**Minutes**

**Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs**

Minutes Date: April 26, 2021 Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom Meeting

1. **Call Meeting to Order –** Chair Refaei

Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m.

1. **Statement of Purpose –** Chair Refaei
2. **Land Acknowledgment –** Vice Chair Sych
3. **Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences –** Chair Refaei

**Present:** Saiyare Refaei (Chair), Sandra Sych (Vice Chair), Emily Calhoun, Rafael Saucedo, Lydia Zepeda, Emani Donaldson, Alma Villegas, Alma Vargas, Patricia Flores

**Absent:** Perla Gamboa (excused), Hieu Nguyen

**City Staff Present:** Nick Bayard, Mohamud Ali & Shawn Stringerfrom Tacoma Police Department, Kate Larsen and Mariesa Bus from Tacoma Public Library

**Guests Present:**  None

1. **Introduction of New CIRA Members – Chair Refaei**
   1. Commissioners Alma Villegas, Emani Donaldson, and Lydia Zepeda shared what work they are most excited about as a new CIRA Commissioner.
2. **Consent on Agendas – Chair Refaei**
3. Approval of Meeting Agenda – Commissioner Zepeda motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Saucedo seconded. Agenda approved.
4. Approval of the February 2021 and March 2021 Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Zepeda motioned to approve the Monday, April 26th version, meeting minutes. Commissioner Saucedo seconded. Minutes approved.
5. **Commission Affairs – Chair & Vice Chair** 
   1. **Introduction of Officer** **Mohamud Ali as new TPD liaison to CIRA:** **Mohamud Ali (Tacoma Police Department),** **Shawn Stringer (Tacoma Police Department)**

Officer Ali shared background and service of the Eastside of Tacoma. Assistant Chief Stringer is the back up to Officer Ali as a CIRA contact.

Commissioner Zepeda wanted to know about use of minors as interpreters and expected roll out date. Lt. Aguirre, former CIRA TPD liaison, started this work. Pierce County is using a mobile device application for this interpretation service. The City is looking to use their example and has tested. TPD is now in the process of getting contact to use department wide.

* 1. **Tacoma Public Library Discussion: Kate Larsen Director of Tacoma Public Library, Mariesa Bus (Tacoma Public Library)**Director Larsen shared Tacoma Library recent history regarding budget, locations, and community involvement. Also shared results from their 2020 Budget work: salary and project cuts, hours decreased, furlough weeks and cancel feasibility study.  
     Commissioner Saucedo shared kudos to TPL and their service to the city. Commissioner Zepeda how can we help and partner? Larsen and Bus replied outreach for service improvements and community gaps. Would like input and help updating and expanding Local Languages Collection. Commissioner Zepeda suggests pre-teen/teen focused books, native language, and detention center presence. Commissioner Nguyen asked about early elementary grades computer programs and any catered to remote schooling. Bus shared the coding workshops and lots of hands-on computer programs. Casual conversation workshops/programs would be helpful for English language learners. Bus added Peace Community Center and Tacoma Rescue Mission are partners in distributing high-speed wi-fi spots. Commissioner Vargas asked about library fees. TPL is now fine-free and was an outcome of the Budget review and Covid pandemic. Charges occur only if something never gets returned and recoup is in the form of replacement cost.
  2. **Introduction of Staff Liaison Nick Bayard, Assistant Chief Equity Officer for the Office of Equity and Human Rights**Office helps with meeting support and identify issues and improvements. Recommendations are given to the Council CVS committee, then to whole Council. Different path of improvements: council formal process and informal departmental feedback on programs and policies.
  3. **Community Safety Committee report on April meeting and City’s response/engagement re: AAPI hate crimes and BIPOC safety in Tacoma:** **Nick Bayard (Office of Equity and Human Rights), Shawn Stringer (Tacoma Police Department), Mohamud Ali (Tacoma Police Department)**  
     Hate Crime Policy review and next steps with Officer Ali, CPAC and state policy liaison. Need to identify what are the gaps, any required union negotiations, and what levels needs further action. Chair Refaei, Vice Chair Sych, Commissioner Zepeda shared comments and questions regarding crime categories, community safety, protected classes and moving forward with work.

1. **Community Affairs**

* **Community Engagement Committee**
  + Bayard future meeting to talk about status of this sub-committee.
* **Governance (of CIRA) Committee** 
  + Chair Refaei reported there was a review of annual report and recruitment process feedback.
* **Language Access Committee**
  + Bayard reported recommendations will be taken to CVS June or July 2021. MCO is incorporating CIRA recommendations already.
* **NW Detention Center Committee** 
  + Chair Refaei continued meetings with CIRA, Council Members and La Resistencia. Shared vaccination updates to detainees, Covid cases for detainees/transfers and NWDC staff, House Bill passing, and stimulus funds to non-citizens.

1. **City Staff Updates** 
   1. Bayard: Community and Economic Development Department hosting an Asian American Pacific Islander Business Event and dates will be shared when announced. Tacoma rezoning parts of the city, see news article and contact Planning Commission or Council Members for input.
2. **Public Comment:** No comments at this time.
3. **Items for next meeting. Budget Office**

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.