



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

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Interim

Executive Director

Jessica Wong

One Ashburton Place

12th Floor

Boston, MA 02108

www.aacommission.org

Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2021, 5:00pm to 6:00pm

Register in advance for this meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvc--hpzguHdPt17f-KeoznXLiWxKMvoPS](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvc--hpzguHdPt17f-KeoznXLiWxKMvoPS)

*Please note this meeting will be recorded

Meeting will be held via teleconference in compliance with the Governor's Executive Order on the Open Meeting Law and COVID-19

Absent Commissioners are highlighted and remote participants are indicated by an asterisk*. Quorum was reached by attendance.

Attachments:

- Letter from June Chan
- Article from the Patriot Ledger

1. Call meeting to order

Sam calls the meeting to order at 5:03pm

2. Discussion on anti-Asian racism

Sam reads the letter and 2/2/21 email from June Chan. Jay did reach out to June to speak further but June rejected the offer.

Meena expresses concern about the demands set forth by June Chan. Meena states our limited capacity with staffing and funding. Meena states there are Asian members on BSC and approach the diversity officer. Michelle Wu spoke up. It is fair for AAC to speak up but does not understand where the tone of June is coming from

Megha expresses sympathy with June's letter since AAC made a greater commitment to condemn racism

Bora states that we can advocate but we cannot make demands. We may put out statements but as an advocate tone.

Vira states that June named three school committee members. Vira attests to their character and her confidence in two of the three school committee members that were named. The calls of resignations is not necessary. Dr. Lorna Rivera is the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development & Public Policy, and an associate professor of Women's & Gender Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Alexandra Oliver-Dávila is the Executive Director of Sociedad Latina. She further expresses that Lacontó resigned. But the other two members do not deserve this.

Ekta states that AAC may be looked upon to be the leader in regards to these incidents. This may have been a misstep if we committed to racial solidarity and take accountability for the delay in our response if we put out a statement.

Danielle expresses that June sent the letter to the AAC two months after the incident and did not reach out to the AAC the day after the incident.



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Vira requests that EC reach out to the BSC and Superintendent that AAC has been following the aftermath of the incident to let them know that AAC is here as a resource to be helpful in combating systemic racism

Nate states that this speaks to a larger issue on structural racism but the AAC should consider a community based research for study on the rise of these type of incidents to provide additional documentation about the impact.

Megha asks about how AAC partners with different institutions and if we issue a statement, what are the concrete steps that we are allowed to advocate for?

Sam states the challenges of the impact and capacity that AAC has. Sam expresses that this is where the Commissioners have to come together to decide how we can address issues that are attainable. Sam clarifies that Commissioners are allowed to make inquiries to different institutions and bring it back to the full Commission

Danielle clarifies that Commissioners have autonomy to reach out and utilize the sub-committees to develop actions steps. Danielle states that she and Sam were contacted by UMB researcher for Korean Americans to participate in a survey on those who have been affected by racial violence. Expresses interest in data findings from community partners.

Sam expresses that there is such little data and expresses further support for data disaggregation because we need more information to advocate.

Ekta supports taking more of a structural lens. This letter expresses accountability but if that is not the route we want to take then we may empower our community on how our community can build solidarity amongst each other who are facing racism and giving them tools to call in people who are not recognizing their aggressions and privilege.

Sam supports creating best practices and calling on those who have the post power and impact to be most effective. Not just calling out but calling in to use our positions.

Meena suggests not overstepping June and her group who are leading this effort. Meena suggests formulating a process and approach on responding to letters in order to not give a partisan stance because we have folks of different backgrounds. Meena encourages empowering the EC to write statements and is willing to help as well as forming a committee to specifically address these issues.

Nate expresses the need for a most cohesive way to hear about incidents in the community so that AAC is not in a reactive way but more proactive. There needs to be an internal process for handling letters/complaints. AAC's website should also be clear on what is AAC's capacity on what we can and cannot do based on our statute.

Vira states we should address, what is our policy around receiving emails. We also need to acknowledge what we can do as a Commission and as an individual. Vira also mentions that we also need to direct our attention to what is happening in other areas such as Western MA.



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Mary Lee suggests EC creating a blueprint on how sub-committees should be focusing their agendas

Haniya states that the health and human services can take on some of the racism aspects in terms of mental health. She also suggests what angle we want to take because of the complexity of this issue but the sub-committees are be utilized.

3. Next Commission meeting: February 16, 2021

4. Other Community updates & Meeting adjourned

Meena motions to adjourn meeting

Megha seconds

Yes: Meena, Megha, Danielle, Cinda, Mary Lee, Nate, Haniya, Bora, Vira, Ekta

No: None

No answer from Betty

Motions passes

Meeting adjourns at 6:00pm



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