



Regular Meeting Minutes

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: Saturday, January 25, 2025

Eastside Community Center - In-person only

Business Meeting Called to Order at 13:19 (following the CIRA Retreat)

Present: Chair Hugo Nicolas
Emmanuella Shasha, *Vice Chair*
Iulia Didkivska, *Second Vice Chair*
Maricres Valdez Castro,
Natalie Ghayoumi
Eunice Kalembo
Maurice Lekea
Linus Nyaga
Alicia Sands
Nixon Tenga
Lydia Zepeda

Absent: Andy Mejia, *Youth - excused (can only attend via Zoom)*
Thierry Ruboneka

Also present: Vicky McLaurin, Sarah Bridgeford

Statement of Purpose – previously read at Retreat meeting

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 – City Land Acknowledgement previously read at Retreat meeting

The Agenda was moved by Zepeda and seconded by Shasha, approved unanimously.

Agenda

1. Know Your Rights

During the CIRA Retreat there had been a discussion about the need for Know Your Rights (KYR) information for immigrants.

Zepeda moved that Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) be invited to the February CIRA meeting for presentation on KYR and their immigrant hotline. Shasha seconded. approved unanimously.

2. Committee Assignments

Discussion: The Governance Committee will take the draft 2025 work plan and draft a proposal for committees to address the work plan for the February meeting. The 2025 Work Plan will be voted on at the February meeting, along with voting on the priorities within the work plan and the committee structure for the work plan.

Nicolas moved that the Governance Committee will draft a proposal of committees to address the 2025 Work Plan for consideration at the Feb CIRA meeting. Didkivska seconded. Approved unanimously.

3. Contact List for Commissioners

At the December meeting the Commissioners requested that McLaurin send out a contact list of the Commissioners. The list will be marked confidential, not for distribution. The request was made again and McLaurin indicated she would send it out January 27, 2025.

4. Other

The Governance Committee will meet on the second Friday of the month at 5pm. They will try to keep the meetings to 30 minutes.

The next CIRA meeting is February 24, 2025

Adjourned at 13:29

Respectfully submitted by,
Commissioner Lydia Zepeda, Secretary

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

January 27, 2025

Retreat Notes:

Access to services

- Budget with lens of immigrants and refugees
 - a. Omission in budget

Education

- Paperwork

Community org. – Data to inform Council

Eligibility based on status

Temporary right to work (at City level)

Inventory (Welcoming City)

Welcome week

Trauma-Informed policing follow-up

Accomplishments

- Blue cards, reporting cards
- Not using children for interpretations
- QR codes/links not working.
- 3 Chiefs ratified jurisdiction over detain.
- TPD interpretation system
- Preserving funding for legal servicing and phone cards for detention center
- Initiating welcoming city
- Support of welcome week
- Trauma informed policing proposal
- Collaborating with CPAC

Workplan Discussion

- Welcome Week
 - Language Access
 - Meet with immigrant and refugees
 - Specifically, with and benefit to the refugee and immigrant communities
 - Marketing – not only for one provider
- Visit/learn about other “CIRAs”
 - Attend meetings
 - Invite to CIRA meeting
- Build Trust
 - City Council (1 per quarter)
 - Community

- City departments
- Marketing
- Outreach and engagement
- Host meeting to understand needs.
 - Business, legal, etc.
 - Develop report on gaps
 - Structure as listening sessions
 - Inform future projects/tasks
 - How to do within Scope of CIRA – what we can and cannot do
- Engage with leadership about budget
- Incorporation into Tacoma 2035
 - Advocate for incorporation
- Language access
 - Marketing and awareness with outreach
 - Understanding access process/barriers
 - Multiple languages
- Promote know your rights outreach
 - Funding
 - Printing
 - Publicity
- Advocate for affordable housing for Immigrants and refugees
 - In housing plan
 - Language access
- City advocates for state for federal policies or endorse policies such as
 - DACA, work permits, pathways to citizenship.
- Education/How to for City processes and services
 - Business – starting in general, permitting as
 - Community services
 - City services
- Community Services
 - Welcome organization/businesses
 - Open, clear process for what organizations/people present
 - Recommendation or funding process – outreach, eval, etc.
- Increase awareness of services
- Lack into City -right to work (City granted)
- How to support and promote immigrant and refugee business
 - Consider safety and protection
- Civility campaign
 - Originally in response to discrimination during COVID
 - Context – non what is happening federally
- TIP Proposal
- Website review and maintenance
- Sanctuary city/Provisions
 - Cooperations with ICE

- Outreach by TPD at NWICE on how to report crime
 - Training at TPD on work with people at NW ICE
 - Phone and legal
- In any topic, City department, etc., engage staff
- Conversations with ICE on conditions at the detention center
 - Recommendation to City
- Gang violence and drug use (such as inpatient tx for youth)