



LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MARCH 18, 2025

The March 18, 2025 Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) meeting was at the County of Los Angeles Hall of Administration, Sybil Brand Room 372, 500 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, California, 90012.

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement

Vice Chairperson Mark Villasenor called the meeting to order at 6:33 P.M. and read the Los Angeles County Land Acknowledgment.

Invocation

Commissioner John Only A Chief provided an invocation.

Roll Call

Present: 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
John Only A Chief
Rudy Ortega Jr.
Rich Toyon (Remote)
Rene' Williams

Absent: Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog (Excused)
Ted Tenorio (Excused)

Staff: Alexandra Valdes, LANAIC Executive Director
Heather Rigby, Department of Arts and Culture Chief Deputy (Remote)
Megan Moret, Department of Arts and Culture Board Liaison

Quorum was met.

Commissioner Introductions

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



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Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

Presentations

6.1 Overview of Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority American Indian & Alaska Native E-Curriculum

Jackson Thompson, Instructional Designer with Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, provided a presentation on the recently developed LAHSA American Indian & Alaska Native E-Curriculum

[E-Curriculum Registration Link](#)

6.2 Overview of LA City Parks Needs Assessment (PNA)

Darryl Ford (Superintendent of Planning, LA City Department of Recreation and Parks), Sarah Swanseen (Senior Landscape Architect, OLIN), and Thomson Dryjanski (Senior Associate, Estolano Advisors) presented on the LA City Parks Needs Assessment.

Commissioner Rene' Williams recommended that the LANAIC appoint a commissioner to serve on the LA City Parks Needs Assessment (PNA) Steering Committee.

Discussion Items

7.1 Discussion of the February 15, 2025 LANAIC Community Listening Session

Commissioner Caroline Bhalla shared a recap of the February 15, 2025 Community Listening Session. She shared that the event was a success and was well received by participants. She discussed takeaways from the table she facilitated, including strategies she used to support the emotional dialogues.

7.2. Discussion of AIAN Homelessness in LA County

Commissioner Andrea Garcia briefly shared about the upcoming *Natives in L.A. Summit: Envisioning Home Across Generations* and encouraged commissioners to attend and share the event with their networks. She shared that this is a culminating part of her Stanton Fellowship.

7.3. Discussion of Impacts of Federal Administration on LA County's AIAN Community

Vice Chairperson Villasenor facilitated the LANAIC in a brief discussion about how the current federal administration's policies are impacting Native people. Commissioner Bhalla shared about a decision made that day to remove information regarding the Navajo Code Talkers from federal websites. It was shared that that decision had already been reversed since being announced.



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Commissioner Ortega Jr. discussed how his tribe is approaching responding to the actions of the Trump administration and that they are taking time to observe, since many actions are being reversed. Commissioner Castro shared that although the AIAN community may fly under the radar, it will take a multicultural coalition to fight back, and it is important that the AIAN community is a part of that.

Action Items

8.1 Adopt absentee excuses

A motion was made by Secretary Bryce Lewis-Smith and seconded by Commissioner Chrissie Castro to adopt Chair Shawn Imitates-Dog and Commissioner Tenorio’s absentee excuses for the March 18, 2025 meeting. The motion passed.

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

8.2 Approve the February 15, 2025 Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) Unapproved Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Caroline Bhalla and seconded by Treasurer Lewis-Smith to approve the unapproved February 15, 2024 LANAIC Meeting Minutes as presented.

The motion passed.

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



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8.3 Adopt Draft Memos to the LA County Board of Supervisors and LA City Mayor Summarizing the feedback from the February 15, 2025 LANAIC Community Listening Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Bhalla and seconded by Commissioner Rene' Williams, to adopt the draft memos to the LA County Board of Supervisors and LA City Mayor summarizing the feedback from the February 15, 2025 LANAIC Community Listening Session with the following changes: move all content following the three listening session questions into an attachment and add a concluding paragraph to the letter stating that the LANAIC will be submitting a follow-up letter in April 2025 with policy recommendations.

The motion passed.

Commissioner Chrissie Castro volunteered to write the draft policy recommendation letters to the BOS and Mayor Bass for the LANAIC to consider adopting on April 15, 2025.

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

8.4 Approve of Chair Shawn Imitates Dog or a designee providing the County of Los Angeles Land Acknowledgment at the L.A. Native Summit: Envisioning Home Across Generations (April 18, 2025) and participating on a summit panel to share the findings from the February 15, 2025 LANAIC Community Listening Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Castro and seconded by Commissioner Bhalla to approve of Treasurer Bryce Lewis-Smith providing the County of Los Angeles Land Acknowledgment at the L.A. Native Summit: Envisioning Home Across Generations (April 18, 2025) and participating on a summit panel to share the findings from the February 15, 2025 LANAIC Community Listening Session.

The motion passed.



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

Chair’s Report

9.1 General Updates

Vice Chairperson Villasenor tabled this item until the April 15, 2025 LANAIC meeting.

Executive Director’s Report

10.1 General Updates .

Alexandra Valdes shared that Julien Tan had been hired to fill the vacant Administrative Services I position. Ms. Tan began on March 17 and transferred from the LA County DA’s Office. She will be at the April 15, 2025 LANAIC meeting.

Committee & Ad Hoc Committee Reports

11.1 Executive Committee

Vice Chairperson Villasenor tabled this item until the April 15, 2025 LANAIC meeting.

11.2 Self Governance Board

Self Governance Board Chair Dawn Jackson shared that the SGB’s focus has been the 2026-2027 CSBG Community Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan and encouraged the commissioners to participate in the Saturday, May 17, 2025, CSBG Public Hearing at LA City College from 10 am to 12 pm. Alexandra shared that she continues to monitor the impacts of the federal administration on CSBG.

11.3 2025 Native American Heritage Month Ad-hoc Committee

2025 NAHM Ad-Hoc Committee Chair Lewis-Smith shared that both Councilmembers Rodriguez (CD7) and Hernandez (CD10) both had to decline hosting this year’s City Hall celebration and that the Ad-Hoc is currently looking for a sponsor and funding. He also shared that Alexandra will be emailing later this week to solicit 2025 NAHM Theme nominations and that the LANAIC will select a theme at the April 15, 2025 meeting. Finally, he shared that the Ad-Hoc has discussed honoring the various tribal firefighter crews that fought the LA Fires in January.



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11.4 LANAIC 50TH Anniversary Archive Ad Hoc Committee

Commissioner Morales Recalde shared that the committee has not met and has nothing to report currently.

11.5 LANAIC Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee

Commissioner Castro shared that she and Commissioner Morales Recalde met, but that other members were unable to attend. She also shared that they received a marked-up version of the bylaws from Heather Rigby. She shared the bylaws contained comments and questions from Counsel and Heather. She shared the Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee was only expecting comments from Counsel. Heather clarified that comments provided were inclusive of both Counsel and from her as a representative of the Department.

Heather agreed to send an updated redlined version to the Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee that delineated her comments from Counsel's comments and comments for which there was concurrence, as well meeting with the Ad Hoc and Counsel once the Ad Hoc had time to review the updated version in order to provide any more context that would be helpful.

Commissioner General Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Treasurer Lewis-Smith shared that through his work in the Governor's Office that they are seeking AIAN perspectives on climate change, and he will send that request to Alexandra to send out to commissioners.

Commissioner Ortega Jr. shared that he found was several historical documents from when the commission was established and will send them to Alexandra.

Announcements/Future Agenda Items

A request was made to put an item on a future agenda regarding the LANAIC website and possibly having a redirection from the Department of Arts and Culture page to the LANAIC website. A request was made as to have someone from the Departmental Communications Team come to discuss options.

Commission Adjournment

Vice Chairperson Villasenor shared that the next LANAIC meeting will be Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Hall of Administration, Room 372, 500 W. Temple Street, LA, CA 90012.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.