



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

CHLOE EUDALY, COMMISSIONER

Suk Rhee, Bureau Director
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 110
Portland, Oregon 97204

Promoting a culture of civic engagement

New Portlanders Policy Commission (NPPC) Meeting Minutes

May 22, 2018

City of Portland Lovejoy Room
1221 SW 4th Ave.
Portland, Oregon 97204

Commission Co-Chairs: Maria Garcia, and Sho Dozono

Commission Secretary: Raju Subedi

Commissioners Present:

Rania Ayoub
Abdikadir Bashir
Dr. Rick Birkel
Dr. Baher Butti
Jamal Dar
Djimet Dogo
Maria Garcia
Yonas Kassie
Ping Khaw
SB Langh
Octaviano Merecias-Cuevas
Musse Olol
Natalya Sobolevskaya
Wajdi Said
June Schumann

Excused:

Lee Po Cha
Victoria Cross
Anne Downing
Sho Dozono
Rev. Joe Enlet
Kolini Fusitu'a
Evelyn Liu
Sanja Muranovic
Sara Jayanthi Raman
Rev. Raju Subedi

Absent:

Quorum met

Also present:

Suk Rhee, ONI Bureau Director
Dianne Riley, CNIC Program Coordinator
Linda Castillo, New Portlanders Program Coordinator
Kara Carmosino, Community Service Aid
Winta Yohannes, Associate Policy Advisor, Office of Commissioner Eudaly

Call to order, roll call, review and approval of minutes and agenda

Co-chair Maria Garcia called the meeting to order at 5:52 PM. She noted that fellow Co-chair Sho Dozono is in Japan so she will be the only co-chair present. The Commission reviewed the agenda with no changes.

VOTE: Commissioner Said moved to approve the minutes from the April 17, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Dar seconded the motion.

- In support: Rania Ayoub, Abdikadir Bashir, Dr. Rick Birkel, Dr. Baher Butti, Jamal Dar, Djimet Dogo, Maria Garcia, Yonas Kassie, Ping Khaw, SB Langh, Octaviano Merecias-Cuevas, Musse Olol, Natalya Sobolevskaya, Wajdi Said, June Schumann
- Abstentions: None
- Opposition: None

The minutes were approved. Commissioner Butti asked about the mention in the minutes of bylaws and asked if that means they exist. Dianne explained that bylaws do not yet exist and would be discussed later.

Grounding

Co-chair Garcia noted the Commissioners' appreciation for earlier efforts to have a grounding moment at the beginning of the meeting and laid out the intention to do so during meetings going forward. Commissioner Said agreed to lead opening reflections for this first time and shared words from Gibran Khalil Gibran. Co-chair Garcia invited other Commissioners to volunteer for future meeting openings.

Community Comments or Public Testimony

Co-chair Garcia called for public comment. No public comments were given. Commissioners discussed if space for public comment meant members of the public would be present at future meetings. Co-chair Garcia noted that meetings are always been public and Commissioners can invite guests to come listen.

Committee Updates

Co-chair Garcia invited the co-chairs of each committee to share an update.

Education and Advocacy Committee:

Commissioner Schumann shared that the merged Education and Advocacy Committee and the Community Integrity Committee agreed to call themselves the Education and Advocacy Committee, as the values and goals of the two committees coincided with ideas around internal and external education and remaining grounded in the truths of Commissioners' various communities. Advocacy represents the portion of work about communicating and educating outward.

Commissioner Schumann agreed to chair the committee on an interim basis. She had committed to a 1 year term and stated that, when her term ends, someone else in the group will be prepared to step up as chair. The plan is for everyone to take a turn. The goals of the two committees will be merging. The committee will meet for an hour before full Commission meetings to get organized.

Equity, Engagement and Entrepreneurship Committee:

In the absence of both Co-chair Fusitu'a and Co-chair Liu, Commissioner Birkel shared updates with the support of other Commissioners. He noted that the meeting was focused on planning for a meeting scheduled for the following week with Portland Housing Bureau Interim Director Shannon Callahan. The committee brainstormed questions they would like to discuss on the housing bond decision-making and processes, and entrepreneurship, savings and rent-to-own programs.

Commissioner Kassie asked the Education and Advocacy Committee how they plan to connect the concerns of communities to the work of the Commission and the City. Dianne clarified that the Education and Advocacy Committee is just getting started, and that once both committees have their foundations laid, they will be able to move forward.

Commissioner Butti raised the potential role confusion between both committees. Commissioners discussed the similarity between committees' focus, as well as the possibility that the goals of the Equity, Engagement and Entrepreneurship Committee could become outsized compared to the smaller section of work falling under the Education and Advocacy Committee's scope. Commissioners also noted the concern that, without coordination, each committee could both engage the same bodies and duplicate conversations.

Commissioners noted that both committees may address similar topics, but may cut at them differently, and complement one another. Each group established goals and objectives, so now the full Commission needs to review them to ensure everyone is on the same page. The committees can then take their own initiative to move the work, and keep the Commission updated to ensure everyone will have input.

Commission Business

Co-Chair Elections:

Co-chair Garcia reminded the group that at the last meeting, Commissioner Enlet stepped down as co-chair. As a result, two candidates were nominated: Commissioner Dar and Commissioner Butti.

Commissioner Birkel raised the question of whether a third co-chair was needed. Commissioners talked about the current model of co-chairs and recalled that the decision to have three co-chairs came out of a close vote, not a deliberate decision to always have three. The Commissioners discussed possible challenges of coordinating between three co-chairs, as well as the benefits of having a diversity of leadership styles, more communities represented, and more leaders available to support one another. Co-chair Garcia noted the time commitment of serving as a co-chair and reminded the group that anyone nominated should be able to commit to that schedule.

Commissioner Said noted that it inspires community members to see one of their own in leadership, so it is important to have a co-chair who represents newer immigrants and refugees. Commissioner Birkel also observed that both current co-chairs serve on the Equity, Engagement and Entrepreneurship Committee, so a third co-chair is an opportunity to ensure representation from the other committee. Ultimately, no Commissioner challenged the decision to move forward with a third co-chair election.

Co-chair Garcia asked for any other nominations for the position of co-chair. Commissioner Merencias-Cuevas nominated Commissioner Schumann. Commissioner Schumann declined the nomination.

VOTE: Commissioners voted for a third co-chair by paper ballot. Commissioner Butti was elected.

- Votes for Commissioner Butti: Maria Garcia, SB Langh, Octaviano Merencias-Cuevas, Musse Olol, June Schumann, Natalya Sobolevskaya
- Votes for Commissioner Dar: Rania Ayoub, Abdikadir Bashir, Djimet Dogo, Yonas Kassie, Ping Khaw
- Write-In vote for Commissioner Schumann: Dr. Baher Butti
- Abstentions: Dr. Rick Birkel, Jamal Dar, Wajdi Said

Bylaws:

Dianne reminded the Commission that currently the City of Portland is implementing a resolution to get all boards, commissions and advisory groups into processes that comply with state and local laws. To that point, while the NPPC has a charter, bylaws still need to be established.

Currently, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement is piloting the City of Portland's efforts to make the necessary changes, through the summer. Staff are working on templates, which includes a bylaws template, that the NPPC can work on and adapt for this Commission. Dianne asked for possible volunteers from the NPPC who would be willing to work on that effort.

Commissioner Langh asked if the Executive Committee could serve that purpose. Commissioners suggested that the Executive Committee's work on bylaws should include Commissioner Schumann, Commissioner Fusitu'a and Commissioner Liu as co-chairs of their respective committees. The current NPPC co-chairs and secretary will discuss whether they are able to take on the bylaws and decide about inviting the committee co-chairs to participate.

Co-chair Garcia reminded the group that the NPPC now meets every fourth Tuesday from 4:30 to 7:30 PM, at City Hall. The next meeting is Thursday, June 26, 2018 in the Rose Room.

City Council's Welcoming/Inclusive/Sanctuary City Task Force updates

Co-chair Garcia noted that a meeting to report back on the outcomes of the Welcoming/Inclusive/Sanctuary City Task Force's work took place two weeks prior. Dianne shared those updates, including a handout that outlined the process of the task force's formation and work, as well as the role of each decision-making body. As the task force concluded its limited-term charge, it completed a report determining the need for (a) an office and (b) a universal defense fund. The work was then taken up by City Council, who was moved by community testimony on the urgency and importance of this investment.

Winta added the context that Oregon Ready is a coalition of immigrant legal service providers as well as community-based service organizations. As outlined in the diagram, this coalition came together through the fall around the idea of universal defense and did site visits and research to figure out a potential model to deliver this service. Because they had done extensive work researching and developing that model, they were invited to provide information on it to City Council, and ultimately City Council decided to support it. The proposal is a framework made up of attorneys, paralegal support, and community navigators, and does not name specific organizations to be funded. If the funds are approved, the coalition will continue to work as a coalition to figure out the process to select and fund community organizations. Commissioners from the NPPC can be involved in the coalition, including that process, as community members, but not in their official roles as NPPC Commissioners, as the City of Portland cannot be involved in implementation so as not to endanger vulnerable community members' identities and information.

Commissioner Said asked why the process cannot simply fund existing legal vehicles of the Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR) Immigration Legal Services, Catholic Charities and Lutheran Family Services. Winta and Commissioner Birkel clarified that Catholic Charities and SOAR have been a part of the Oregon Ready effort to develop the model described, as well as the providers Metropolitan Public Defenders, AYLA and IRCO. Commissioner Said requested that these groups attend the next NPPC meeting to brief the Commission and provide clarity that they support this model, over direct funding to enhance their existing efforts.

Commissioner Birkel noted that the money has not yet been approved, nor has it been awarded. He explained that some funding needs to go to capacity building, and that, as this is one-time funding, it can only support cases that will have an immediate hearing in the next 12 months.

Commissioner Sobolevskaya asked for clarification on the sources for this funding, as other items are not included in the budget, such as the East Portland Action Plan's requests for money for childcare and translation. Suk explained that it is a good revenue year so there are one-time dollars available, but some long-term, ongoing funds are being cut as ongoing costs are outstripping revenue. General, ongoing revenue funds and one-time funds are looked at differently, and in this instance, City Council was persuaded by community testimony and made the decision to invest one-time funding here. Suk also noted that part of the accommodations request was funded through the Office of Equity and Human Rights. Dianne added that ONI has a commitment to ensuring translation is part of ongoing operations.

Commissioners discussed the application process for the potential funding, clarifying that Oregon Ready is deciding on a fiscal sponsor and the City will then give the entire \$500,000 to that fiscal sponsor, to be allocated through an application process the coalition will create. Catholic Charities has signified they are willing to serve as a fiscal sponsor if the Oregon Ready coalition decides they are the best option. Commissioners confirmed that any organization providing legal services will be able to apply.

Commissioner Olol and Commissioner Merencias-Cuevas reflected that the City's investment is a generous investment that can have a significant impact on communities currently facing deportation if approved, and it is an opportunity to say with a unified voice that communities support this funding priority. Because of the investment, communities will want to know how the funding was used, and so those questions on who will be involved and who will benefit are important.

Commissioner Kassie asked for clarification on the model as there is already work happening to assist refugee communities fill out applications for green cards. Commissioner Birkel explained that the money is specifically held for universal deportation defense, knowing that clients' chances of getting relief for their claims of asylum or getting any ability to stay are 15 times better with an attorney. The funding will be spent on experienced, established immigration attorneys representing clients before judges.

Commissioners asked about oversight for these decisions, including which organizations and attorneys are involved to monitor conflicts of interest. Winta clarified that these questions need to be directed to Oregon Ready at this point, as City staff will purposely not be involved in implementation. Commissioners clarified that the NPPC cannot and does not have any authority over the Oregon Ready coalition, though the NPPC can invite any group to be a guest and answer questions. Commissioner Schumann raised the possibility of a Q&A session or a periodic review of the process, and the role of the NPPC in providing oversight on City Council's decision-making.

Adjourn

Before closing, Commissioner Dogo shared an update on Iraqi refugees in Ontario, Oregon, located in a very isolated, conservative area, and his efforts to support the opening of a refugee welcoming center and connect them to Oregon DHS. He noted that Commissioners could potentially assist by making food boxes to be delivered to them, as they have to drive to Boise for halal food, and continuing to be aware of and advocate for the needs of these communities.

The meeting was adjourned by co-chair Garcia at 7:39 PM.