



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
COMMISSION ON MINORITY AFFAIRS**

Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Commission on Minority Affairs was held on Monday, January 28, 2019 at 9:42 am. Pursuant to public notice: Via video conference call between all locations: 1) Nevada State Business Center, 3300 W. Sahara Ave, Nevada Room, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102, 2) Nevada Department of Business and Industry, 1830 College Pkwy, Suite 100, Carson City, NV 89706, and 3) Conference call: Carson City: 775-687-0999, Las Vegas: 702-486-5260, Participant's Collaboration Code: 64575.

1. COMMISSION BUSINESS

- A. Vice Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 9:42 am.
- B. Present: Chair Berna Rhodes-Ford Esq. (person), C. Donald Chaney (person), C. Janelle Conine (phone), C. Hasaan Azam (phone), C. Michael Flores (phone), C. Yolanda Flores (phone), Counsel Gary Mathews, Secretary Emily Ku, Management Analyst for the Commission on Minority Affairs (person), Deputy Director Marcel Schaerer (person), and Public Information Officer Teri Williams.
- B.1. Public Attendance: Kathleen Taylor, Glenroy Cole, Cyrus Hojjaty, Georgi Schultz Tava McGinty-Jimenez, Janet Serial (phone), Barbara Bolton (video)
- C. Commissioners Absent: C. Adleen Stidhum, C. Jetoon Patel-Ghai

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Cyrus Hojjaty said that this is a taxpayer funded organization telling people why minorities are struggling. They are giving you data and somehow minorities are underperforming in a lot of categories, but we have to know why is this happening. Why do we see differences among income, education, a lot of different things. This organization does not explain why this is happening. Is it institutions holding people down? I've studied history, and I've known that particularly among races, there always have been differences for thousands of year. Every civilization has had strengths and minuses. Differences have always existed. What is your plan? A lot of the minorities tend to be foreign born, and a large number of foreign born are low skilled and low income. I'm not against minorities coming here, but the particular ones coming here are the ones who are low skilled. What net benefit are we getting from these people? If you look at the demographics on the Strip, you'll notice a difference than in the Valley. If diversity is so great, than why is every zip code has differences among the racial demographic? Why is Henderson different from here? And why have they changed so much? What does that tell you? That tells you that people prefer to live in societies that are much like themselves. Diversity has issues. It does have benefits, but it does have consequences. The other problem I have with this organization is what is the definition of white? I'm Iranian American, so what am I classified under? Do you represent my people? Where do you draw the line between white?

3. COMMISSION BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE COMMISSION.

- A. Approval of January 28, 2019 meeting minutes (for discussion and possible action) – C. Rhodes-Ford moved approval of the minutes for the January 28, 2019 meeting. C. Chaney seconded. The motion carried.

B. Annual Report – M.A. Ku said the annual report is our annual recommendations and activity report to the governor. In the first few pages, it give an overview of the Commission background, followed by the year in review, and then details for each subcommittee. C. Chaney moved to approve the Annual Report. C. Rhodes-Ford seconded. The motion carried.

C. Subcommittee Updates (for discussion and possible action).

1. Education

M.A. Ku attended the Education Summit on January 9, hosted by Communities in Schools. There was a panel discussion including Dr. Jara, Senator Denis, and Dr. Tiffany Tyler. They discussed school safety and how 20% of CCSD students don't feel safe in schools and that impacts their ability to learn. They also talked about how to address complex social issues in schools.

2. Health

C. Flores is involved with supporting the UNLV School of Medicine and the school is making efforts in ensuring that the community is aware of the sponsorship, involvement, and the good efforts to bring the school to Nevada. The leadership from UNLV School of Medicine traveled to Carson this past week to speak before the legislative finance committee to request additional money for the school. The Graduate Medical Education Department was granted continued accreditation, which is very important to ensure that the curriculum is accredited from a national perspective. Two former resident physicians who trained at UNLV, Dr. Joshua Goldman and Dr. Ashley Pistorio, have joined the plastic surgery department. There are several specialty departments being developed and this is one of them. C. Flores is helping to spread the word in the community about careers in medicine.

3. Housing

C. Chaney said that we want to ensure that there is an open dialogue and communication with the housing entities. We have made efforts with Tamara Thomas at Housing and Urban Development, who serves the entire state of Nevada, Senta Robinson in Henderson, Jim Hayes in North Las Vegas, and also the City of Las Vegas. We are gathering information to understand the affordable housing crisis in Nevada. There is a shortage of 200,000 houses in the area and are making efforts with other agencies to collaborate and make sure information is disseminated with regards to events and initiatives that come down from a national level. He is looking for contacts in the North.

M.A. Ku attended the AREAA (Asian Real Estate Association of America) event on January 8 and met some of the board members from the local chapter and the national chapter. She also received some national housing data statistics by race.

4. Workforce Development

No update.

5. Economic Development

M.A. Ku attended the Zappos Tech Summit on January 18. The Commission hosted a table there with Business and Industry. It was an event honoring minorities in technology. There were several minority panelists and Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, gave the keynote and spoke to an auditorium of mostly students. Then there was an expo in the rotunda where we had our table and met with several minority

small business owners. The Commission also hosted a table at Preview Las Vegas on January 24 with Business and Industry. The event was organized by the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce, and there were over 100 exhibitors there. In one of the sessions, the management analyst listened to Professor Lang from Brookings, who spoke about the goals needed to advance Las Vegas, such as improving education, diversifying the economy, and providing mass transit.

C. Williams attended the Community Benefits Oversight Committee meeting in regards to the stadium, where they reported on minority participation. She will pass that along to the management analyst. C. Williams also attended the Urban Chamber's State of the Chamber. They had several guest speakers and talked about inclusion on some of the larger work that is coming up.

Back in December, C. Azam participated in the Awards for Young Professionals program – 20 under 40 program, and he was the only minority honored. He plans to meet with the president of the Young Professionals in the coming weeks to see what we can do to leverage both organizations. C. Azam attended the Reno Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority Sales/Marketing Retreat in December. He met with the sales team, where they discussed how to bring business to northern Nevada. They are interested in attracting minority-related conferences, for example, the black engineers conference, and he is working with them to see how they can bridge that gap.

6. Legislative

C. Williams, C. Rhodes-Ford, and the management analyst met with the Urban Chamber of Commerce to discuss any possible alignment with our legislative priorities. C. Williams said that we will continue to meet with community organizations and legislators so we can efficiently and effectively advocate for minorities throughout the legislative session.

M.A. Ku attended the Children's Advocacy Alliance policy forum on January 14. They highlighted different bills that on education and health. Senator Woodhouse spoke about some of the bills that she's sponsoring. She also attended Legislative 101 on January 16 that was sponsored the Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition. They gave a great overview of the legislative process. The Department of Health and Human Services presented and showed how to navigate through their analytics site, which is organized by voter district, and had a lot of health statistics. They also came out with a minority health report.

7. Community Liaison

C. Azam introduced himself to the new Customs and Border Port Director in northern Nevada, who has a 30 year experience with the CBP. C. Azam was able to tell him about the Commission on Minority Affairs and its purpose. With the government shutdown, federal employees were going weeks without paychecks, and the Pakistani community in northern Nevada provided home cooked meals to the customs officers last week. C. Azam also met with the Deputy Director of TSA in northern Nevada, and he was very happy to see minorities giving back to the community.

M.A. Ku attended the Asian American Sheriff's Advisory Council on January 16. Around 200 people attended and the public was able to ask Sheriff Lombardo questions directly about school safety, increase in the number of vehicle fatalities in January, and how the public can help Metro.

D. Management Analyst update (for discussion and possible action)

1. B&I news – Business and Industry has a new director, Michael J. Brown. The management analyst had a chance to meet with him last week, and he is very supportive of the Commission.
2. Upcoming events –

- a. February 6th, the management analyst will be attending the LVGEA State of Economic Development event to learn what kind of data they will be presenting. That is at 8 am at the Four Seasons.
 - b. February 13th, there will be a lecture by Andre Perry from Brookings. His lecture is titled “The Devaluation of Assets in Black Neighborhoods: How Racism Robs the Homeowners of the American Dream” at the UNLV Greenspun Hall Auditorium at 6pm.
 - c. April 17th, another Brookings lecture by Jon Valant, “The Causes and Consequences of Student Discipline Disparities at UNLV Greenspun Hall.
 - d. The Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition is planning to have a minority health day in Carson City on April 11 with several of the legislators.
 3. Budget update – no updates
 4. Donations – We have a statute that allows us to seek donations from different sources. Counsel Mathews said this is for third party donations and to allow the management analyst to accept donations. NRS 232.866 The Commission may apply for and receive gifts, grants, contributions or other money from governmental and private agencies, affiliated associations and other persons for the purposes of carrying out the provisions for this chapter and for defraying expenses incurred by the Commission in the discharge of its duties. C. Chaney moved that the Commission adhere to NRS 232.866 in receipt of gifts, grants, contributions, or other money from third party sources. C. Williams seconded. Motion passes.
 5. Commission for Women joint event – M.A. Ku suggested to possibly collaborating with the Commission for Women on a joint event on March 14. It will be a statewide panel discussion and we will invite legislators to talk about bills that affect women and minorities. It will be teleconferenced between Carson City and Las Vegas from 6-9pm. C. Rhodes-Ford said we need to check deadlines and the calendar, check with the secretary of the Senate, as well as the Assembly to see if they have any evening events scheduled. We also need to check bill deadlines because they will work really late in the evening when those approach. C. Rhodes-Ford asked if there was a reason to do the event during the session instead of after the session. M.A. Ku said she had not thought about that idea but responded that the date is contingent on getting the meeting rooms at NSHE to do the video conference. C. Rhodes-Ford would like further report at the next meeting on availability and location.
 6. Commission applications – We will have 2 vacancies at the end of June. There are a few applications available by the sign-in, and you can also email the management analyst for an application. It is basically your letter of interest and your resume. Those are due February 28. If any Commissioners know of anyone who may be interested, please forward the application on. C. Rhodes-Ford clarified that the letter of interest should state why you are interested in on the Commission and what you would bring to the table.
- E. Data Review – this is a short data presentation on minorities in Nevada:
- a. The Mission of the Commission is to advocate for and to provide a voice to minorities residing in the State of Nevada in matters relating to areas including, but not limited to: education, housing, employment, civil rights, health, political empowerment, and economic development.
 - b. We have 9 Commissioners: Chair Rhodes-Ford, Vice Chair Williams and also Legislative subcommittee chair, Commissioner Azam – our Community Liaison Subcommittee Chair who lives in Reno, Commissioner Chaney – our Housing Subcommittee Chair, Commissioner Conine who also lives in Reno, Commissioner M. Flores – our Education Subcommittee Chair, Commissioner Y. Flores – our Health Subcommittee Chair, Commissioner Patel-Ghai – our Economic Development Subcommittee Chair, and Commissioner Stidhum, our Workforce Development Subcommittee Chair.
 - c. Nevada is a majority minority state, which means Nevada is comprised of 51% minorities. The demographics of Nevada has been changing in the last few decades. We’re the fastest

growing state in the state, growing at around 2% a year. Asians are actually the fastest minority group. The data presented today is mostly from the US Census, and there's a little bit of a time lag from when the Census collects the data and actually releases it. They examine the data fairly rigorously to make sure its accurate. There are some racial groups that we don't have a lot of data for just because they are small percentages of the population. We use the nomenclature American Indian because that is the term the Census uses. Also, Hispanic is considered an ethnicity and the other groups are considered races, so the white category is divided by non-Hispanic white.

- d. This is just an overview of poverty by race and ethnicity and highlights the inequality and how income varies by ethnicity.
- e. This is the homeownership rate in Nevada with some historical data to add context of what happened during the Great Recession, so data from 2006 is included. Due to the subprime mortgage crisis, some of the minority groups were hit worse than others and some communities are still recovering from the Great Recession and have lower rates of homeownership now in 2017 than in 2006.
- f. This is the percent of Nevadans without health insurance. Hispanics and American Indians are almost twice as likely not to have health insurance than whites.
- g. Infant mortality for blacks is almost twice the Nevada average, but if you shuffle back to the last slide, blacks did not have the highest uninsured rate. A lot of this has to do with access of care and complex social factors.
- h. Nevada ranks 49th in education. The slide shows how reading and math proficiencies varies among the different groups.
- i. Juvenile court referrals by race and ethnicity – black children under 18 make up 29% of juvenile court referrals but only make up 10% of the population.
- j. This slide shows the number of minority owned businesses in Nevada. It's the latest numbers that the Census has right now but hopefully they will release new numbers soon. This shows how much minority businesses contribute to the economy; we make up a 1/3 total Nevadan businesses.

C. Rhodes-Ford said that a lot of people do not know what the Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs is or what we do. We wanted to highlight some of the statistics that we are looking at. We are charged with presenting information to the governor. While we are not necessarily the ones who are going out to alleviate all these conditions, we think it's important raise awareness to these conditions so that dialogue can be started and you as our community partners, can see how we move forward. We are still developing and evolving as a commission and doing our best to move the needle. There are definitely a lot more statistics but we wanted to present the ones which overlap with where we have subcommittees. C. Azam agree that awareness is key and the community needs to know the existence of the Commission and what the strategic priorities are.

- F. New Business - C. Conine just wanted to share her the MLK dinner at the Atlantis Casino. Michelle DePino and Michelle Saahene spoke at the event, and they were the two women who spoke for the two black gentlemen who are asked to leave the Starbucks in Philadelphia. The great thing about them is one is black and one is white. It would be really nice in the future if the Commission can have more Commissioners there to represent the Commission in one way or the other. It's a great venue to be able to show who we are.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathleen Taylor (Nevada Business Opportunity Fund and Women's Business Center) – I just wanted to commend the Commission. In 2018, I attended several meetings, and it's just a pleasure to see the

growth and evolution of the Commission, especially in reference to the data presentation to inform the public. The data helps me tremendously in small business development, especially seeing the statistics in workforce development, economic development, housing, education—all of these things contribute to the economy in some kind of way. I appreciate this data and impressed by your repertoire of skills.

Cyrus Hojjaty - I just want to know what does Iranian American fall under? Do you represent me? How do we know the definition of white or not? I'd like to share some information about Iranian Americans, because their data is way better than the average American. They make more than the average American and the national average and far less likely to go to jail and far more likely to have homeownership rates. Is the institution favorable to us? Because what I'm getting is that minorities are being repressed but we're not European descent, so how do you explain that? Why aren't there white organizations? Don't we want to elevate everyone else, not just minorities? Certainly white people have a voice and they have struggles. Do we ever discuss why housing is very expensive? What is causing rents to go up? Does it have to do with the fact that 85% of our state's land is owned by the federal government, and it's very hard to get permits? Could it be speculators or a lack of labor? There's all these different things. Why do we have such a large price increase in housing in the last 8 years? If you guys are not addressing this, you guys are taxpayer funded services, you guys should know where these problems are coming from and so we know how to solve the issues. This is why it is very important that we have a roundtable discussion and townhall meetings.

Marcel Schaerer (Deputy Director of Department of Business and Industry) – I just want to remind everyone that a week from today, February 4th is the 80th session of the Nevada Legislature. I'd like to thank all the commissioners for your dedication and continue to do great work as we move into 2019.

Janet Serial (Executive Committee and Chair Health Committee of the Reno-Sparks NAACP) – I'm speaking on behalf of the NAACP and would cordially invite both northern representatives Commissioners Conine and Azam to one of our branch meetings to come and talk to the branch about the activities of the Commission. I'm very interested in your collaboration work with the Commission for Women. It sounds like you are doing very good things. One of the things I would like to happen is for the commission, especially with the health committee, to work with the Office of Minority Health and Equity. I think there's a lot of opportunity there to gain more information. There's a lot of data on health disparities in the latest 2019 Minority Health Report. I thank you for allowing me to sit in on this meeting, and I will continue to support you through the NAACP.

Chair Rhodes-Ford reiterated that the commission does not have all the answers, but we are certainly happy to facilitate introductions to state agencies that collect data. We use data from the US Census and honestly do not know how they come up with classifications. The data card event was the first of its type and we had not done this previously. I see some familiar faces from that event and thank you for coming back out to hear us again. We always have an open door for you to attend our meetings and for us to help as much as we can. In terms of the Commission for Women, we will continue working on that, and we will check on the roundtable to see if that can happen. We will see if any of the Commissioners can attend the NAACP meeting up North.

5. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 10:39 am
- Next Meeting: Monday, February 25, 2019 at 9:30 am