



Regular Meeting Minutes

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: Monday, September 25, 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>

Meeting ID: 967 9184 0410

Passcode: 264285

I. Call Meeting to Order– Chair Natalie Ghayoumi

- a. The meeting was called to order at 5:42 PM.

II. Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences – Chair Natalie Ghayoumi

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

III. Statement of Purpose– Commissioner Emani 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.”

IV. Land Acknowledgment – Commissioner 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

Commissioners

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

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

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.

V. Consent Agenda – Chair Ghayoumi

- a. Approval of ~~July~~ (updated September) 2023 Meeting Agenda (Aye/Nay Votes)
 - Added Approval of September 2023 Special Meeting Minutes for Approval in Consent Agenda
 - Motion made by Commissioner Donaldson to approve the updated September 2023 agenda; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Zepeda.
 - The ayes have it and the September Regular Meeting Agenda was approved.
- b. Approval of July 2023 Meeting Minutes and September 2023 Special Meeting Minutes (Aye/Nay Votes)
 - Motion made by Commissioner Zepeda to approve the July 2023 Meeting Minutes and September 2023 Special Meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Donaldson.
 - The ayes have it and the July 2023 Meeting Minutes and September 2023 Special Meeting were approved.

VI. Public Comment

- a. **Youth Presentation**

VII. Commission Affairs

- a. Commissioner Spotlight – Commissioner/Vice Chair Maricres Valdez Castro
- b. Bylaws Amendment Vote – Attendance
 - Vote tabled to October 2023 Meeting
 - Staff to connect with Legal for status of approval of proposed by-law amendments
- c. **Goals for CIRA**
 - Review of Committees
 - Safety Committee
 - Current Members – Lydia, Alma, Hieu, Thierry, Samantha and community members
 - Governance Committee
 - Current Members – Natalie, Emani, Hugo, Maricres, Maurice
 - Welcoming Week
 - Current Members – Maricres, Thierry, Maurice, Emani
 - Language Justice
 - Merged with Governance due to lack of attendance
 - Potential Committee – Recruitment (October – April)
 - Considerations:
 - Should the current committees continue?
 - Do you as a Commissioner want to remain on your current committee? Are you interested in joining another Committee?

Commissioners

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

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

- d. November Retreat Scheduling & Planning Committee Updates
 - Governance (of CIRA) Committee Wednesday, 2023- 9/13/2023, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm
 - Community Safety Committee Wednesday
 - Welcoming Week Committee
- Retreat – Poll sent to Commissioners to determine logistics (Date/Time of Retreat and topics to be covered)
 - Staff to confirm access to budget for retreat and return to October Business Meeting with information

VIII. City Staff Updates – OEHR Staff

- a. Announcement OEHR Staff Assistant Chief Equity Officer and Human Rights Manager
- b. Announcement CIRA Staff Liaison Support
 - Staff to record action minutes at Monthly Business Meeting
 - Staff to coordinate presentations with Governance Committee utilizing previous format developed by liaison in order to respect time and topics important to CIRA
 - Staff to review ZOOM and ensure easy access for commissioners at each Business Meeting
- c. Update Welcoming Week

IX. Items to Consider for Next Meeting & Announcements

- a. Announcement; How to help undocumented veterans. Second Vice Chair Nicolas

X. Adjourn

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 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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