**Board Meeting Minutes**

Saturday, January 11, 2025 | 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Zoom Conference Call

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

Quorum reached at 9:59 AM. The meeting was called to order by 1st Vice Chair Uppala at 10:05 AM.

*Present:* Chair Lydia Faitalia,1st Vice Chair Lalita Uppala, 2nd Vice Chair Kendall Kosai, Cmmr. Carrie Huie, Cmmr. Scott Lehrman, Cmmr. Ekkarath Sisavatdy, Cmmr. Kiana McKenna, Cmmr. Sam Cho, Cmmr. Anna Lising, and Cmmr. David Phongsa

*Absent:*  Cmmr. Ping Ping

*Staff:* Executive Director Nam Nguyen, Project Manager Negheen Kamkar, and Project Coordinator Brenda O’Brien

**II. Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve: Cmmr. Sisavatdy

Seconded by: Cmmr. Huie

*No abstentions or objections. Motion carried unanimously.*

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve: Cmmr. Lehrman

Seconded by: Cmmr. Kosai

*No abstentions or objections. Motion carried unanimously.*

**IV. Staff Report**

**ED Nguyen** gave a verbal overview of the Staff Report at 10:11 AM. Full report can be accessed below.



**V. Legislative Update**

**PM Kamkar** provided a legislative update to the Commission. Full report can be accessed in the Staff Report above. After the report, Cmmr. Sisavatdy made a motion to support [SB 6314](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=6314&Year=2023&Initiative=false). The motion was seconded by 1st VC Uppala. *No abstentions or objections. Motion carried unanimously*.

**VI. Ethnic Commissions Roundtable**

**ED’s Ed Prince (CAAA),** **Maria Siguenza (CHA),** and **Nam Nguyen (CAPAA)** provided updates on what their respective agencies are working on, are concerned about, and their thoughts on the trend moving away from DEI.

**ED Prince:** We, like the other ethnic commissions, have been working on the Opportunity Gap Studies with the EOGOAC. We are also preparing our commissioners for the upcoming Legislative Session. CAAA is somewhat lucky in that we have the Legislative Black Caucus comprising of 13 members now. Most of my time since the elections has been talking with the Caucus to determine priorities that we can align with them on.

Current concerns amongst our community include the upcoming transition to the new government, which is two-fold. One is the impact on economics and the other is if law enforcement will revert to what it was pre-George Floyd. We are also looking to see if there is an opportunity for studies to be conducted around reparations.

It is disheartening to have the meaning and intent of DEI be taken over by the right, as well as the concept of being woke. Since Trump was re-elected, there seems to be an over correction on these concepts, so that corporations are pulling away from it to avoid being targeted. Protecting employees of color should be prioritized over concerns of being targeted.

**ED Siguenza:** CHA was granted funding to develop a community development team. It is a staff of four that is specifically embedded in Eastern Washington. They have been working with community orginizations locally to understand the different populations that exist across Washington. To help collect this anecdotal data, we have utilized surveying, outreach, and asset mapping.

Two other projects we have been engaged in are the studies with EOGOAC, contracted through WSU, and partnering with the Department of Ecology to draft a funding request to the EPA in regards to the [Safer Choice](https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice) program. The questions we hope to determine answers for is two-fold. Number one, how do we engage the Latino community to know what the safer choice products are and why they are important, and number two, what the studies reveal about how to develop policies that make switching to these products more feasible.

In the Skagit Valley, we have been partnering with folks on gang prevention work. Lastly, because of the current political climate we have been working on employing our rapid response network to be able to use after January 20h. Current concerns amongst our community members include the transition to the new federal administration and increase in mental health issues since the pandemic.

In regards to DEI, we may be at another nexus point where we consider renaming these efforts we have been working on. The thing I keep coming back to is that the Civil Rights Act still exists, and we will continue to focus on access being number one. Access to language or physical access are rights that people have. Regardless of ebbs and flows, our commissions have been here doing this equity work for 50 years.

**ED Nguyen** finds the current trends troubling. I see a lot of corporations giving in to the political trends of the country, but I think it is only temporary. Those who are continuing to engage in DEI work are renaming those efforts to try to prevent the knee jerk responses to current terms.

**VII. Community Reinvestment Plan Q & A**

**Korbett Mosesly**, Managing Director at the Department of Commerce, and **Dave Pringle** also from Commerce provided an update on the Community Reinvestment Plan. Full presentation can be accessed below.



**Cmmr. Uppala** hoped that there is a shift recognizing that the distribution data on the workforce reinvestment should include a significantly larger percentage of NHPI than in currently reflected in the numbers.

**Cmmr. Huie** asked if the six advisory groups are collaborating with the ethnic commissions. A more accurate representation of our communities can be reached through such a collaboration since we already work with those communities.

**ED Nguyen** wondered when the funds would be reappropriated. **Director Mosesly** answered that Commerce has asked for additional funding, but due to the recent budget freeze, it was not allocated in Gov. Inlsee’s budget. They will reach out to Gov. elect Ferguson when he comes in and are hoping to have more clarity on the request by the end of May.

**VIII. APICAG Introduction**

**Florence Sum** and **Evelyn Chow** introduced the Commission to APICAG and the work they are engaged in. Cmmr. Huie has committed to having the Health & Human Service Committee connect and collaborate with APICAG. Full presentation can be accessed below.



**Sen. Hasegawa** thanked APICAG for presenting and mentioned that there is a KUOW reporter, Gustavo Sagrero, who has been looking for people to interview as good examples of how his SB 5103 impacts them. It would be great if you could reach out to him and connect him with some contacts. Also, I know the DOC is working on trying to improve a number of conditions there and I think some of that can be mandated legislatively. If there is any bill you’d like me to sponsor or support that could help with that endeavor, let me know.

**IX. Public Comment**

**Sen. Bob Hasegawa** appreciated the comments during the CRP presentation. The way that the plan was originally implemented was anti-Asian/racist and that must be corrected before it is reimplemented. If they continue to implement the program according to the by and for model, then it will continue to be anti-Asian. The plan was not intended to be divisive, but they ended up framing it in an anti-drug war context, which they felt only impacted the Black and Brown communities.

**Cmmr. Emeritus Rey Pascua** participated in a memorial event for legendary leader and artist Francisco Aragon in October. He was also present for the ceremony in Wapato that designated the Filipino Community Hall as a national historical site.

CE Pascua also chaired a committee working on the commissioning of its 57th [Fast Response Cutter](https://www.news.uscg.mil/Press-Releases/Article/3945668/coast-guard-commissions-second-pacific-northwest-based-fast-response-cutter/) after US Coast Guard Cutter Florence Finch. It is the first US Coast Guard ship to be named for a Filipino American, who was a part of the WWII resistance during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines.

Lastly, I was able to attend a national celebration that inducted three Filipino Americans into the [Dept. of Labor Hall of Fame](https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/hallofhonor/2024-filipino-farm-workers). Larry Itliong, Philip Vera Cruz, and Peter Velasco led 1500 Filipino farmworkers in a strike against 10 vineyards.

**Devin Cabanilla,** Make Us Visible, flagged SB 5134 to the Commission. It is a bill that is on Chinese American education history that is being sponsored by Sen. McCune and Sen.Trudeau. What’s curious is that there are no Chinese people who instigated or support this bill. It was raised by an independent member out of Buckley. The bill is not complementary to their bill and they are curious about how it originated and came about.

**Cmmr. Kosai** will look into the bill and follow up to determine the thought process that went into its existence and how it got a hearing.

**X. Commissioner Roundtable Updates**

**Cmmr. Uppala** shared that while a decision from the Jaahnavi Kandula case was reached with the City of Seattle, the community ask has been that clarity and guidelines be issued for calls coming into officers whether it be for speeding or the use of flashing lights. The ACLU is continuing to work on that end to have that implemented. In E. King County, they are starting a cross-cultural MH/First Aid for youth that they are collaborating with other organization on.

APIC Legislative Day is coming up on February 13. If there is interest in having bills followed or looked at, please reach out to your chapter of APIC.

**Cmmr. Kosai** reported that there are strong concerns around the incoming administration and how it will impact our communities. He is thinking over what role CAPAA may play in helping to protect them over the next four years. If there are bills that our AA & NHPI communities are concerned about, you can send them over to him and the Legislative Committee’s attention.

The OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates is having their [Golden Circle Awards](https://ocaseattle.org/2024/12/23/golden-circle-awards-2025/) on January 17th. He encourages everyone to attend. Lastly, an update on the [Minidoka Pilgrimage’s mission](https://www.minidokapilgrimage.org/about-3) to preserve the site where Japanese Americans were incarcerated during WWII. Despite strong objections from the community that included a Washington State Historical Preservation officer, the Department of Interior has decided to continue with the wind farm project. Please continue to support their efforts in preserving this site.

**Cmmr. Lehrman** has continued to attend meetings for Health & Human Services and Education Committees. He also had the opportunity to visit Pearl Harbor and the Polynesian Cultural Center, along with his wife and oldest child. He was able to learn about the natives and cultures from each of the islands which included Tonga, Fiji, Tahiti, Hawaii, Samoa, and Aotearoa (aka New Zealand).

**Cmmr. Cho** echoed off of Cmmr. Kosai’s comments around the incoming administration. Sanctuary states like ours will be targeted, especially in light of Gov. elect Ferguson already having had contentious interactions with them. The incoming president has made it clear that he will go after his enemies, and he believes that our state will be caught in the crosshairs.

That on top of current budget deficits that our state is currently facing, we need to be aware of and advocate for resources for our communities so that we are not being disproportionately and negatively impacted by these factors.

Secondly, we recently had a tragic death in Seattle. Shawn Yim, a local metro bus driver, was fatally stabbed while on the job December 18th. Our community is going through some major distress as we face this recurrence of violent deaths. If you know a Korean American, please give them a hug and some words of encouragement.

**Cmmr. Phongsa** has been engaged in plans for assisting local businesses through the Economic Development Committee. Many of the small businesses are struggling and closing.

He has also been helping Cmmr. Sisavatdy organize an event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Lao community coming to America. The celebration of their heritage and culture will take place August 8th at the capitol.

**Cmmr. Huie** started serving on the Interagency Council on Health Disparities. [SB 5228](https://fastdemocracy.com/bill-search/wa/2025-2026/bills/WAB00022322/?report-bill-view=1) seeks to restructure the Council to be more inclusive of representation from the Women’s Commission and the LGBTQ community. She continues to serve on the NAMI committee for EDI, which is going strong and is expanding its work.

Elections are coming up for the Filipino Hall in Yakima, and she has been working on ensuring a fair and transparent election for their leadership. Lastly, the annual sukiyaki dinner fundraiser will begin its planning and she will keep CAPAA updated on the details.

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**Cmmr. McKenna** thanked CAPAA and Cmmr. Faitalia for hosting the Samoan Prime Minister. The PM was impressed by our community leaders’ relationship with local tribes and encouraged us to continue uplifting and investing in that relationship.

Recently, she had the opportunity to meet with the new Spokane Police Chief who is the first Native American to serve in that role. An opportunity to meet with DCYF Language Team also took place. They are working to better incorporate more Pacific Islander language to better serve those families.

We are continuing to see an inconceivable amount of attacks to LGBTQIA and Trans rights. It is really critical that we uplift and center those communities in our work. One comment that a Marshallese elder in the Seattle area asked Cmmr. McKenna to voice is her concerns around limits to academic freedom. She is a professor and nurse who is especially concerned about concerns around Critical Race Theory, LGBTQ, and reproduction rights. She hopes that CAPAA can look into this and report back.

Finally, the last thing she would like to flag the upcoming API Legislative Day. She hopes that she can work with CAPAA to see how NHPI-led organizations can be better included and have clearer leadership representing those communities.

**Cmmr. Sisavatdy** thanked CAPAA for their support on Make Us Visible’s bill. They’ll be seeking community support broadly and post details about the bill through their socials.

The Education Committee will be working with staff on an RFP draft pertaining to the Lunar New Year education funding that CAPAA was granted. Lunar New Year is coming up on January 29, and the Lao Community Center will be celebrating on March 29th.

As Cmmr. Phongsa mentioned, 2025 marks 50 years of Lao communities coming to America. After community feedback, they now have a proclamation they would like to connect with Sen. Hasegawa on.

**XI. March Meeting Planning**

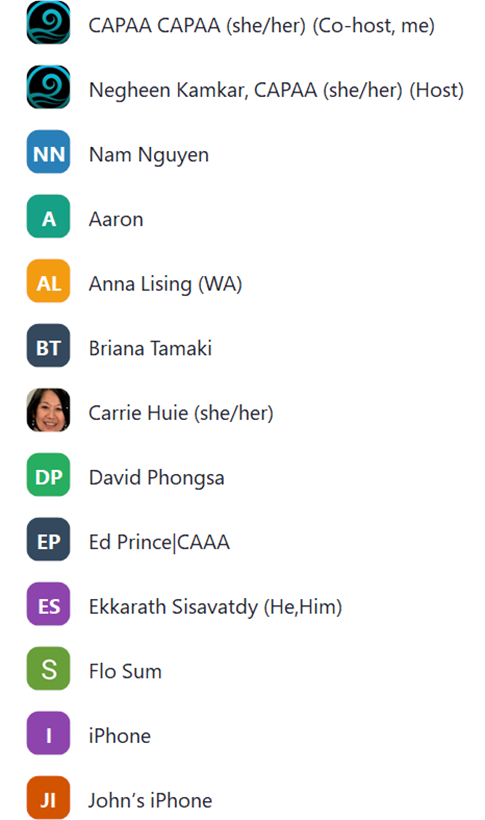
Due to time constraints, this discussion was suspended. The March meeting will be hosted by Cmmr. Kosai at APCC in Tacoma. Staff will be coordinating the details with Cmmr. Kosai.

**XII. Adjournment**

The meeting was officially adjourned at 12:40 PM.

**Zoom Attendees:**

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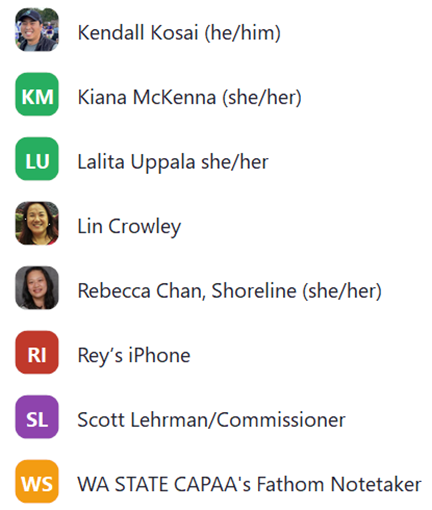
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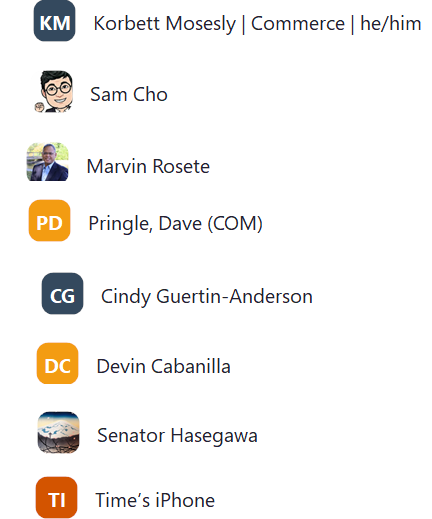
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