**Board Meeting Minutes**

Saturday, June 25, 2022 | 10:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Whatcom County

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

Quorum reached at 9:58 AM. The meeting was called to order by Chair Nguyen at 10:01 AM.

*Present:* Chair Nam Nguyen, 2nd Vice Chair Carrie Huie-Pascua, Cmmr. Julio Diaz, Cmmr. Ekkarath Sisavatdy, Cmmr. Ping Ping, Cmmr. Chongsun Abbott, Cmmr. Toka Valu, Cmmr. Sam Cho, and Cmmr. Satpal Singh Sidhu

*Absent:* Cmmr. Faitalia (excused), Cmmr. Uppala (excused), Cmmr. Kosai (excused)

*Staff present:* Executive Director Toshiko Grace Hasegawa, Project Manager K’gnausa Yodkerepauprai

*Staff absent:* Project Coordinator Brenda O’Brien

1. **Welcome**

Welcoming remarks were made by Cmmr. Satpal Sidhu, the first immigrant elected as Whatcom County’s Executive and to its County Council. Bellingham was historically a lumber and fish canning town with the largest mills in the United States. The unincorporated areas of Whatcom County are inhabited by both Canadians and Americans. During the border shut down, this area was largely affected, as a result.

Bellingham was also considered a KKK town during the early 50’s through late 60’s. Western Washington University’s current president is the first president from Pakistan. The county has the densest population of Native Hawaiians/Asians. Presently, there are 7-10k Indians in Whatcom County, compared to the 10 east Indian families when Cmmr. Sidhu first arrived. Traditionally, it has been hard to reach ANHPI communities in the area. Having our meeting here today is very significant.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve: Cmmr. Cho

Seconded by: Cmmr. Sisavatdy

*Motion carried unanimously.*

1. **Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve: Cmmr. Sidhu

Seconded by: Cmmr. Diaz

*Motion carried unanimously.*

1. **Sponsorship Requests**

Motion to approve sponsorship in the amount of $500 for an event by Fil-Am Yakima Valley was made by Ping.

Seconded by: Cmmr. Diaz

Discussion: This is a wonderful way for communities to understand Commission work! ***ACTION: Staff should look into Commerce related grants to do community engagement work.***

*Motion carried unanimously.*

Motion to approve sponsorship in the amount of $500 for an event by Mukai Farms was made by Cmmr. Cho.

Seconded by: Cmmr. Abbott

*Motion carried unanimously.*

1. **Public Comment**

There were no requests for public comment for this meeting.

1. **Commissioner Roundtable Updates**

Cmmr. Valu: Three to four hundred homes were destroyed in Tonga due to the volcano eruptions. There is a rebuild going on. Shipping prices are very high because of fuel costs, and so goods are no longer being imported to Tonga. There are still significant health issues in the COFA community. Strong partnerships have been formed with King County, and they’re conducting checks for diabetes and asthma. There is movement to create clinics for Tongan & Marshallese communities in South King County.

Cmmr. Sisavatdy: In April, many New Years holidays and celebrations occurred in Seattle, with a first-ever proclamation from Governor Inslee. A huge lesson learned from the pandemic is that communities are stepping up and actively working with government. Cmmr. Sisavatdy works with United

Communities of Laos as well as Khmer Community of King County. Disaggregated data for Asian communities still doesn’t exist. He also represented CAPAA at the Laos Festival in Woodland, WA with 3,000-4,000 Laotian community members in attendance. He wa able to secure hundreds of Covid test kits for distribution.

Cmmr. Sidhu: Whatcom County experienced many floods in November – the worst in county history –

that was devastating to the community. The only way to rescue people was by boat. The floods significantly affected BIPOC and those of low income, and there are still 30 families in motels waiting for homes to be rebuilt. He and Commissioner Uppala visited Fil-Am Seattle Community Center, and next week will visit El Centro de la Raza, hoping to build something similar for the Sikh community. They already have four acres in land, and will be in conversation with Commerce. They received $44 million in American Rescue Plan Funds. They are investing $15 million dollars into childcare and $16 million into low-income housing. He also plans to launch in 2023 an ethnic food festival in the city and county plaza, providing free tents and space to ethnic communities to cook for six hours, and food will be free to anyone who comes.

Cmmr. Ping: Kiana McKenna & Shomya Tripathy wrote an article in Spokane’s “Spokesman Review” entitled “[Why We Must Dismantle API](https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2022/may/22/kiana-mckenna-and-shomya-tripathy-why-we-must-dism/).” NHPI’s being recognized separately is an equity issue, which is an issue that exists within the Asian category as well. APIC Spokane Chapter is moving towards acknowledging that they only serve Asian communities, not NHPI’s. Some advocates want to see Chinese American History Month pass through state legislation. ANHPI Heritage Day took place May 14th in Riverbank Park. Twelve to fifteen thousand people came. Organized by “United We Stand”, which was she co-founded in 2020 in the rise of anti-Asian hate, it required people to sign a pledge agreeing to oppose racism and to embrace anti-oppression. One hundred fifty organizations signed. Senior members of the Asian community in Spokane are concerned about antagonism and lack of solidarity among Asian communities. Cmmr. Ping would like this discussed by CAPAA, if this is happening in other parts of the state. Chinese immigrants facing language barriers want free training on how to pass the citizenship exam.

Cmmr. Huie-Pascua: Will soon move to King County as she will be a grandmother! Spokane’s largest minority is latinx at about 50% of the overall population. There has been a significant increase in the population. The Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander population is larger than Asian population. Fil-Am Yakima senior lunches have been maintained. It used a Commerce grant to make building improvements to amplify Filipino community presence, through a performance stage and other cultural elements. The Sukiyaki dinner fundraiser has not occurred, but perhaps will take place later in 2022. Despite some negative health repercussions of Covid-19, community has really held together and maintained cultural values and importance of keeping traditions and activities alive, even if they’re not more internal. As board member for NAMI-WA, there has been a focus on DEI training for the board itself. This is really important because the state board is predominately white, so this is a step in the right direction.

Cmmr. Diaz: Took on the role of trusted messenger in multiple zooms in providing input to state agencies: 1) Human Transportation Plan Update- Listened for areas where they did not incorporate youth, elderly, disabled, especially in high density areas like King, Thurston, and Whatcom Counties. Ensured they took into consideration the lack of understanding or communication of services provided. One thing that came out is they want to consider an uber-learning process for the elderly so they can more easily get around. 2) Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition, hosted by Commerce, discussed how loans are distributed to local governments to support housing providers. Commerce examined what happened in the past and what they can do better. Ideas on how to use money to revitalize buildings and reduce barriers to construction were also discussed. There was a noticeable lack of ANHPI representation, including developers. 3) Connected with WA Small Biz Development Center, a consortium out of WSU, which is very similar to the Small Business Resiliency Program at the Dept. of Commerce. The emphasis is in sustaining growth post-covid, letting them connect to support services that are there.

Connecting, showcasing, and providing information was Cmmr. Diaz’s goal this quarter, and he’ll continue to emphasize that while connecting with state partners, especially those with money to disperse. Another highlight was connecting a guy who wanted to take his hot sauce to market. His product is in the process of being bottled and he’s working with consultants.

Cmmr. Cho: Last meeting he mentioned that KAC-WA would be hosting a big event on October 22-23rd at Bell Harbor Conference Center with KAC chapters in Oregon , Hawaii, Dallas, LA, and others. All are welcome to come. CAPAA can expect a sponsorship request very soon! He has also been speaking with new US Small Business Administration Director Mike Fong to create a diaspora event with Coupon, which is like Korea’s Amazon. It would be a way for the US to list Korean products and vice versa! Tentative date for that diaspora event is sometime in September.

Cmmr. Abbott: Many hours have been spent preparing for the Korean Women’s Association 50th Anniversary Celebration occurring October 22nd. They will also be asking for sponsorship from CAPAA!

Tickets are $150/person and CAPAA is invited to purchase a table. They are writing a 400-page book reflecting on their 50 years of service. They are trying to determine how they are doing before the grant, so people understand their capacity. Retirement and assisted living homes need to be built, as elders need a place to stay that is culturally specific with appropriate foods, and with staff that speak Korean. Their scholarship program also has seven to nine scholarships available to community members. U.S. Senator Patty Murray & Congressman Kilmer helped with funds for housing, including 87 units in Tacoma, to try to reduce the homeless population, and house those with mental illness into safe places. The Lakewood Multicultural Coalition will have its meet & greet next week on Thursday, and they’re planning multicultural celebrations to create unity among communities. Pierce County is growing each year and has grown 18% since 2010. Only 6.45% are Asian but they are heavily located in Tacoma area.

Cmmr. Nguyen: APIC-SPS is seeking to build a community center and received a grant by a foundation, in an effort led by Lin Crowley. Khurshida Begum bought a facility and wants to opening a catering center. ANHPI state employees officially formed an ANHPI Employee Business Resource Group, that will have a strong launch at the Capitol in September, and CAPAA will attend.

1. **Lunch**

Recessed for lunch at 11:15 a.m.

Meeting was re-called to order at 11:40 AM.

1. **Staff Report**

ED Hasegawa gave a verbal overview of the Staff Report, which is available online on CAPAA’s website.

1. **Labor & Industries LEP Community Relations**

L&I Community Relations Specialist Carmen Rivera shared that there is an anonymous way to report bad working conditions/safety violations. If someone reports, they are protected if the employer lashes out. Examples: agricultural workers, they partner with clinics that go to the house facilities. They understand their health and go visit the housing on the farms. Many H2A workers, inform them they have the same rights as Washington workers. Punjabi language speakers need more access to resources for employers.

1. **Video Presentation**

Cmmr. Sidhu shared a video presentation on the experience of Sikhs in Whatcom County.

1. **Good of the Order**

Cmmr. Abbott offered the new headquarters building for KWA as a future meeting location, when our Public Board meeting is held in Pierce County again.

Cmmrs. Abbott and Cho mentioned that Korean Independence Day is always celebrated 6/25 in Olympia, WA so we should be mindful to do June board meetings on a different Saturday of month.

The 2nd Seattle Educational Summit will occur, but they need a space to hold it. They issued a survey to understand impacts of Asian hate and the pandemic.

Cmmr. Ping spoke about Asians for Equality and negative sentiment they have towards a house

member.

ED Hasegawa recognizes Pride Month, and the stigma in the communities about same sex relationships and non-binary identifying people. We have included a LGBTQIA+ tab on our website.

1. **Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM.