**Minutes**

**Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs**

Minutes Date: August 23, 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 5:33 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), Lydia Zepeda, Alma Villegas, Patricia Flores, Rafael Saucedo, Hieu Nguyen, Perla Gamboa (excused), Emani Donaldson, Alma Vargas

**Absent:** Emily Calhoun

**City Staff Present:** Nick Bayard OEHR, Samantha Kaauamo OEHR, Raeshawna Ware OEHR

**Guests Present:**  Tacoma City Council Member Robert Thoms, Mouammar Abouagila (Lutheran Community Services Northwest)

1. **Ice Breaker – Vice Chair Sych**
2. **Consent on Agendas – Chair Refaei**
   1. Approval of Meeting Agenda – Commissioner Zepeda motioned to approve the agenda. Vice Chair Sych seconded. Agenda approved.
   2. Approval of the July 2021 Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Saucedo motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Zepeda seconded. Minutes approved.
3. **City Staff Updates – Raeshawna Ware**
   1. **Tacoma Support of Afghan Translator – Council Member Robert Thoms**Discussed Tacoma’s adoption of becoming a Welcoming City and how that that could play a role in bringing in Afghan refugees. CM Thoms would like partner with CIRA on helping this effort. Chair Refaei, Vice Chair Sych, Commissioners Zepeda, Villegas and Flores shared the following thoughts and topics: more than translator population, coordination with other agencies and cities, Visas, concrete plans on how to support the refugees.
   2. **Refugee and Placement Program– Mouammar Abouagila, LCSNW**Abouagila represents the Lutheran Community Services Northwest who is one of the main organizations helping with the Afghan refugee crisis. There are 14 refugee families he’d like to locate in Pierce County and needs support with housing, furnishings, school support, food, clothing, mental health services, etc, with a quick turnaround. Working with Tacoma Community House, Greater Lake Mental Health Services, and limited government support. Chair Refaei, Commissioners Villegas, Nguyen and Zepeda shared the following thoughts and topics: state funding, 90 day work requirement for visas, grant funding focused on housing, community support for everything but housing, recruit Afghan mental health professionals, estimate 35 refugees per month till December 2021.
   3. **Government Relations Invitation for CIRA policy development**Future presentation on policy development by Council Assistant and Government Relations staff
   4. **Committee Update Request**Please send meeting brief and action items to Raeshawna right after the meeting. Helps to continue work between meetings.
   5. **Get to know you calls with Commissioners**Raeshawna will be sending individual virtual meeting invitations to commissioners
4. **Commission Affairs – Chair & Vice Chair** 
   1. **Welcoming Week Event Planning**Virtual event confirmed for Friday, September 17th at 12noon. Highlight local organizations that are helping immigrant and refugee communities with short presentations and Q&A session. Presenter and attendee compensation with gift cards to local businesses. Event information due Friday to start advertising.
   2. **University of Washington Tacoma’s Inaugural Celebration of Latinx Communities**Monetary support for awards ceremony. Max funding amount is $5000. Commissioner Zepeda wanted to clarify UWT’s funding portion and what City support would be used for. City’s support is to help with incentives for awardees, scholarship fund, attendee experience. Total budget is $16K, Office of partnership is providing $9k of that. Currently no sponsors for this event. Funding for this event would be requested of the City Council contingency fund.   
      Commission Zepeda motioned to make the request to City Council to support the University of Washington Tacoma Campus’ Inaugural Celebration of Latinx Communities event with $5000. Vice Chair Sych seconded. Motion approved. Commissioner Saucedo abstained.
   3. **Committee Updates *(postponed for next month’s meeting)***
      1. **Community Safety Committee**Study Session to cover police compensation and Manny Ellis updates, hate crime notification process, language cards for non-emergency contacts are being circulated, mental health calls and 911. A request has been made to request Officer Ali attend this committee’s meetings, rather than the regular CIRA business meetings. This committee is willing to work their schedule around to have him present.
      2. **Governance (of CIRA) Committee**Vice Chair Sych motioned to have Commissioner Saucedo in the role of Acting Vice chair in her absence. Commissioner Zepeda seconded. Motion approved.
      3. **Language Access Committee**Upcoming presentation to the Council’s CVS Committee on Thursday, August 26th. The Language Justice Workshop will take place Thursday, 10-11am and hosted by Tolde and will have Spanish translation available.
      4. **NW Detention Center**Covid cases are still on the rise. Status of meetings with Council members and delegation. Outbreak at Pierce County Jail. These numbers are being included in Health department reporting numbers, but not NWDC, inquiry submitted to clarify why.
5. **Public Comment:** No comments.
6. **Items for next meeting.** 
   1. Annual Plan discussion
   2. Add Policy
7. **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.