



Regular Meeting Minutes

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: March 27th, 2023

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

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/91791840410?pwd=d3lyYW44Tm8wT1NrNIU4ekRsWERnQT09>

I. Call Meeting to Order – Chair Emani Donaldson called meeting to order at 5PM.

II. Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences – Chair Donaldson

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

III. Statement of Purpose – Read by Commissioner Lydia Zepeda

IV. Land Acknowledgment – Read by Commissioner Maurice Lekea

V. Consent Agenda – Chair Donaldson

a. Approval of March 2023 Meeting Agenda (Aye/Nay Votes)

Motion made by Commissioner Zepeda to approve the March 2023 agenda; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Valdez Castro.

The ayes have it and the March 27, 2023 agenda was approved.

b. Approval of February 2023 Meeting Minutes (Aye/Nay Votes)

Motion was made by Commissioner Zepeda to approve the February 27, 2023, minutes; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Staff Liaison Ware noted there was a typo that was corrected (hat to hate); the correction is reflected in the minutes.

Commissioners

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

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

The ayes have it and the February 27, 232 minutes were approved.

VI. Public Comment

No members of the public present to give public comment. Public Comment was closed at 5:37 PM.

VII. Presentation

- a. Picture Pac Ave. – Wesley Rhodes (wrhodes@cityoftacoma.org), Senior Planner, Planning and Development Services

- The City of Tacoma has an upcoming initiative in the south & east side of Tacoma called “Picture Pac Ave,” which is part of Sub Area Plan.
- The plan is to take a comprehensive look and create a long-range plan, 25 years, for the corridor of Pacific Avenue (south of I-5 to around S. 96th).
- Strategy of project is to locate housing and jobs near high-capacity transit, and to limit displacement of current residents.

Community Engagement Component:

Soft Launch (Summer/Fall/Winter 2022) – Key Stakeholders & Issues

Visioning and Scoping (Spring Summer 2023)- Collect community ideas for the future of the corridor, scope EIS.

Draft Plan Review (Fall/Winter 2023) – share draft versions of the plan & EIS for community feedback.

Final Plan (TBD) – Report how feedback on drafts is incorporated

Q&A and Comments:

(1) Are you setting any preliminary goal setting to ensure that you’re holding yourself accountable to meeting certain measurements around equity? (2) And have you integrated confirming with the community what you hear from them through the engagement phase into your program, particularly for elevating BIPOC community, including immigrants and refugees?

- Acknowledges that the City has not always had the best practices of reporting back to community. Not all measures and goals have been established yet – but PDS is working with a consultant to develop metrics and communication plan.
- City can work to being more explicit in about how feedback is incorporated into the planning process.

How can CIRA be involved in this project:

- Seeking input at any point from CIRA in feedback, but particularly in engagement component. PDS would welcome volunteers from CIRA to join in the Project Advisory committee if the commission sees fit.

Commissioner Zepeda had several questions & comments. Key points:

- Plan needs to be relevant to community needs such as supportive and affordable housing and living wage jobs.
- There is a lack of green space along Pac Ave, and the plan needs to have more culturally, and environmentally sensitive planning is needed.

Commissioners

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

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

- 18% of Tacoma Residents don't speak English, so engagement with non-English speaking communities is important, and concepts need to be culturally translated as well.
- Plan needs to translate into tangible benefits for the community with intention investments in community members who don't have as many resources including grants and supportive services.
- Questions from Commissioner Zepeda included
 - What are the priorities of the area?
 - Are incentives only doing to go to developers?
 - What are the tangible benefits that the plan will provide immigrant, refugee, and BIPOC communities?

Mr. Rhodes responded by saying he and team will work to prepare more culturally translatable materials, by putting them in simpler terms, and providing real work examples, including literal translations.

Environmental impacts assessments are being done early in the project to provide more green spaces.

The plan is expected to provide tangible to the community by prioritizing capital investment benefits such as sidewalk, road, and other infrastructure improvement projects. Because it's a 25 year plan – results will not be immediate.

Are there considerations for live-work spaces on the Pac Ave Corridor? This would un-burden many immigrant business owners to have one rent.

- The plan currently includes “mixed use development” which is a mix of commercial & residential areas. The goal of mixed-use development centers is for people to live, work, and shop near each other. Live-work spaces are not fully realized in the current plan.

VIII. Commission Affairs

a. Commissioner Spotlight Commissioner Stacy Kowalski.

Commissioner Kowalski was not present to give presentation.

b. Meeting with CERC Update/Needs - Commissioners Castro, Lekea, and Chair Donaldson

- Commissioners Castro, Lekea, and Chair Donaldson met with the CERC committee to discuss events for Welcoming Week (estimated dates: September 7-18, 2023). Commissioners brainstormed what the partnership between the CIRA, Welcoming Week, and CERC.
- There is a \$20,000 budget for Welcoming Week.
- Intention is that CIRA will guide, and envision what Welcoming Week will be, and not be solely responsible for the planning. With the caveat that CIRA will help host a Community Resource Fair.
- Commissioner Castro is volunteering to be the Chair of Welcoming Week Committee if approved.
- Commissioners Villegas & Zepeda asked questions about the budget
 - Q: Where is the \$20K funding coming from? Is this from CIRA's direct budget?
 - A: It's not from CIRA's direct budget, but Staff Liaison will follow up on where the budget is allocated.

Commissioners

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

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

Q: Can the \$20K be used for anything else? CIRA has never had a finite budget, and now there is this fund for Welcoming Week. Could money be spent to support immigrants & refugees more directly?

A: Staff Liaison Ware will follow up on the funding sources.

Comment: Some CIRA Commissioners are more interested in more substantive work, and other are very interested in community engagement and event planning. It makes sense to form a subcommittee to discuss event planning.

Agenda item paused to have Pac Ave Presentation

- i. Vote on Welcoming Week Committee
Commissioner Castro made a motion to implement & develop a welcoming week committee. Commissioner Ghayoumi seconded the motion. The ayes have it, and the Welcoming Week Committee was formed.
- ii. Appoint Welcoming Week Committee Chair
Chair Donaldson made a motion to nominate Commissioner Castro to be the Chair of the Welcoming Week Committee.
Commissioner Zepeda seconded the nomination
The ayes have it and Commissioner Castro is the chair of the Welcoming Week Committee.

Vice Chair Villegas – stated for the record that while she voted aye for the Welcoming Week Committee, would ask that in the next year CIRA develops more clarity on the role of CIRA’s work & assess how much planning and labor goes into Welcoming Week.

- c. Recruitment Updates/Needs – Commissioner Villegas, Nicolas and Chair Donaldson
CVS is shifting how interviews are conducted by the request of CIRA, and the HRC. This year:
 - CVS Chair are asking for a meeting with (to be established) CIRA Recruitment Committee and Staff Liaison. Meeting would happen on Friday 3/31.
 - CVS is seeking feedback from CIRA on the protentional CIRA appointments.
- i. Vote on Recruitment Committee
Commissioner Villegas made a motion to form CIRA Recruitment Committee, with Commissioner Nicolas as the chair, and Commissioner Nguyen as the backup.
Commission Castro seconded the motion.
The ayes have it and the CIRA Recruitment Committee is formed.
- d. Committee Updates and Overview of work.
 - Community Safety Committee Wednesday, 2023-04-19, 11 am to 12 pm
 1. The CSC committee requested budget for phone & commissary funds for detainees at the Northwest Ice Processing Center. This is a programmatic funding

Commissioners

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

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

request that is separate from OEHR support funds, and likely will need council approval. Staff Liaison will provide support on how to submit a budget request.

2. Lucas Smiarldo, staff liaison for the Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities (TACOD) joined CSC to talk about the Joint CBC event with the Police Chief Moore. The event is scheduled Wednesday, April 26, from 5-7 pm at the Peace Lutheran Community Center. Commissioners submitted about 10 questions for TPD to respond to, and we are asking the responses also be submitted in writing.
3. There is still no date for the visit to the Northwest Ice Processing Center.
4. The CSC is still waiting for a link to the meeting with the City of Tacoma regarding the NWICP.
5. Staff Liaison sent a letter to OCI about the need for blue cards in multiple languages. TPD has cards that are in multiple languages about reporting crimes, but they don't have the name information as blue cards. Commission Nguyen requested 1000 cards in Vietnamese, which TPB was unable to provide. To expand the print order, COT will need to identify additional funding sources.
6. CSC discussed community issues that centered on affordable housing for immigrants, and a small developer that wants to create housing for immigrant communities.
7. Commissioner Zepeda is representing CIRA on the Facilities Assessment Committee and is seeking feedback on how to prioritize projects in various city owned facilities (Fire departments, senior centers, community centers, libraries, etc.). If you have ideas, please sent them to Commissioner Zepeda.
8. World Premier of Tacoma Method opera the week of 3/31- 4/2 at the Rialto.

Vice Chair Villegas requested that Commission Business and reports be moved to the top of the agenda so there is more time for reports.

- Governance (of CIRA) Committee Wednesday, 2023-04-12, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

All updates for Governance were given earlier in the agenda (Welcoming Week, and Recruitment committee.

IX. City Staff Updates – Staff Liaison Raeshawna

- a. TPD Convening with CIRA, TACOD, and HRC
Discussed earlier in the agenda.
- b. Welcoming Interactive Arrangements
Staff Liaison will connect with Commissions that are traveling
- c. Recruitment Review – March 31st 1pm with CVS Chair Ushka
Connect with Commissioners Nicolas & Nguyen if interested in participating.

X. Items to Consider for Next Meeting:

Budget Form Discussion

Commissioners

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

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

XI. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM

Commissioners

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

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