



Commission on Equity Approved Minutes

Monday, March 23, 2026

Council Chambers and Online

1. Call to Order

Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Thelma Jackson, Chair; Makieda Hart, Vice Chair; Commissioners Clifton Brown, Raul Garza, Jon Hegwood (remote at 5:32); and Michelle Ewig, Lacey Youth Council Representative (present at 5:39)

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: Commissioners Annie Clay and Kim Sauer

STAFF PRESENT: Shannon Kelley-Fong, Assistant City Manager; Shanelle Pierce, Special Projects Administrator; Veronica Hand, Equity and Inclusion Program Manager; and Brandy Legomina, Deputy City Clerk

3. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Jackson presented the abbreviated Land Acknowledgement.

4. Approval of **Amended*** Agenda, Previous Meeting Minutes, and Consent Items

- A. Approval of Amended Agenda
- B. Approval of February 23, 2026, meeting minutes
- C. *September March 22, 2026, DEIB Regional Notes

Vice Chair Hart moved to approve the amended agenda, previous meeting minutes, and consent items. Commissioner Brown seconded. The motion carried.

5. Public Comment

No verbal public comment was received and (1) One written public comment was received.

6. Inspirational Item

A. Makieda Hart, Vice Chair

Vice Chair Hart presented a piece titled "The Revolution" in honor of Women's History Month.

7. Business Items

A. **2026-2028 Poet Laureate Application Review**

Shanelle Pierce, Special Projects Administrator

Pierce presented 2026-2028 Poet Laureate Application Review. The City advertised the Poet Laureate program through multiple channels and accepted applications from January 8 to March 6, 2026. One application was received. The following individuals assisted the Commission in reviewing applications for the 2026-2028 Poet Laureate:

- Cynthia Pratt, Lacey Poet Laureate
- Michelle Gipson, Annette Roth, and Aram Wheeler - Parks, Culture, and Recreation Board
- Sharla Desy - Library Board
- Julia Chavez, Saint Martin's University
- Suzanne Simons and Chris Dahl - Olympia Poetry Network
- CJ Dosch - South Puget Sound Community College

Poet Laureate Applicant Sonya Wohletz presented Poet Laureate Proposal 2026-2028, which included plans to promote poetry in Lacey, engage the community, track impact, and carry out poetry-related projects.

The panel discussed the applicant's artistic merit, community engagement experience, proposed community-based poetry programs, proposed budget, and other relevant factors. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Brown moved to recommend Sonya Wohletz as Poet Laureate for Council consideration. Commissioner Hart seconded. The motion carried.

B. **Public Art Donation Policy Review**

Shanelle Pierce, Special Projects Administrator

Pierce presented a proposed revision to the Public Art Donation Policy. This revision would address art donated by private individuals or organizations by adding a new section to Council Policy 10.03. Pierce detailed the donation process, criteria requirements, attribute considerations, and maintenance responsibilities. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Brown moved to recommend the proposed Public Art Donation Policy, with an amendment to include deaccession guidelines, for Council consideration. Commissioner Garza seconded. The motion carried.

C. 2026 Community and Cultural Grant Application Review

Veronica Hand, Equity and Inclusion Program Manager

Hand presented the 2026 Community and Cultural Grant Application Review. This program provides funding to support events that enhance community engagement, celebrate cultural diversity, and provide accessible opportunities for community members to participate in local traditions, events, and celebrations. A total of 16 applications were received, with 12 applicants meeting policy criteria.

Michelle Gipson and Annette Roth from the Lacey Parks, Culture, and Recreation Board assisted the Commission in reviewing applications and recommending funding options for the 2026 cycle. Discussion ensued.

Vice Chair Hart moved to approve Option 3: prioritize funding for community and cultural events by providing funding for eight events that are both community and cultural events rather than only community events. Commissioner Hegwood seconded. The motion carried, 4-1-1.

In favor: Chair Jackson, Vice Chair Hart, Commissioner Hegwood, and Lacey Youth Council Representative Ewig

Opposed: Commissioner Brown

Abstain: Commissioner Garza

8. Commissioner Reports

A. 2026 Lacey Cultural Celebration Overview

Shannon Kelley-Fong, Assistant City Manager

Kelley-Fong reported on the 2026 Lacey Cultural Celebration event held on March 7, 2026, at St. Martin's University. The Commission shared experiences and new ideas to consider for future events.

B. Evergreen College Equity Symposium

Raul Garza, Commissioner

Commissioner Garza reported on the upcoming 2026 Evergreen Equity Symposium - Fires Rising: Igniting Resilient Movements event, scheduled for April 15, 2026, at Evergreen State College.

C. Thurston Forward: 2026 DEIB Summit Update

Jon Hegwood, Commissioner

Veronica Hand, Equity and Inclusion Program Manager

Hand shared planning updates for the upcoming Thurston Forward: 2026 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Summit, scheduled for May 1–2, 2026, at the South Puget Sound Community College, Lacey Campus.

9. Director Report

A. Olympia Soroptimist Awardee Annie Clay

Shannon Kelley-Fong, Assistant City Manager

Kelley-Fong reported on Commissioner Clay being a 2026 Olympia Soroptimist Awardee.

B. Women's Dignity School Request and Multicultural Women's Leadership Workshop

Veronica Hand, Equity and Inclusion Program Manager

Hand reported on the Women's Dignity School and Multicultural Women's Leadership Workshop, scheduled for March 14 and 28, 2026, at the YWCA in Olympia, and April 25, 2026, in the Lacey Community Room.

C. 2026 Lacey Youth Council Meeting Review

Shannon Kelley-Fong, Assistant City Manager

Kelley-Fong provided a recap of the Commission on Equity meeting with the Lacey Youth Council held on February 23, 2026. Discussion ensued.

Additional Reports

Hand reported on the upcoming Asian Pacific Islanders Coalition of South Puget Sound (APIC) Race Dialogue: Cultivating an Anti-Racist Community, scheduled for March 28, 2026, in the Lacey Community Room.

Chair Jackson reported on the upcoming No Kings Rally, scheduled for March 28, 2026, at the Washington State Capitol.

Hand reported on the upcoming Thurston County Home Buying Expo scheduled for April 18, 2026, at the Olympia Center.

Hand reported an update on the new Thurston County Senior Program Manager - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, Kenny Yarbrough.

10. Adjourn

Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Approved April 27, 2026.