



## Asian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | February 3, 2026 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm  
City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

### Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Meg Chang, Sarah Gilpin, Masood Kasim, Hieu Lê, Yasamin Nawabi, Cecilia Nguyễn, Sofia Noshay, Cing Nuam, Bee Paredes, Parisa Pilehvar, Anna Thao, Vivian Wang, Yi Zhang

Commissioners Absent: Ha Huynh

#### I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

#### II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve January meeting minutes.
  - i. Commissioner Kasim made a motion, Commissioner Chang seconded.
    1. Aye: 12, Nay: 0, Abstain 1 (Commissioner Nuam)
  - ii. Motion carried, January minutes approved.

#### III. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin thanked Commissioner Noshay and all the volunteers for the incredible work of Tulsa Asia Fest.
- b. Commissioner Nuam (in the 1/3 Largest Asian Populations seat representing the Burmese community) introduced herself and shared about her journey to the United States and Tulsa.
- c. Still wanting to work to broaden the commission residency eligibility to Tulsa County, not only City of Tulsa residents.
- d. 3 Largest Asian Populations in Tulsa has changed Vietnamese to Indian. Hieu will hopefully change seats and stay on the commission, and we will work to fill the new Indian Representative seat.
- e. Vice Chair Pilehvar did not have a Vice Chair Report.

#### IV. Tulsa Asia Fest Debrief

- a. Commissioner Noshay said thank you to all commissioners who attended and made Tulsa Asia Fest (TAF) a success. AAC made history on Saturday.
- b. Expected 5,000 people, which felt ambitious. 1,000 people showed up just in the first five minutes, people started lining up half hour before and consistently showed up throughout event. Filled the entire convention center parking garage within first hour and a half of the event.
- c. Commissioner Noshay is sending out a survey to vendors, community partners, and committee for their feedback.



- d. Arvest had never done an event of this scale through their partnership with the City and it was a learning experience for everyone.
  - e. The volunteer committee stepped up in a big way and Commissioner Noshay wishes everyone could experience this kind of community. It's bigger than any one person.
  - f. TAF was impactful for everyone involved. Community partners shared this was the best run event they've ever attended. Arvest Convention Center (ACC) said this is one of their most fluid events. Vendors were happy to be there—one business owner flew back into the country to be there. Restaurants got their name out there. One artist had never exhibited her art before and sold six paintings.
  - g. TAF isn't about the commission, it's about community. Commissioners sit in a position representing an entire community and hold that responsibility seriously.
  - h. A lot of infrastructure is needed to sustain TAF in future years, as it takes immense capacity. Commissioner Noshay asks AAC to consider importance of a community event like this and how AAC can be the vessel to hold and fund these types of events.
  - i. ACC expects this to be one of their largest annual events. Having a world-class space and production value, in the middle of downtown Tulsa, is spirit-lifting.
  - j. Commissioner Noshay wants to have a full, thoughtful debrief and strategic conversation about funding, and it needs to happen quickly for next year's event.
  - k. Commissioner Noshay opened a conversation about allocating \$5,000 for volunteer appreciation to have a celebration with the Cultural Event Committee, AAC, and ACC core team.
    - i. Chairwoman Gilpin noted that we need to determine exactly how much money is available after finalizing all payments. Suggested meeting with Tulsa Community Foundation this week and considering a special meeting if needed to vote on budget. Also discussed paying the volunteer website designer.
  - l. Chairwoman Gilpin noted the need for a communications plan post-event.
  - m. Chairwoman Gilpin: Commissioner Thao can lead thank you cards.  
Commissioner Thao agreed to lead thank you notes to sponsors and will connect with Commissioner Noshay to proceed.
- V. Review and Vote to Approve Asian Affairs Commission Op-Ed**
- a. Commissioner Kasim suggested sending the letter to community leaders in addition to Tulsa World since not everyone will read the article.
  - b. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to formally discuss the Asian Affairs Commission Op-Ed.
    - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Nguyễn seconded.



- ii. Vice Chair Pilehvar suggested adding to the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, after 1<sup>st</sup> sentence: We were able to accomplish the scale of the event thanks to a dedicated volunteer planning committee of commissioners and community members committed to bringing this vision to life. For our volunteers, vendors, and many Asian Tulsans...
- iii. Commissioner Noshay suggested adding: The Commission's role is to create the infrastructure to meaningfully lift up our community in the sustainable, ongoing production of programming that supports Asian Tulsans.
  - 1. Vice Chair Pilehvar suggested adding this in the last paragraph.
- iv. Commissioner Nguyễn suggested adding a nod to the upcoming AAPI Leadership Roundtable. Vice Chair Pilehvar suggested instead to add a sentence at the end encouraging folks to visit AAC's webpage and having the roundtable mentioned there.
  - 1. Suggested language: To learn more about our commission, visit [cityoftulsa.org/asianamerican](http://cityoftulsa.org/asianamerican).
- v. Three edits:
  - 1. 3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph
  - 2. Final Paragraph
  - 3. Add AAC's webpage link at the end
- c. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve the Asian Affairs Commission Op-Ed with three edits.
  - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Kasim seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 13, Nay: 0
  - ii. Motion carried, op-ed approved with three edits. (Appendix 1)

**VI. Review and Vote to Approve Asian Affairs Commission Data One Pager to Submit to Mayor's Office and City Council**

- a. Vice Chair Pilehvar noted commissioners have seen the data one pager through many iterations before. The document defines who AAC serves. Reminded commissioners the commissions have the ability to submit formal documents to the Mayor's Office and City Council.
- b. Noted main changes since last version: Thursday received updated population data, including federally Asian, Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern Tulsans. Top 32 countries in Tulsa naturalization data, Tulsa Public Schools enrollment, and American Community Survey data. Included signature programs.
- c. Wrote memo telling where the commission has been, where they are now, and included all names at the end.
- d. Commissioner Noshay suggested edits: Add date to American Community Survey, "we recognize that culture is not only bound by country lines," use a deeper red tone.



- e. Commissioner Wang suggestion to add “SAR” to Hong Kong to align with their official name.
- f. Chairwoman Gilpin noted update to commissioner list.
- g. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve the AAC Data One Pager to submit to the Mayor’s Office and City Council with aforementioned edits.
  - i. Commissioner Lê made a motion, Vice Chair Pilehvar seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 13, Nay: 0
  - ii. Motion carried, one pager approved for submission with edits. (Appendix 2)

**VII. Committee Reports**

- a. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy
  - i. Commissioner Nguyễn shared a tabling opportunity, TU’s Lunar New Year Festival on February 13. Will send out a volunteer sign up form.
  - ii. Commissioner Nguyễn will focus on further building out AAPI leadership roundtable. Planning to utilize connection to the Cultural Event Committee. Will create sign up form for AAPI leaders who will attend.
- b. Workforce and Education
  - i. Commissioner Kasim: Committee discussed eligibility and other requirements for the scholarship. Don’t want to rush scholarships, will combine with Luminary Awards in the fall.
- c. Data and Research
  - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar: Continuing to work on the Stories of Asian Tulsa project. Have received 88 stories after TAF. Had organic roundtable discussions at TAF as guests came to share their story.
  - ii. Exciting opportunity to target certain groups to broaden reach of these stories.
  - iii. Commissioner Noshay noted the possibility of building an Asian Chamber. Asked if there a bigger pan for how AAC’s work can lead to those types of broader impacts.
    - 1. Vice Chair Pilehvar: AAC has been planning year to year, haven’t planned that long-term yet. Something like a Chamber can’t happen with data alone.
  - iv. Commissioner Chang noted that the list of vendors and performers from TAF is a great resource.
  - v. Chairwoman Gilpin shared she thinks AAC is at a great place to start building out long-term plans.
- d. Cultural Event – covered earlier in the meeting

**VIII. Old Business – no old business**

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



**X. Announcements / Public Comments**

- a. Commissioner Kasim: The Islamic Society of Tulsa will welcome Dion'trae and the Mayor's Office for a meeting on February 10 at 4:30. Will email information when confirmed. Opportunity to show support to the Muslim community.
- b. Commissioner Nuam: Zomi National Day is on February 20

**XI. Adjournment**

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
  - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Nuam seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 13
  - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.

This past Saturday, the City of Tulsa's Asian Affairs Commission welcomed between 8,000 and 10,000 Tulsans to Arvest Convention Center for a profound celebration of culture and a bridge to deeper community understanding. On behalf of the Asian Affairs Commission, we want to share our thanks to the community for the incredible turnout at our inaugural Tulsa Asia Fest.

Following the overwhelming support for our 2025 Lunar New Year celebration, we evolved our cultural event to not only accommodate more attendees, but also to represent more cultures. Tulsa Asia Fest celebrated a kaleidoscope of traditions from East, South, Southeast, and Central Asia, the Pacific Islands, and the Middle East, all converging to tell a single, powerful story.

Our theme, "Many Stories, One Tulsa," was felt in the cultural performances that captivated the crowd, in the educational booths that shared artifacts from over 30 countries, and plates of cultural food from Tulsa's many excellent Asian restaurants. We were able to accomplish the scale of the event thanks to a dedicated volunteer planning committee of commissioners and community members committed to bringing this vision to life. For our volunteers, vendors, and many Asian Tulsans, the festival was an emotional experience where their heritage became a public celebration, honored by neighbors from every corner of the city.

This gathering exemplified that Tulsa's diversity is not a challenge to be managed, but our greatest untapped strength. When thousands of people from different walks of life come together to celebrate the beauty of another's culture, the walls that often divide us begin to dissolve. By unifying a continent of cultures across language, religion, and history around our shared identity as Tulsans, we witnessed the strengthening of our city's community fabric.

The Tulsa Asia Fest has set a new precedent. It was a declaration that every culture represented under that roof is an essential thread in the tapestry of our city. From the opening remarks by Deputy Mayor Krystal Reyes to the closing words from Mayor Monroe Nichols, the energy in the room reflected a city that is proud of its diversity and eager to embrace the heritage of all its residents. The Commission's role is to create infrastructure to meaningfully lift up community in a sustainable, ongoing production of this event and other programming that supports Asian Tulsans. As we look toward the future, we carry the momentum of this success with us, committed to ensuring that the unity felt on Saturday becomes the standard for how we live together every day.

To learn more about our commission, visit <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/asianamerican>.

With gratitude and hope,  
The City of Tulsa's Asian Affairs Commission



Since its establishment in fall 2023, the City of Tulsa Asian Affairs Commission has actively engaged Tulsa's Asian community through both participation in existing cultural events and the development of signature programs that strengthen visibility, connection, and leadership.

In 2024, we hosted our inaugural Luminary Awards ceremony at City Hall and launched our first Asian Cultural Event—Lunar New Year—at 101 Archer downtown. To build on this momentum, we have expanded both events and their reach this past year. The Luminary Awards is now a luncheon that recognizes leaders across sectors who are making a meaningful impact on Tulsa's Asian community while raising funds for student scholarships. In response to strong public enthusiasm for the 2025 Lunar New Year and community feedback, we reimaged our annual cultural celebration as Tulsa Asia Fest. This expanded event features representation from more than 30 countries across the Asian continent, offering Tulsa a more inclusive and comprehensive celebration of Asian cultures.

Attached, you will find a one-page overview of the communities represented by our commission, key data on Tulsa's growing Asian population, and the signature programs designed to celebrate, elevate, and support Asian Tulsans as leaders in our city. As always, we welcome your presence at our commission meetings and remain committed to serving as a thought partner in your work on behalf of the Tulsa community.

### **Commission Members**

Meg Chang

Sarah Gilpin - Chair

Ha Huynh

Masood Kasim

Hieu Lê

Sofia Nagda Noshay

Yasamin Nawabi

Cecilia Nguyễn

Cing Nuam

Bee Paredes

Parisa Pilehvar - Vice Chair

Anna Thao

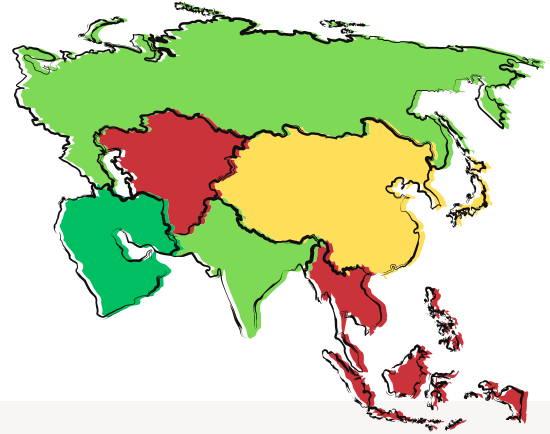
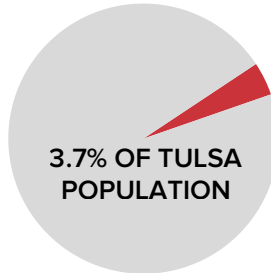
Vivian Wang

Yi Zhang

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## ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN TULSA

ACCORDING TO THE 2024 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY



The Asian Affairs commission represents Asian American Tulsans with roots across Asia, including East, South, Southeast, and Central Asia, as well as the Pacific Islands and the Middle East.

### SOME OF THE NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED BY OUR COMMISSION:

- |                |           |             |              |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| Afghanistan    | Indonesia | Lebanon     | Saudi Arabia |
| Bangladesh     | Iran      | Malaysia    | Singapore    |
| Bhutan         | Iraq      | Micronesia  | Syria        |
| Cambodia       | Israel    | Myanmar     | Taiwan       |
| China          | Japan     | Nepal       | Thailand     |
| Georgia        | Jordan    | Pakistan    | Turkey       |
| Hong Kong, SAR | Korea     | Philippines | UAE          |
| India          | Laos      | Samoa       | Vietnam      |

*We recognize that this list is not exhaustive and culture is not solely bound by country lines.*

## DID YOU KNOW:

The population of Asian and Pacific Islanders in Tulsa has grown by

# 64%

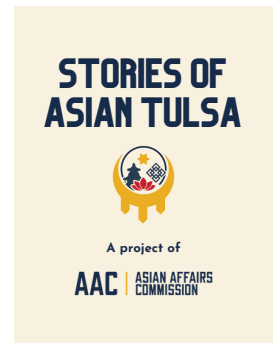
from 2010 to 2024

## OUR SIGNATURE PROGRAMS:

Annual Cultural Event

Luminary Awards and Scholarships

Stories of Asian Tulsa Project



Learn more on the AAC website