



Community Involvement Commission (CIC) October Retreat 2025 Minutes

October 18, 2025

10:00 – 3:00 pm

Webex Meeting & El Centro de la Raza

Commissioners present: Julio Perez, Ahoua Kone, Heidi Morisset and Kamryn Yanchick

Potential Commissioners (Attending in Community Capacity):

Gabriel de los Angeles, Haley McColgan, Timothy Turner, Chelsea Affleck, Nada Ramadan, Elise Herwig, Olivia Barlow, and Negash Hassen

Co-chairs: Heidi Morisset

Commissioners not in attendance: Hunter Camfield and Rachelle Olden

City of Seattle Staff present: Staff Liaison Alvin Edwards

Public Comment: No public comment was received.

Transcriber's Note: The notes shown below are summaries of statements provided. They are not transcriptions and have been shortened and edited to include the major points raised. Full comments are retained in the files in the video recording and available upon request.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Staff Liaison Alvin Edwards called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and conducted roll call.

Quorum: Four Commissioners present - Julio Perez, Ahoua Kone, Heidi Morisset and Kamryn Yanchick

II. Approval of Previous Minutes (September 15, 2025)

September 15, 2025, Minutes: Approved unanimously.

III. Commissioner Confirmation Update

Presenter: Alvin Edwards, Staff Liaison

Edwards provided an overview of commissioner appointments and confirmations:

- All mayoral appointees have been approved; several district seats remain pending confirmation by City Council.
- Official confirmation for all pending commissioners is expected at the Libraries, Education, and Neighborhoods (LEN) Committee **December 11, 2025**.
- Commissioner terms generally begin in **May** and are renewed after a term (2 years).

Clarification: New commissioners may participate in discussions prior to Council confirmation but do not have voting power until officially appointed.

IV. Icebreaker and Team-Building Activity

Facilitator: Nada Ramadan

Nada led an interactive team-building session emphasizing collaboration, trust, and shared purpose. Commissioners shared personal insights to strengthen internal relationships and promote an inclusive working environment.

Outcome: Commissioners reaffirmed commitment to respectful dialogue and mutual support as guiding principles for the year.

V. CIC Onboarding and Review of Bylaws

Facilitators: Heidi Morisset and Ahoua Kone

Commissioner Morisset reviewed the Commission Handbook, Bylaws, and RCW establishing the CIC's purpose:

- To advise the Mayor, City Council, and City Departments on policies related to equitable civic engagement.
- Commissioners represent districts and perspectives but may not speak on behalf of the Commission unless formally delegated.
- The CIC functions in an advisory, not outreach, capacity.

Discussion Highlights:

- Commissioners discussed challenges balancing individual community roles with the Commission's advisory limitations.
- Commissioner comments emphasized that members' community identities strengthen, rather than conflict with, their advisory purpose.
- Commissioners agreed to revisit language in bylaws for clarity regarding community representation.

Action: Subcommittee to be assigned to review and clarify bylaws language concerning community representation in 2026.

VI. Commissioner Responsibilities & Expectations

Presenter: Heidi Morisset

Commissioner Morisset reviewed core expectations, including preparation, participation, and service on at least one subcommittee.

Key ethical principles discussed: respect, cooperation, and commitment to Commission decisions.

Action: Commissioners to review and acknowledge Code of Ethics and Bylaws prior to next meeting.

VII. Election of Officers (Preview)

Elections for Commission Chair and Co-Chairs will occur in **March 2026**, with nominations to open in **February 2026**.

Only confirmed commissioners are eligible to run or vote.

VIII. Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Overview

Guest Speaker: Director Jenifer Chao, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Director Chao shared her vision for a connected, equitable Seattle built on authentic community engagement.

She highlighted DON's current structure, staff capacity (approx. 60 employees), and \$18M operating budget.

Key Program Areas:

- Community Partnerships and Engagement
- Community Investments and Grants
- Historic Preservation and P-Patch Program
- Public Safety and Neighborhood Relations

Director Chao emphasized:

- Strengthening neighborhood activation and cross-cultural relationship-building.
- Supporting community-led safety and engagement initiatives.
- Deepening collaboration with the CIC to co-create engagement strategies.

Commissioner Dialogue:

- Commissioner Barlow raised concerns about barriers to community participation (e.g., time, mobility).
- Director Chao and Liaison Edwards noted ongoing partnerships with public libraries and community centers to increase accessibility.
- Chao encouraged leveraging existing community networks rather than creating new ones to avoid burnout.

Outcome: Director Chao committed to ongoing dialogue with CIC and potential joint community activation pilots in 2026.

IX. Norms and Values Discussion

Facilitators: Ahoua Kone and Alvin Edwards

Commissioner Kone revisited the Commission’s Group Values and Behavioral Norms, reaffirming principles of:

- Service, equity, and accountability
- Direct, honest communication
- Respect for differing viewpoints
- Professionalism in all Commission activities

Agreed Actions:

- Maintain open, respectful discussion standards.
 - Address interpersonal conflicts outside formal meeting time.
 - Schedule refresher training on **Robert’s Rules of Order** in early 2026.
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X. Ethics, Public Records, and Open Meetings Review

Presenters: Heidi Morisset and Alvin Edwards

The Commission reviewed the City of Seattle Code of Ethics and Open Public Meetings Act requirements:

- Commissioners must avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from political advocacy in their official capacity.
- All meetings are public and recorded.
- Written materials and “reply-all” emails are subject to public disclosure under state law.

Clarification: Commissioners may express personal political opinions but may not speak on behalf of the Commission regarding electoral matters or ballot measures.

Dissenting View (Recorded):

Commissioner Gabriel de los Angeles, expressed concern that limitations on political expression could constrain the Commission’s equity mission.

Staff Liaison Edwards agreed to consult the Ethics and Elections Commission for guidance and report back.

Action: Alvin Edwards to seek clarification from Ethics and Elections staff on permissible discussion boundaries for equity-related advocacy.

XI. Subcommittee Structure and Next Steps

1. Data Subcommittee

Summary:

- The group agreed to first develop an understanding of the **historical context** of the Commission and the **Department of Neighborhoods (DON)** before defining new goals.
- Plan to conduct a **data-gathering exercise** to analyze progress made by DON over the past six years.
- A **“show and tell” session** is planned for next week to share findings and insights.
- The purpose is to identify what’s working, what’s not, and to better inform goal setting.

Action Items:

1. **Data Gathering:** Each member to research DON progress reports, programs, and performance from the past six years.
2. **Report Compilation:** Alvin to provide existing **literature and success summaries** from DON reports used to brief the City.
3. **Financial Review:** Collect **budget, expenditure, and P&L** data related to DON activities where available.
4. **Success Metrics:** Identify how DON reports and measures its **successes**, particularly in relation to **equity outcomes**.
5. **Next Meeting:** Share findings in a “show and tell” format for group analysis and goal development.

2. Events and Engagement Subcommittee

Summary:

- Decided not to host new large-scale events due to resource limitations.

- Instead, will focus on **participating in existing community events, resource fairs, and district-level meetings.**
- Discussed developing and sharing **community resource materials** to guide residents to appropriate support and information.
- Agreed to explore what **resources are already available online** (e.g., DON website) to avoid duplication.

Action Items:

1. **Event Participation Plan:** Identify and schedule upcoming resource fairs and community meetings to attend.
2. **Resource Materials:** Develop or compile informational handouts that outline community resources and commission roles.
3. **Website Review:** Audit DON's online resources to identify materials that can be shared at events.
4. **Outreach Coordination:** Ensure consistent branding and messaging when representing the Commission at external events.

3. Communications Subcommittee

Summary:

- Group includes newer commissioners; initial meeting was used to brainstorm ideas and understand the **subcommittee's original purpose.**
- Received helpful background on why this subcommittee was formed and its **focus on external communications.**
- Priorities include:
 - Creating a **newsletter** or similar platform to increase community awareness.
 - **Inviting community participation** and feedback.
 - **Collaborating** with other subcommittees to share research findings and promote initiatives.
- Emphasis on defining the **purpose and structure** of the subcommittee in the next meeting.

Action Items:

1. **Purpose Definition:** Finalize the mission, goals, and deliverables for the Communications subcommittee.
2. **Newsletter Development:** Begin outlining a strategy for regular community updates (frequency, format, content leads).
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Identify stakeholders and partners to get involved in communication and outreach efforts.
4. **Collaboration Plan:** Work with Data and Engagement subcommittees to share insights and amplify outreach.
5. **Next Meeting:** Present draft of subcommittee structure and communication strategy for feedback.

XII. Adjournment

The retreat concluded at 3:05 PM with closing remarks by Staff Liaison Edwards.