



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission

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Ekta Srinivasa
Gary Yu

Executive Director

Yasmin Padamsee Forbes

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Meeting Minutes

Aug 20, 2024, 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.

Commissioners in Attendance: Gary Chu, Ekta Srinivasa, Danielle Kim, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Karen Chen, Jennifer Rubin, Gary Yu, Meena Bharath, Tuyet Tran, Christopher Huang, Moana Bentin

Staff in Attendance: Policy & Communications Director Jennifer Best, Executive Communications Specialist Lizette Sta. Maria, Programs & Research Director Shubhecchha Duarali

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Chairperson Gary Chu calls the meeting to order at 6:41 PM.

2. Commissioners Check-in

3. Public Comment

4. Approval of Draft Meeting Minutes June 11, 2024 (VOTE)

Commissioner Jennifer Rubin makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes.
Commissioner Saatvik Ahluwalia seconds.

Yes: Ekta Srinivasa, Danielle Kim, Karen Chen, Jennifer Rubin, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Gary Yu, Meena Bharath, Gary Chu

The motion passes unanimously.

5. New JDs for Director of Policy and Director of Communications (VOTE)

Commission Chairperson Gary Chu provides an update on proposed changes to staff titles.

Commissioner Danielle Kim makes a motion to change the title of Policy & Communications Director to Policy Director and Executive Communications Specialist to Communications Director, with the current staff staying in the respective roles.
Commissioner Meena Bharath seconds.

Yes: Ekta Srinivasa, Danielle Kim, Karen Chen, Jennifer Rubin, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Meena Bharath, Christopher Huang, Tuyet Tran, Gary Chu

Did Not Vote: Gary Yu



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The motion passes.

Commissioner Christopher Huang joins at 6:45 PM.

Commissioner Tuyet Tran joins at 6:45 PM.

Commissioner Moana Bentin joins at 6:50 PM.

6. Unity Dinner Update and \$2500 Deposit Required from NP funds (VOTE)

Executive Communications Specialist Lizette Sta. Maria provides an update on the Unity Dinner planning process. The Unity Dinner will take place at the Doubletree Westborough on May 10, 2025, which requires a \$2,500 deposit.

Commissioner Tuyet Tran makes a motion to use \$2,500 of nonprofit funds for a deposit at the Doubletree Westborough. Commissioner Saatvik Ahluwalia seconds.

Yes: Ekta Srinivasa, Danielle Kim, Karen Chen, Jennifer Rubin, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Meena Bharath, Christopher Huang, Tuyet Tran, Moana Bentin, Gary Chu

Did not vote: Gary Yu

The motion passes.

7. Youth Council Members and Stipend (VOTE)

Programs & Research Director Shubhecchha Dhaurali provides an update on Youth Council hiring for the 2024-2025 cohort. 70 applications were received, and a process was used to select 10 finalists who will work on individual projects throughout the year.

Commissioner Meena Bharath suggests future years of Youth Council applications to include outreach to homeschool students and biracial students.

Commissioner Meena Bharath makes a motion to hire Aden Huang, Aidan Le, Chahat Kalia, Elianna Umana Kimura, Gina Yi, Julie Hong, Lindell Valsote, Mirei Saneyoshi, William Nguyen, and Ying Kay Leung for the 2024-2025 Youth Council cohort, who will be paid \$15/hour. Commissioner Moana Bentin seconds.

Yes: Ekta Srinivasa, Danielle Kim, Karen Chen, Jennifer Rubin, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Meena Bharath, Christopher Huang, Tuyet Tran, Moana Bentin, Gary Chu

Did not vote: Gary Yu

The motion passes.

8. Communications Coordinator and Stipend (VOTE)

Executive Communications Specialist Lizette Sta. Maria provides an update on the hiring process for a new Communications Coordinator, replacing the previous intern. Over 200 applications were received and 12 interviews completed.

Commissioner Ekta Srinivasa makes a motion to hire Monita Seng as the Communications Coordinator at a rate of \$26/hour for 10 hours/week. Commissioner Meena Bharath seconds.



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Yes: Ekta Srinivasa, Danielle Kim, Karen Chen, Jennifer Rubin, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Meena Bharath, Tuyet Tran, Christopher Huang, Moana Bentin, Gary Chu
Did not vote: Gary Yu

The motion passes.

9. Budget for 2025 (VOTE)

During the update on the FY25 Budget, Commission Chairperson Gary Chu highlighted the plan to address various aspects, including hiring an HR consultant. The consultant will provide assistance in salary equity, HR processes, the staffing model, and legal training requirements.

Additionally, other funding will be allocated for website translation, survey purposes, and the implementation of the strategic plan. Commissioners emphasized the importance of ensuring equitable wages for staff, particularly in light of Massachusetts's high cost of living and the staff's significant workload.

The budget proposed by the Governance & Finance Subcommittee includes using up to \$25,000 from nonprofit funds for Small Grants and \$25,000 from state appropriations for the Small Grants Fund.

Commissioner Saatvik Ahluwalia moves to approve the FY25 Budget, including up to \$25,000 from the nonprofit funds for Small Grants and hiring an HR consultant. Commissioner Ekta Srinivasa seconds.

Yes: Ekta Srinivasa, Danielle Kim, Karen Chen, Gary Yu, Karen Chen, Jennifer Rubin, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Meena Bharath, Christopher Huang, Tuyet Tran, Moana Bentin, Gary Chu.

The motion passes unanimously.

10. Strategic plan update and Key Issue Area determination process

Commission Chairperson Gary Chu provides an update on strategic plan implementation, including accountability and values.

Policy & Communications Director Jennifer Best provides an update on the Key Issue Area determination process, which was discussed at an open Government Relations Subcommittee meeting. It includes targeted community outreach and analysis.

Commissioner Karen Chen raises a question about potential listening sessions surrounding ballot questions, including education-related questions. This conversation will be shifted to the Government Relations Subcommittee.

11. Budget dispersed for 2024

AAPIC Treasurer Tuyet Tran provides an update on the nonprofit funds, and suggests the planning for a six-month rainy day fund.



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12. Commissioners compliance update

Executive Communications Specialist Lizette Sta. Maria provides an update on Commissioner compliance. Commissioners are legally required to complete documents in order to serve. All Commissioners received an email from Lizette Sta. Maria on May 17th with which documents they are missing.

Commissioner Danielle Kim leaves at 7:31 PM.

13. Old News

- a. Subcommittee Reports
- b. Staff Reports

14. Future Agenda Items Suggestions

Commissioner Meena Bharath encourages all Commissioners, especially new Commissioners, to be engaged, and for the Commission to do a better job engaging Commissioners. Chairperson Gary Chu seconds this.

Next Commission Meeting: Sept 17, 2024.

Commissioner Saatvik Ahluwalia makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Tuyet Tran seconds.

Yes: Ekta Srinivasa, Karen Chen, Meena Bharath, Jennifer Rubin, Saatvik Ahluwalia, Christopher Huang, Tuyet Tran, Moana Bentin, Gary Chu

The motion passes unanimously. The meeting is adjourned at 7:38 PM.



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