



## **LOS ANGELES CITY/COUNTY NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF APRIL 15, 2025**

The April 15, 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**

Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog called the meeting to order at 6:31 P.M. and read the Los Angeles County Land Acknowledgment.

### **Invocation**

Commissioner Ted Tenorio provided an invocation.

### **Roll Call**

Present: Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog  
Vice Chairperson Mark Villasenor  
Secretary Bryce Lewis-Smith  
Chrissie Castro  
Vivian Garcia  
Dawn Jackson  
Rich Toyon (Remote)  
Rene' Williams  
Ted Tenorio

Absent: Treasurer Denise Escoto  
Caroline Bhalla  
Dr. Andrea Garcia  
Mona Morales Recalde  
John Only A Chief  
Rudy Ortega Jr.

Staff: Alexandra Valdes, LANAIC Executive Director  
Heather Rigby, Department of Arts and Culture Chief Deputy  
Megan Moret, Department of Arts and Culture Board Liaison  
Julien Tan, LANAIC Administrative Manager

Quorum was met.

### **Commissioner Introductions**

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



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**5. Public Comment**

No public comment was provided.

**6. Action Items**

**6.1 Adopt absentee excuses**

*A motion was made by Secretary Bryce Lewis-Smith and seconded by Commissioner Rich Toyon to adopt Treasurer Denise Escoto, Commissioner Caroline Bhalla, Commissioner Dr. Andrea Garcia, Commissioner Mona Morales Recalde, Commissioner John Only A Chief, and Commissioner Rudy Ortega Jr's absentee excuses for the April 15, 2025 meeting. The motion passed.*

*The motion passed.*

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

**6.2 Approve the March 18, 2025 Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) Unapproved Meeting Minutes**

*A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mark Villasenor and seconded by Rene' Williams to approve the unapproved March 18, 2025 LANAIC Meeting Minutes as presented.*

*The motion passed.*

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

**6.3 Adopt a 2025 Native American Heritage Month Theme**

Final theme selected: 7. Firekeepers: Honoring Tribal Firefighters, Indigenous Stewardship, and Future Ancestors



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**6.4 Establish an Ad Hoc Subcommittee Consisting of all City-appointed Commission Members to Propose, for Full Commission Approval, a Land Acknowledgment Statement Consistent with the Values and Considerations Identified Through LA Civil Rights' and the Civic Memory Working Group's Research, using the County Language as a Starting Point, as Recommended by LA City Council**

Commissioner Chrissie Castro expressed that an ad hoc committee is unnecessary and that the proposed work is not in the Commission's charge. She confirmed with Alexandra that the County hired a consultant team when they developed a land acknowledgement. There was a discussion regarding the past efforts of LA City Department of Civil Rights (LACHR) to investigate the establishment of an LA City land acknowledgement, past presentations from LACHR to the LANAIC in 2024 and the Commission's previously adopted position to reject LACHR's process. Commissioner Castro inquired why the Commission took action to reject LACHR's process since the LANAIC had previously provided support to the County's process which was similar. Commissioner Castro volunteered to draft a letter to LA City to express that the Commission cannot develop a land acknowledgement for LA City as well as to provide support for the previous process LACHR underwent to draft a land acknowledgment for LA City.

*A motion was made by Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog and seconded by Commissioner Rene' Williams, for Commissioner Chrissie Castro to draft the letter to LA City Council expressing that the Commission cannot develop a land acknowledgement for LA City as well as to provide support for the previous process LACHR underwent to draft a land acknowledgment for LA City.*

*The motion passed.*

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

**6.5 Adopt Letters to the LA County Board of Supervisors and LA City Mayor Recommending Policy Solutions to Address American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Community Concerns Shared at the February 15, 2025 LANAIC Community Listening Session.**

Alexandra Valdes provided background on this item and the recently received letters. The Commission will review and send feedback to Alexandra by the close of business on Friday, April 18, 2025. Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog expressed that the word choices between "Native" and "Indigenous" in the draft letters should be edited to be consistent.



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**6.6 Appoint Chair Shawn Imitates Dog to Serve on the LA City Parks Needs Assessment Steering Committee**

Alexandra Valdes provided background on this item. Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog volunteered to fill the role.

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mark Villasenor and seconded by *Commissioner Rene' Williams, for Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog's appointment.*

*The motion passed.*

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

**7. Discussion Items**

**7.1 Discuss Drafting a Statement Including the Following, as shared by the AIAN community at the February 15, 2025 LANAIC Community Listening Session: a Cohesive Community Message in Response to the New Federal Administration and What the AIAN Community is Doing**

Alexandra Valdes provided background on the February 15, 2025 listening session. Community in attendance recommended that the Commission write a statement in response to the new federal administration and what the AIAN community is doing. Commissioner Bryce Lewis-Smith commented that besides writing a statement, the Commission can provide more substantial support to the community (e.g., holding space against the new Federal Administration or another prayer circle). Commissioner Chrissie Castro suggested responding to community members who provided feedback with our appreciation, updates on actions the Commission have taken, and addressing some of the concerns submitted by community members to close the loop.

**7.2 Discuss Moving the Content of LANAIC.lacounty.gov to a Page of the Department of Arts and Culture's Website**

Alexandra Valdes shared the Department of Arts and Culture website and demonstrated how one can access pages related to the commission (e.g., commissioner's bio, events). Heather Rigby informed the Commission that the Arts and Culture website will be updated eventually, and support will be provided if any updates are to be made. The Commission agreed to the Department building out a LANAIC page on the Department's website as a stopgap measure until a new LANAIC website can be developed.



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### **7.3 Discuss AIAN Homelessness in LA County**

Commissioner Rene' Williams invited the Commission to attend the *Natives in LA Summit* on Friday, April 18, 2025, at the Quiet Cannon. Commissioner Williams shared that over 200 people have registered and that they have a great agenda, separate sessions between youths and adults, and allies and funders will come together to share statewide data and announcements on collaborative works on developments. This event is an opportunity to check in with the AIAN community to determine if housing is still a priority in the community.

### **7.4 Discuss Impacts of Federal Administration on LA County's AIAN Community**

Alexandra reported out on the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program and informed the Commission that funding is secured through CY 2025, and that future funding is dependent on actions taken by Congress in September. Anticipating possible budget cuts and a possible gutting of CSBG, as noted in Project 2025, Alexandra shared that she has been working with the Department to advocate for Care First Community Investment (CFCI) funding as a plan b to backfill the CSBG contract.

### **Chair's Report**

#### **8.1 General Updates**

Chairperson Shawn Imitates Dog shared that he was invited to attend Mayor Karen Bass' State of the City address on April 21, 2025 and plans on attending.

### **9 Executive Director's Report**

#### **9.1 General Updates**

Alexandra Valdes shared the CSBG Community Action Plan and Community Needs Assessment survey analysis results, which reflected that the most pressing needs amongst the community are housing, utility assistance and, basic needs including nutrition assistance.

### **10 Committee & Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

#### **10.1 Executive Committee**

No report was provided.

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

Commissioner Dawn Jackson encouraged all commissioners to attend the CSBG Public Hearing on Saturday, May 17, 2025 from 10:00 to 12:00 at LA City College.



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**10.3 2025 Native American Heritage Month Ad-hoc Committee**

Commissioner Bryce Lewis-Smith updated the Commission that he is still seeking funding sources for Native American Heritage Month and hopes to provide more updates at the next meeting. He shared that the ad hoc will request NAHM honoree nominations in July, and the process will be shared later.

**10.4 LANAIC 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Archive Ad Hoc Committee**

No report was provided.

**10.5 LANAIC Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee**

Commissioner Chrissie Castro shared that the next step is to assess the Bylaws and bring the assessment to the body.

**11. Commissioner General Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

No comments were made.

**12. Announcements/Future Agenda Items**

No announcement on future agenda items.

**13. Commission Adjournment**

The next LANAIC meeting will be Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. Chair Imitates Dog shared that he reached out to the Autry Museum of the West to see if they could host the meeting. He will notify the Commission once a location has been secured.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.