



City of Seattle



Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2022 | 6:30 – 8:30 p.m

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Commissioners Present: Victor Loo, Andrew Ashiofu, Steven Pray, Brett Pepowski, Jessi Murray, Nate Higby

Commissioners Absent: Raja Fouad

SOCR Staff: Janet Stafford, Meredith Stone, Kyana Wheeler

Guests: Lillian Williamson (Get Engaged Commissioner – pending appointment), Alex Tang (Human Rights Commission), Winter Cashman, Byram Simpson

Meeting Minutes recorded by: Brett Pepowski

Next meeting minute taker: Raja Fouad

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions were done, including guests Winter Cashman and Byram Simpson (former Commissioner) to give public comment, and Alex Tang from the Human Rights Commission.

Public Open Comment

Byram and Winter came to comment on anti-trans legislation in Washington and elsewhere.

They described a bill being in WA committee, House Bill 1556, which would require birth certificates for students to participate in sex-segregated activities.

Byram and Winter are looking for a statement of support for LGBTQ youth in WA and elsewhere. There are seven WA schools planning a walkout on April 1. Not sure which schools. There will also be an action day involving multiple organizations across the US, perhaps April 9.

It was pointed out that the legislative session for Washington has ended, so this bill must have been tabled, and these bills don't usually pass in WA. However, we as a Commission can still communicate that these bills are a problem here in WA (they are usually seen as something that only happens in other states). We can also individually volunteer to help with event(s).

Winter shared a form: <https://forms.gle/tpX3PeGRUdnizJan6>

And will share more information with us so we can learn about these action days.

Andrew supports a statement of support. Victor started a motion for this, which **passed**.

Nate will take the lead on crafting a statement.

Approve Minutes and Agenda

- February minutes: added that we approved winter retreat notes. **Passed with unanimous consent**
- March minutes: no amendments made. **Passed with unanimous consent.**

Welcome Alex Tang from Seattle Human Rights Commission

Alex Tang will attend our meeting monthly because the Human Rights Commission intends to collaborate across commissions.

Alex is elated to be here and expects to be here every month.

Update on Recruitment - Victor

Steven, Janet, Victor, and Brett interviewed six candidates total and will recommend five of them (more information to come out in an email to the rest of the commission). Note that there was an ad hoc committee for recruitment that consisted of Steven, Victor, Brett, Nate, Andrew, Jessi, and Raja.

We are receiving additional applications, but we want to move forward with the five and will have another round of interviews in the spring.

Some adjustments may be made to the process, like asking commissioners to attend commission meetings.

There is one open commission-nominated seat, so we'll fill that with one recent interviewee and put the rest in city council seats to get commissioners confirmed.

Committee Report Outs:

POC Committee: Raja not present so we skipped the update.

CommOps: Steven requests help for figuring out what this committee does. Andrew and Janet offered to help.

Community Outreach and social media: discussed tabling at pride/marching in pride parade and what we should do about flag raising ceremony. Brett mentioned a community member who came to the committee meeting and said the disabled attendees enjoyed the online pride the community member's group had co-sponsored last year. The commission should consider supporting/attending an online pride event.

Tabling/marching – Brett asked what amount of time people could dedicate to tabling or marching at pride events. Lillian “really likes to table” and Andrew could do “some.” Janet reports SOCR has previously marched with other departments but will see what plans are for 2022.

Flag raising – Brett summarized CommOut meeting discussion on Monday, which is that we declined to support the flag raising ceremony right after/during Durkan using tear gas on protesters. The Harrell administration is sweeping people, so should we do flag raising or is that condoning the sweeps?

Victor: he doesn't support sweeping, which disproportionately affects BIPOC and/or queer people.

Nate: explained that everyone at the CommOut meeting felt conflicted about this.

Steven: We should Connect with Monisha Harrell, the deputy Mayor, and use this as a chance to educate the mayor's office.

Andrew: Considering Monisha supports LGBTQ rights at a state level, he finds this administration's acts shocking. Can we create a relationship with the administration without compromising our values? There's still time to meet with this admin. What have they done to support our community beyond putting up rainbow flags. We need to create a connection with them or hold them to our values.

Steven: What if people start sweeping while wearing rainbow pins? Not good.

Lillian: Supports what Andrew and Steven said. Doesn't want sweeps to be gay washed.

Jessi: We have declined to do flag raising after Durkan-tear gas and Ed Murray – sexual abuse of minors. The commission received pushback in both cases, since both mayors were gay. It is good to discuss where to draw the line of what behaviors would cause us to stop flag raising.

Steven: When people are swept, where are they referred, do they get referred to shelters, what are the alternatives and do those alternatives meet community needs?

Jessi: We should keep pushing on this issue. One person we pushed on while Durkan was in office is still in the same position. Let's keep pushing on why we're moving people around.

Brett: We're burned out from Durkan not listening. This is a new admin so we're figuring out how much education(/grace?) to give.

Jessie: A lot of the admin is the same as Durkan's admin, though

Victor: We want to discuss our work plan and pride flag raising with the mayor, so let's tell them that and see if they show up. If they don't show up to our meeting, that gives us a lot of info.

Jessi: Let's mention the work plan but don't frame it as about the flag raising.

Steven: agrees with Victor.

Janet: will reach out and let Brett/other commissioners know how the scheduling works.

SOCR Report (Janet)

Derek Wheeler-Smith will join the April Commission meeting. Can we give him 45 minutes (or whatever time we can) and provide 1-2 questions beforehand, asking what we want to hear from him? Or we can share the commission's goals and expectations.

There's a way to see Derek presenting OCR's work plan to City Council at:

<https://www.seattlechannel.org/videos?videoid=x135834>

and more about Derrick's bio at: <https://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/about/meet-the-director>

Meredith: Remember you'll have limited time with Derek after intro. Look at these links beforehand.

Kyana: Wants Derek to hear some of the things we've said and think about how Derek can share that information upward. Talk will occur over Teams, and Kyana will send out a manual so we can learn how to use teams but Kyana can also be available to help. There will be an invite and we'll need to respond. There will also be a page we can populate, coming out next week. Remember we have power beyond inviting people to a meeting!

Janet: Try asking deeper dive questions. Email her or Victor or Andrew if any of those questions come up. OCR has also requested a meeting with City Council to share work plans. We'll have a chance to make a slide on this and present it to council with the other OCR commission. She will follow up as soon as we get a confirmation date.

Andrew: Will this be like the retreats we've had?

Janet: Good question. The last retreat focused on the committee work structure and recruitment. This meeting would be to highlight the current commission work plan. Has checked in with a couple of us to track it down.

Andrew: He probably has access and will try to share it.

Janet: Keep in mind the commission still has \$2000 in the budget this year.

Co-chair update

Andrew: Last week, the Co-Chairs were approached by Fox News to ask about Florida's Don't Say Gay or Trans Bill. The article/news segment was against this bill. Andrew talked to them on behalf of the commission.

Announcements, Reminders, & Roll Call

Victor closed off the meeting