



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
LANSING

SUSAN CORBIN
ACTING DIRECTOR

**Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan,
Detroit Union Carpenter’s and Millwright’s Skilled Training Center
11687 American St, Detroit, MI 48204
Detroit, MI
October 27, 2023
Meeting Minutes No. 349**

Commissioners Present

Consuela Barber-Lopez, Vice Chair	Aurora Saucedo	
Floren시오 Hernandez, Treasurer	Sonya Hernandez (Virtual)	
Abril Valdes-Siewert, Secretary	Anthony Rubio (Virtual)	
Jesus Hernandez		
Jose Sanchez III		

Staff Present:

Isabel Montemayor-Vazquez (Executive Director)
Marisa Constantini-Ramos (Administrative Assistant)

Guests:

Mika Mcaskill (Commissions Administrative Manager)
Stephanie Gilmore Lopez Ed Midwest Trust
Bradley R. Hall, Latino judicial appointment for the Michigan Court of Appeals 2nd District
Tonya Jeter, Attorney General Office

1) Call to Order:

Vice Chair Consuela Barber-Lopez called the meeting to order at 6:08pm.

2) Roll Call:

Secretary Abril Valdes-Sierwert complete the Roll Call. Consuela Barber-Lopez, Floren시오 Hernandez, Aurora Saucedo, Jose Sanchez III, Jose Hernandez, Sonya Hernandez (Virtual) Anthony Rubio (Virtual)

3) Acknowledgement of Commissioner Absences:

Commissioners Chair Jesse Bernal, Angelita Valdez, Juan Rodriguez, Elias Gutierrez, Vanessa Guerra, Monteze Morales, and Celeste Sanchez Lloyd.

4) Approval of Agenda:

Secretary Abril Valdes-Siewert made a motion to amend the agenda to transferring Chair Jesse Bernal’s responsibilities to Vice Chair Consuela Barber-Lopez for the duration of the meeting. Treasurer Floren시오 Hernandez seconded the motion; motion was approved by majority.

Jesse Bernal, Chair
Consuela Barber-Lopez, Vice Chair
Floren시오 Hernandez, Treasurer
Abril Valdes Siewert, Secretary
Sonya Hernandez

Vanessa Guerra
Anthony Rubio
Jesus M Hernandez
Celeste Sanchez-Lloyd
Jose Sanchez, III

Monteze Morales
Angelita Valdez
Aurora Saucedo
Elias Gutierrez
Juan Rodriguez

5) Approval of Minutes from August 12th, 2023 :

MOTION: Motion for the approval of the minutes was made by Vice Chair Consuela Barber-Lopez, seconded by Jesus Hernandez, supported by commissioner Aurora Saucedo and passed by majority.

6) Executive Director Report:

a) Dr. Isabel Montemayor-Vazquez

Events:

- The Commission held three successful events during Hispanic Heritage Month with over 900 people in attendance at the presentation of Ballet Nepantla and 300 individuals present at our Hispanic Heritage Event in Kalamazoo, where Hispanic leaders from across the state were recognized for their contributions and 13 students received \$1000 scholarships. In October, with the sponsorship of OGM, the commission and Hispanic Caucus held a VIP event in SW Detroit and welcomed the Governor for brief remarks. The event brought 80 leaders together to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month in a Latinx owned business with a Latinx owned caterer providing the food. Special thanks to commissioners Barber Lopez, Sanchez and Gutierrez for attending and representing HLCOM.
- The Statewide Latinx Summit Planning Committee: Has set a date of June 21 for the summit on the GR campus of GVSU. GVSU will serve as the primary sponsor of the summit. We will have a pre-event on Thursday June 20th, location to be determined. We have developed a logo for the event. HLCOM will serve as the fiduciary for the event and finance has set up a separate donations conference account to hold these funds. The planning committee will be calling on commissioners to serve as leaders of the various breakout sessions given your diverse areas of expertise. Marisa will handle all reservations for the summit and is working on the flyer that will be sent out in January to the invited Latinx serving organizations.
- We are currently securing a location in Lansing for the April Statewide Graduation Event. Once secured, Commissioners will be notified of the date and a Save the Date will be sent out.

Projects:

- REDI: The three-year grant is complete. We received our check of \$6275.00 for having participated over the past three years in meetings, conducting small focus groups and townhalls on health care and the social determinants of Health for Latinx in the Tri County area. We also helped redefine the race and Ethnicity categories for the BRFS survey in the Tri-counties. I was asked by Ingham County Health Department to present on the qualitative methods used throughout the project and shared governance models for health departments at the Michigan Premier Public Health Conference in Shanty Creek. The session was at capacity with over 80 public health administrators in attendance. Funds have been deposited into our donations account.
- HEC: We are in year two of the grant and will be sending out the RFP soon for small projects working to improve access to resources for minoritized populations post covid. We received two checks for \$3750.00 for our participation in those monthly meetings and review of applicants. Funds have been deposited into our donations account.

Meetings:

- IMSC: The IMSC met in September and in October and had presentations from Migrant Legal Aid regarding the services they offer as well as the new structure for the Farmworker Outreach Service Division formerly Migrant Affairs within MDHHS. There were also conversations about the Hepatitis A cases at the Migrant farms in Kent County and a request was put in to MDHHS for vaccine clinics for the Migrant Outreach workers and staff. The clinics are now open. The IMSC will be hosting their annual Migrant Service Provider conference in November in Grand Rapids. The Si Ayuda Campaign and advertising is now over.

- The Policy and Advocacy IMSC subcommittee: Has met and have shared that there were very limited responses to the Civil Rights Commission's call for public statements on the conditions and housing of Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers.
- Unemployment and Insurance Agency: OGM staff will be meeting with UIA to share feedback and best practices to assist them in executing inclusive focus groups across the state, to capture the data they require.
- Johnny and I attended a presentation by the Mexican Consulate in Holland on the impact of Mexicans on the West side of the state and more specifically Ottawa County and the city of Holland.
- Commissioners Siewert and Guerra attended the quarterly EOG meeting earlier this week where several questions were presented by our commissioners regarding appointments, EOG/Legislative priorities prior to adjournment, and how the EOG is supporting working families struggling to make ends meet in the current economy. For a copy of the meeting notes Marisa can send you those directly.

Most Recent Outreach and Engagement:

- Anthony Rubio presented in October to the VA Medical Center on Hispanic Heritage Month
- Aurora Saucedo presented at the LEO Town Hall in October for Hispanic Heritage Month
- Elias Gutierrez celebrated the 30th Anniversary of Latino Press
- Johnny Rodriguez celebrated the annual Latin Americans United for Progress Gala in Holland in October
- Vanessa Guerra conducted voter registration efforts at local high schools in Saginaw County
- Elias Gutierrez served as a panelist for the EIO SOM virtual panel on the Lived Experience of Michigan Latinx, E.D. Montemayor Vazquez served as moderator. Over 450 SOM were in attendance.
- E.D. Montemayor-Vazquez spoke at Albion College and at Sienna Heights University for their Latino Youth Conference.

Secretary Abril Valdez-Siewert requested notes for the meeting with the Unemployment and Insurance Agency

MOTION: Motion for the approval of the ED report was made by commissioner Rubio, seconded by Treasurer F. Hernandez, and passed by majority.

**b) Chair's Report- Dr. Jesse Bernal
Vice Chair Barber-Lopez read Chair's report on behalf of the Chair Dr. Jesse Bernal**

I would like to begin this report by expressing my sincere appreciation to Dr. Isabel Montemayor-Vazquez, Executive Director, and Marisa Constantini-Ramos for their outstanding leadership and dedication in supporting our record-breaking attendance at this year's Hispanic Heritage Celebration in Kalamazoo and our first cultural/arts event in Lansing. Their hard work and commitment made these events truly memorable and impactful. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Commissioner Monteze Morales for hosting the Hispanic Heritage Celebration. The tremendous support we received from the community played a significant role in the success of this event and extends the impact of the Commission. During the Celebration, we had the honor of recognizing several individuals for their exceptional contributions to the Latino community. Their dedication and achievements serve as inspirations for us all.

- Celeny Quintino, from Grand Rapids, was given the Educator of the Year Award. With the support of her parents, she overcame language barriers and earned her education degree from Aquinas College. As the Director of La Escuelita, a preschool program in partnership with ELNC and the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, she is dedicated to providing a quality early childhood education to the Hispanic community in Grand Rapids.
- Abby Teasley was celebrated as the Hispanic Latino Commission of Michigan's Unsung Hero, recognized for her dedication to making a difference in the lives of students and their families through education.
- Mary Puente Luevanos was presented Arts in the Community award for her contributions to organizing Latino exhibitions in Michigan.
- Jose Manuel (Manny) Estrada was awarded the Veteran of the year. Manny is a decorated Vietnam Veteran and retired member of the Michigan Army National Guard. He served with valor and integrity, earning two purple hearts in combat. As the first Hispanic promoted to Sergeant in the Ingham County Sheriff's Department, he made significant contributions to law enforcement and later served as a Juvenile Court Officer.

We were also proud to award 13 scholarships (Nuestro Futuro Scholarship):

- Alejandra Padilla of Detroit, Michigan
- Alexis Robles Vazquez of Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Carlos Panuco of Holland, Michigan
- Emilio Albaranque of Argentina and East Lansing
- Enrique Cazares of Parlier, CA
- Gabriela Olivarez of Saginaw Mi.
- Jada Linstrom of Norton Shores, Mi
- Lizbeth Zavala of Southwest Detroit
- Nighthdelyn Martinez Detroit, Mi.
- Ruberto Mosqueda of Midland, Mi.
- Samantha Rodriguez of Grand Rapids, Mi.
- Tania Sofia Ruiz of Mexico and Novi, Mi.
- Tomas Tello of Flint Michigan

In my welcome comments at the Celebration, I emphasized the importance of Hispanic Heritage Month in celebrating and recognizing the vibrant and diverse cultures of the American Latino community. I also highlighted the significant growth and impact of the Latino community in Michigan's economy. Other highlights include:

- The event celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month and the contributions of the Latino community in Michigan.
- It emphasizes the importance of social justice, economic parity, and inclusivity for all communities.
- Recognition and gratitude for the progress made in advancing equity and embedding it into state systems, policies, and budgeting.
- Latino community highlighted as a crucial component of Michigan's future population growth and economic stability.
- Emphasized the impact of the Latino community on Michigan's economy, with Hispanic-owned businesses contributing billions of dollars annually.

- Charge the state to be a welcoming environment for Hispanic refugees and advocate for justice for immigrant workers.

2023 Retreat

I would also like to provide a summary of our August 2023 retreat. During this retreat, we identified three strategic initiative groupings that will guide our work moving forward:

1. **Operations:** Our priority is to get clear on the roles of the Commission, executive committee, executive director, and the Office of Global Michigan. We will continue to develop stakeholder engagement opportunities to ensure that we are hearing from the community and meeting their needs effectively.
2. **Community Engagement:** We are committed to supporting the convening of statewide Latino organizations at a summit in Grand Rapids on June 20-21, 2024. Additionally, we will continue our work on educational awareness opportunities and focus on coalition building with other aligned organizations across the state and country.
3. **Legislative Advocacy:** Our top legislative priority is advocating for Driver's Licenses and IDs for all. We are proud of the progress we have made in this area, including the Expansion of Elliott-Larsen, Post-Secondary Opportunities, and Language Access. We will continue to prioritize legislative efforts that promote equity and address the needs of the Latino community.

MOTION: Motion for the approval of the Chair's report was made by Vice Chair Barber Lopez, seconded by Treasurer F. Hernandez, supported by Commissioner Jesus Hernandez and passed by majority.

7) Committee Reports

- a. Finance- Treasurer Floren시오 Hernandez informed that an updated quarterly budget report will be available in December. He expressed gratitude to all commissioners for utilizing almost all the funds allocated in the fiscal year 2023 and reminded that HLCOM sponsored 29 organizations with a budget totaling \$26,000.
- b. Outreach and Engagement SIG- (Commissioner Jose Sanchez III)
 - Location for Graduation. Commissioner Sanchez mentioned that the Heritage Hall at the Capitol in Lansing, the city the Commission aimed to host the statewide graduation ceremony, is not available in the afternoons. Additionally, the MSU Auditorium is also not an available option. Staff will be exploring additional locations for consideration.
 - Sponsorship application process is being discussed, will open once finalized. The SIG committee is reformulating the application process. Staff will create forms and update the website to facilitate the application process. Applications will appear in an Excel spreadsheet accessible in real-time by commissioners. The SIG will make recommendations, and the Executive Committee will review and allocate funds accordingly on behalf of the Commission between commission meetings.
- c. Operations SIG- (Vice Chair Consuela Barber-Lopez)
 - Vice Chair Barber-Lopez informed that the SIG committee will do a survey to collect information about interest in listening sessions and major issues impacting Latinx across the state.
- d. Legislative SIG- (Secretary Abril Valdes-Siewert)
 - Secretary Valdes-Siewert informed that Commissioner Guerra and she met with E.D. Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez and Mika Mcaskill to discuss legislative priorities

for 2024; vote to take place at next meeting. Secretary addressed the commissioners, requesting them to send an email if there are any additional items they would like to be added to the agenda. Commissioner Sonya Hernandez inquired if the SIG group is tracking of the current Senate bill proposed by Senator Camilleri (No. 463). Secretary requested Commissioner Hernandez to email her information related to the House bill.

- Introduction of Brad Hall seeking appointment to Michigan Court of Appeals
- Brad Hall made a presentation regarding his intentions to be appointed to the Michigan Court of Appeals. He expressed gratitude to the Commission for its support.
- Explanation of Drive Safe thank you letters. Secretary read the letters.

A motion for the committee reports was made by Vice Chair Barber-Lopez, Secretary Abril Valdes-Siewert supported the motion, Treasurer F. Hernandez seconded and passed by a majority.

8) Report from Office of Global Michigan:

Mika Mcaskill, Commissions Administrative Manager provided the report.

She informed that Governor Gretchen Whitmer has created the LGBTQ+ Commission and she announced the plan to establish a Refugee Council soon. Further information will be provided as developments unfold.

She informed that there will be a monthly newsletter about commissions and an update to the website.

Commissioner S. Hernandez and Secretary Valdes-Siewert inquired about the Newcomer Rental Subsidy, as well as Maricarmen Munoz, Executive Director from La SED. Mika Mcaskill informed that it is a program that provides Refugees and other Newcomer population-eligible households with rental assistance up to \$500 per month for up to 12 months, with eligibility based on immigration status and household income.

Stephanie Gilmore Lopez, from Ed Midwest Trust provided a presentation regarding Language Access.

Old Business:

Vice Chair requested a motion regarding the proposed dates for commission meetings and locations.

Secretary Valdes-Siewert requested a change for the date for the November meeting. Instead of November 29, she suggested two alternative dates: November 15 and 22.

New Business:

Secretary Valdes-Siewert made a motion to vote on letter of support for Bradley R. Hall, as candidate for the Michigan Court of Appeals 2nd District. Treasurer Floren시오 Hernandez supported the motion. Motion was put to a vote and passed by a majority.

Vice Chair Barber-Lopez ask for a vote on amendments to by-laws to reflect the new subcommittee structure (SIGs). E.D. Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez read the proposed amendments.

Vice Chair Barber-Lopez called for a motion to amend the duties of the treasurer, specifically adding the responsibility to serve as the finance representative. Treasurer Floren시오 Hernandez supported the motion and commissioner J. Sanchez seconded. Motion was passed by majority.

- E.D. Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez read the proposed amended to other standing committees include:
- i. Community Engagement and Outreach Strategic Initiative Group/Standing Committee
 - ii. Legislative Advocacy Strategic Initiative Group/Standing Committee
 - iii. Commission Operations Strategic Initiative Group/Standing Committee

Commissioner Jesus Hernandez made a motion to amend the standing committees, Vice Chair Barber-Lopez seconded de motion. Discussion: Motion was passed by majority.

Commissioner Sonya Hernandez inquired about the existence of committees specifically dedicated to education and migrant issues. Secretary Valdes-Siewert clarified that these issues will be addressed within the Community Engagement and Legislative Advocacy SIG. Commissioner Sonya Hernandez expressed concern about the evolving goals and suggested adding a subsection stating, “any other committee as designated based on community need”. Secretary Valdes-Siewert and Treasurer Florenio Hernandez recommended amending the titles by removing “Standing Committee” at the end.

Secretary Valdes-Siewert made a motion to amend the document, Treasurer Florenio Hernandez seconded the motion; motion passed by majority.

E.D. Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez read the proposed amended to duties of officers, collectively the Executive Committee: a. Chair. The Chair shall preside at all Commission meetings; serve as ex-officio member of all committees; appoint the chair and the members of all standing and ad-hoc committees; designate individual Commissioners or groups of Commissioners to represent the Commission and designate a former member of the Executive Committee to serve as a Non-elected Former Executive Committee Member to assist with transition of information and procedures to different commission leadership. The Chair shall vote only to break ties, except in the case of a secret ballot.

Commissioner Jesus Hernandez made a motion to amend the document, commissioner Abril-Valdes-Siewert seconded the motion; motion passed by majority.

E.D. Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez read the proposed amend to add under section 4.5 after d. on Page 4. e. Non-Elected Former Executive Committee Member: This individual will serve at the designation of the Chair and will assist in transitioning information and procedures to new executive committee members.

Commissioner Jose Sanchez made a motion to amend the document, Treasurer Florenio Hernandez seconded the motion; motion passed by majority.

Secretary Abril Valdes-Siewert made a motion to vote on proceeding with Drive Safe Thank You Letters to Legislators in support of the legislation; motion passed by majority.

9) Public Comment

Limited to 2-3 minutes. Public comments will be received but will not be acted upon by the Commission. They will respond if requested via email in 2-3 business days.

- a) **Rogelio Landin, President of LULAC.** He expresses his gratitude to the commission and extended an invitation to all Latino organizations to join forces in advocating for the revision, renewal, and revitalization of bilingual education. He invited the commission to collaborate with LULAC on sponsorships and joint initiatives. He offered assistance in accessing grants through the national LULAC platform.
- b) **Angelo Kapp, LLEAD Saginaw.** He emphasized the significance of observing Chicano History Week around the state. He informed that there will be a documentary, “American Homeboy”, directed by Brandon Loran Maxwell that explores the complex origins of pachuco and cholo culture.

- c) **Boris Porras Rios, LLEAD Flint.** He expressed gratitude to commissioners Barber-Lopez and Aurora Saucedo for their support in assisting Cubans and Venezuelans in Flint who face language barriers.
- d) **Mary Carmen Munoz, E.D. La SED** She expressed gratitude to HLCOM for its work and for support Bradley Bradley R. Hall. She addressed the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. She highlighted the urgent need for changes in the social worker system. She emphasized that the Latino population in Southwest Detroit is facing challenges when seeking assistance and support.
- e) **Dale Freeman. Manager at MDHHS.** He provided an update on the Office of Migrant Affairs that change the name for Farmworker Outreach Services Division. He spoke about the migrant programs that MDHHS has.

10) Announcements:

Next Commission meeting scheduled for December 1, 2023 Adrian Public Library 6pm

Treasurer Floren시오 Hernandez made a motion to vote on canceling the commission meeting in Adrian; motion was seconded by commissioner Aurora Saucedo; motion passed by majority.

Secretary Valdes-Siewert proposed having a commission meeting in Adrian in 2024. Vice Chair Barber-Lopez suggested scheduling a listening session in Adrian instead. A decision was made to the proposal.

Treasurer Floren시오 Hernandez informed that the E.D. Dr. Montemayor-Vazquez was recognized with the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Alumni Award of Distinction at Central Michigan University. The category was the CLASS Alumni Award of Distinction for Global Engagement. The recognition acknowledged the Executive Director’s previous work in the research on the health maintenance strategies of mixed-status families in Michoacan, Mexico, and her contributions at OGM with the commission.

11) Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jesse Bernal, Chairperson

Date

Abril Valdes Siewert, Secretary

Date