



# Regular Meeting Minutes

## Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

**Date:** Monday, April 22, 2024

**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/82775537321?pwd=XFAEbIONsymHQoaTkRuFwEG25Lfbur.1>

Meeting ID: 827 7553 7321

Passcode: 053473

### I. Call Meeting to Order (5:30 pm) – Chair Ghayoumi

*Meeting Called to Order at 5:32 PM.*

### II. Statement of Purpose (5:33 pm) – Commissioner Sands

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 (5:35 pm) – Commissioner Castro

*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. Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences Chair Ghayoumi

~~Thierry Ruboneka~~ excused

Natalie Ghayoumi

~~Samantha Le~~ absent

Lydia Zepeda

~~Hieu Nguyen~~ term expired

Maurice Lekea

Maricres Valdez Castro. *Vice Chair*

Alicia Sands

Hugo Nicolas. *Second Vice Chair*

Andy Mejia – Youth

#### Commissioners

Natalie Ghayoumi  
Alicia Sands  
Samatha Le  
Maurice Lekea  
Hieu Nguyen

Hugo Nicolas  
Thierry Ruboneka  
Maricress Valdez-Castro  
Andy Mejia  
Lydia Zepeda

- V. Consent Agenda (5:40 pm) – Chair Ghayoumi**
- a. Approval of April 22, 2024, Agenda (Aye/Nay Votes)
    - *Commissioner Zepeda made a motion to approve the agenda.*
    - *Vice Chair Valdez Castro seconded the motion.*
    - *The Ayes have it and the Meeting Agenda is approved*
  - b. Approval of March 25, 2024, Meeting Minutes (Aye/Nay Votes)
    - *Commissioner Zepeda made a motion to approve the amended minutes.*
    - *Vice Chair Sands seconded the motion.*
    - *The Ayes have it and the amended meeting minutes is approved*

**VI. Public Comment (5:40 – 5:50 pm)**

*No Public Comment Offered*

**VII. Commission Affairs**

- a. New Commissioner Training
  - *In development*
- b. Funding for legal representation for Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC)
  - Commissioner Zepeda / Community Safety Committee
    - *Advocate to city to continue to fund, potentially increase funding.*
    - *Commissioner Sands and Zepeda will draft letter to be shared at next meeting*
- c. Immigration related policy making
  - Commissioner Zepeda / Community Safety Committee
    - *Advocating should be more structured.*
      - *Liaison Nancy will connect with Sonja Hallum to talk about potential access*
- d. Updates on litigation for Middle Eastern travel ban and Census
  - *Chair Ghayoumie shared a website with information about this topic*
- e. Commissioner Lekea’s report on the Welcoming Interactive America
  - *Liaison Nancy to check with City to determine status of Welcoming City*
- f. Second Vice Chair Nicolas’ update on strategies and committees
  - *Liaison Nancy to create a doodle poll for commissioners to offer availability for a summer retreat*
  - *Liaison Nancy to offer info on CIRA Budget*
- g. Casting Discrimination – Chair Ghayoumi
  - *In process, background research completed.*
  - *Potential to collaborate with Human Rights Commission*

**Commissioners**  
Natalie Ghayoumi  
Samatha Le  
Maurice Lekea  
Hieu Nguyen

Hugo Nicolas  
Thierry Ruboneka  
Maricress Valdez-Castro  
Lydia Zepeda  
Andy Mejia

h. Committee Updates

- Governance (of CIRA) Committee Wednesday, meeting held on April 10, 2024
- Community Safety Committee Wednesday, meeting held on April 9, 2024
- Welcoming Week / Recruitment Committee

**VIII. City Staff Updates – OEHR Staff**

- Director Lisa Woods has moved to a new position with the City Manager’s Office. Assistant City Manager Hyun Kim is acting Director of OEHR.
- Reminder of special meeting in May – scheduled on May 20<sup>th</sup> instead of May 27<sup>th</sup>.

**IX. Presentation - Amy Newcomb and Sameera Ibrahim from University of Washington**

- Interviewees needed – lived experience with Middle Eastern and North African descent – qualitative data collection.

**X. Items to Consider for Next Meeting & Announcements**

- a. Proclamation

**XI. Adjourn (7:34 pm)**

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**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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