Racial Equity Commission October 2025 - Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2025
Prepared By: Toya Davis, Operations Manager, Racial Equity Commission
Reviewed By: Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Agenda Item #1: Welcome

A. CALL TO ORDER

After a delayed start due to travel challenges from weather delays, Commissioner Matthews called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM. Shared a reminder that the Commission condemns acts of hate and discrimination. Commissioner Matthews shared the CA vs Hate resource line. Commissioner Matthews noted that several Commissioners will be arriving late due to travel and weather challenges.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMUNITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

C. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA

Executive Director Dr. Larissa Estes, reviewed the agenda and requested to have Agenda Item #4, Director's Report moved after Agenda Item #2, Consent Agenda due to allow for Commissioners to arrive.

D. REMARKS FROM DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Isabelle Gatdula, District Representative to State Senator Angelique Ashby, 8th District, provided remarks. Commissioner and President Luke Wood, brought remarks welcoming the Commission to the campus of Sacramento State.

Dr. Sam Aseffa, Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, Director thanked Dr. Estes for her leadership in this important and transformative work. He marked the importance of the milestone of the Framework completion.

E. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

Quorum was met; 9/9 Commissioners present.

Commissioners present:

1. Commissioner Virginia Hedrick
2. Commissioner John Kim
3. Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado
4. Commissioner Traco Matthews
5. Commissioner Dr. Manuel Pastor

6. Commissioner Yolanda Richardson
7. Commissioner Angelica Salas
8. Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood
9. Commissioner Simboa Wright

Commissioner Kim, Commissioner Salas and Commissioner Wright joined the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

No public comment on Agenda Item #1.

Agenda Item #2: Consent Agenda

Action: Motion to approve the September 17, 2025, Commission meeting minutes with one correction was made pg. 8, to Commissioner Maldonado's comments clarifying that he "is not a State Director", he was seeking clarity and wanted to add in "if I were a State Director…". Motion was made by Commissioner Richardson and seconded by Commissioner Pastor. Motion passed 6-0.

No public comment on Agenda Item #2.

Agenda Item #4: Executive Directors Report

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director, Racial Equity Commission

Dr. Larissa Estes announced the transition of two Commissioners from the Commission Yolanda Bowles and Jolie Onodera, effective September 2025. The Governor's Office and the Senate Rules Committee have been made aware and are starting their processes to reappoint for those vacancies. The Commission can still function as long as there are six Commissioners.

Framework Discussion

Dr. Estes reviewed the Commission Charge EO-N-16-2021. She also reviewed the Model for Transformation and the role of the Commission- specifically the Commission's activities in the Model for Transformation and more specifically, "Working Together to make a California for All a reality". She discussed finalizing the Framework as it is due to the Legislature and the Governor on December 12, 2025. The proposed Commission Strategy was reviewed which includes developing a community survey that would be launched in 2026. There would be an overview that is able to be shared with community via a brochure. The ownness of implementing the framework would be on the agencies as there is no body that would be monitoring progress. Continuing to have conversations about details of what an "Office of Racial Equity" could look like, drafting a memo - building that into the Staff's work next. The first annual report would be due by December 1, 2026.

In 2027, Implementation and Technical Assistance Committee would focus on what the implementation strategy would look like as well as a self-evaluation strategy tool. Annual Report would be due December 2027. On-going strategies and implementation and evaluation in 2028, with continuous evaluation through the sunset of the Commission in June 2030. The ideas would be to use the Racial Equity Framework to advance racial equity, address structural racism, and shift power to communities beyond June 2030.

Executive Director Estes shared the products need to be created in a way that community can resonate with i.e. a brochure, or an animated video.

Proposed meeting locations for 2026:

- Central Valley
- San Diego/San Bernadino-Commissioner Maldonado recommended San Diego to support ease of travel for Commissioners
- Central Coast (Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Luis Obispo)-Commissioner Pastor acknowledged the equity work happening in the Central Coast region.
- Sonoma

Proposed Meet-n-Greet locations for 2026

- East of the Sierra
- South Bay
- Shasta or Siskiyou County
- Bishop

Executive Director Estes pointed out there are strategies and tools included, but there is an opportunity to work with other agencies and departments further on the timeline due to staffing capacity.

Proposed Bylaws Changes

Executive Director Estes mentioned the need to establish an Evaluation Committee as a standing committee. The Commission did receive a grant from Blue Shield of California Foundation, for $200,000. Proposing to discuss this in December.

Any proposed changes to the bylaws should be shared with the Executive Director by November 14, 2025, for consideration and proposed language for consideration at the December 17, 2025, Commission meeting.

Public Comment
No public comments on Agenda Item #4.

BREAK FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES

The meeting was called back to order by Chair Matthews at 11:52 a.m.

Agenda Item #3: Draft Framework

Dr. Larissa Estes, Executive Director of California Racial Equity Commission and Joyce Chiao, Facilitator, Abundance

Executive Director Estes stated that immediately following the September meeting, the REC Staff feedback received from Commissioners along with several public comment letters from advocates, advocacy organizations, and two from State agencies/departments. This feedback was taken into consideration and embed it into to the existing framework draft without changing the structure of the document while accounting for what the Commissioners and the public wanted to see added. The updated draft was then sent to the Legal department for review to make sure recommendations that were made were able to be acted upon according to the law.

Joyce Ciao closed with the following points as it pertained to the Framework:

1. Framework is written to the key audience.
2. Transmittal Letter- including Commissioner Kim's thoughts on the equity index. and exploring long-term strategy for implementation, includes important messaging and contextualization from the beginning about the role of government and past transgressions, incorporation a recognition of budgets and making sure governments remains committed to budgeting for community engagement without overreliance on philanthropy.
3. Continuing to explore deeper dives into California immigrant communities.

Public Comment

Public Comment was made by:

- Xi Zeung, Equity Specialist, California Department of Aging
- Elena Santamaria, NextGen CA and California Racial Equity Coalition
- Alejandra Ponce de Leon, Catalyst California
- Vince Leus, Prevention Institute, California Racial Equity Coalition

Chair Matthews acknowledged he would be drafting a letter to accompany the Framework.

Commissioner Vote

Voting results on approval of the draft Framework:

1. Commissioner Virginia Hedrick- aye
2. Commissioner John Kim - aye

3. Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado- aye
4. Commissioner Traco Matthews- aye
5. Commissioner Dr. Manuel Pastor- aye
6. Commissioner Yolanda Richardson- aye
7. Commissioner Anjelica Salas- aye
8. Commissioner Dr. Luke Wood - aye
9. Commissioner Simboa Wright- aye

Vote: 9-0

Lunch Recess

12:52 PM to reconvene at 01:52 PM; the meeting was called back to order at 01:52 PM.

Agenda Item #5: Next Steps for Staff Action

Executive Director Estes stated the following Staff Actions:

1. Staff will be moving forward with the formatting and design of the approved draft Framework in preparation for its delivery to the Assembly, Senate, and Governor's Office to be posted publicly no later than December 1, 2025.
2. Staff will support the Chair Matthews in drafting a Transmittal Letter and working to secure signatures the Commissioners in support of that letter and review it with Communications and External Affairs.
3. Staff will refine the evaluation scope of work to be inclusive of focus groups with agencies and departments as well as connecting it back to the asset analysis that was done in 2024.
4. Exploring the development of an Open House in 2026 welcoming State agencies and departments to be a part of the process and to engage with them to get a better sense of what their needs may be around implementation and technical assistance.
5. Staff will update the Funders Briefing document to make sure some of the recommendations that were lifted-up around community engagement, and ensuring we are requesting funding that supports increasing community awareness and accessibility of the Framework.
6. Staff will be working on planning the December 17, 2025, meeting in Sacramento, specifically around the Implementation and Technical Assistance Committee and the Community Engagement Committee.
7. Staff will accept any by-law changes through mid-November so if any changes are recommended at the December meeting can be considered.

Chair Matthews asked Executive Director Estes if the action items outlined seem feasible?

Executive Director stated the priority is the development of the Framework in ensuring it is ADA compliant and accessible on-line to ensure communities can access the work produced. There may be a delay on the exploration of an Open House.

Agenda Item #6: Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

No public comment on Agenda Item #6.

Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by common consent at 1:59 PM.