

**MARION CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 2, 2019, 6:30 pm**

Marion City Hall  
1225 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Marion, IA 52302

**Commissioners Present:** Ms. Ellen Barnett  
Ms. Danielle Brazant  
Mr. Frederick Brown  
Ms. Kim Gordon  
Mr. Kent Jackson  
Ms. Renae Forsyth-Christy  
Mr. Bret Nilles

**Commissioners Absent:** Mr. Okpara Rice  
Ms. Angelica Vannatta  
Mr. Dave Baumler

**Staff/Other Present:** Ms. Amal Eltahir, Assistant to the City Manager

**I. Call to Order**

Noting there was a quorum, Commissioner Nilles, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

**II. Roll Call/Introductions**

Commissioners and staff did roll call.

**III. Public Response**

There was no public response.

**IV. Director's Report**

Commissioner Nilles, Chair reviewed the director report and caseload report included with the meeting packet. He noted we continue addressing housing cases and moved to approve executive bill for the city of Cedar Rapids. Commissioner Nilles expressed his gratitude for Angelica and Ellen's service.

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

Commissioner Nilles asked if commissioners have comments about the minutes and moved to approve the December minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Barnett, the motion passed unanimously.

## **VI. Report from Chair**

Commissioner Nilles mentioned that he and the Mayor interviewed five candidates for commissioner's vacancies and selected three. Applications will be sent to City Council for approval. He stated that they are qualified and have diverse backgrounds and they will be appointed in time for the next meeting. Commissioners discussed the strategic plan next steps.

## **VII. Committee Reports**

### *Executive Committee*

Commissioner Nilles stated that in the meeting they went through an agenda, commission candidate's interviews were discussed, and approval of finances.

### *Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Liaison*

Commissioner Brazant provided a brief update from the most recent Cedar Rapids meeting.

## **VIII. Old Business**

### a. Grant Program Update

Commissioner Brown provided an update on the grant program and shared that the application portal will close January 8<sup>th</sup>. Amber will forward all inquiries about it.

The grant reviewers will screen applications then bring them for selection. Commissioner Nilles mentioned that they received good press in the Marion Times.

### b. Star Power- Trian-the Trainer

Commissioners discussed potential guest speakers to bring in during 2019, and opportunities for future training. Commissioners Gordon and Forsyth-Christy volunteered. Amanda is expected to follow up with the City leadership group

## **IX. New Business**

### a. Strategic Plan review with new members on board

Items discussed included:

LGBT support presentation

Commissioner Gordon's service animal presentation

Commissioner Jackson highlighted some items on the plan and suggested items not addressed to be addressed or removed.

### b. Upcoming Events & Proclamations

Amal was tasked with adding a MLK proclamation to the upcoming Council agenda. Commissioner Brazant will be representing the Commission at the City Council meeting to accept this proclamation.

A proclamation for Black History Month was also proposed.

## **X. Good of the Order**

Commissioner Nilles asked if there are any contributions. He noted housing-related issues

are still in mind.

## **XI. Adjournment**

Commissioner Nilles moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by commissioner Jackson, the meeting adjourned at 7:07pm

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 6:30 pm at Marion City Hall, 1225 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Marion, Iowa.

*Respectfully submitted by Amal Elthair, City of Marion*