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Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

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Director



**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, June 15, 2020. Pursuant to public notice and the Governor's suspension of the statute that requires public meetings to have a physical location, this meeting was conducted by a Webex videoconference call.

1. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Chair Chaney called the meeting to order at 9:36 am.

B. Commissioners Present (phone): Chair D. Edward Chaney, Vice Chair Myisha Williams, C. Hasaan Azam, C. E. Mercedes Krause, C. Melendrez, C. Amy Shaw, C. Adleen Stidhum, and C. Kathleen Taylor.

C. Commissioners Absent: C. Janine Conine

D. Staff Present: Emily Ku, Management Analyst for the Commission on Minority Affairs

E. Public Attendance: Janet Serial, Ender Austin, III, Andrea Gregg, Deputy Director Marcel Schaerer

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ender Austin, III, former Commissioner and staff member for Congressman Horsford's office, representing Nevada's 4th Congressional District – He wanted to give a brief update on what the Congressman is doing, especially on the issues of justice within our nation. The Congressman is an executive board member and Parliamentarian for the Congressional Black Caucus. He has been working with the caucus to introduce the Justice in Policing Act of 2020. Mr. Austin wanted to make sure that the Commission was aware and will send a copy of the one-page factsheet on the act. The Congressman will be pushing really hard on this and to make sure folks know what this means for our communities and the positive things that will come out of it. The Congressman stands fully by the people who are exercising their first amendment rights and wants meaningful change in our criminal justice system.

3. COMMISSION BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS: Chair Donald Chaney; Vice Chair Myisha Y. Williams; C. Hasaan Azam; C. Janelle Conine; C. E. Mercedes Krause, C. Jose Melendrez, C. Amy Emiko Shaw, C. Adleen B. Stidhum; C. Kathleen Taylor

A. Approval of May 18, 2020 meeting minutes (for discussion and possible action)

C. Melendrez moved to approve the minutes. C. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Subcommittee Updates (for discussion and possible action)

1. Education

C. Krause could not attend the meeting, but M. A. Ku read the written update she sent. M. A. Ku said that the Department of Education released guidelines for districts and schools to consider. The Digital Learning Taskforce is still very active and preparing resources in case we need them for the beginning of the school year. In higher education, there is a big push for UNLV to get rid of their Hey Reb! mascot. They've tried in the past to get the mascot removed, but now there is a petition circulating and gaining momentum in this current climate. It's a controversial mascot because for some it represents a Confederate soldier, and for others, it represents a frontiersman who used to clear the land that indigenous people lived on. C. Chaney said he looks forward to C. Krause's leadership in that area, and it will be very interesting the direction the schools take in the fall.

2. Health

C. Taylor said current COVID-19 numbers are constantly changing but we have over 11,000 cases in Nevada and unfortunately, about 464 deaths. There has been an increase in testing in Nevada, so that's the correlation between the uptick and the increased testing a result in funding. As we are entering in Phase II, it is still highly recommended to have protective equipment, social distancing for businesses, and to make sure employees are being safe and decreasing exposure to COVID-19. C. Melendrez said we should be mindful that we're not done with the first phase. NPR is reporting that this wave is still ongoing and that all of the states that opened up including Nevada, Utah, Arizona all have had spikes come up again. The second wave might start in the fall, and we're going to have a double whammy with coronavirus still active and the flu making its yearly rounds. Our public health professionals are going to have their hands full until we have that vaccine. Then the question is who is going to have access first, so these are just some things for us to think about. C. Chaney said he is concerned about the disparities in our communities and how we are going to get that information out.

C. Azam said that law enforcement and first responders are offered priority testing and most of them are voluntarily testing for it. Regarding the first wave, he said that on June 4th, the casinos reopened at 50% capacity. We are seeing a lot of pent up demand, and when people are in close proximity, it's likely that the rate of infection will be higher than in a normal situation. The casino floors are based on building code, so even at 50% on a typical day is already busy. The casinos are full and are all in compliance, so it's a matter of perception of what's full versus what the public is seeing. We are keeping track of the passenger trends and there is a slight uptick on air passenger travel over the last few weeks, with June 14 being the highest. People are getting more comfortable getting in planes and taking leisure trips. Once they become more comfortable, they will take more trips, be in closer proximity with other people, and increase the rate of transmission. From our perspective, we don't know what they are working with, but we are seeing passengers getting into cars and planes. C. Chaney said that we need to communicate to our communities about the importance of staying home and staying safe and using extreme caution.

C. Melendrez said that the UNLV School of Public Health and Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition is kicking off a webinar series on COVID-19 impact on communities of color. On Tuesday, June 23 from 1-3pm, there will be a national speaker, then 5 speakers from Nevada talking about

the Black, Latinx, Asian/Filipino, African American, Native American, and LGBTQ community. Following that, we will be more in-depth webinars with each of the populations and have a content expert speak to that population and the impact of COVID-19. Then a Part 2 webinar series will focus on education and awareness development of our communities and look at the current issue of what's happening with impact of racism in public health. For anyone who would like to share their story, positive or negative, we feel it's important to document those stories. Other organizations are working with us, including the Center for Health Disparities, Nevada Office of Minority Health, and Region IX Office of US Health and Human Services.

3. Housing

C. Taylor attended the Nevada Housing Coalition webinar on May 13 on COVID-19 and the anticipated housing recovery. It featured various representatives in the housing sector and spoke about the resources being allocated to address how housing in various aspects has been impacted.

C. Chaney helped facilitate a dialogue between the Nevada Housing Coalition and the Attorney General concerning the rent and mortgage issues, especially on how it impacts our communities.

4. Workforce Development

C. Stidhum said that minority communities and businesses have been hit the hardest. She did a survey to check to see how they were doing. Out of those that responded and shared information, 28% percent received PPP funding for a total of \$1.2 million received. She is trying to find out if there are any nonprofit groups that are able to assist businesses that may not know how to apply for funds. Hopefully, she can get a response to she can further share the information. On Wednesday, June 17th, the Clark County stabilization grant will be open. The assistance will up to \$5,000 for 1-4 employees and businesses with 5-20 employees can apply up to \$10,000 for this loan. There will also be a retrofit grant and small business rental assistance that is forthcoming. Different jurisdictions are awarding the money, but the businesses have to be in the jurisdiction to apply. The Cities of Henderson and Las Vegas has funds available. She said that those helping small businesses can ask Shani Coleman at Clark County specific questions.

She said her appointment to the Commission has been a great experience over the last two years and wishes the Commission continued success. C. Chaney said C. Stidhum brought such a wealth of breadth and knowledge, and he appreciates everything you brought to this Commission. He said that we hate to see you go but understand that the pandemic has caused us to all make personal adjustments in our lives. C. Chaney thanked her and wished her well. C. Stidhum is planning to retire this year and said she will be here to support the Commission. C. Taylor thanked C. Stidhum for all that she has done. She enjoyed working with C. Stidhum on the Commission and appreciated her advice. She knows their paths will cross beyond the Commission. C. Williams wants to thank C. Stidhum for her work not only for the Commission, but for all the work she's done over the years to advance small businesses and the voice of people of color. C. Williams looks forward to continuing to work with C. Stidhum and that her spirit and work will continue to move forward, that it won't be the end. C. Azam also thanked C. Stidhum and learned so much from her on how to get engaged and get information out. If she is ever in the North, don't hesitate to reach out. C. Shaw said she had the pleasure of working with her on several committees and having discussions about supporting small businesses, and her knowledge and helpfulness is so appreciated. She said C. Stidhum's kindness and grace is really hard to replicate and will miss her so much.

C. Chaney wanted to also give kudos to C. Conine for her wealth of knowledge and outstanding work and leadership. When C. Chaney came on, she said she helped with the onboarding and was very transparent. C. Chaney said he appreciated C. Conine for all the work she has done and the fortitude she has given us with her time, talents, and energy. C. Stidhum also wanted to say thanks to C. Conine and to be able to have met her in person was always uplifting. She could always hear C. Conine's ability to serve the community, and she gave one hundred percent in doing that. M. A. Ku also thanked both C. Stidhum and C. Conine for their service on the Commission. She really enjoyed the positivity and energy they brought to the Commission, and it makes such a difference to be in a room full of people who want to make a difference and create change in the community. C. Chaney said it's important to keep our former Commissioners engaged as well, and we can't let them go off the scenes with all of that knowledge and resource.

C. Chaney said that the Raiders stadium is looking to hire for 4,500 jobs. They need to be available for all the football games and UNLV games.

5. Economic & Business Development

C. Shaw said the traffic at the airport was greatly reduced and most of the businesses had closed, with the exception of a Starbucks for the employees. Each of the departments were running with minimal staff. One thing that we tried to do help the minority businesses at the airport was that as flights to increase, HMSHost, which is the master food and beverage concessionaire, offered opening opportunities to minority and women-owned businesses first in lieu of their own restaurants and bars. They were able to have several minority and women-owned businesses open while 95% restaurants were closed. They have been sending eblasts to businesses about the assistance that the chambers were offering in terms of explaining legislation and how to apply for funding.

M. A. Ku said that the Department of Business and Industry is helping to promote masks to small and microbusinesses. They are still working on a distribution center for the North, but in the South, they can fill out a form at the Vegas Chamber website and schedule a time to pick them up. They have the Nevada flag logo on the mask, and it says Stay Safe, Stay Open. They are offering them for free. The Governor's Task Force ordered 250,000 of these reuseable masks to distribute. United Way of Northern and Southern Nevada are distributing them to non-profits and their volunteers and the different chambers are distributing them as well. C. Azam said that everyone in the Reno-Sparks Chamber Leadership Class had the mask.

C. Taylor attended a virtual small business roundtable with various resource partners on May 5, hosted by the Department of Business and Industry. We discussed resources for businesses for COVID-19 relief. On May 20, she attended a webinar by the City of Las Vegas, and they showcased their \$4,000 small business grant program for COVID-19 relief.

6. Legislative

C. Williams connected with Ms. Shani Coleman to talk about the legislation we introduced in the last session regarding small business and will continue that conversation. She encouraged the Commissioners send over thoughts and ideas they can support in their legislative session, and asked for their help in identifying issues most important to the subcommittees so we can bring them to the full Commission. We don't have create new BDRs for every single issue, but there may be some existing legislation based on our communication with other community partners that we can be a

part of. She would like to bring forth to the Commission and run through the proper protocols would be economically stimulating businesses that have been impacted but the pandemic. We've been working really hard to get them temporarily relief and funding, but we need to recognize that those are loans. The work doesn't end at just getting a loan, the work begins on setting aside opportunities for small and microbusinesses to be able to repay those loans. We are working to research the typical size of minority owned businesses in the state. M. A. Ku said she is taking a look at the data. They have changed some of the methodologies and is working with the Census on why the numbers look different. C. Chaney mentioned the possibility of a special session is on the horizon, and a lot of that will be dealing with the budget. They are looking at cuts to higher education and departments at 19%, so it will be interesting going into session, that revenue and housing are going to be issues.

C. Stidhum said that maybe this year, legislators will be more open to what we were attempting to try last session. She hopes that the Commission doesn't lose its task from what we tried for last legislative session in trying to further assist the minority businesses.

7. Community Liaison

C. Azam said that Sheriff Balaam has voiced his opinion on certain things and would like to be a part of any legislation relating to the discussion on law enforcement, the escalation of the use of force, and training. He's working very closely with Chief Soto and the Reno City manager. Sheriff Balaam's Community Engagement Outreach Committee meets on a quarterly basis and but now it's going to be meeting every month. They had their last meeting on Thursday. It's a very diverse group, from all different backgrounds and mostly minorities. There is representation from NAACP, the Muslim community, Christian community, and other faith-based communities. It was a very robust discussion and two-way communication where Sheriff Balaam talking about what he's implemented on de-escalation and use of force training. He's shared in detail what the training looks like. In terms how we can make things better and bridge the gap in terms of training, he is looking at 3 or 4 different programs, which is probably going to be baseline if there's going to be any reform. C. Azam was very impressed on the mitigating measures they are planning to work on. The folks in the community suggested so many different things from questions on body cams, who has access to it to length of investigations. Why does it take 2 years for an investigation? Sheriff Balaam is a leader with his program, and other police departments may follow his approach. They are talking about going forward, what is the priority of law enforcement. They are peace officers, not just police officers, and they are there to bridge the gap. They will be meeting more often and try to gauge what the police are feeling. The two-way communication is very important at this time and getting the information out the community. We need to understand their perspective as well. All sides need to be heard.

M. A. Ku said that we released a statement two weeks ago stating that we are in full support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

C. Chaney said these discussions will be very interesting moving forward. It's important that we continue to move in engagement. He participated on a justice panel with the Attorney General as a member of the Commission, but also on other panels as a member of the faith community and communities of color. He hopes that we can de-escalate a lot of what we're seeing right now.

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

- a. Community events – Commissioner Melendrez already spoke about the upcoming COVID-19 webinar on minority populations. To reiterate, the panel that the Chair mentioned, Attorney General Ford held his 3rd justice and injustice panel yesterday, and he had several sheriffs from different parts of the state. They have posted the recordings of their previous webinars. C. Chaney said he recommended at the Attorney General continue his series. The Commission is having a face and a voice, and we have to keep up the great work.
- b. Commissioner applications – it is still open and we have received a few applications so far. We are continuing to spread the word and get those filled. With the special session looming, M. A. Ku does not know when the Legislative Commission will meet next.
- c. Outreach – M. A. Ku has increased online engagement with social media and has created a Twitter account and have over 100 followers. She will be working on getting the website up and running.

4. NEW BUSINESS

C. Taylor asked if it was possible for us to use the Webex platform in order to enhance our outreach. Can we use our new platform to coordinate virtual roundtables with resource partners or mixers or forums that aligns with our mission or purpose? The second item she would like to bring up, given that C. Stidhum has phased out of the Commission, that leaves her position her chair of Workforce Development open. She is willing to exit out of the Health Subcommittee and step into the Chair of Workforce Development once approved by the full body, with the hopes that C. Melendrez will take Health Subcommittee given his public health expertise. C. Chaney said there may need to be further discussion for further consideration. We have to get ready for a new normal because we can't do business like we used to. M. A. Ku said we have been trying to be active like co-hosting the Amplify Equity webinar and leveraging those community partners is really helpful for organizing webinars. C. Melendrez said he would be fine chairing or co-chairing the Health Subcommittee. He is busier now more than ever due to the pandemic, and every federal agency that has been providing funding, the School of Public Health has been busy submitting lots of COVID-19 grants. M. A. Ku said we will have two new Commissioners that we will need to slot in as well.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Janet Serial, Health Committee of the Reno-Sparks NAACP – They will be rolling out a testing treatment and tracing initiative. It's important now that testing has opened up that we get as many people tested. The majority of people that have gone testing are negative, but we need to focus on treatment. The health district is starting contact tracing, and we want to make sure we have a multicultural presence with people in those roles practicing the transformation that we want to see. Also, a small group of community leaders met with Governor Sisolak and his staff, including LeNiesha Dawson, on Friday. He wants to work, specifically in Washoe County, on creating short-term and long-term goals on transforming systemic racism within all of our structures. She pointed out that we have existing resources that can better utilized or are being underutilized and we should be going through the Office of Minority Health and Equity, the Coalition, and the Commission to accomplish some of our short and long-term goals. The Black Caucus that she chairs will be spearheading and developing a strategic plan. They want to be very intentional and make sure that we connect with those grassroots entities, because so often that we create things and are well intended, they don't actually produce the results we are seeking. Ms. Serial thanked C. Melendrez for saying that racism is a public health crisis. We need to act on this opportunity, bring more young people in to get them engaged and get them involved in these processes.

6. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 10:57 am
- Next Meeting: Monday, July 20, 2020 at 9:30 am