



# Regular Meeting Minutes

## Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

**Date:** Monday, November 25, 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/82877122622?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82877122622?pwd=vzPBsPX1YvQbOS5haBnEEHqdF0YVLd.1)

[pwd=vzPBsPX1YvQbOS5haBnEEHqdF0YVLd.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82877122622?pwd=vzPBsPX1YvQbOS5haBnEEHqdF0YVLd.1)

Meeting ID: 828 7712 2622

Passcode: 98402

**Call Meeting to Order/Roll Call 5:50pm** - X Chair Hugo Nicolas

X Emmanuella Shasha, Vice Chair

X Iulia Didkivska, Second Vice Chair

X Natalie Ghayoumi

X Maricres Valdez Castro

Eunice Kalembo, absent

Maurice Lekea, absent

Andy Mejia, *Youth, excused*

Linus Nyaga, absent

X Thierry Ruboneka

**X** Alicia Sands

Nixon Tenga, excused

X Lydia Zepeda

**Also present:** Vicky McClaurin,

**Quorum confirmed, meeting called to order at 17:36**

### Statement of Purpose

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."

### Land Acknowledgment

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.

### **Agenda Approval**

**Motion to move the CIRA business before presentation**

**Shasha moved and Valdez Castro seconded motion to approve the amended agenda and seconded. Approved unanimously.**

### **Approval of October 28, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

Vicky did not send out minutes so will have to postpone until next meeting.

### **Public Comments**

*All written public comment must be submitted in writing at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.* None

### **Commission Affairs**

#### **Trauma-Informed Policing Proposal Discussion**

Concerns raised about the delayed response from the police department regarding the proposal. Discussion on the need for trauma-informed training, especially for interactions with immigrant communities. A letter was proposed by CIRA at the September 23 meeting; Zepeda volunteered to draft, and Commissioners Valdez Castro, Ghayoumi and Sands agreed to review the letter. The draft letter was sent out before October 28 meeting, read aloud at that meeting and according to the minutes of October 28 was approved at the October 28 meeting.

Vicky will send a copy of the letter without “draft” on it tomorrow Nov 25, 2024

Ghayoumi asked for CIRA to be cc'd

#### **Letter of Gratitude to Tacoma City Council**

Discussion on a letter to City Council indicating gratitude for advocacy regarding NWIPC. Some members expressed the need for more information before voting on it at the last CIRA meeting. In revisiting the letter, no one had any edits.

**Zepeda moved and Valdez Castro seconded that the letter be approved and sent. The motion passed unanimously.**

The letter will go out Nov 25, 2024.

#### **Proposing an Ordinance or Resolution to Become a Sanctuary City**

Ghayoumi talked about how the city of LA passed an ordinance to become a sanctuary city, meaning not cooperating with ICE, e.g. not doing an ICE hold on undocumented immigrants.

Zepeda indicated that Keep Washington Working (KWW) legislation forbids peace officers in Washington State from cooperating with ICE over civil (immigration)

violations. However, the current sheriff is notifying ICE of releases from Pierce County Jail and sheriff-elect promises to cooperate with ICE.

Know Your Rights (KYR) outreach to immigrants is needed to inform them that they do not have to identify their status. This could involve distributing information.

In answer Shasha's question about which nonprofits do KYR: NWIRP. It was suggested we invite NWIRP to do a KYR workshop for the the immigrant community in Tacoma. Sands supported the idea.

Ruboneka asked if we know what happens if we become a sanctuary city, would there be costs? Could the city lose funding?

Sands asked if sheriff is violating KWW, we are simply asking that it be enforced.

Nicolas stated we could remind public of KWW and the stance of sheriff.

Ruboneka asked what can city do about county?

Ghayoumi stated that if a resolution like Los Angeles passed in Tacoma, even if TPD or Sheriff do not violate law, individual officers might.

Nicolas was concerned about how immigrants might be vilified.

Vicky has ordered business cards and name tags.

Zepeda reminded them of Shasha's suggestion for outreach on KYR.

Ruboneka suggested an outreach campaign that included KYR, and a TPD safety program.

Vicky mentioned that there will be money for printing business cards.

Nicolas suggested forming a group to outline an outreach proposal, partner with NWIRP on KYR, and talks to public. He suggested asking the city council for a statement in support of immigrants and letting TPD know.

Valdez Castro: supports outreach, there are many new Africa students at Mount Tacoma.

Shasha: what organization would we work with and how is it decided?

Vicky: open bids, or if have an organization in mind, can simply explain why we selected it .

Zepeda: the CSC will be putting together a plan of work for 2025. Among the things it will be looking at is KYR/outreach; so CSC can start a draft of what a campaign could look like. Then the full CIRA could discuss it at the retreat and an outreach group would be created to implement it.

**Shasha moved to have the CSC draft an outreach campaign and then create an outreach group to carry it out. Seconded by Valdez Castro. Approved unanimously**

Valdez Castro suggested creating proclamation to support migrants by Dec 18.

Nicolas: is this the same as what you proposed?

Ghayoumi: It should be a resolution.

Nicolas: they are very different. Governance will work on resolution on sanctuary city.

**Zepeda Moved and Ghayoumi seconded that the Governance committee will draft a letter asking the city council for a resolution for Tacoma to be a sanctuary city. Approved unanimously.**

Castro proposed that we create a proclamation to support international immigrant.

Point of order, CIRA would need to see the proclamation to vote.

Would need to vote, possibly by email, or special meeting.

Zepeda, would prefer special meeting

Shasha had a question.

Ghayoumi suggests moving the meeting to Dec 16.

Vicky, suggests that it is too short of a timeline because it needs to be in the clerks office Suggests we put this in the workplan for next year.

Valdez Castro can do this on their own.

Didkivska suggest that we use Google docs so everyone can see it.

Vicky: open records prevents using this for a quorum.

Nicolas suggested we table Valez Castro's request given we do not have lead time to draft, review and vote on it before Dec 18.

## **Committee Updates**

### **Community Safety committeeT**

Present: Lydia Zepeda, Andy Mejía, Officer Ali, Allen McKenzie, Thierry Ruboneka,

Absent: Alicia Sands, Sammie Le, Alma Villegas, Hieu Nguyen,

1. Report on NWIPC meeting Nov 4: Andy (Alicia and Thierry were there also)

CM Walker shared that the DOH is trying to inspect NWIPC to assess access to doctors, air quality, library, etc. but there is a legal challenge from GEO Group. Letter sent to Rep Kilmer, and Rep-Elect Randall. Inspection is on pause bc of lawsuit.

La Resistencia complained about train activity and removal of banners by train staff.

2. OD Death of José Manuel Sánchez Castro at NWIPC Oct 27 in Medical Segregation. DOHS will Investigate. CSC asks CIRA to ask the city to investigate. Lydia asked Hugo to put on the agenda.

3. CIRA meeting Oct 28, TIP letter approved. The thank you letter was not approved.

4. Policy doc - please add to it

5. What happened to resources that Nancy Shattuck was collecting on CIRA website? Why has only a partial list been posted?

Vicky: The list on the website is what she had. Please resend resources to her. Expressed concerns about liability, bc it looks like we are endorsing the organizations.

Zepeda: we could use a disclaimer on the website.

Nicolas: does it need approval, is it difficult to update

Vicky: it does not take much to update. Just make sure that we are protecting people, that we are not promoting scammers.

For next meeting: gather list of resources to share. Send them to Vicky so she can create a single document. A link and short blurb.

6. Shot Spotter: \$800,000 DOJ grant to test the audio gunshot detector in 3 areas of city, first is in South Hosner. Community meeting November 10 about over-policing and racial bias. There will be a presentation in Jan at CPAC on Shot Spotter.

7. Allen: Pierce County jail is not doing ICE holds, but is notifying ICE when immigrants are being released. New sheriff Keith Swank has promised full cooperation with ICE and he is in charge of the jail so he may also do ICE holds. This violates KWW but courts may not uphold KWW. Immigrants are at risk.

8. Officer Ali: Don't answer questions about immigration status, you don't have to. You have to provide ID, but you don't need to answer questions about status.

9. Next meeting of CSC Dec 10 4:30. Plan for 2025.

10. We need a different zoom link that lasts an hour. Lydia will ask Vicky. Vicky said City cannot support a zoom link for CSC.

Shasha asked about the retreat next year,

Nicolas: we are discussing what we are doing for retreat. We need to let people know we care, bc people are afraid

**Governance committee** Nicolas was not able to attend the last meeting. He is reflecting on what happened in 2016: concerns about retaliation. Talk to him privately.

Valdez Castro did a proclamation but did not send it out, so it cannot be voted on because it was not sent out with agenda.

Sands, do some letter writing for immigrants as part of retreat.

Governance committee will be setting the agenda for the retreat.

Ruboneka: I heard about denial of asylum, they need testimony from credible community members, they may need housing or sponsorships.

Discussion of difficulties to access to info about detainees, lawyers, there is a need for more money and representation.

Nicolas: cannot understand why state can't go in to NWIPC, it is a business.

Sands: The funds for legal representation are they included in the budget?

Vicky: \$50,000 for 2 years. Budget will be approved on Dec 10.

Nicolas: does the city do a press release that would highlight that CIRA asked for this. What is the right approach?

Vicky: Yes, the city does do press releases. She will be meeting with Media and Communications and ask what they want to feature.

Nicolas: we want people to know about CIRA

Valdez Castro: Charter resolutions: 26 recommendations only 4 made it to the ballot.  
Events: Treelighting Dec 1 in Proctor, 6:30pm bring a shelf stable snack for youth shelter.

Dec 7 Khmer fundraiser at Lincoln HS

Dec 18 6:15 at Tacoma public library Tacoma Refugee Choir.

Asia Pacific Community center, 5 free mental health sessions

Vicky Name tags and business cards are available whenever Commissioners attending/ representing events.

Shasha what is the process of getting them?

Vicky is happy to send them out, you can hold on to them.

Next meeting December 23, 2024 -

Ghayoumi suggests December 16 instead.

**Lydia moved to move meeting from Dec 23 to Dec 16 Ghayoumi seconded, approved unanimously.**

**Next meeting December 16, 2023**

Shasha waiting for invitation for governance committee meeting

Governance meeting Dec 11.

Link is Natalie and only 20 minutes, needs a longer link,

They will use a Teams meeting on **Dec 11 at 5:30pm**

**Retreat scheduled for January 25, 2025, 10am-2pm**

Eastside Community Center

1721 East 56th St

Tacoma WA 98404

**Adjourned at 7:38 pm**

**Moved and seconded approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lydia Zepeda, Secretary

CIRA