



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission

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Philjay Solar
Tuyet Tran

Executive Director

Yasmin Padamsee Forbes

One Ashburton Place
12th Floor
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Meeting Minutes

November 28, 2023, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83421971270>

*Please note that this meeting will be recorded

The meeting will be held via teleconference in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order on the Open Meeting Law and COVID-19.

Attachments:

- Draft meeting minutes: October 17, 2023, and October 25, 2023
- Budgets
- Staff reports

Commissioners Present: Gary Chu, Tuyet Tran, Richard Chu, Marilyn Park, Moana Bentin, Ekta Saksena, Philjay Solar, Megha Prasad, Amy Goh

Staff Present: Executive Director Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Policy and Communications Director Jennifer Best, Program and Research Director Shubhecchha Dhaurali, Policy & Communications Coordinator Diana Li

Others Present:

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Gary Chu called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

2. Commissioners Check-in

Commissioner Meena Bharath comes in at 6:36.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes, October 17, 2023, and October 25, 2023 (VOTE)

Commissioner Moana Bentin motions to vote on the approval of meeting minutes for October 17. Commissioner Tuyet Tran seconds.

Yes: Ekta Saksena, Marilyn Park, Richard Chu, Philjay Solar, Meena Bharath, Gary Chu, Moana Bentin, Tuyet Tran

The motion passes unanimously.

Commissioner Marilyn Park motions to pass the minutes of October 25. Commissioner Tuyet Tran seconds.

Yes: Moana Bentin, Ekta Saksena, Marilyn Park, Richard Chu, Philjay Solar, Meena Bharath, Gary Chu, Marilyn Park, Tuyet Tran

The motion passes unanimously.

4. Public Comment

5. Strategic Plan update

Thank you to all who were able to join the Strategic Planning Retreat in person and virtually on November 19th. Dr. Heang Rubin and Katrina Brink will put together a report to share in December.

Commissioner Megha Prasad joins at 6:41 PM.



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6. Selected Small Grant Fund Grantees Table (VOTE)

There were a few points brought up about Conflict of Interest in terms of applicants. ED Padamsee Forbes contacted the State Ethics Commission to ask whether or not past commissioners can apply for grants on behalf of organizations that they work with. The Ethics Commission was not able to provide advice because they only provide advice to individuals. Commissioners discussed that previous Commissioners likely can be part of organizations that apply, as long as they do not use their position as former Commissioner as leverage. Individual former Commissioners will have to contact the Ethics Commission on their own.

For future years of the Small Grants Fund, criteria will be less broad.

ED Yasmin Padamsee Forbes reported that the Commission received 78 grant applications for a total of over \$350,000. The Small Grants Subcommittee was tasked with narrowing the requested awards to \$50,000. In the end, there were 24 organizations and the total award amount came to \$47,000.

Commissioner Richard Chu raises concerns about the lack of Western Mass organizations awarded grants. Commissioners discuss distribution of grants to diverse geographic, cultural, and ethnic groups: Hampden County was represented as part of Western Mass.

Commissioner Gary Chu explains that a lot of the applications from Western Mass came from small businesses and universities, which the Small Grants Subcommittee decided not to prioritize over community organizations this application cycle. The Small Grants Subcommittee also prioritized programming over festivals, with the intention that festivals could be looked at separately.

Commissioner Meena Bharath suggests the AAPIC create clearer documentation for the shifting goals and overall direction of the Small Grants Initiative, to develop policy and statistical precedent.

Commissioner Amy Goh joins at 6:56PM.

Commissioner Richard Chu leaves at 7:02PM.

Commissioner Richard Chu returns at 7:06PM.

Commissioner Philjay Solar suggests each grant proposal get voted on individually in the future so that commissioners with conflicting interests for certain groups may vote on others.

Commissioner Gary Chu suggests looking at the history of previously funded grants and visually showcasing the awardees on a map.

Commissioner Moana Bentin makes a motion to confirm all grants except the Philippine American Mainstream Advocacy for Non-partisan Associations (PAMANA, Inc), as it presents conflict of interest for Commissioner Philjay Solar. Commissioner Tuyet Tran seconds.

Yes: Tuyet Tran, Moana Bentin, Richard Chu, Ekta Saksena, Marilyn Park, Philjay Solar, Meena Bharath, Amy Goh, Gary Chu

Abstain: Megha Prasad

The motion passes.

Commissioner Moana Bentin makes a motion to confirm the grant for PAMANA. Commissioner Tuyet Tran seconds.



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Yes: Moana Bentin, Tuyet Tran, Richard Chu, Meena Bharath, Amy Goh, Gary Chu, Ekta Saksena, Marilyn Park

Abstain: Philjay, Megha

The motion passes.

7. EC Elections are to be held at the December 2023 meeting.

Please submit nominations — if there are any questions, please ask. Requirement includes a short 250-word application.

Old Business:

8. Reports

- a. Commissioners Report
- b. Sub-committees
- c. Unity Dinner discussion (date April 20)
 - i. Commissioner Gary Chu asks about moving away from the fundraising aspect
 - ii. Commissioner Meena Bharath suggests having a working group take feedback from past Unity Dinners to reimagine it
 1. Meena Bharath expresses interest in chairing the committee, to start meeting in December
 2. Additional Commissioners who are interested in joining the committee: Moana Bentin, Philjay Solar. Other Commissioners are encouraged to email Yasmin if they are interested in joining
 - iii. Commissioner Gary Chu summarizes old Unity Dinners
 - iv. ED Yasmin Padamsee Forbes has a tentative booking with UMass Boston
 - v. Commission discusses including grant outcomes at Unity Dinner
- d. Staff reports
 - i. Commissioners are encouraged to submit feedback on the website to Jennifer Best.

9. Future Agenda Items Suggestions

10. Next Commission Meeting: December 19

Commissioner Tuyet Tran motions to adjourn meeting, Commission Moana Bentin seconds.

Yes: Tuyet Tran, Richard Chu, Moana Bentin, Ekta Saksena, Marilyn Park, Philjay Solar, Megha Prasad, Meena Bharath, Amy Goh, Gary Chu

The meeting is adjourned at 7:39pm.



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