



Regular Meeting Minutes

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: October 23, 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

The Tacoma Municipal Building is served by Pierce Transit bus routes 1, 2, 11, 16, 45, and 57.

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

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

Webinar ID: 876 5467 6275

I. Call Meeting to Order – Chair Natalie Ghayoumi

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm.

II. Statement of Purpose – Second Vice Chair Hugo Nicolas

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 – Commissioner Maurice Lekea

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 – Chair Natalie Ghayoumi

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

Motion to approve the October 2023 Agenda as written by Commissioner Zepeda

Seconded by First Vice Chair Castro

Ayes have it, the October 2023 Agenda was approved as written

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

Motion to approve the September 2023 Meeting Minutes as written by Commissioner Zepeda

Seconded by First Vice Chair Castro

Ayes have it, the September 2023 Meeting Minutes was approved as written

V. Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences – Chair Ghayoumi

Natalie Ghayoumi - Chair

Thierry Ruboneka - joined after roll call

Maricres Valdez Castro - First Vice Chair

Emani Donaldson

- Hugo Nicolas - Second Vice Chair
- Alicia Sands - joined after roll call
- Maurice Lekea
- Hieu Nguyen
- Samatha Le

- Lydia Zepeda
- Commissioner (Vacant)
- Commissioner (Vacant)
- Youth Position (Vacant)
- Alternate (Vacant)

VI. Public Comments

No Speakers, No Written Comments

VII. Commission Affairs

a. November 2023 and December 2023 Meeting dates

Motion to cancel the regular scheduled November Meeting and add a special CIRA meeting same time and location on November 20th at 5:30 pm by Commissioner Zepeda

Seconded by Commissioner Nguyen

Ayes have it, the November Regular Scheduled meeting is cancelled and a special meeting of CiRA on November 20th at 5:30 pm at the regular location and time was approved.

Commissioner Samantha Le has confirmed her coming absence for the November 20th Special CIRA Meeting.

No action was taken to cancel or change the December 2023 Regular meeting that discussion take place at the November 20th Special Meeting.

b. Bylaws amendment update

Staff spoke with Legal. Legal wrote a position on the current and proposed version of CIRA bylaws. Staff to send Legal's written response to commissioners. Staff to continue dialogue with Legal in preparation for the November Meeting.

c. Proclamation for Elimination of Violence Against Women and Human Rights Day

CIRA will bring forward this proclamation to Tacoma City Council. CIRA would like to work with the Human Rights Commission (HRC) on the proclamation. Staff liaisons will work to support the proclamation finalization. The date to turn in the proclamation to the Chief Policy Analyst is November 14th. The date for the proclamation reading is set for November 21st at 5:00 pm.

d. Committee survey updates

Chair Ghayoumi reviewed the results from the Committee Survey via PowerPoint and posed suggestions on how to proceed. Commissioner Sands was the only commissioner that was not named on any committee at the time of the survey and decided to join the Community Safety Committee. Commissioner Donaldson is interested in joining the Recruitment and Welcoming Week Committee. Chair Ghayoumi would like to consider joining the Recruitment and Welcoming Week Committee together. Commissioner Le is interested in Welcoming Week and Governance but cannot attend the current governance meeting time/date. A comment to consider "if you don't have anything to discuss at a committee meeting, cancel it."

e. Committee discussion

- i. Is Welcoming Week a permanent committee?
No decisions were made, however because of the recurrent nature it is being discussed.
- ii. Is Recruitment committee a permanent committee?
No decisions were made, however because of the recurrent nature it is being discussed.
- iii. Should Welcoming and Recruitment committee be merged to an Outreach Committee
No decisions were made, those interested in both committees will need to discuss.
- iv. Should Language Access / Justice committee be added to our committees?
No decisions were made.

f. Goals for 2023 and 2024 Discussion

- i. Bylaws
- ii. Crimes against immigrants
 1. Data collection
 2. Advisement to the City Council and TPD
- iii. Relationship with City of Tacoma
- iv. Youth involvement and diversification in recruitment to have representatives from all communities;
- v. Language access
- vi. Welcoming week program
- vii. Any suggestions

A general discussion on the goals for 2023-2024. Emphasis on extending the meaning of Welcoming beyond Welcoming Week, and immigrant and refugee safety.

g. Community member spotlight by a commissioner

Chair Ghayoumi discussed a suggestion for each commissioner to find a community member to be spotlighted (not organizations) at CIRA meetings that is inspirational, or their work is important to CIRA. CIRA responded favorably to this suggestion. No decisions were made on who to invite in November. However, some consideration like anonymity was discussed.

h. **Committee Updates and Overview of work.**

- Community Safety Committee

Met with Captain Darlington and Lieutenant Katz on 09/28. Received additional TPD 1000 resource cards in Vietnamese. Trying to get Blue Cards, Incident Cards to be translated into other languages and having police go over the card with victims. There is a need for detainee reporting crime cards and outreach at the detention for clarifying their rights. Need to address hate speech and slurs – we may need a city campaign on city civility. Would like to work with TPD on around what issues immigrants face and the difference good policing can make.

Question: Is there a penalty for “hate speech?” How can we protect those being verbally attacked?

Answer: - Varied Responses - threat speech is likely punishable.

Question: Can CIRA go in to the NWIPC to tell them about resources and reporting crime. Because folks may have fled due to uniformed personnel. it may be better for a group outside of TPD to go.

Answer: TPD does this in other communities and could do this with NWIPC. It would be likely be TPD, not CIRA.

Question: Are the resource cards available in Farsi and Arabic cards?

Answer: Not currently.
- Governance (of CIRA) Committee

Report out included in prior items

Retreat needs planning

Governance will receive presentation request from staff liaison and commissioners who would like to present to CIRA
- Welcoming week Committee

No Update

 - One hour policy / attendance

VIII. City Staff Updates – Liaison Raeshawna

Staff offered information on upcoming support. Primary staff liaison will be taking an extended leave February – June of 2024. In preparation Liaison Raeshawna will work with the Chair and CIRA leadership to prioritize work plans so ensure there is a smooth transition for incoming support staff.

Dialogue:

Commissioner Zepeda would like to learn more about budget.

AIDNW would still like to present though they could not present this meeting

Tacoma Slavic Association would like to connect with CIRA having particular questions about funds.

IX. Local news and events relating to CIRA affairs – Vice Chair Castro

-10/26 TPD delivering care packages at the NICO center at St Joseph 1:30pm

-11/03 Congolese drive for free clothing

-11/05 Art Market for Gaza 12-4 pm

Question: Read statement from CM Rumbaugh on Israel and Palestine conflict – Can CIRA issue a statement addressing fears.

Response: CIRA can generate a memo for CVS or full City Council if it would like to share sentiments and any document submitted in that form is made public on the agenda.

X. Items to Consider for Next Meeting

CIRA Retreat – Commissioner Ruboneka would like to take the lead in planning the retreat. Chair Ghayoumi encouraged in-person attendance for November 20th Special meeting. CIRA would like food in November Special Meeting.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33pm

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.lsping.org/knowtheland>



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