

CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Date of Meeting

Time of Meeting

Place of Meeting

**Minutes of Access, Advocacy, Equity, &
Engagement Commission Meeting**

May 12, 2026

3:00 PM

Council Chambers & Zoom

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Amber Hoefer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call Present: Phil Backlund, Amber Darting, Judd Grey, Amber Hoefer, Cody Natland, and M. Eliatamby-O'Brien.

Also present: Nicole Klauss, staff member assigned to the AAEE Commission; Stacey Henderson, Planning Manager; Heidi Behrends Cerniwey, City Manager; Rhonda Schmidt, Ellensburg School District liaison; Ruben Cardenas, Interim Associate Vice President at Central Washington University; Ramona Bryant, League of Women Voters of Kittitas County; and 6 members of the public.

Vice Chair Hoefer allowed applicant Lorena Medina Dirsken to make an introduction.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Cody Natland moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Amber Darting seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **Motion approved 6-0.**

3. Public Comment

Vice Chair Hoefer called for public comment. There was no public comment.

4. Approval of Commission Minutes from April 14, 2026 Meeting

Commissioner Phil Backlund moved to approve the meeting minutes from the April 14, 2026 DEI Commission meeting. Commissioner Cody Natland seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **Motion approved 6-0.**

5. New Business

A. Rhonda Schmidt provided an update on the Ellensburg School District's Department of Justice Settlement Agreement and what the district is doing next.

B. Planning Manager Stacey Henderson provided an update on the consultant's recommendation related to Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. The Commission provided feedback. Kathryn Martell provided public comment.

C. Heidi Behrends Cerniwey provided a recommended work plan and spending plan for the AAEE Commission.

Commissioner Judd Grey moved to create a subcommittee to work with staff on the work plan draft. Commissioner Backlund seconded the motion. During discussion,

members indicated Grey, Backlund, and Eliatamby-O'Brien were interested in being on the subcommittee with Commissioner Grey as the subcommittee chair. **Motion approved 6-0.**

6. Liaison Reports

7. Subcommittee Reports

There was not sufficient time for this.

8. Commission Member Reports

There was not sufficient time for this.

9. Staff Report

There was not sufficient time for this.

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Drafted by Nicole Klauss, staff member assigned to the AAEE Commission

Drafted: 5/14/26

Approved: 6/9/26