



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

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One Ashburton Place

12th Floor

Boston, MA 02108

www.aacommission.org

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2020, 8:00pm

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

Absent Commissioners are highlighted and remote participants are indicated by an asterisk*. Quorum was reached by attendance.

Attachments:

- Draft Statement supporting creation of a Commission on the status of African Americans
- S.2800: An Act to reform police standards and shift resources to build a more equitable, fair and just commonwealth that values Black lives and communities of color

Staff Present: Jenny Chiang, Jay Wong, Brooke Yuen, Sheila Vo
Vira called the meeting to order at 8:05pm

1. Discussion on the draft statement

- Danielle shared she worked with Sam to draft a statement in response to S.2800, which talks about creation of a Commission on the Status of African Americans. Both Sam and Danielle first heard about the bill through a public news article.
- Betty asks why there isn't a Commission for all people of color. Groups should not be separated. Betty states there is an equivalent Commission for Black and Latino Communities
- Danielle expresses that since there is a standalone Asian American Commission, there should be a standalone African American Commission. There was a temporary Commission for Black and Latino communities to release recommendations.
- Sam shares that the NAACP also supports the creation of the Commission.
- Vira shares the statement is appropriate at this time. African American community should have space to have feedback. AAC can learn from their model. Vira shares that she supports it be released for tomorrow.
- Nate shares it's critical to have a Commission given its 10% of residents in the Commonwealth. It's important to have a body to oversee the current issues we've been seeing and supports the statement.
- Betty states the section (d)(8) in our statute is to advise public bodies as the Commission considers appropriate. Advise is different from



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urge, in which Danielle used in the statement. Betty states that she does not see her position as a Commissioner to make position statements. We need to go to our communities and talk to stakeholders and bring back the needs to the Commission. AAC has avoided position statements in the past as they do not speak for the community.

- Mabel and Bora echo what Nate and Vira stated. In the past, we have issued statements as well. Black communities have very different needs than Asian communities. A Commission for all people of color dilutes the issues and ignores specific communities. The Governor has a Black and Latino Advisory Commission that is not permanent and called upon as needed by the Governor.
- Gilbert shares that the Commission should be cautious. Perhaps we should speak with community members to incorporate feedback through a town meeting before putting together a statement. We should get public input before making a statement.
- Betty states the Speaker and Governor are coming out with their own proposals. It's necessary for us to ask appointing authorities to see if our statement aligns with their office. We have to be cautious as we have public accountability.
- Pralhad agrees with Gilbert and Betty. We need to understand the position of our appointing authorities. We are not expressing our own opinions. We are putting our appointing authorities in a tough position. We are only trying to publicize our name and divide the community. Pralhad states he is not opposing the creation of the Commission, but does not see the urgency.
- Gilbert suggests changing language of "expedite" to "support." Perhaps we can use a letterhead without all the Commissioner names. We can list who supports, opposes, or abstains at the bottom. Betty agrees with the suggestion.

Vote to adopt amendments to the statement:

Five proposed amendments:

- Addition on history and founding of AAC in the first paragraph
- Strike out "urge" and replace with "advise" in the second paragraph
- Strike out "was developed" and replace with "serves" in the first paragraph
- Strike out "expedite" and replace with "support" in the second paragraph
- Strike out "this proposal" in the second paragraph
 - No: Betty, Gilbert, Pralhad
 - Yes: Sam, Bora, Mabel, Vanna, Philjay, Nate, Vira, Danielle
 - Motion passes



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Mabel motions to close the discussion and move forward with a vote. Sam seconds.

2. Roll call vote on final version of the statement (Vira, 10 mins)

Vote:

Yes: Vanna Howard, Philjay Solar, Sam Hyun, Bora Chiemruom, Danielle Kim, Vira Douangmany Cage, Mabel Lam, Nate Bae Kupel

No: Gilbert Ho, Betty King

Abstain: Pralhad KC

Motion passes

3. Meeting adjourned

- Bora motions to adjourn. Sam seconds.

Vote:

Yes: Nate Bae Kupel, Pralhad KC, Vanna Howard, Sam Hyun, Gilbert Ho, Danielle Kim, Bora Chiemruom, Vira Douangmany Cage, Mabel Lam

Motion passed unanimously.