

**MARION CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 6:30 pm**

Marion City Hall  
1225 6th Avenue, Marion, IA 52302

**Commissioners Present:**

Chris Stoner  
Okpara Rice  
Frederick Brown  
Kent Jackson  
Danielle Brazant  
Renaë Forsyth-Christy  
Dave Baumler  
Kim Eiler  
Bret Nilles

**Commissioners Absent:**

Selita Jansen  
Jenifer Tibbets

**Staff/Other Present:**

Amal Eltahir, City of Marion

**I. Call to Order**

Noting there was a quorum, Commissioner Jackson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

**II. Roll Call/Introductions**

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

**III. Public Response**

There was no public response.

**IV. Director's Report**

Director's report presented a list describing complaints. Three out of the four complaints filed in December were housing related. Report also included a reminder about upcoming events and activities. Commissioners see housing as a major area in need of outreach efforts and are looking for more information in regard to the Cedar Rapids' Housing Resource Fair event.

V. **Approval of Minutes from November Meeting**

Commissioner Rice moved to approve the December minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Brazant, motion passed.

VI. **Report from Chair**

Commissioner Jackson expressed his gratitude recognizing Commissioner Nilles for his outstanding service as a chair. Nilles has been a great supporter of the commission. Commissioner Jackson also stated that outreach efforts were discussed in depth during executive committee meeting.

VII. **Committee Reports**

a. *Executive Committee*- Commissioner Brown

Commissioners met on December 18<sup>th</sup> to set the agenda. Committee discussed strategic plan and housing.

b. *Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Liaison* - Renae Forsyth-Christy

Nothing to report as the meeting was a close session meeting.

c. *Grants & Strategic Planning Committee* -Commissioner Brown

Inquiries regarding grant application were received from Wilis Dady and Marion Cares. Commissioner Brown explained the grant award process and will be updating the commission on award status following the upcoming sub-committees meeting. Commissioner Rice moved to power the executive committee to extend grant application deadline if needed, seconded by commissioner Nilles, motion passed.

VIII. **Unfinished Business**

a. Partnership with the Marion Library

Commissioner Stoner met with Madeline Jarvis, Director of scheduling for adult programming to talk about events planning process and timeframe. She identified 4-month events and themes that are good candidates for collaboration:

1. "Cost of Homelessness" presentation at the Cedar Rapids Library on January 23<sup>rd</sup> to cosponsor.
2. "All Iowa Reads" program series. Speaker on Reproductive Rights, Documentary on black faith communities.
3. In June, Pride Event
4. October, Anniversary of Women Sufferings. Voting Rights and Race Issues

Commissioner Jackson suggested that the communication and outreach sub-committee meet quarterly to plan for events.

Sub-committees' as follows:

- a. Communication and outreach: Commissioners: Stoner, Tibbets, & Jensen
- b. Grants and strategic planning-Commissioners: Brown, Rice, Jackson, Nilles
- c. Training: Tibbets, Eiler, Forsyth-Christy

**IX. New Business**

- a. Housing Discussion- Commissioner Jackson noted that housing has been and continue to be the community's number one issue. Commissioner Eiler suggested inviting Mark Hudson to speak on the issue. Commissioner will be planning for the event.
- b. Upcoming Events
  - i. MLK Movie Night – CR Public Library, January 16- 5:30 to 7:30
  - ii. MLK Public Sector Job Fair- Event will be held at the Cedar Rapids Public Library 3 to 4:30 on Friday January 17<sup>th</sup>. Event is to encourage diversity in public sector employment.

**X. Good of the Order**

Commissioner Rice shared news about a movie called “Just Mercy”. According to Rice, the movie is based on a true story and its book version is an interesting read. Commissioner also called attention to a pre-legislative sessions Gazette issue mainly about resources.

**XI. Adjournment**

Commissioner Baumler moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Jensen, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6:30 pm at Marion City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, Marion, Iowa.

*Respectfully submitted by Amal Eltabir, City of Marion*