event
- Go online and register event happening that day with Lisa Herbold's office
- Create calendar for planning ahead for next year
- **Action Item:** participation (social media, come to events, share with your networks/communities)

### **Jeanette Williams Award**

**Jacquee Kurdas & Loida Erhard**

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- 4 nominations – need more!
  - **Deep, intentional outreach needed for people working for racial equity for women and girls**
  - Media attention very important
  - Action Items:
    - Continue asking for nominations
    - Need volunteers to plan event – likely in June
    - Jacquee to send out google drive folder
    - Michele to send out press release for nominations
    - Jacquee not available most of May, Loida available at the end of April
  - May 10<sup>th</sup> deadline

7:30 PM

**Adjourn**