



MINUTES

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
APRIL 12, 2022
ATTEND VIRTUALLY

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **ROLL CALL**

Members Present:

Voting Member Olivia Sloan
Voting Member Araseli Varela
Voting Member Gabriela Schwenker
Voting Member Vickie Gabin
Voting Member Carla Bachechi

Members Excused:

Voting Member Candice Flint
Voting Member Kate Bienvenu

Others Attending:

Anna Pendas, Clerk
Jamie Cassutt, Attendee

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. Approval of minutes from March 8, 2022

A motion to approve was made by Carla. The motion was seconded by Vickie. Votes to approve were made by Olivia, Araseli and Gabriela.

5. **PRESENTATION**

- a. Presentation: Addressing Early Childcare for Santa Fe Families (Councilwoman Jamie Cassutt)

Councilwoman Jamie Cassutt has been working on projects and policies to address childcare access and affordability. The issues are access, affordability, hours of available care and the lack of slots for the number of children in need of care. She noted that this is challenging to parents who work a 9-5 schedule and nearly impossible for families who work alternative hours, such as much of the service industry workers in our local economy.



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She has been working with state and local authorities on this issue. Some of the barriers that families face are more significant for children under 18 months of age. Many available childcare slots are not full time care (e.g. childcare from 9am-1pm). Pre-pandemic, there were only enough infant slots for 7% of the children born in Santa Fe each year.

Councilwoman Cassutt shared details of a proposed project which would be a partnership with SFCC to help strengthen the pipeline of early childcare professionals in our community. The project would provide free tuition and materials to students from SFCC, part time employment in local daycare centers and a stipend to help support these students while they pursue this career path. There are also regulatory changes that are being looked into, such as a zoning regulation that currently requires daycare centers to obtain a special use permit. Removing the need for this additional permit would reduce barriers to opening new daycare centers.

The economic impact of the lack of childcare has a disproportionate impact on women in the workforce. When women can't afford or access childcare, they often leave the workforce partially or completely, limiting career advancement opportunities and/or income.

Gloria Martinez asked about whether this project with SFCC would only create entry level jobs. Councilwoman Cassutt spoke about career development and advancement as part of the plan but largely focusing on the entry into this workforce as a place to start.

Araseli Varela appreciated the inclusion of both formal daycare centers and also home daycare options.

Gloria asked about how this supports intergenerational care, e.g. grandparents caring for grandchildren, etc. Councilwoman Cassutt noted that Growing Up New Mexico supports this and added that many unregistered home daycares which are often families need support to thrive also.

Carla stated that NM state coordination is critical. Councilwoman Cassutt agreed and highlighted the alignment between each agencies goals and plans.

Carla expressed concern regarding quality of care, not just access. Councilwoman Cassutt said that professional development plans are intended to support high quality care and that funding would be geared towards the development of professionals in this field rather than geared towards highly rated care centers only. By plugging highly trained

professionals into care centers all throughout the community, the equity of access to high quality care is improved.

Carla asked how the Women's Commission could support this project. Councilwoman Cassutt spoke about how the Commission could gather feedback from the community and use their voice to lend support and recommendations to the Governing Body and other high level entities.

Carla also asked whether Councilwoman Cassutt has sought partnership with the State Workforce Connections department. Councilwoman Cassutt said that they may go this route eventually but in these early stages there is an emphasis on local connections and control.

The Women's Commission thanked Councilwoman Cassutt for her presentation and focus on this issue.

6. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Discuss and Approve: Adjusted Meeting Times and Survey Review (Anna Pendas)

Anna shared the results of the survey sent out after the last month's meeting. She also shared that the City Attorney has let City staff know that meetings will be required to return to in person after May 11th. Given the change in venue from zoom to in person, the Commission decided to table this until after they have had a chance to meet in person and decide whether or not the current meeting time and duration works for everyone. The May meeting is on May 10th, just before the deadline to return to in person and the Commission decided to have that meeting on zoom and plans to have the June meeting in person.

Gabriela asked if there can be a mandate to wear masks once we return to in person. Anna will look into this and find out if it can be mandated or at least encouraged.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Discussion: Review of Women's Commission Strategic Plan (Araseli Varela)

Araseli introduced the review of the strategic plan and asked how the Commission would like to proceed with moving forwards with the plan.



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Olivia asked about low hanging fruit and suggested childcare at the Genoveva Chavez Center being something that felt achievable as a recommendation to the City.

Vickie asked about how the Women's Commission could show up around other opportunities for advocacy and recommendations for policy and planning. It was suggested that a regular update on those opportunities would be helpful.

Araseli asked about communications and marketing. How does the community become aware of the Women's Commission and their work and how does the Women's Commission engage with community partners. Gloria offered to look into this and find best practices around how other similar groups are engaging with their communities. This was identified as a subcommittee that could meet to work on this. It was noted that another subcommittee could form to work on best practices for establishing and supporting early childcare.

Anna shared that a consultant had given a proposal to support the Women's Commission with a community engagement event and also that the City now has an office for community engagement. These could be great supports to tap into.

Gabriela added that elder care and care for other family who are not small children is also needed when making plans and recommendations around this issue.

Vickie made a motion to recognize and support Councilwoman Cassutt's efforts in increasing access to childcare. This will be added to the agenda for the May meeting for a vote.

Gloria asked how the Women's Commission work could be more language inclusive, specifically with Spanish. She would like to see that all outreach and engagement in reaching all segments of the community. Olivia added that inclusion of Indigenous communities and groups is critical to reaching the goals of equity for women and girls.

Catherine volunteered to work to Gloria in researching and developing networking plans and looking into marketing strategies.

8. **MATTERS FROM STAFF**
9. **MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE**
10. **MATTERS FROM THE CHAIR**



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11. **NEXT MEETING: May 10 2022**
12. **ADJOURN**

Anna C Pendas

[Anna C Pendas \(May 18, 2022 15:40 MDT\)](#)

Liaison

Araseli Varela

[Araseli Varela \(May 19, 2022 09:53 MDT\)](#)

Chair