



Commission Chair Franklin Donahoe  
Representing Snohomish County

Commissioner Sara Franklin  
Representing South King County

Commissioner De'Sean Quinn  
Representing South King County

Commissioner Sheila Reed Trahan  
Representing Tri-Cities

Commissioner Dr. James Smith  
Representing King County

Commissioner Dorian Waller  
Representing Pierce County

Commissioner Andrea Caupain  
Representing King County

Commissioner Will Howard  
Representing Pierce County

Executive Director Edward O. Prince

## Commission on African American Affairs Public Meeting Minutes Friday, September 25, 2020 via Zoom 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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

Absent: Commissioner Bruce. Quorum established

**3:00 PM** -- Meeting called to order

**3:02 PM** -- Moment of silence for Mayor Harold Moss

**3:05 PM** – Motion to adopt previous meeting minutes. Motion seconded. Meeting minutes adopted

**3:10 PM – Legislative Session Preview:** Washington State Representative Debra Entenman

A small cohort of members are working to move approximately 60 pieces of legislation forward over the next few legislative sessions that will address how public safety is executed in Washington state.

Believes reform and training of police officers is needed and when deadly force is used, it cannot be left up to the police to investigate themselves.

Two pieces of legislation forthcoming independent investigation under the Attorney General's office and standing up an independent prosecutorial position as the working relationship with between prosecutors and police may cause difficulty in the filing of criminal charges.

Seeks policy that ends Qualified Immunity: when an officer breaks the law, the officer cannot resume their work with the police through collective bargaining. Also seeks to decertify law enforcement to end the circular abuse. No officers have been decertified in Washington due to misconduct. Language is being discussed currently.

The Data Privacy legislation sponsored by Rep. Entenmann called for a moratorium on the use of facial recognition software to preserve the right to privacy while in public. It was not successful last session. The right to privacy while in public should be preserved. There are biases integrated in these algorithms when used by law enforcement and there is evidence these biases in algorithms exist.

Asks the commission to mobilize with a cadre of people of color in Olympia every day during session.

Many students do not have access to the internet, broadband or a device allowing access to their educators. Comcast is only in Western Washington and their \$10 plan does not include devices. This means basic education is not being provided as directed by the state's constitution. Broadband as a public utility discussion is occurring in light of COVID-19 and legislation is being drafted.

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Working on permanent, identifiable structures installed in Olympia to recognize the African Americans who founded of Washington state. Funds have already been appropriated

### **3:40 – Fiduciary Legislation Update: Washington State Senator Bob Hasegawa**

Washington state needs a public bank. Currently, the state's banker is U.S. Bank. They answered the bid and gets to use our tax revenue. Commercial banks have carved up public finance and use our tax dollars to leverage anyway they want. Resulting in the state having to sell bonds for capital investments and projects. Sen. Hasegawa feels Washington should have its own public bank. Money is the utility of an economy and too important to put in the hands of Wall Street: We would maintain control of our tax dollars for investment into our community through a public bank. Fractional Reserve Lending means if we capitalized the bank with 1 billion, with tax revenue flowing through it - we would leverage out to 10 billion in capacity. The state does not have the capacity to borrow any more money as we are at our debt service limit currently. Selling a billion in bonds will cost 2 or 3 billion when paid off and that revenue is of benefit to the bank, not the state. When we lose access to state dollars to keep our businesses going, we lose the infrastructure to keep going after those state dollars. All of our minority contracting is folding. Our contracting procedures need fixing also. They only go for the lowest bidding, meaning only the largest companies are able to bid on these public projects. A public bank would increase the capacity so much.

A public bank would create capacity to create jobs and support communities by turning a profit - creating new revenue and go to the people instead of Wall Street. Raising new revenue without raising taxes. In commercial banks, credit dries up - especially in Black and BIPOC communities – they have hard times accessing capital to begin with and this is really exposed during this health crisis. Out of 60,000 Cambodian people in King County, currently, there aren't any Cambodian businesses remaining because they could not access the PPP loans. Commercial banks are cyclical - tightening credit when the economy turns down because they aren't sure loans will be repaid. A public bank runs counter-circular – because its mission is to support the people – extending credit and injecting new money into the economy instead of benefitting shareholders. The passage of a bill looks possible, but the concern is the language being too narrow. A bill must be able to provide help for BIPOC communities.

Right to be banked – a huge unbanked community, Halal communities, money transmitters, etc don't have bank accounts. Commercial banks are closing their accounts. A public bank may be of benefit for these communities. One public bank model is the Bank of North Dakota. It just celebrated its 100 year anniversary. Established by a third party in the 1800's, the Bank of North Dakota just reported their 16 year of consecutive profits for the people – even during the 2008 recession. They were not invested in the derivatives that caused Wall Street to fail. With that 16<sup>th</sup> year of profit - they returned 18.6% on their investment.

- Racial impact statements will be an early mover in session. Racial disparity that occurs with legislation. There may be a misperception on the disparities council concerning health impact statements and racial impact statements. Although they dig deep into the weeds in the research on the issues they deal with, a different perspective may be needed.
- Department of Commerce determined equity is 'by and for' – but does not go far enough to say 'by and for communities of color' in the distribution of CARES funding.
- Concerning potential budget cuts: 43% of African Americans are using some form of social services. Cannot trim the budget through regressive taxes such as sales tax increases. Social services need to be funded: past changes in eligibility rules were tightened too much. Most no longer qualify and this has given rise to people housing and income insecurity.

### **Commissioner Reports**

**Land Trusts:** Commissioner Caupain – There are different schools of thought regarding the use of land trusts; it is a means of collective community wealth usually 200-300 years in length. Various feelings

exist when the idea is presented to the community; some feel it is substandard ownership while others feel it is a means to land ownership. The mechanism may not work for everyone. Africatown was a large scale recognition of a huge displacement and racial wealth divide was growing. It was felt the trust was a means of tackling both issues at the same time. Before its creation, a feasibility study was conducted with Seattle University, multiple types of land trusts were examined. The rush in the Central District was the decline of black folk from 70% to 20% within a very short period time and the land trust was a means of staving that off.

Commissioner Hausa feels this topic should be added to our list of legislative priorities. As an opportunity for people to earn wealth.

**Department of Employment Security/ Unemployment Compensation:** Commissioner Waller is active in trying to resolve UI cases as the lag in distribution of funds has been waiting for months to receive a check. He is working with one of the ESD commissioners about a overhaul and an effective way of reaching Black communities across the state to improve their processes in addition to paying the people who are in dire need of funds. The impact on Black households is greater as these households generally are underpaid and now have no income.

**Independent Investigations Task Force:** Commissioner Kendricks notes that there is serious discussion on what independent investigations look like. It is a separate entity that would have independent investigators and what powers would be given them. There is considerable resistance; three meetings remain with an additional meeting scheduled to address systemic racism within the Task Force. Recommendations from this group will advise the governor.

**Tobacco/Smoking Cessation Efforts:** Commissioner Franklin-Phillips notes the Center for Multicultural Health has been in the forefront regarding this issue early on and deserve credit for their work. Of late, another group was given publicity without mention of the Center.

**4:58 PM – Public Comment**

Forum opened public comment. No public comment

**5:00 PM - Adjournment**