



PARTICIPANTS

Commission Members Present:

Kelsey Murray, Vice Chair; Laura Fouts; Robert Marshall; Joaquin Lara Midkiff, Lisa Novak, Cathy Ostrand-Ponsioen, David Rheinholdt

Guests Present:

Kirra Pressey; Erin Hull; Rabbi Eli Herb; Debbie Cabrales; Jodi H.; Taylor Lane; Catie Mohr; Leif; Samiyah Foster; Sabrina Abuelkhair; Farah Abuelkhair; Jesseny S.; Finn M.; Margaret Stephens; Jordan; Enam A.; Janty Yaqoub; Espinoza; Silver; Logan; Zeke Druker; Lynelle Wilcox, and others not named

Staff Present:

Gretchen Bennett, AIC Lt. Robert Dowd

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Review of Agenda

Vice Chair Murray welcomed the group and facilitated introductions. The You Tube channel transmission/recording was noted. Introductions were shared.

2. Public Comment

Public Comment related to Gaza received from: Jesseny S.; Jodi H. (also opened with a land acknowledgement); Enam A.; Sabrina Abuelkhair; Rabbi Eli Herb; Margaret Stephens; Logan; Jordan.

3. Consent Calendar

Commissioner Novak moved the approval of the consent calendar which consists of the agenda and the March meeting minutes. Commissioner Ostrand-Ponsioen seconded the motion. The motion to approve the consent calendar was unanimously approved.

4. Action and/or Discussion Items:

a. Sanctuary City: Welcome Debbie Cabrales, Executive Director, Farmworker Service Center

The Commission welcomed Debbie to address HRC questions about the experience of indigenous community members. The 2023 Community Belonging Survey demonstrated these communities are less likely to report discrimination or bias.

Debbie noted she is not personally indigenous and works with people who are. In preparation for the conversation this evening she consulted with a colleague who is from Guatemala and works with indigenous communities.

To the first question: When situations happen, and people do not report, do you have a sense of the related circumstances or influential factors? Debbie replied:

- Language: don't speak Spanish nor English
- Don't know how to report
- Don't know what to say back
- Don't know what to do
- Don't have knowledge of their rights

Commissioner Lara Midkiff noted efforts with the Oregon Law Center and the NW Justice Project and asked as a city what can be done. Debbie recommended working closely with community-based organizations to get funding for "know your rights" training in specific indigenous languages.

To the second question, Are there things that the police department, the City's Human Rights Commission, or the Department of Justice hotline can do to help be more welcoming or reduce barriers, Debbie recalled in Florida, a person who was aged 19 was charged with manslaughter; they didn't stop at law enforcement command and didn't know Spanish nor English. Learn from this experience. Understand that people do not speak languages and do not understand why they are being stopped. Contract or hire people to get paid to translate and interpret. Create programs for people to become certified interpreters. Know that there are multiple languages; Debbie estimates five indigenous languages in Woodburn. Commissioner Lara Midkiff noted different dialects within languages as well.

To the third question, how can we build trust, Debbie answered to not assume language, treat with respect and to have patience. Educate law enforcement to have an understanding that people don't know what is happening when being asked to stop. Hire law enforcement officials who speak indigenous languages with interpreters on call. Understand the cultures.

When situations are reported, people often don't believe anything happens or that they are not believed.

To the fourth question, How can we talk with people who may be experiencing discrimination and have reluctance to report, Debbie recommended building trust, building programs with community-based organizations which is often where people feel safe. Collaborate with groups to have conversations. For example, Woodburn has two committees from Guatemala. Reach the Guatemalan Consulate: go to Seattle and see what it is like to go through the process. Attend events: there may be one in Woodburn in September.

Debbie indicated people are willing to reach her with other questions. Commissioner Lara Midkiff indicated he is hearing the importance of trust and legibility. People are often collapsed into being Mexican or Guatemalan. Debbie agreed, noting it is more than translation or interpretation. Commissioner Lara Midkiff noted the recent inquiry about adding citizenship as a protected class in Chapter 97, asking Debbie's view. She spoke of the discrimination they focus on is related to employment, adding no one should be discriminated against for not speaking a language.

b. Statement related to cease fire in Gaza

Vice Chair Murray reopened public comment. Public comment was received from Samiyah Foster. Chair Murray noted she is hoping to hear from everyone and asked commissioners to all participate. Jesseny S. indicated interest in hearing a Commission recommendation on if the statement would be a proclamation or a resolution. Gretchen clarified the difference.

The group began by brainstorming possible items to include in a recommended statement. During the discussion, the following ideas were captured on chart pack paper, in no order and without a vote or approval:

- Strong language to not discriminate against all people in Salem
- Harmony and peace for people in Salem, in a positive light
- Denounce acts of hate historically to present day
- Say what it is, a genocide
- It all hurts. Silence hurts when those in Jewish hurt and two million
- Jews and Palestinians and Muslim neighbors, community in solidarity
- Colonial settlements
- Complicity and the money – we fund Israel, use of our funds
- Support an immediate and permanent cease fire by all parties
- Person centered
- Palestinian State
- Order with anchoring
- Unequivocal condemnation of the genocide against the Palestinian people
- Distinguish leadership from the whole of Israel actions of leaders not whole of people
- Israel in violation of international law
- Example of aid language in Seattle’s resolution

Discussion topics included, but were not limited to:

Commissioner Lara Midkiff noted words won’t stop missiles falling on playgrounds. If we cannot imagine or articulate freedom, we can’t materialize it. Rabbi Eli Herb spoke of being an ally but feeling like the energy erases him and his people. Sabrina Abuelkhair noted a statement is the very least we can do. Vice Chair Murray spoke of multiple things can all be true. Discussion ensued about calling for a cease fire is not equal to being antisemitic. Zeke Druker spoke of actions being taken are contrary to Jewish law, adding there is nothing more Jewish than standing against genocide. The US has influence, it was observed. Leif spoke of us not being a neutral party. It was urged to reduce fluff statements and have clear condemnation of genocide.

Commissioner Novak motioned that a work session be held to further progress the discussion. Commissioner Fouts seconded the motion. Gretchen clarified it would be a meeting (work sessions are held by council for discussions). The group voted unanimously in support of

meeting Wednesday, April 24, from 6:30 – 8 pm (previously scheduled committees yielded time; LGBTQIA+ will meeting from 6 – 6:30 this day as well).

Commissioner Lara Midkiff motioned that the HRC commit that the work coming out of the commission will include a statement for an immediate and permanent cease fire; that Israel (leadership) are in violation of international law; and that what is happening is genocide, as part of, but not the full, recommendation of the Commission. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Guests were thanked for providing input.

c. Bias Crime Update

Lt. Dowd reported on two bias crimes and one bias incident. The information from DOJ is not yet available. Information related to Commissioner Marshall's questions from a previous meeting will be held until a future meeting in the interest of time. Commissioner Ostrand-Ponsioen asked about a report of bias against people experiencing houselessness; Gretchen shared she contacted the location of concern to educate about chapter 97.

Remaining agenda items were pended to the May meeting.

Minutes respectfully presented by staff Gretchen Bennett.