



Minutes

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: June 27th 2022

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/91791840410?pwd=d3lyYW44Tm8wT1NrNIU4ekRsWERnQT09>

Meeting ID: 967 9184 0410

Passcode: 264285

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

I. Call Meeting to Order – Vice Chair Donaldson

Meeting called to order at 5:43 P.M. due to technical difficulties.

II. Statement of Purpose – Vice Chair Donaldson

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 – Vice Chair Donaldson

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. Consent Agenda – Vice Chair Donaldson

- a. Approval of June 2022 Meeting Agenda has been Approved.
- b. Approval of January - March 2022, May 2022 Meeting Minutes have been Approved.

V. Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences – Vice Chair Donaldson

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emani Donaldson (Vice-Chair) | <input type="checkbox"/> Thierry Ruboneka |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natalie Ghayoumi late | <input type="checkbox"/> Maricres Valdez Castro |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Kowalkski | <input type="checkbox"/> Alma Villegas (working late) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samantha Le (left early) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leena Vo (left early) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maurice Lekea | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lydia Zepeda (will be late) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hieu Nguyen | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate (Vacant) |

Commissioners

Emani Donaldson
Natalie Ghayoumi
Stacy Kowalkski
Samatha Le
Maurice Lekea
Hieu Nguyen

Hugo Nicolas
Thierry Ruboneka
Maricress Valdez-Castro
Alma Villegas
Leena Vo
Lydia Zepeda

VI. Group Get-To-Know-You Activity - Vice-Chair Donaldson

- a. Meet and Greet – answer the following questions “If you could make one thing better for your community what would it be??” (summarizations listed below)

Commissioner Donaldson- A rent cap, in the COT because it is hard to rent and hard to own

Commissioner Vo- Having better language access to resources for rent, utilities and jobs.

Commissioner Lekea- need to go back and get his response Need to observe more, however something needs to be done for the amount of people facing homelessness.

Commissioner Zepeda- to have safer housing in the COT

Commissioner Kowalski-Access to resources in immigration and non-profit organizations, mental health, medical clinics etc.

Commissioner Nicolas-Affordable food, making sure people have enough to eat especially with the price of things rising.

Commissioner Ghayoumi- Diversity training for all agencies. To acknowledge and understand people who have disabilities, mental health and other unique backgrounds/foundations.

Commissioner Le- Would like to see more business incubator programs. Hand in hand with that we need to provide more free and confidential technical services that are culturally relevant. We can achieve that by properly compensating trusted partners adequately, and being much more inclusive in our practices.

VII. City Staff Updates – Liaison Raeshawna

- a. Commissioner Required Training <https://www.atg.wa.gov/open-government-training>
b. Welcoming America, Welcoming Network [Home - Welcoming America](#)
c. Events and Recognition Support for [Welcoming Week - Welcoming America](#) Sept. 9-18
d. Upcoming Activities, Needs, Events

VIII. Commission Affairs

- a. World Refugee Day – Commissioner Valdez Castro (not present to update)
b. Onboarding Debrief – Vice Chair Donaldson
c. Chair Position Conversation – Vice Chair Donaldson
d. Community Events: Are there any events we would like to support. For example, UW Tacoma Latinx Celebration Awards 2022? – Vice Chair Donaldson (hold for next meeting, what does our support look like, funding, volunteering etc)?
e. Committee Updates and Overview of work
 - Community Safety Committee
 - Governance (of CIRA) Committee
 - Language Access Committee

IX. Public Comment- no public comment

X. Items to Consider for Next Meeting:

What will CIRA’s support for others look like? Endorse, Donate, Sponsor, Volunteer or do all of it?

What does CIRA need to be efficient, and function well?

How to share information without using google docs?

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*What is the formal process for the committee and other organizations requesting funds?
Is there a calendar of when all subcommittees meet?
Is there a group or organization that is already doing something in conjunction with Welcoming America?
Would it be useful to form a subcommittee to support events?
Potentially bringing back the Community and Engagement Committee?
Can there be a reminder email sent for this standing meeting prior to the day of?
Welcoming week is September 9th-18th
Going before CVS anywhere between October and November
Recruitment is usually in the month of February*

XI. Adjourn- 7:14PM

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

Reminder to take the Commissioner required training.

COT has been asked to create event(s) for Welcoming Week and looking for ways CIRA can support/participate in that event.

Commissioner Donaldson will consider becoming Chair if no other candidate presents itself.

At 6:45PM Quorum no longer met and will continue only in discussion with no option to make motions or vote on any further matters.

Commissioner Zepeda shared 3 new bills that have been introduced https://adamsmith.house.gov/press-releases?id=B5A580CF-8AA0-4A32-9AA8-3A86D87A2ADD&fbclid=IwAR0ctV4oRe7tLbxZD5VaWd7AW0mzTS3L04W5KGi3tY_L1K87wpyg1_1duSA as well as 3 new members have joined the Community and Safety committee.

Committees can have community members involved does not have to be all commissioners.

TPD fully funded but understaffed and unable to do neighborhood patrols in certain parts of Tacoma.

Still looking to fill the vacant Alternate position.

Need more people on governance committee.

Need more youth involvement and a youth commissioner from age requirement 16-24.

TPD understaffed and unable to do neighborhood patrols in South parts of Tacoma.

Each Commissioner should reach out to their networks to potentially recruit and look for ways to partner with them.

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