



## **Asian Affairs Commission**

Regular Meeting | April 1, 2025 | 12:00 – 1:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

### **Meeting Minutes**

Commissioners Present: Meg Chang, Sarah Gilpin, Ha Huynh, Masood Kasim, Athan Lau, Hieu Lê, Cecilia Nguyen, Parisa Pilehvar, Anna Thao, Yi Zhang

Commissioners Absent: Bee Paredes, Vivian Wang

#### **I. Call to Order and Introductions**

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

#### **II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin made a motion to approve March meeting minutes.
  - i. Commissioner Kasim seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 10
  - ii. Motion carried, March meeting minutes approved.

#### **III. Chair / Vice Chair Report**

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin reviewed the process to appoint new commissioners. Working to fill vacancies on AAC.
- b. Chairwoman Gilpin has been in touch with Cynthia Jasso at Elevate East to discuss storing decorations that have been donated for future cultural events.
- c. Want to make an amendment to AAC's bylaws to establish a standing committee focused on the yearly cultural event. Instead of having an ad-hoc committee or working group—which would dissolve after the event—a standing committee will provide continuous support. Establishing a committee ensures event planning responsibility doesn't fall on one person. Chairwoman Gilpin will draft language for the bylaws amendment and the commission will vote in May. Will also vote on a chair for the committee.
  - i. Reach out to Chairwoman Gilpin if you are interested in chairing the committee.
- d. Committee chair terms end in June (one-year terms). Will vote in new chairs in June.
- e. Chairwoman Gilpin shared that the Executive Committee discussed the cultural event. Will keep cultural event in the winter to avoid competition with other holidays and big events. Want to broaden scope. In conversation with Arvest Convention Center to discuss availability and bringing outside food (City of Tulsa has a partnership with them). Event will be Saturday, January 31, 2026.
- f. Will have a commission retreat in July, think about locations and specifics of what to discuss. Could be off-site.

#### **IV. Committee Reports**

- a. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy
  - i. Commissioner Lau shared commissioners attended Eid prayers on Sunday, looking forward to building more relationships with the Muslim community.

- ii. Working with Data Committee on an outreach project.
  - iii. April events will see several south Asian holidays, if anyone knows of celebrations happening in Tulsa please share with Commissioner Lau.
  - iv. Distributed flyers: Tulsa Global Alliance art exhibit and mental health study.
- b. Workforce and Education Committee
  - i. Commissioner Kasim shared the committee has almost finalized a timeline for the Luminary Awards. Will present in May meeting.
  - ii. Continuing work on the Asian women empowerment initiative. Committee members are meeting with community leaders to put together an event in May.
  - iii. Next meeting: April 16
- c. Data and Research Committee
  - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar reported the committee (along with the Culture Committee) rolled out the first round of partner conversations. Continuing to define questions and how to get needed information. Will continue conversations.
  - ii. Resource Guide: Vice Chair Pilehvar started her conversations with Wes Mitchell (Executive Director of 211 Eastern Oklahoma). 211 is a non-emergency help line. No other resource guide that is so up to date and accurate, have translation available for almost every Asian language (except Marshalese & Chukese).
    - 1. Of the 250k calls 211 EOK took in 2024, less than 10 requested Asian language translation.
    - 2. Love putting power in community to determine what they need.
    - 3. Can market 211 to the community, opportunity to partner with other commissions to get the word out.
  - iii. Vice Chair Pilehvar has received questions about AAC providing translation services. While that's not possible, AAC can elevate that need to the city.
- d. Chairwoman Gilpin encourages those attending today's meeting as community members to get involved in a committee.

**V. Old Business**

- a. Commissioner Lau returned to the discussion of the 2026 cultural event. After Lunar New Year, Commissioner Lau spent a lot of time reflecting and debriefing. Received feedback about having a broader cultural celebration instead of focusing on an east Asian celebration. How can the commission create a platform to celebrate all Asian cultures in Tulsa? Broader cultural event can spark other celebrations focused on different communities within the Asian umbrella. Commissioner Lau opened the floor for discussion and questions.
  - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar: A Pan-Asian celebration is important to dispel myths/stereotypes of the Asian community. Also noted that Pan-Asia Supermarket could be a great sponsor. Commissioner Kasim has a connection.
  - ii. Commissioner Chang: This sounds wonderful, when would it happen?
    - 1. Commissioner Lau: Saturday, January 31, 2026
  - iii. Vice Chair Pilehvar: Thinking about what the City is uniquely positioned to do, appreciate the educational element, different cultural groups can contribute experiences. Gives AAC an opportunity to invite others in.
    - 1. Chairwoman Gilpin reflected that she is looking forward to growing the education component of the event.

- iv. Commissioner Nguyen raised the need to differentiate this event from the AAPI Night Market. Chairwoman Gilpin noted that whoever the chair person is will be tasked with this.
- v. Vice Chair Pilehvar proposes moving forward with Jan 31<sup>st</sup> as the event date, and commissioners should check their personal calendars to avoid conflicts.

**VI. New Business – no new business**

**VII. Announcements / Public Comments**

- a. Lexi introduced Dion'trae Hayes, City of Tulsa's new Chief Resilience Officer.
- b. Lexi reviewed TGOV mic protocols and City Hall parking procedures.
- c. Commissioner Kasim thanked Mayor Nichols and Deputy Mayor Reyes for attending the Eid festival. Over 5,000 people attended. Commissioners greeted people and Mayor Nichols recognized commissioners by name.
  - i. AAC has some work to do to engage leaders of the Muslim community—they were receptive to having Mayor Nichols there but were hesitant with some commissioners.
  - ii. Chairwoman Gilpin: Do you think it's a lack of awareness of the commission's role?
    - 1. Commissioner Kasim: Yes, need to do more work to engage. Recognized Saber (City of Tulsa staff) played a role in connecting community leaders to the commission.
  - iii. Chairwoman Gilpin also proposed inviting leaders from the Islamic Society of Tulsa to attend and speak at the June AAC meeting.
- iv. Vice Chair Pilehvar added that something special was the cultural diversity of those attending—Muslims of all races and ethnicities. Will benefit everyone for them to collaborate with the City.
- v. Commissioner Kasim thinks there's a misconception of who the commission represents—wider umbrella than most folks think when they hear "Asian."
- vi. Chairwoman Gilpin reflected that it's more important than ever to support the Muslim community. Don't want any misconceptions that the commission focuses on one cultural group over another.
- d. Commissioner Lau noted that Culture Committee will not meet in April.
- e. Chairwoman Gilpin opened the floor to public comments:
  - i. One member of the public, Nic Annette Miller, shared about a community project, a pop up reading room. Grand opening is on April 19 at 1521 S Main St. In recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War. Purpose is to increase exposure of Tulsans to Vietnamese culture. One way commission can support is through outreach and business connections.

**VIII. Adjournment**

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to adjourn.
  - i. Commissioner Lau made a motion, Vice Chair Pilehvar seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 10
  - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 12:49 pm.