



Date: April 24th 2023
Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Hybrid Tacoma Municipal Building

747 Market Street
Conference Room #243 and #220-A (Interpretation Room)
Tacoma, WA 98402

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

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

Meeting ID: 967 9184 0410

Passcode: 264285

I. Call Meeting to Order Meeting was called to order by Chair Donaldson at 5:31 PM

II. Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences
Chair Donaldson

- Emani Donaldson (Vice-Chair)
- Natalie Ghayoumi
- Stacy Kowalski
- ~~Samantha Le~~ (absent)
- Maurice Lekea
- Hieu Nguyen
- ~~Hugo Nicolas~~ (absent)
- ~~Thierry Ruboneka~~ (absent)
- Maricres Valdez Castro
- Alma Villegas
- ~~Leena Vo~~ (withdrawn)
- Lydia Zepeda
- Alternate (Vacant)
- Youth Position (Vacant)

A quorum is present (8 members)

III. Statement of Purpose Read by Commissioner Zepeda

IV. Land Acknowledgment Read by Commissioner Zepeda

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

V. Consent Agenda
Chair Donaldson

a. Approval of April 2023 Meeting Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Zepeda to approve the April 24, 2023 Agenda
Second made by Commissioner Ghayoumi.
The ayes have it and the X agenda was approved.

b. Approval of the March 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Zepeda.
Second made by Commission Nguyen.
The ayes have it and the March 2023 minutes are approved.

VI. Public Comment No members of the public were present to give comment.

VII. Commission Affairs **Commissioner Spotlight** – Commissioner Natalie Ghayoumi

- a.** Commissioner Ghayoumi shared her immigrant/immigration story.
- Born in Iran during the Iran/Iraq War; her family had to move to the capital to avoid bombings and chaos.
 - Commissioner Ghayoumi & her family moved to the United States when she was in 10th grade, and she underwent a lot of discrimination and racism due to her being an English language learner.
 - Despite the challenges, she went on to graduate as an English major, went to law school and became an immigration lawyer.
 - Commissioner Ghayoumi shared a clip from a CBC documentary she was in, where she shared about the struggles of immigrants getting to America and their immigration cases. Link is [here](#) (Start at Chapter 4, or around minute 22 for the Commissioners segment).
 - Commissioner Ghayoumi is currently working on a documentary film about prison reform, including the stories of those who have been detained in immigration detention centers.
- b. Recruitment Updates/Needs - Commissioner Villegas, Nicolas and Chair Donaldson**
- Commissioners Nicolas and Nguyen will be representing CIRA at the Community Vitality and Safety (CVS) when new commissioners are going to be interviewed. CVS Agenda for April 27 is here: <file:///C:/Users/rmoore/Downloads/Agenda.pdf>.
 - CIRA had eleven candidates, but of the eleven candidates only two responded to be interviewed. There will be a total of six interview: two new candidates, and four reappointments.

Commissioners

Emani Donaldson
Natalie Ghayoumi
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Hieu Nguyen

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- Commissioners discussed their obligation to select candidates who fit the position and meet CIRA's need, such as having diverse backgrounds, and being advocates for immigrant and refugee communities.

c. Committee Updates and Overview of work.

Community Safety Committee

Commissioner Zepeda reported:

Northwest Ice Processing Center (NWICP) Update

- The Tacoma City Council visited Representative Kilmer in Washington D.C. – but the request to visit NWICP was not discussed.
- Concerns about health & safety in the detention center continue, as well as training for Tacoma Police on how to respond to crimes happening in the NWICP.
- Next CSC meeting is Wednesday, 2023-04-19, 11 am to 12 pm.

Joint Commission meeting the Chief Moore

- Meeting is scheduled Wednesday April 26th at the Peace Lutheran Community Center from 5 to 7PM. The Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities and the Human Rights Commission will also be present.
- The Police Chief received 10 questions in advance, and five of them will be asked during the meeting.
- Commissioners are encouraged to attend either in person or remotely.

Commissioner Nguyen's Recent Interaction with the Police

- Commissioner Nguyen shared an experience of being rear-ended and the subsequent response from the police. He experienced extreme delays and received racially biased statements made by the responding officers.
- Commissioner Nguyen reported the incident and hopes for an investigation within the police department.

Budget Priorities and Multi-stage Plan

- The committee discussed budget priorities related to the immigrant community including housing, businesses, permitting and licensing, social services, TPD response, ride sharing, employment, and access to information and forms.
- CSC would like to propose a plan that involves creating a website with resources in multiple languages, distributing hard copies of resources, holding monthly open houses, and establishing an Office of Immigrant and Refugee Services in the City of Tacoma.
- Input & collaboration from other city departments and stakeholders are essential for executing the plan effectively.

Commissioners

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Facility Assessment Committee Concerns

- There were concerns raised about past & current city allocation of resources and decisions regarding budgets and facilities, particularly fire safety.
- The next Facility Assessment Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17th at 11 AM.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Villegas expressed concern that the responsibility for developing a multistage plan like creating an Office for Immigrant and Refugee Services would fall to CIRA – and that it’s not coming internally from City of Tacoma Departments; questioned why the Office of Equity & Human Rights has not identified this as an issue.
- Raeshawna Ware, OERH Staff Liaison, clarified that CIRA’s role is to identify gaps and recommend actions, and the execution of a plan would require collaborative efforts involving multiple departments; she acknowledged the need more momentum and buy-in from city departments. She expressed intention to initiate efforts in collaboration with CIRA.

c. Committee Updates and Overview of work (*Continued*)

Governance (of CIRA) Committee

- Next meeting Wednesday, 2023-05-1, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Committee Report:

- The committee discussed recruitment matters and wrapped up any details leading up to Commissioner interviews with CVS.
- Upcoming Welcoming Interactive in San Jose, CA (April 26-28). Commissioners discussed how they would participate at the conference, with focusing on workshops and sessions that were in alignment with the city officials’ goals and priorities, particularly language justice/access, and community safety. They decided that individual attendance at workshops would be followed by a joint discussion.
- At the next Governance Committee, commissioners will begin to develop the onboarding plan for the new commissioners.

Discussion:

- Commissioners discussed how the onboarding plan would form, because there needs to be more deliberate training than emailing informational materials.
- Discussed if there needs to be more meetings in advance of the May and June Meeting to create the plan.

Commissioners

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- Staff Liaison Ware offered to assist with any onboarding efforts, and if the Recruitment Committee might also play a role in the onboarding.
- Commissioner Nguyen suggested looking at the CIRA bylaws to determine the age of the Youth Commissioner Seat, and how we might expand on the recruitment efforts of the youth seat.
- Commissioner Zepeda suggested that if CIRA recruits a youth seat, that there be a mentoring component built around their onboarding and tenure.

Welcoming Week Committee

Commissioner Castro reported:

- Working on forming the Welcoming Week Committee and is requesting involvement from interested commissioners.
- Connected with Star Center and Tacoma Libraries, who would be willing to host events for Welcoming Week.
- Intends for Welcoming Week to amplify the voices of immigrant communities, and the community needs.

Recruitment Committee

Recruitment discussed in earlier agenda items.

VIII. City Staff Updates

- Staff Liaison Raeshawna Ware

a. Recruiting/Orientation of new Commissioners

Recruitment & onboarding discussed in earlier agenda items.

Other Items:

- Informed Commissioner Nguyen that Officer Katz sent over “Blue Cards” in Vietnamese.
- There is an emerging conversation about including a labor acknowledgement at the beginning of CBC meetings. Staff Liaison Ware will do some more research and pass on the information to commissioners at next meeting.
- Intention for participating in the Welcoming Interactive is to learn about how Tacoma can become a Certified Welcoming City and will bring information back to commissioners to discuss.

Commissioners

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Meeting Minutes
Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
April 24, 2023

**IX. Items to consider
for Next Meeting**

- Budget Form Discussion – table for May or June meeting when CIRA is through recruitment.

X. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:44 PM.

Commissioners

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