



Governor's Commission on Hispanic and Latin American Community Affairs
1st Quarterly Commission Meeting
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Tuesday, March 31, 2026
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners in Attendance:

Gabriela Argoti-Fernandez, Vice Chair
Lorena De Pombo, Member
Lena Hernandez, Member
Maria Ramos Olazagasti, Member
Jennifer Rios
Nitzalis Rivera, Member
Katie Simbala, Member

Commissioners not in Attendance:

Veronica Estrada, Member
Stephanie Landaverde, Member
Yuliana Macey, Member
Julian Perez
Javier Toro

GOCI Staff:

Silvia Decja, Administrative Director (GOCI)
Cheryl Madigan, Executive Assistant (GOCI)

I. Call to Order:
Chair Gabriela Argoti-Fernandez – Meeting called to order at **6:05 p.m.**

II. Opening Remarks:
Chair Gaby Argoti-Fernandez greeted everyone.
AD Silvia Decja welcomed everyone and briefly went over meeting procedures.

III. Motion to approve the minutes from the commission meeting 02/17/26.

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Approval of the minutes for 02/17/2026	Jennifer Rios	Katie Simbala	7Y - 0N - 0A

IV. Mission and Vision Statement:

❖ **Proposed NEW Mission - 3/31/26**

The Governor's Commission on Hispanic and Latin American Community Affairs aims to advance equity, access, and opportunity for Hispanic and Latin American communities across Maryland. We identify and elevate community priorities, advise state leadership, and drive coordinated action to improve economic mobility, educational attainment, health outcomes, and civic engagement. Through our efforts, we aim to empower Hispanic and Latin American individuals and communities, ensuring their voices are heard and their contributions are recognized.



❖ **REVISED Vision - 3/31/26**

The Governor's Commission on Hispanic and Latin American Community Affairs envisions a Maryland where every resident thrives in a vibrant, inclusive, and equitable community. We strive to elevate Hispanic and Latin American voices, fostering an environment where cultural heritage is celebrated, systemic barriers are dismantled, and opportunities for growth and success are accessible to all. Our vision is to create a state where diverse experiences and contributions are recognized and valued, driving positive change and unity across Maryland.

Motion to approve the updated mission and vision statements.

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Approval of the updated mission and vision statements.	Lorena De Pombo	Maria Ramos Olazagasti	7Y - 0N - 0A

V. Policy - Communications:

Chair Argoti-Fernandez and AD Silvia Decja reminded the commissioners to use the [GOCI Event form](#). This is a tracker for the annual report. Commissioners are to use the [Social Media link](#) to submit events details and pictures for GOCI's Communication unit to post to social media.

VI. Committees:

- a. **Business & Economic Dev. – Commissioner Veronica Estrada** was not present to provide an update, but the committee has been focused on the Roundtable Discussions.
- b. **Community – Commissioner Lena Hernandez** stated they have focused on the Roundtable Discussions.
- c. **Education – Commissioner Stephanie Landaverde** was not present to provide an update, but the committee has been focused on the Roundtable Discussions.
- d. **Health & Housing – Commissioner Maria Ramos Olazagasti** had no updates, except for the planning of the Health Fair.
- e. **Legislation – AD Silvia Decja** had no updates.

VII. Working Groups:

- a. **Roundtables (Updates): Commissioner Lena Hernandez** stated that April 1st will be the last Roundtable Discussion and they need two moderators. They are working on the transcripts to provide the data to Commissioner Ramos Olazagasti to generate the analysis for the second phase of the Roundtable Discussions. AD Decja provided updates concerning the prospective intern. Commissioner Ramos Olazagasti would like to know what the Commission or GOCI will do with the findings of this data. She would like to know if the Commission can have debriefings with Housing, Health, etc. AD Decja provided GOCI's feedback on the first report and Chair Argoti-Fernandez would like to meet with COS Yancey to go over the report. Commissioner Hernandez would like to meet with the Governor's Chief of Staff to go over these findings. Commissioner Rios would like the report to be sent to the attendees of the Roundtable Discussions. GOCI will need to find out the protocol for this process.
- b. **Maryland 250 Celebration: Chair Argoti-Fernandez** stated that the event will consist of multiple commissions. It would be a celebration that would showcase food and cultural performances. The location and date are still being discussed.



- c. **Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration:** AD Silvia Decja stated that this event will be at Carroll County Community College. The available dates will be September 30 or October 1. Members of this working group will be decided in March. Commissioner Simbala asked the commission to think of ideas for a better flow of the program.

Motion on Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration event to be held on October 1st at Carroll Community College.

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Motion on Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration event to be held on October 1 st at Carroll Community College.	Lena Hernandez	Lorena De Pombo	7Y - 0N - 0A

- d. **Hispanic Health Fair:** The following suggestions were to have Standby Guardianship, which it was stated that the Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will be attending. Waiting for confirmation of venue, Save the Date flyer is almost ready. City of Annapolis doesn't want this flyer shared on social media. Event will be on Saturday, June 6, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

IX. New/Old Business:

- a. **Sponsorship Letter and Levels:** AD Silvia Decja sent out the letter two weeks ago and asked the commissioners to send it out to their contacts. This sponsorship letter is for the Hispanic Heritage Month and Health Fair. She went over the levels of the packages.

- b. **By-laws Discussion:** Commissioners need to provide feedback by October 1, 2026.

VIII. Adjournment:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Motion to adjourn at 7:53 p.m.	Maria Ramos O	Lena Hernandez	7Y - 0N - 0A