



**LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION  
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NOVEMBER 19, 2024**

The November 19, 2024, meeting Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) was at the Autry Museum of the West.

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Chairperson Shawn Imitates called the meeting to order at 6:32 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  
Secretary Bryce Lewis-Smith  
Caroline Bhalla  
Chrissie Castro  
Dr. Andrea Garcia  
Vivian Garcia  
Dawn Jackson  
Mona Morales Recalde (Remote)  
John Only A Chief  
Rudy Ortega Jr.  
Rene' Williams (Remote)

Absent: Ted Tenorio (Excused)  
Rene' Williams (Excused)

Staff: No staff present.

Quorum was met.

Commissioner Introductions

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



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Public Comment

Dustin Hermann - TreePeople

*Share about California’s Fifth Climate Assessment and connecting to figure out how to include Tribal voices woven throughout the assessment.*

*TreePeople is leading the LA Region Chapter community engagement. They are starting a process to engage Tribes in community advisory contributions to the Fifth Assessment. Expressed to hope to return in January.*

Cynthia Ruiz - Community Advocate

*Saying thank you for coming to the community by hosting the meeting at the Autry since it is easier to access than the Hall of Administration.*

Action Items

**6.1 Adopt absentee excuses**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Rudy Ortega Jr. and seconded by Commissioner Mark Villasenor to adopt Commissioner Williams’ and Tenorio’s absentee excuses for the November 19, 2024 meeting. The motion passed.*

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

**6.2 Approve the October 15, 2024 Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) Unapproved Meeting Minutes**

*A motion was made by Secretary Bryce Lewis-Smith and seconded by Commissioner Andrea Garcia to approve the unapproved October 15, 2024 LANAIC Meeting Minutes as presented.*

*The motion passed.*

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

Discussion Items

**7.1 Discussion of updated draft LANAIC FY23-24 Annual Report**

Chairperson Imitates Dog introduced the draft report, noting it will be finalized and submitted for final review and possible adoption at the next meeting.

**7.2. Discussion of draft letter to LA City Council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson regarding ordering of annual Indigenous People’s Day and Native American Heritage Month Council presentations**

Chairperson Imitates-Dog introduced two versions of the letter: one written by Secretary Lewis-Smith and the other one with edits from Alexandra. The Commission plans to vote on the letter during the January meeting.

**7.3. Discussion about possible collaboration with PolicyLink on a regional mini-paper about LA’s American Indian and Alaska Native community and housing affordability Shawn tabled until January.**

Chairperson Imitates-Dog tabled this topic.

**7.4. Discussion on guidance for Commissioner’s requested to speak at public events Caroline asked if there were any guidelines to speak on behalf of the commission at a USC conversation.**

Commissioner Bhalla inquired about guidelines for representing the Commission at public events.

Key discussion points:

- Vice Chairperson Villaseñor emphasized disclosure is necessary if funding is involved, though no payments are available.
- Chairperson Imitates-Dog stressed informing the Commission about any representation.
- Commissioner Morales Recalde suggested identifying as a tribal member if not officially representing the Commission.
- Commissioner Castro proposed using Commission talking points to improve community representation.
- Commissioner Ortega advised coordination with the Chair to ensure proper alignment.



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**7.5. Discussion on possibility of adding LANAIC pages to the Dept. of Arts and Culture website**

Alexandra has previously brought up having a page on the Department of Arts and Culture website in addition to having our own website.

Key discussion points:

- Commissioner Only A Chief: Discussed this as a first step but expressed not wanting to get stuck on the Department of Arts and Culture website.
- Chair Imitates Dog: Discussed having a line item in the budget and that it could be discussed during the 2025 LANAIC retreat.
- Commissioner Ortega Jr.: We need to discuss this with the Board of Supervisors.

Chair's Report

**8.1. Recap of November 15, 2024 Meeting Between LANAIC Chair Imitates Dog, Commissioner Morales Recalde, Professor Nancy Mithlo (UCLA) and Joshua Garret-Davis (The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens)**

Chair Imitates Dog shared that on November 15 he along with Commissioner Morales Recalde, Professor Nancy Mithlo and Josh Garret-Davis from the Huntington met to brainstorm the 50th Anniversary of the Commission. He shared that the Huntington seemed on board to get this event to happen. They are excited. What does the Commission want to get out of this work? Finally, Chair Imitates Dog shared that Professor Mithlo has some good ideas around this idea awhile we are two years out and that monthly meetings will continue.

Commissioner Rich Toyon shared that the Huntington released some documents about the commission separate from the Commission's meeting.

Commissioner Andrea Garcia asked if the plan includes interviewing folks who have been on the commission for a while? Chairperson Imitates Dog confirmed that they will meet with commissioners past and present.

Commissioner Dawn Jackson reminded the Commission that the Huntington used to host the Commission meetings.

Commissioner Morales Recalde shared that the Huntington seems interested to engage and work with the Commission in any capacity.

Chairperson Imitates Dog shared that there will be an official ad hoc committee.



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Commissioner Ortega Jr shared that this should be communications worthy to spark up some traction and excitement. People can be interviewed to discuss what it means for this anniversary to come.

### 8.2 2025 LANAIC Retreat

Chairperson Imitates Dog shared that he is trying to identify a couple dates for the 2025 retreat to discuss what we want to do in the next year. He shared that he will send out an email with date options.

The Commission identified Saturday, January 25, 2025 from 10 am to 1 pm to hold the retreat.

### 8.3. Establish a Bylaws Ad Hoc and Appoint Members

Chair Imitates Dog shared that there's been discussion around the Commissions' bylaws and that the Commission would like to establish a Bylaws Ad Hoc committee to update the Commission's bylaws.

**Members:** Mark Villasenor (Ad Hoc Chair), Chrissie Castro and Mona Morales Recalde

**Sunset Date:** November 30, 2025

Key discussion points:

Commissioner Chrissie Castro: The County made it seem like we were not in a leadership position. The changes that have been identified aren't changes the Commission identified (language around involvement with the staff).

Vice Chairperson Mark Villasenor: The County said we shouldn't have a bylaws as a Commission.

Commissioner Chrissie Castro: There was a meeting with County Counsel; around seven years ago. The ordinance by itself doesn't give any direction to the Commission.

Commissioner John Only A Chief: The Commission should take a lead in updating the commission.

Commissioner Chrissie Castro: It's not only the bylaws, it's the charter, and the relationship between the Commission.



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### Executive Director's Report

#### **9.1 General Updates**

This item was tabled until January 21, 2025.

### Committee & Ad Hoc Committee Reports

#### **10.1 Executive Committee**

##### **10.1.1. Adopted Letter Responding to Report Back on Proclaiming 2023 Native American Heritage Month and Investing in American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities.**

Chair Imitates Dog shared that the Executive Committee unanimously adopted the letter and Alexandra sent the letter on our behalf. He shared that the Executive Committee will keep people updated and gave thanks to the authors of the letter.

#### **10.2 Self Governance Board**

Self Governance Board Chair Dawn Jackson shared that the SGB's focus has been the Community Needs Assessment. She shared that the survey is open through the end of January 2025 and that the SGB has had booths at powwows and community events. Survey response numbers are still low and she called upon commissioners to share out the survey.

#### **10.3 Homelessness Committee**

Homelessness Committee Chair Andrea Garcia announced the webinar Thursday 9-11am. Two community panelists will be presenting. She discussed sunseting the Homelessness Committee with the intent of moving the committee into the entire Commission meeting. This would require including action items and education opportunities to discuss Native American and Alaska Native homelessness, so our Commission has substantive knowledge in the subject. She suggested 15 minutes a meeting to discuss homelessness.

Key discussion points:

Chair Imitates Dog: This could be something we discuss during the retreat.

Commissioner Caroline Bhalla : This feels like something we could decide at the retreat.



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### 10.4 2024 Native American Heritage Month Ad-hoc Committee

Chairperson Imitates Dog discussed wanting to go first during the first City Council meeting to honor our community leaders. He provided the run of show for the November 22, 2024 event at LA City Hall:

9:30 am - Ribbon cutting for the Bridge Gallery

10:00 am – Enter Council Chambers (Currently, slated to go second and hoping to go first)  
Following Council Presentation - Media Room for photos and reception in the courtyard with speakers to honor our honorees

#### Commissioner General Comments on Non-Agenda Items

No Commissioner General Comments on Non-Agenda Items were provided.

#### Announcements/Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Andrea Garcia: Curious about how we can be more thoughtful about what we do in this body. This could be an item we can add to the retreat.

Commissioner Rudy Ortega Jr.: Discussed identifying how federal budget cuts are going to impact the County.

Commissioner Andrea Garcia: Right, something about the hits we are going to take and discuss philanthropic funding opportunities.

The Commission discussed requesting that Alexandra to pull the data for upcoming cuts as well as inquire about what it means to have set asides in our communities.

Commissioner Bryce Lewis-Smith: Discussed the Tribal User Needs Assessment survey to send to the commissioners.

Commissioner Chrissie Castro shared about holiday gathering options. She shared that California Native Vote Project will provide food and the event will be on Thursday, December 19, 2024 at Bar Chelou in Pasadena or Redbird. She shared that they would need 30 people there. The Commission expressed a desire to move forward with this plan. Commissioner Castro also introduced Maeve Fairbanks.

Commissioner John Only A Chief: Would be good to keep our communication with National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) as the Trump Administration steps into power.



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Commission Adjournment

Chairperson Imitates Dog shared that the next meeting of the LANAIC will be Tuesday, January 21, 2025 from 6:30 pm at the Hall of Administration, Room 372, 500 W. Temple Street, LA, CA 90012.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm.