



DRAFT Minutes for Meeting, September 17th, 2021

- Meeting opened by Co-Chair Botzer at 10:00 a.m.
- Welcome Check ins, Land acknowledgement, welcome to Legislative Advisors, Housekeeping
 - Staff explained guidelines to virtual Commission meeting
 - Land acknowledgement
- Director Santiago turned meeting over to Co-Chair Botzer
- Co-Chair introductions and roll call
 - Commissioners present:
 - Commissioner Matt Landers, King County
 - Commissioner Everett Maroon, Walla Walla County
 - Commissioner Jeffrey Robinson, Franklin County
 - Commissioner Jac Archer, Spokane County
 - Commissioner KB Kelly-Barroga, Pierce County
 - Commissioner Alvaro Figueroa, Spokane County
 - Commissioner Lars Erickson, King County
 - Commissioner Tobi Hill-Meyer, Thurston County
 - Commissioner Marsha Botzer, Jefferson County
 - Commissioner Dustin Best, Okanogan County
 - Senator Claire Wilson, at-large
 - Commissioners excused:
 - Commissioner Karen Fredriksen-Goldsen, Island County
 - Commissioner Steven Sawyer, King County
 - Commissioner Agaiotupu Viena
 - Representative Nicole Macri, at-large
 - Representative Skyler Rude, at-large
 - Staff:
 - Director J. Manny Santiago
 - Program Manager Omar Santana
- Acceptance of Minutes from May meeting
 - Commissioner Robinson presents a motion to accept the Minutes from the March meeting as presented, Commissioner Maroon asks to accept the Minutes with an edit on the spelling of Walla Walla County.
 - Commissioner Landers seconds the motion.
 - The Commission receives the Minutes from the May meeting with the proposed edit, by the majority of Commissioners present and one abstention.



- Executive Director’s report, presented by Executive Director Manny Santiago and [available here](#). Some highlights from the report are:
 - Director Santiago has engaged the WA state Office in DC to get support in advancing the Equality Act. He also met with Congresswoman P. Jayapal to discuss this legislation and other LGBTQ-related issues coming before Congress.
 - The Commission was represented at various Pride events throughout the summer, and Director Santiago had the opportunity to represent the Governor at “Reunited with Pride”, an event by SOMOS Seattle.
 - The Commission is currently facilitating the HIV Medication Access Workgroup, and all materials related to this work can be found [here](#).
 - There are currently several conversations happening regarding moving forward legislative action for some of the priorities of the Commission such as expansion of infertility treatment coverage through insurance plans, and decriminalization of sex work.
 - Director Santiago also shared the news of staff transition, with Omar Santana, Program Manager with the Commission, moving to the DOH as a DEI manager. The position will be filled by Tracey Carlos, a longtime state employee who is also very active in leadership with RAIN.
- **Executive Committee:**
 - Co-chair Botzer welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Dustin Best, from Okanogan County. It was shared that Co-chairs Botzer and Viena met with Commissioner Best to welcome him and to answer questions about the work of the Commission prior to his first meeting.
 - Commissioner Best addressed the Commission and shared about his work with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation.
- **Economic Development:**
 - Commissioner Landers shared about the plans to host town halls around the state regarding LGBTQ certifications. These plans had to be revisited given the increase in COVID-19 cases and to follow updated health guidelines. The Committee will be hosting virtual town halls starting October.
- **Communications and Outreach Committee:**
 - Commissioner Robison provided update. Although the last meeting of the Committee had to be canceled, the members of the Committee continue to work on the communications plan. Commissioner Robison also reminded the Commission the importance of the quarterly newsletter to share updates and information with the community at large, and encouraged Commissioners to be timely with their submissions for publication.
- **Children, Youth, and Families Committee:**



- Commissioner Maroon provided update. Although the Committee hasn't met regularly, members continue to engage with the community. Examples of this work is support for trans students in Walla Walla and Spokane Counties schools boards and engaging in trainings to make family systems more LGBTQ-informed.
- **Health and Wellness Committee:**
 - Commissioner Maroon provided update. Although the Committee has not met regularly, Commissioners Maroon and Sawyer have participated of the HIV Medication Access Workgroup representing the Commission.
 - Commissioner Maroon also shared the news about the loss community activist Lauren Fanning, who dedicated her life to work for the LGBTQ community and advocating for people living with HIV in Washington.
- **BIPOC Committee:**
 - No report.
- **Vulnerable Communities Committee:**
 - Commissioner Hill-Meyer provided update. The Committee has been meeting regularly and has several community members participating.
 - Members of the Committee were instrumental in securing funding for a housing project for LGBTQ older adults in King County, which broke ground recently.
 - Currently, the Committee is focused on three areas: sex work decriminalization, incarcerated transgender people, and learning more about the reality of intersex people in Washington.
- **Legislative Updates:**
 - Senator C. Wilson shared updates.
 - The eviction moratorium has been a priority for legislators this session, as they are concerned with how people will afford housing costs with the challenges that COVID-19 presents.
 - The Behavioral Sub Committee of which Sen. Wilson is a member, is currently discussing issues related to systems of support for the whole family, especially for youth and children.
 - Sen. Wilson has also engaged DOC in conversations regarding re-entry programs. Recent changes to the law will impact these programs, hopefully offering more opportunities for people leaving prisons to better get integrated into their communities.
- **New Business**
 - Ad Hoc Process Committee:
 - Commissioner Maroon presents the draft report of the Ad Hoc Committee, which looked into the election process and has gathered



recommendations. These recommendations will be presented at the next meeting of the Commission for action.

Conversation on Strategic Vision

Director Santiago introduced the work of a strategic vision conversation. Commissioners were presented with three questions that guided the discussions:

1. Do you think that the current Mission and Vision of the Commission reflect the work we are currently doing?
2. How do you center the voices of the most marginalized and vulnerable within the community in your own personal and professional areas to bring about collective liberation?
3. How can the Commission center the of the most marginalized and vulnerable within our communities in our work to achieve collective liberation?

Below are the draft notes from each one of the breakout groups (with minimal edits.)

Group 1

- Mission seems to be focused on infrastructure on advocacy, the interface with the community, and the needs of the community. The Commission facilitates advocacy and setting things up so that others can do stuff. Landers thinks the commission is doing an excellent job as a facilitator. When the legislators were going over this, there was discussion about whether or not commissions were allowed to advocate at all. Yes – we are advocates. Reflect that in the mission a little better perhaps.
- Two things that come to mind; one is actually making certain that those voices are present. That is something difficult to do in the vulnerable committee. The logistics of having an incarcerated person attend our meetings is an example. There is also a dynamic, essentially, a state body asking the most marginalized and vulnerable communities to show up to a meeting and talk about it without any type of compensation is hard. Commissioner Hill-Meyer reached out to one white person to join the committee, and three people of color to join, the POC were interested but never followed up. The white person showed up with two other white friends. There is perhaps a limitation in whose voices are there. And providing space for voices. Might be good to have a reminder that we are helping create the interface to give opportunities for advocacy. – Commissioner Landers; agrees with Commissioner Hill-Meyer. Discussions take a lot longer now, because they're including all of these different voices. Sometimes it is hard to get everyone in the room. Even though these discussions may take longer, the end result is better. Challenges can include technology, feelings of safety, etc., to make sure communities that are marginalized do have access.

- Commissioner Landers; It helps that this was a foundational principle from the start of this commission. This was a stated value from the community, the legislators, and the inaugural commissioners. Execution is the most difficult side of this, but it helps that this was a foundational principle of this group, and of all the work that we do. Commissioner Hill-Meyer; one of the critical pieces is the commissioners. We can create a town hall, but then we need to be the ones reaching out to our communities to let people know about the town hall. If we don't represent the communities, this becomes very difficult. Having this representation on the commission itself is a critical piece of it. Being able to have moments like this conversation to reflect on how we are doing, how committees are doing, what could we be doing differently, etc., creates the constant check back. The check list in your head may not be the checklist on the agenda. Commissioner Erickson; the action-focus is a really good thing. His experience with state government, we need to bring those vulnerable voices to state government. That is the biggest gap. What has worked well is when we are aggressively going into the community and bringing those voices in. A suggestion; having these town halls in state agencies.

Group 2

Question 1:

- Commissioner KB thinks our work is currently in line with mission and vision. Notes that the word "interface" may not be clear to younger readers
- Commissioner Robinson believes it is a work in progress
 - Feels we could do more work around reducing stigma
 - Work to create more spaces where people can talk about their experiences in safe, non-judgmental environments
- Commissioner Archer feels that the work of the commission is being accomplished, and accomplished well, but that when we examine who within the commission structure is doing the heavy lifting, it seems the vast majority of the accomplishments are by our staff (Manny and Omar). I wish to be slightly more hands-on as a commissioner and to be able to help shoulder the load taken on by our (fantastic) staff.
 - Commissioner Robinson ascents
 - Need more opportunities for commissioners to take a more hands-on approach
 - More structure
 - One-year plan? Term-based plans?

Question 2:



- Commissioner Robinson notes personal trauma around the hostility of his region—elected officials/prominent community members center patriarchy and queerphobia
 - Tries hard to empathize with voices with which he is less familiar, which may be more marginalized
 - Ask questions that he hopes will make them feel listened to and cared for
 - Tries to break out of his “own privileged comfort zone”
- Commissioner KB leads by example at every opportunity—professionally and in the world/personal life
 - Likes to point out what feels off, say what needs to be said
 - Tries to center the voices of the unheard in feedback they offer
 - Finds the area around the state capitol to be unsafe, finds Olympia to be unsafe, which makes it difficult to leverage their voice for others when they are unsure of their personal safety
- Commissioner Archer tries to center marginalized people through their professional work (Organizer and Program Coordinator for SCAR) by actively surveying and soliciting their voices to help form goals, visions, and policy—for the internal policies of their work place, and the policies of the community in which they live.
 - They try to live the ethic of an organizer—a professional listening who facilitates the shift and exercise of collective power
 - Personally, they try to read and consume media from perspectives different from their own (but rarely have the spoons and time to do this as much as they would like)

Question 3:

- Commissioner KB believes we can help staff more to do this work, utilizing our 15-strong team, do more than meet periodically
 - Commissioner Archer ascents, notes that we come from a variety of regions across the state (we are truly a state-wide organization), so we have the advantage of regional diversity to draw from
 - We also have many people representative of the most marginalized voices in our Commission, for example:
 - Trans women of color
 - Non binary people of color
 - People who have engaged in sex work, including survival sex work
- Commissioner Robinson says we need to stop tokenizing the members of the most marginalized communities, including members of our commission, who may feel like they are tokens within our organization



- People need more opportunities to shine and do the work and make use of their talents
- Commissioner Archer noted that the nature of a State Commission is such that no matter how diverse we are, we will always comprise the most privileged members of our subgroups, as those who are currently thriving (relatively speaking) are in the best position to help others survive and thrive. This means a certain level of privilege is baked into our perspective. At the very least, the privilege of someone who has “made it out” of whatever the worst circumstances are that may be imagined, to serve in a state agency.
 - No solutions, just an observation

Group 3

1. Mission and Vision “OK”
2. The Vision covers many aspects of identity – so place other language (around gender identity) in a strategic plan document.
 - Keep a “read thread of intersectionality” throughout a strategic plan.
 - Equity must be “front and center”.
 - The questions about needing voices from constituents is real, but when you reach the level of being a Commissioner you *are* (or should be) the representative of your area and have some power to discuss issues.
 - What does “raising other voices over ours” mean?
 - Possibly: Lifting more rural voices and additional lens – “staying in touch”.
 - Possibly: Commissioners going to groups in local communities.
 - Keep up with a strategic plan that is flexible.
 - A strategic plan can be a way to show more people what the Commission is doing.

Meeting adjourned

- Commissioner Robinson moves that the September public meeting of the Commission be adjourned.
- Commissioner Archer seconds.
- With no objections, the motion passes and the meeting is adjourned at 12:30 pm.