



Commission on African American Affairs Public Meeting Friday, March 19, 2021 | 3:00 pm - 5:00 p.m. via Zoom

Commission Chair Will Hausa
Representing Pierce County

Commission Vice-Chair Sara Franklin
Representing South King County

Commissioner De'Sean Quinn
Representing South King County

Commissioner Chaune Fitzgerald
Representing Tri-Cities

Commissioner Paula Sardinias
Representing King County

Commissioner Dorian Waller
Representing Pierce County

Commissioner Andrea Caupain
Representing King County

Commissioner Rev. Walter Kendricks
Representing Eastern Washington

Executive Director Edward O. Prince

Members present: Chair Hausa, Vice-Chair Franklin-Phillips, Caupain, Fitzgerald, Kendricks, Quinn, Sardinias, Waller, Executive Director Edward Prince, Executive Assistant Charlotte Kerney

Absent: None. Quorum established

3:00 pm – Meeting Called to order by Chair Hausa

3:05 pm – **Motion to approve previous meeting minutes by Commissioner Sardinias**

Seconded by Commissioner Franklin-Phillips

Voice vote – no objections. Motion carried. January 2021 commission meeting minutes approved

3:10 pm – Director's Report

- Executive Director, Edward Prince and Vice-chair Franklin Phillips met with new Department of Health Secretary Shaw. Reports the meeting was productive and is the beginning of a series of ongoing conversations.
- Brief update of tracked legislation. Commissioner Sardinias added detailed insights into the Juneteenth bill and others

3:15pm – Chair's Report

- Met with OSPI Superintendent Chris Reykdal to discuss a more involved and inclusive African American curriculum instead of just one class. History taught currently is very singular and many things can be done to teach gives people a level of cultural sensitivity awareness they currently do not have.
- The Washington Historical Society is working on a Black history mobile app.
- Chair Hausa joined the Collective Bargaining Team for the City of Tacoma

Chair Hausa yields time to Commissioner Waller

- Recounts the actions of the Tacoma Police Department incident of January 2021 and called attention to the verbal attacks on the Black leadership of Tacoma who are critical of police actions.

Motion by Commissioner Waller to communicate by letter to the City of Tacoma about the incident.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Kendricks

Voice vote approved: One objection

3:25 pm – Prosecution Referral Process Presentation: John Hillman, Criminal Litigation Unit Division Chief, WA State Office of the Attorney General

The Attorney General's office is the largest law firm in the state with over six hundred attorneys that provide legal advice to the state and its agencies and commissions enforcing laws such as consumer

protection act. The AG's authority to prosecute criminal cases and how they come to the auspice of their office. The Criminal Justice division most of which are for sex offenses, civil commitments, legal advice to the Washington State Patrol, the Criminal Justice Commission, claims for wrongful conviction. Two client agencies are State patrol wrongful conviction small group of eight prosecutors that prosecute claims for wrongful conviction, sex trafficking, financial fraud and a few that manages a few felony crimes. The state constitution establishes criminal jurisdiction - creating the office of the county prosecutor and gives the counties the power to bring criminal charges. Counties handle 99% of all felonies in the state but when a lack resources or a conflict of interest occurs, the AG's office can receive the case. Statute 43.10. 232 allows the county prosecutor or the governor ask in writing the AG to manage a case.

Commissioner Kendrick: Perceived over prosecution – how is that handled? How can a county prosecutor be curtailed?

Mr. Hillman - The prosecutor is subject to recall by the voters – the AGs office does not have a legal mechanism within its reach.

Commissioner Quinn: Concerning a state-wide review of disparities; is there a potential broad commitment around addressing disparities within the system?

Mr. Hillman. It is something that could be discussed with the county prosecutors – it is a topic important to the AG's office. Uniformity in data collection can be addressed by the legislature: We just supported a bill that required the collection of data when lethal force is used. Data collection is poor. Jurisdictions may not currently collect data because they don't have the resources or other reason.

Chair Hausa; are we talking about arrest records, or equitable enforcement of the law? My concern is about the data that can be collected and can support equitable enforcement of the law.

Commissioner Quinn: There isn't really a definition of equitable data; it's the outcome and that data can surface. A full body of data is needed in order to assess. It comes down to the demographics and who is being arrested. It can be surfaced by It's important when you have data, related to arrests and demographics will surface, when you have data related to arrests and prosecution – those things will surface but another part is but who is looking at the data? When a state-wide process of agreed upon criteria. If there's documentation, its hard to corrupt.

Mr. Hillman: Data helps describe the severity of the problem. There is some available, but are those arrested or prosecuted being treated the same.

Commissioner Franklin: How do you make in-roads into communities of color for recruitment?

Mr. Hillman: Bar associations and other orgs, but im embarrassed to say I don't know where they go outside of that. Now I need to find out.

Dr. Smith: The dean of UW Law is African American. Your organization can make contacts there. Nationally, regarding disparities is attention to disaggregation of data and that should follow suit here in the state of Washington.

3:50 pm – Washington State Equity Office Presentation: Dr. Karen Johnson, Director, WA State Office of Equity

Currently setting up the new office and work plan. April's virtual Meet & Greet is scheduled. Looks to assess all state agencies, listen to Black and Indigenous cultures across the state to accurately determine what the disparities are, and what increasing opportunities means for the communities directly. Aims to be intentional, strategic and not get caught up in fluff stuff or minutia and make sure laws, rules, policies, and practices that build and infrastructure leading to outcomes towards equity. Not interested in a mess of dashboards as there should be one that is accessible to everyone. Its good to be here and thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Commissioner Caupain: Is the office fully funded for you to be able to carry out the work and if not, what can CAAA do to help you?

Commissioner Quinn: What kind of authority do you have to reach into some of the departments? With the change in the federal government, there will be grants and will the state be set up to address disparities. It is an atrocity there isn't uniform data and a state-wide approach is the way to do it uniformly. CAA has been able to talk to agencies to address the issues but not hold them accountable.

Commissioner Fitzgerald: Just attended a data workshop presented by Dr. Patrick Jones, a public policy and economic analyst at Eastern Washington University. Data is so important in serving the community. Whatever I can do to be of assistance; would like to see parity in Eastern Washington.

Commissioner Waller: Of concern is the physical and mental health of our people. Historically it hasn't been taught or funded. Education and jobs are not applicable if we aren't around.

Commissioner Kendricks: We all are allowed to pursue life, liberty and in doing these things we will find happiness. I am here to support you. Let me know what I can do.

Dr. Smith: I'd like to see a solid explanation of what equity means. Many people interpret what it means. Consider partnering with the EOGOAC as also the Commissioner Sardinas and I are on the Regional Economic Recovery Task Force. Many of the earlier discussion on disparities aligns with this task force.

Commissioner Sardinas: We are working hard to define underserved communities of disparate impact. Also, there is a difference between equality and equity. Equity across all agencies in government. Explaining the Black experience to those who aren't Black and that Blacks are not monolithic: Black people have a different lived experience. When engaging agencies, they have that bench of knowledge and meet people where they are. Looking for a collaboration with your office - race work is hard work and we need tools.

Director Prince: Happy to see you the first director of the Washington State Equity Office. Looking forward to meeting and working with you going forward.

4:20 pm – Education Opportunity Gap Oversight Accountability Committee Update

Dr. James Smith and Dr. Tyson Marsh

Dr. Marsh represents CAAA as an alternate on the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) and he partners with school districts about culturally relevant teaching. Originally from Spokane. Dual pandemic – students of color are being marginalized. Concern is being expressed to the EOGOAC from families of color experiencing racial injustice in their district and trying to get help. It isn't just teachers – its administrators and principals who aren't aware how to interact with families and students of color.

In addition to the academic gap are additional problems as some are struggling with remote learning. The EOGOAC notes the lack of supports for student of color that have special education needs. Many students were not receiving what their IEPs called for and some have aged out of the system without receiving services they are entitled to. At the onset of the virus, 20% of the childcare centers had closed and remaining childcare had gone up in price.

Remote learning difficulties among households with multiple children has been reported. Aggregated data does not tell the story accurately. Disaggregated data is an identifier and can pinpoint where the problems are. Data is implying some Black children are doing better at home because they feel safe. The EOGOAC recommends institutionalized racism and white supremacy be named as a social/emotional issue students of color have to navigate.

Concerns about residual setbacks in K-12 for African American children due to COVID-19 stated. Incentives are needed to attract and retain teachers of color to the state

The EOGOAC finds itself being tapped more often to participate in workgroups and to elaborate their findings. More constituents are needed to assist and help with. The Black Child Development Institute BCDI will be working with CAAA to advocate education issues concerning students of color.

4:40 pm – Public Comment

No public comment

5:00 pm- Adjournment