



SPECIAL Meeting Minutes

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Time: 5pm – 6pm

Location: Hybrid Tacoma Municipal Building

747 Market Street

Conference Room #243

Tacoma, WA 98402

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87654676275>

Webinar ID: 876 5467 6275

1) **Call Meeting to Order**– Chair Emani Donaldson

- a) The meeting was called to order at 5:12 PM.

2) **Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences** – Chair Donaldson

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emani Donaldson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thierry Ruboneka |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natalie Ghayoumi | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maricres Valdez Castro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Samantha Le (absent) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alma Villegas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alicia Sands (absent) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lydia Zepeda |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maurice Lekea | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hieu Nguyen (absent) | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate (Vacant) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hugo Nicolas | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Position (Vacant) |

3) **Statement of Purpose** – 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.”

4) **Land Acknowledgment** – Commissioner Ruboneka

Commissioners

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

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

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.

5) Public Comment

- a) No Public Comment offered.

6) Commission Affairs

a) Commissioner Elections

- i) Chair Donaldson calls for nominations for the position of Chair for 2023-2024.

(1) Nominations from the floor.

- (a) Commissioner Zepeda nominates Commissioner Villegas
- (b) Commissioner Ruboneka nominates Commissioner Ghayoumi
- (c) Commissioner Lekea nominates Commissioner Valdez Castro

(2) Commissioner Statements

- (a) Commissioner Villegas declines the nomination.
- (b) Commissioner Ghayoumi accepts the nomination and speaks.
- (c) Commissioner Valdez Castro declines the nomination.

(3) Vote – Chair Donaldson calls for a vote.

- (a) The ayes have it and Commissioner Ghayoumi is elected Chair for 2023-2024 CIRA.

- ii) Chair Donaldson calls for nominations for the position of First Vice-Chair for 2023-2024.

(1) Nominations from the floor

- (a) Chair Donaldson nominates Commissioner Nicolas.
- (b) Commissioners Ghayoumi and Lekea both nominate Commissioner Valdez Castro.
- (c) Commissioners Ghayoumi and Lekea both nominate Commissioner Villegas.

(2) Commissioner Statements

- (a) Commissioner Villegas declines the nomination.
- (b) Commissioner Valdez Castro accepts the nomination and speaks.
- (c) Commissioner Villegas declines the nomination.

(3) Vote – Chair Donaldson calls for a vote.

- (a) The ayes have it and Commissioner Valdez Castro is elected First Vice Chair for 2023-2024 CIRA.

- iii) Chair Donaldson calls for nominations for the position of Second Vice-Chair for 2023-2024.

(1) Nominations from the floor

- (a) Commissioner Lekea nominates Commissioner Zepeda.
- (b) Commissioner Lekea nominates Chair Donaldson.
- (c) Commissioner Zepeda nominates Commissioner Nicolas.

(2) Commissioner Statements

- (a) Commissioner Zepeda declines the nomination.
- (b) Chair Donaldson declines the nomination.
- (c) Commissioner Nicolas accepts the nomination and speaks.

(3) Vote – Chair Donaldson calls for a vote.

Commissioners

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

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

- (a) The ayes have it and Commissioner Nicolas is elected Second Vice Chair for 2023-2024 CIRA.

7) Items to Consider for Next Meeting & Announcements

8) Adjourn

- a) The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 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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Commissioners

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