



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION  
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 16, 2024**

The July 16, 2024, meeting Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) was at County of Los Angeles Hall of Administration, Sybil Brand Room 372, 500 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, California, 90012.

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M. and read the Los Angeles County Land Acknowledgment.

Invocation

Commissioner John Only A Chief provided an invocation.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog  
Vice Chairperson Mark Villasenor  
Treasurer Denise Escoto  
Caroline Bhalla  
Andrea Garcia  
Vivian Garcia  
Dawn Jackson  
Mona Morales Recalde  
Bryce Lewis-Smith  
Rudy Ortega Jr.  
John Only A Chief  
Rich Toyon  
Chrissie Castro  
Rene' Williams

Absent: Ted Tenorio (Excused)

Staff: Alexandra Valdes, LANAIC Executive Director  
Heather Rigby, Chief Deputy  
Stephanie Guadron, LANAIC Administrative Manager

Quorum was met.

Commissioner & Staff Introductions

Commissioners provided brief introductions including their names, appointing office and tribal affiliation.



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION  
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 16, 2024**

Public Comment

Cynthia Ruiz – Cherokees of Los Angeles - Comment on Agenda Item 6.1

*I have been in the community my entire life, second gen community advocate. The title of the report sounds good, but the fine print of it is an attempt to dismantle the commission. I don't think it should be done at the expense of the commission. Wants to transfer the staff and resources to the office and would render this commission operational. This has been the go-to commission for all Native things in the county. If you dismantle you will lose the voice of the community. If you lose the county resources, our elected commissioners don't have a point. The CEO will continue to identify cost savings. Disservice to community. Strongly oppose it.*

Kimberly Johnson – Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians- Comment on Agenda Item 6.1

*I was on the Commission from many years, I have two emails. One from 1993. They are on why the SGB was created and how the Department of Community and Senior Services was going to dismantle it. Ron fought that they should only be Community Elected and that it should be sovereign so that we will not be quieted down by the County.*

Presentations

**Presentation on the Report Back on Proclaiming November 2023 as Native American Heritage Month and Investing in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities -, Kim Ortega (Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis), Anthony Baker (County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office), Starr Coleman (County of Los Angeles Office of County Counsel) and Heather Rigby (Chief Deputy, LA County Department of Arts and Culture)**

Kim Ortega (Office of Supervisor Solis) provided background on the motion and the report back and clarified to the Commission that Supervisor Solis is not seeking to dismantle the Commission but was looking at all the options as noted in the report back. Representatives from County Counsel and CEO were also in attendance and provided some summarization of various parts of the report back. Ms. Ortega also noted the County's investment to the Commission is much higher than the City and holds all liabilities. She also stated that the agreement between the City and the County is over 40 years old and that the agreement should be renegotiated or it may be better to develop unique bodies. Ms. Ortega stated that the lack of language in County Code may need to be amended.

There was a robust discussion from commissioners including discussion on autonomy, self-determination, the Commission's unique culture and a history of government disenfranchising Native people. There was also a discussion about the City's contribution and the opportunity for renegotiation with the City.



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION  
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 16, 2024**

Finally, there was discussion about the LANAIC’s bylaws and mandated trainings and adherence to laws and policies. The discussion concluded with representatives from the Office of Supervisor Solis sharing their intent to come back to the August meeting and Commissioners stating that they want to debrief and determine how they want to respond to the report back.

**Care First Community Updates, Tencha Chavez (LANAIC CFCI Alternate Designee)**

*This item was tabled by the Chair until the next meeting.*

Action Items

**Take action adopting absentee excuses for the July 16, 2024 meeting: Commissioner Ted Tenorio (Excused)**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Mark Villasenor and seconded by Commissioner John Only A Chief to adopt absentee excuses for the July 16, 2024 meeting: Commissioner Ted Tenorio (Excused). The motion passed.*

<b>YES</b>	Imitates Dog, Villasenor, Escoto, Bhalla, A. Garcia, Jackson, Morales Recalde, Only A Chief, V. Garcia, Lewis-Smith
<b>NO</b>	
<b>ABSTAIN</b>	Castro, Williams, Toyon, Ortega Jr.
<b>ABSENT</b>	Tenorio

**Take action approving the June 16, 2024 Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) Unapproved Meeting Minutes**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Rudy Ortega, Jr. and seconded by Commissioner Mark Villasenor to approve the unapproved June 16, 2024 LANAIC Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion passed.*

<b>YES</b>	Imitates Dog, Villasenor, Escoto, Jackson, Morales Recalde, Ortega Jr., Only A Chief, Toyon, V. Garcia, Lewis-Smith, A. Garcia, Bhalla
<b>NO</b>	
<b>ABSTAIN</b>	Castro, Williams
<b>ABSENT</b>	Tenorio



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION  
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 16, 2024**

**Amend the Minutes for the February 20, 2024 meeting previously adopted on March 19, 2024 to reflect that Commissioner Mona Morales-Reclade was granted an excused absence**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Rudy Ortega, Jr. and seconded by Commissioner Mark Villasenor to amend the minutes for the February 20, 2024 meeting previously adopted on March 19, 2024 to reflect that Commissioner Mona Morales-Reclade was granted an excused absence. The motion passed.*

<b>YES</b>	Imitates Dog, Villasenor, Escoto, Bhalla, Jackson, Morales Recalde, Ortega Jr., Only A Chief, Toyon, A. Garcia, V. Garcia, Lewis-Smith, Castro, Williams
<b>NO</b>	
<b>ABSTAIN</b>	
<b>ABSENT</b>	Tenorio

**Adopt draft letter recommending that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors neither support nor oppose HR6859: Gabrielino/Tongva Nation Recognition Act of 2023**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Rudy Ortega, Jr. and seconded by Commissioner Mark Villasenor to adopt letter recommending that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors neither support nor oppose HR6859: Gabrielino/Tongva Nation Recognition Act of 2023. The motion passed.*

<b>YES</b>	Imitates Dog, Villasenor, Escoto, Bhalla, Jackson, Morales Recalde, Ortega Jr., Only A Chief, Toyon, A. Garcia, V. Garcia, Lewis-Smith, Castro, Williams
<b>NO</b>	
<b>ABSTAIN</b>	
<b>ABSENT</b>	Tenorio

Discussion Items

**Discussion about [Continuing the Work of Reparations](#) in Los Angeles County Board Motion (June 4, 2024)**

Commissioner Rudy Ortega, Jr. stated that he read an article about the County making reparations for Black Americans and shared that would like to advocate for access to County museums for AIAN residents during Native American Heritage Month.



## LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 16, 2024

Alexandra Valdes stated that her recommendation would be to write a letter utilizing the June 4 motion as an example. She also stated that she read in the article that in order for access to the free services, participants had to complete a form with personal information.

The Commission supported Alexandra drafting a letter to Supervisor Solis for discussion at their August meeting.

### **Discussion about possibility of working with the [State Native American Graduation Adornments Taskforce](#)**

Commissioner Rudy Ortega, Jr. stated that he serves on a State taskforce and they heard from many community members that folks weren't allowed to wear their regalia at graduation ceremonies. He also shared that the taskforce asked if the LANAIC would be interested in hosting a listening session in LA County. Alexandra Valdes asked Rudy to make an e-introduction to the contact on the taskforce so that she could learn more hosting a listening session and report back to the Commission at their August meeting.

### **Chair's Report**

#### **General Updates/Announcements**

Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog stated that Alexandra sent out an email asking for Native American Heritage Month nominees and asked for commissioners to submit nominations for the three categories before August 6 at 5:00PM.

### **Executive Director Report**

#### **Peter Pan at the Hollywood Pantages Theatre**

Alexandra Valdes stated that there was a power outage at the Pantages and there is an updated invite that the commissioners should have received via email. Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog encouraged commissioners to share the discount code that was provided by the Pantages.

#### **County of Los Angeles Department of Arts and Culture Community Impact Arts Grants Revised Eligibility Guidelines**

Alexandra Valdes stated that within the Department of Arts and Culture there is a Community Impact Arts Grant and that the grant eligibility was recently revised to include local non-federally recognized tribes.



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION  
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF JULY 16, 2024**

Committee & Ad-hoc Committee Reports

**Self-Governance Board**

Commissioner Dawn Jackson stated that the Community Needs Assessment survey is live and she made signs with QR codes to help collect responses.

**Homelessness Committee**

Commissioner Andrea Garcia stated that a new position is needed to continue the work and that not much has moved since the last time. She also stated that CEO would like to have listening sessions with Black, Latino and Native community members. She stated that when the info is available she will share it out and that a new report will be ready before the next meeting.

**2024 Native American Heritage Month Ad Hoc Committee**

None

**FY23-24 Annual Report Ad Hoc Committee**

None

**Legislative Agenda Ad Hoc Committee**

None

Commissioner General Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Commissioner Chrissie Castro asked if the LANAIC is going to debrief about what happened during the meeting. Commissioner Mark Villasenor stated that a debrief should be added to the next month's agenda.

Announcements/Future Agenda Items

None

Commission Adjournment

Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog adjourned the meeting at 8:20 PM.