



Special Meeting Minutes

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: Monday, January 29, 2024

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Hybrid Tacoma Municipal Building

747 Market Street

Conference Room #138

Tacoma, WA 98402

The Tacoma Municipal Building is served by Pierce Transit bus routes 1, 2, 11, 16, 45, and 57.

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Zoom (Click the following link to join the meeting):

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82775537321?pwd=pbDCnh93nh-fUMCY4cYI2Zfc2qu3Tg.e76XT7BvH_P2KSFJ

Passcode: 053473

Webinar ID: 827 7553 7321

I. Call Meeting to Order (5:30 pm) –Chair Ghayoumi

The meeting called to order at 5:30 pm

II. Statement of Purpose (5:33 pm) – Commissioner Ruboneka (First Vice Chair Castro)

We convene this meeting to advance the City of Tacoma’s mission to “reducing barriers to access and participation in Tacoma’s economic, cultural, and civic life for immigrants and refugees.” This Commission aspires to help “make the City more vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming for all.”

III. Land Acknowledgment (5:35 pm) –Commissioner Valdez Castro (Second Vice Chair Nicolas)

The Commission acknowledges that the meeting is being conducted on Indigenous lands of the Puyallup People, who cared for their ancestral lands before the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854 removed native peoples to clear way for colonial settlement. It is important to this Commission as settlers here, aspiring to care for immigrants and refugees in this place and to call it home, that we acknowledge and send gratitude to the Puyallup Tribe of Indians who continue to be leaders for justice in our community today.

IV. Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences – Chair Ghayoumi

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emani Donaldson (excused) | <input type="checkbox"/> Thierry Ruboneka (absent) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natalie Ghayoumi, Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maricres Valdez Castro. First Vice Chair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Samantha Le | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alicia Sands |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lydia Zepeda | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate (Vacant) |

Commissioners

Emani Donaldson
Natalie Ghayoumi
Alicia Sands
Samatha Le
Maurice Lekea
Hieu Nguyen

Hugo Nicolas
Thierry Ruboneka
Maricress Valdez-Castro
Andy Mejia
Lydia Zepeda

- ☑ Maurice Lekea
- ☑ Andy Mejia – Youth

- ☑ Hieu Nguyen
- ☑ Hugo Nicolas. Second Vice Chair

V. Consent Agenda (5:40 pm) – Chair Ghayoumi

- a. Approval of January 29, 2024, Special Meeting Agenda (Aye/Nay Votes)

Motion to approve the January 2024 Special Agenda with an proposed amendment to add Trauma Informed Policing Proposal by Commissioner Zepeda

Seconded by Commissioner Sands

Ayes have it, the January 2024 Special Agenda was approved as written

- b. Approval of November 20, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes (Aye/Nay Votes)

Motion to approve the November 2023 Minutes as written by Commissioner Zepeda

Seconded by Commissioner Nicolas

Ayes have it, the November 2023 Minutes were approved as written

VI. Presentation

- a. Tacoma Slavic Association presentation (7:12 pm – 7:25 pm)

Olga Piddubna, the Executive Director of the Tacoma Slavic Association (TSA) shared a PPT and update on the work of the TSA including funding sources, types of resources provided, and the groups served.

VII. Public Comment (5:40 – 5:50 pm)

No members of the public were present to speak.

VIII. Commission Affairs

- a. Training on city government process, registration by February 1, 2024 (5:50 pm to 5:55 pm)

Resource shared by Chair Ghayoumi – Government process training and February 7th – Islamic-phobia support opportunity through the Office of Equity for state employees.

- b. Commissioner Zepeda and Chair Ghayoumi review on changes to states’ attempts to pass immigration laws (5:55 pm to 6:00 pm)

Basic rights are being challenged across the nation. Some states around the country are looking to establish their state immigration laws which historically have been federally regulated. This information is being shared for awareness of the daily challenges faced while protecting the rights and current laws that help the immigrant community. Example of State of Texas busing immigrant who cross the border to other states.

- c. Hate Crimes (6:00 pm to 6:05)

- d. Commissioner Nicolas (Second Vice Chair) Interactive Presentation and Training (6:05 pm to 6:35 pm)

Second Vice Chair Nicolas presented a PPT to guide the commission in developing a plan for 2024 and beyond. The request of each committee is to do the following:

- 1) Complete the SWOT analysis regarding projects and work, communication,
- 2) Share the top 5 priorities to accomplish by the end of 2024 or beyond,
- 3) Be ready to present to CIRA in February.

A question was asked about creating a shared document to capture information more easily. The advisement of staff liaison was that committees could create Google documents that are used in committee work because committees do not take final actions and they are not at quorum. The full commission is discouraged from creating a Google document because it can be considered a meeting that would necessitate public access and would need to comply with OPMA.

- e. Committee Updates

- Governance (of CIRA) Committee (6:36 – 6:40)

Chair Ghayoumi provided a recap of the presentation to CVS from January 25th.

Chair Ghayoumi reviewed critical dates to note to include items on the agenda.

On Wednesday, January 10th meeting the Budget (Trauma Informed Policing, Outreach events participation/tabling), Strategic Planning were discussed.

- **Questions by Commissioners**

- **Community Safety Committee (6:41 pm – 6:51 pm)**

Chair of the CSC Committee Commissioner Zepeda provided an update on activities on the January 9th meeting including submitting the accomplishment for 2023, sending the CSC work plan for 2024, reviewing the training model that happens at the State level for policing, requesting data on car thefts,

Chair of CSC Commissioner Zepeda provided an update on the Trauma-informed policing proposal that came about due to Commissioner Ruboneka leading the effort with the support of the previous Vice Chair of CIRA Commissioner Alma Villegas. The request is to review and respond to the proposal before it goes to CVS for next steps.

The staff liaison sent the proposal to the full commission while in the meeting and informed CIRA that the proposal would first go through CIRA and then the Office of Equity and Human Rights before moving to a request to CVS or City leadership.

- **Questions by Commissioners**

- Comment by First Vice Chair Castro about 2007 the Human Rights Commission made a similar request for Trauma-Informed Policing, and it was stricken down by City Manager Anderson at the time.

- **Welcoming Week / Recruitment Committee (7:01 pm to 7:06 pm)**

Chair of the Welcoming and Recruitment Committee First Vice Chair Castro provided an overview of some of the work that they would like to see completed, namely the City of Tacoma becoming Certified Welcoming.

The staff liaison gave some recruitment materials to First Vice Chair Castro to review and edit. Commissioner Nguyen will not be able to participate in the recruitment committee in the same way as last year, he is willing to review documents for recruitment though.

- **Questions by Commissioners**

- Chair Ghayoumi asked about the re-appointment process being that CIRA's current bylaws state that commissioners seeking re-appointment do not need to re-apply/interview. Staff liaison responded informing CIRA that CVS has the authority to decide to directly re-appoint or decide to re-interview. CIRA can request CVS to do it a certain way, but the final decision is the CVS Chair's. CIRA will need to review its bylaws to ensure that there are no sections that are misaligned with the authority of CVS.

IX. Immigration Local News and Updates – Vice Chair (7:07 pm to 7:11 pm)

First Vice Chair Castro

Feb 12th is Asia Pacific Islander Coalition days – advocating for employment benefits for undocumented workers from the change from EIN to SSN and other priorities.

Feb 17th Lunar New Year Celebration at the Star Center

Feb 24th Lunar New Year at the Tacoma Dome hosted by APCC (Commissioner Nguyen asked if CIRA could table at the event)

Feb 24th Charter Committee Public Hearing (evening time)

X. City Staff Updates – OEHR Staff

Raeshawna Ware will be going on extended leave in February, Nancy Shattuck will be supporting CIRA during the leave of absence.

Raeshawna Ware will coordinate a transition meeting with Chair and leads of committees.

Staff liaison sent booklet on becoming Certified Welcoming. OEHR is working on formalizing how to move this project forward.

Staff liaison reminded CIRA that CVS would like to involve CIRA in its legislative agenda planning that will take place early spring and summer.

Staff liaison mentioned the webpage is out of date – CIRA could focus on highlighting certain items, deciding on which photos to upload, and on what the webpage content could look like.

XI. Items to Consider for Next Meeting & Announcements

- a. Presentation from Washington State Office of Independent Investigation

XII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm

Why do we recognize the land?

To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory you reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. It is important to understand the long-standing history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol.

–<http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland>



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