**Minutes**

**Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs**

Minutes Date: July 26, 2021 Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom Meeting

1. **Call Meeting to Order – Chair Refaei**

Meeting called to order at 5:45 p.m.

1. **Statement of Purpose – Chair Refaei**
2. **Land Acknowledgment – Vice Chair Sych**
3. **Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences – Chair Refaei**

**Present:** Saiyare Refaei (Chair), Sandra Sych (Vice Chair), Lydia Zepeda, Alma Villegas, Patricia Flores, Rafael Saucedo, Hieu Nguyen

**Absent:** Perla Gamboa (excused), Emani Donaldson, Alma Vargas, Emily Calhoun

**City Staff Present:** Nick Bayard OEHR, Samantha Kaauamo OEHR, Raeshawna Ware OEHR, Dr. Eric Jackson OEHR

**Guests Present:**  Margaret (Spanish Translator), Rufina (La Resistencia), Lily (La Resistencia), Elvia (La Resistencia), Wendy (La Resistencia)

1. **City Staff Updates, Raeshawna Ware**
   1. **CIRA Member Topics: Nick Bayard**
      1. Return to in-person meetings: Staff reconstitution plan has started and depending on in-person interaction, a phased approached to returning to the office will begin in August. Meeting rooms are being retrofitted to accommodate hybrid meetings. City Council meetings will be the first to test hybrid capabilities. There is no set timeline due to equipment testing and trouble shooting.
      2. Endorsement of political candidates: City resources cannot be used for political campaigns. This includes city property, staff and staff time, and City-sponsored Committees/Boards/Commissions/Events. If participation/advocacy of political campaigns is desired, individuals must do so without any City affiliation.
      3. Sponsoring of events: When CIRA would like the City to sponsor an event, please submit the request to Raeshawna and she will begin the process for Council consideration/approval.
   2. **OEHR Reconciliation Project: Dr. Eric Jackson**
      1. Introduced himself as the newest staff member to the Office of Equity and Human rights. His role is to help the community of Tacoma work together with the Tacoma Police Department toward Peace and Reconciliation work. He would like for this Commission to start thinking of representatives for this project. Chair Sych and Commissioner Flores commented as asked about experience with this work and the city of Tacoma and how will he supported in this work. Dr. Jackson responded that he’s been active with Project PEACE, a former member of the Military, projects with the Pierce County Sheriff’s Office, Police and Army Chaplin, former pastor in Tacoma. In addition to OEHR staff support, he is making rounds to Tacoma organizations, agencies, groups, and individuals to form a team that will execute this project.
   3. **Timeline for Upcoming Community, Vitality, and Safety Committee: Raeshawna Ware**
      1. August joint presentation with Media and Communications Office on the Language Access Policy, September for CIRA’s Annual Report, and October for commissioner application process and review and expanding number of commissioners.
   4. **Other Relevant Updates**
      1. No additional topics to report on at this time.
2. **Group Activity – Vice Chair Sych**
   1. Postponed for next month’s meeting.
3. **Consent on Agendas – Chair Refaei**
   1. Commissioner Zepeda motioned to swap items B and A of the Commission Affairs section of today’s agenda. Vice Chair Sych seconded. Motion approved.  
      Approval of Meeting Agenda – Commissioner Saucedo motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Zepeda seconded. Agenda approved.
   2. Approval of the June 2021 Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Zepeda motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Saucedo seconded. Minutes approved.
4. **Commission Affairs – Chair & Vice Chair** 
   1. **Updates on NW ICE Processing Center from invited guests from La Resistencia *(presentation spoken in Spanish)***La Resistencia members Lily, Elvia and Rufina spoke on behalf of the organization. They shared reports received from individuals on the inside, federal and local actions affecting immigrants and refugees and personal observations when at the Tacoma Northwest Detention Center/Northwest ICE Processing Center. Some items covered: cleaning products used to disinfect for Covid-19 caused painful reactions in detainees’ such as rashes and nose bleeds and no safe alternative cleaning products have been given, Covid tests are given without returned results and only administered if symptoms are shown, containing and prevention of others getting Covid will be more difficult with transfers and lack of of quarantine process, individuals with cancer, HIV or other sickness are not separated from general population, the best way to help La Resistencia is to share what they post on social media and contact government officials and GEO Group to close the facility and stop filtering transfers through the NWDC.   
      Commissioners Villegas and Zepeda asked questions and shared comments regarding support, local advocacy and appreciation for all their work and the presentation they shared.
   2. **Welcoming Week Event Planning**Nick provided context on Tacoma’s involvement in Welcoming Week. A few years ago, talks of Sanctuary Cities were a hot topic and the City Council at the time made a decision to be a welcoming city instead of sanctuary city. Since then, CIRA has been involved with the National Week of Welcome and last year, Council passed a resolution calling for release of detainees. Chair Refaei, Vice Chair Sych and Commissioners Saucedo, Flores, Villegas, and Zepeda shared ideas and comments around the commission’s involvement for 2021 such as: local restaurants willing to accommodate, either small groups throughout the city or one big event, reminders to comply with the public meetings act, topics for event (NWDC, housing moratorium, supporting Immigrant and refugee populations, boycotting event due to location of NWDC in City limits, recognize partners in closing NWDC), staff and commissioner capacity, messaging and advertising, deposit/fee rental.   
      Commissioner Zepeda motioned to approve a request of $2500 from the City for a 2021 Welcoming Week event. Commissioner Saucedo seconded. Motion approved.
   3. **Committee Updates *(postponed for next month’s meeting)***
      1. Discussion on Community Engagement Committee
      2. Community Safety Committee
      3. Governance (of CIRA) Committee
      4. Language Access Committee
      5. NW Detention Center
5. **Public Comment:** No comments.
6. **Items for next meeting.** Welcoming Week planning

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.