



# Minutes

## Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

**Date:** March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Time:** 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

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

<https://zoom.us/j/91791840410?pwd=d3lyYW44Tm8wT1NrNIU4ekRsWERnQT09>

Meeting ID: 967 9184 0410

Passcode: 264285

Real-time Spanish translation will be available during the meeting.

### 1) Call Meeting to Order – Chair Sych 5:35pm

### 2) Statement of Purpose – Chair Sych

#### Statement read

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.”

### 3) Land Acknowledgment –Vice Chair Donaldson

#### Statement read

*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.*

### 4) Consent Agenda – Chair Sych

- a) Approval of Meeting Agenda (Aye/Nay Votes) **Rafael move to approve, Emani second. Motion passed.**
- b) Approval of January and February 2022 Meeting Minutes (Aye/Nay Votes) **No Motion was made. Minutes were not made available**

### 5) Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences – Chair Sych

<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant		<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant		<input type="checkbox"/> Emani Donaldson (Vice-Chair)	Present
<input type="checkbox"/> Hieu Nguyen	Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rafael Saucedo	Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Sandra Sych (Chair)	Present
<input type="checkbox"/> Lydia Zepeda	Absent - Ex	<input type="checkbox"/> Alma Villegas	Present
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant		<input type="checkbox"/> Alternate Position (Vacant)	

#### Commissioners

Sandra Sych (Chair)

Lydia Zepeda

Emani Donaldson (Vice Chair)

Alma Villegas

Hieu Nguyen

Rafael Saucedo

Rafael recalls the last two years of service. He applauds the commissioners as volunteers and states that he is willing to support CIRA going forward and that he is CIRA's number one fan.

## 6) City Staff Updates – Liaison Raeshawna - Absent

## 7) Group Get-To-Know-You Activity: Vice-Chair Donaldson

What is your favorite vacation location and why?

Emani: Maui – husband and I got buddy pass tickets to go to Maui. It is my very place to be. We went during COVID so it was nice to be in the States and on the island. It is difficult because the indigenous are going through much. It is nice to go to do some volunteer work.

Rafael: Anywhere where there is the sun. I am my best self when it is warm and sunny out.

Sandra: I love the sun and sandy beaches. I like going to different places every time. Maybe somewhere in the future, I will discover that place I want to vacation every time.

Hieu: Warm water, close to the beach. Quiet place to relax. Hawaii, Vietnam, California,

Mia: I don't have a favorite spot. Sometimes I like the sun other times any weather is good. Next week I am going to try to do camping in eastern Washington.

Alma: I do not take a lot of vacations. I have not really been to many places. But anything that is anywhere as long as there are margaritas.

Officer Ali: Hawaii, it's my wife's favorite vacation spot.

## 8) Historic Preservation month (20 min) – guest speaker

Susan Johnson – Landmarks Preservation Commission. Part of the work is to observe the history of Tacoma buildings, landscape, oral history, etc. May is Preservation Month “Many voices many stories is the theme.” May 17<sup>th</sup>, WA State Historical Society. South Sound Japanese Language Remembrance. May 24<sup>th</sup> a virtual panel with Tacoma Library and Tacoma Community House – giving an update on community archives for the libraries. Maritime Heritage. Fort Nisqually. All month long a virtual scavenger hunt. Are there other organizations we should be partnering with and supporting?

Hieu: Work with local colleges and student centers. Luia Picchard- Please connect with her.

Rafael: Thriving APCC community. They have an active presence in UWT. Rafael will share an email to connect Susan to UWT. LUSS – Rafael will connect with Susan.

Sandra: Connect with the Islamic Center of Tacoma. Thank

## 9) Commission Affairs (90 min)

### a) Committee Updates (30 min)

- Community Safety Committee

Hieu: In the meeting, we went over the purpose statement. Officer Ali looked for it and approved it. Asking Raeshawna to share it with the full commission later on. NW Detention Center – got a report from Maura concerning COVID cases. Ice is using very strong possible harsh force to detain people. The Blue card, the process is still ongoing. Community Safety Survey – three languages corrections.

- Governance (of CIRA) Committee

Sandra: We are still working on onboarding – on how to make it the best for people joining that need different languages. Updating our bylaws, outdated things that do not apply. Emani is working on visuals for new commissioners. Emani: thinking of making a FAQ and a flowchart of the meeting, and info of the bylaws including

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terminology and words to clarify. We will work with subcommittees to include it in what we want

- **Language Access Committee**

Alma: Perla sent the workplan for 2021. Met with Sandra and Maria Gamez the City's new Language Access Coordinator. Looking at the LAC purpose statement. Proposing a reduction of the tasks we have listed in a workplan. 1) Move forward with the Language access policy, and use the opportunity with language needs as a model for other commissions.

b) **Discussion about CIRA budget needs (20 min)– Chair Sych**

Sandra: We can propose what we need. We can let the City know what we need resources for. The city cannot give us an amount that is dedicated solely to our work, but we can make requests.

c) **Onboarding updates and discussion (20 min)– Chair Sych, Liaison Raeshawna**

Sandra: CVS is planning to interview a lot of applicants which is why there is a delay in the interview process.

Mia: The interview dates are April 14<sup>th</sup> and April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Alma: There is a person who applied who was not asked to interview. Also, the timeframe of interviewing and onboarding before the April meeting is extremely tight. I have strong feelings that we cannot have a CIRA representative on the interview panel.

i) **Mentoring new members**

Sandra: What is the existing commissioner's capacity to mentor? I would prefer to meet with two at the same time.

Hieu: We can ask the previous commissioner with new commissioners if they are willing. He will try to reach out to a few previous commissioners about mentoring?

Alma: I am happy to help.

Emani: Yes, I can take on two or three to mentor.

Rafael: If any new members what to reach out to a former member I am happy to help out.

ii) **Interpretation services during the next CIRA meeting**

Did not have any updates. Sandra: We can do a run-through when we know which languages are needed. Also, if there will be multiple languages how will commissioners fully participate in the meeting/

Alma: Is there a way to come up with the CIRA business, like welcoming week, budget process, commissioner recruitments, and standing items to get things on the agenda in advance??

**10) Public Comment**

**11) Items to Consider for Next Meeting:**

**12) Adjourn 6:40pm**

**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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## NOTES


**Commissioners**

- Sandra Sych (Chair)
- Lydia Zepeda
- Emani Donaldson (Vice Chair)
- Alma Villegas

Hieu Nguyen  
Rafael Saucedo