

Culver City Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee  
Indigenous Peoples Day Project Ad Hoc Subcommittee  
September 17, 2024

The members of the Indigenous Peoples Day Project Ad Hoc Subcommittee are: Jezenia Aguirre, Haifaa Moammar, Ifunanya Nweke and Rebecca Rona-Tuttle.

During the August committee meeting, members voted in favor of a social media project to commemorate Indigenous Peoples Day that would entail creating a short video to be included on the City's social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and the like.)

The basic video will consist of:

1. A representative of Culver City—most likely the mayor--speaking about Indigenous People, in part as they relate to Culver City
2. A photo collage of area locations significant to Native Americans from the region

During the August meeting we voted in favor of inviting the mayor to appear in the video. It is anticipated that by September 17<sup>th</sup> we will have a response from her.

Two versions of the video were proposed in August:

1. The preferred version would include primarily the land acknowledgement that the committee approved in August, possibly supplemented with additional language written either by this ad hoc subcommittee or by the city representative.
2. The less-preferred version would include language other than that of the land acknowledgement.

The City Council will consider the land acknowledgement approved by this committee at its September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Assuming that the City Council approves to adopt the land acknowledgement, the mayor (or another city representative) will recite the Culver City Land Acknowledgement during the video. Visitors to the City's social media platforms will hear her in the background while seeing a photo collage of area Indigenous sites. She can either choose to be seen at the beginning and end of the video with the photo collage appearing the majority of the time, or choose not to be seen at all. If desired, the Land Acknowledgement can be augmented by additional language.

If the City Council does not adopt the land acknowledgement, members of the Indigenous Peoples Day Project Ad Hoc Subcommittee propose the following language, which was drafted with the expectation that the mayor would agree to participate:

*Hello. I am Yasmine-Imani McMorrin, mayor of Culver City.*

*Our City Council proclaimed Indigenous Peoples Day an official city holiday several years ago.*

*I am so pleased to represent the City of Culver City at this time of year, when we focus more than ever on Native Americans They have inhabited the land we now call the United States of America for many thousands of years.*

*Five Native American tribes and bands proudly call Culver City and the surrounding region home. They have inhabited this region for millennia. In no particular order they are:*

- the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation (pronounced KEECH)*
- the Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California*
- the Gabrielino Tongva/San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians*
- the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation*
- and the Gabrielino Tongva Tribe*

*The photos you see here depict locations, as well as art, that are especially dear to members of these tribes and bands. For example, we see what is commonly called “The Springs,” located on the grounds of University High School, in West Los Angeles. These beautiful springs, surrounded by trees, are considered sacred.*

*We see sculptures created by a local artist, Robert Dorame, who is currently chairperson of the Gabrieleno Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council. The sculptures seen here grace Discovery Park, located in Playa Vista.*

*One focus of Indigenous Peoples Day, of course, is the terrible injustices suffered by Native Americans throughout the US, hundreds of years ago and to this day. We recall the numerous missions that extend throughout the length of California, which were built on the backs of Native Americans. These people were for all intents and purposes slaves. On top of other indignities, many were forced to abandon their native religion.*

*We imagine the physical and mental pain Native Americans throughout this country felt. What it’s like to feel “less than,” to be thought of as “the other.” While this terminology is relatively new, the feelings and perspectives extend from more than 600 years ago, when white people arrived, to the present day.*

*Let’s set aside the unfairness and cruelty for a moment to focus on this region as it was hundreds and thousands of years ago. Clean air. Pristine water. Native trees and plants. Stars that sparkled in the pitch black sky. Animals not yet extinct. A land with no concrete, no freeways, no brick walls, no plastic fences, no electric lights, no electric power lines, no cars, no blaring horns. How gorgeous it must have been. How serene.*

*Native American scholars remind us not to romanticize the indigenous people. They lived hard lives: struggling to find food, washing clothes on the rocks, defending themselves against other Native American tribes, contending with illness and broken bones without the advantages of modern medicine. And so on...*

*We say that these people were stewards of the land. What does this mean? Perhaps they thought of the land as belonging to them. They likely thought of it as sacred. [NEED TO LOOK INTO THIS.] In some areas they grew crops. At the very least they refrained from despoiling it.*

*At this time of year and throughout the coming months, let’s imagine ways in which we Culver City residents could be stewards of our four-and-one-half square miles of land. I will do this, and I invite you to do the same.*

*Thank you for caring.*

***It should be noted that the assumptions and opinions contained in the September 6, 2024, Indigenous Peoples’ Day Ad Hoc Subcommittee Report are reflective of the Indigenous Peoples’ Day Ad Hoc Subcommittee only and do not necessarily represent that of the remainder of the EHRAC nor the staff.***