

MARION CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday January 6th, 2020, 6:30 pm
Location: Zoom Webinar ID: 897 8156 8601

Commissioners Present:

Frederick Brown
Jenifer Tibbets
Bret Nilles
Chris Stoner
Okpara Rice
Kent Jackson
Dave Baulmer
Selita Jansen
Angelica Vannatta
Danielle Brazant
Renaë Forsyth-Christy

Commissioners Absent:

Staff/Other Present:

Amal Eltahir, City of Marion

Ana Clymer
Kara Bullerman, City Attorney

- I. **Call to Order**
Noting there was a quorum, Commissioner Jackson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
- II. **Roll Call/Introductions**
Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.
- III. **Ethics Policy- Kara Bullerman, City Attorney**
Raising awareness and advising on how to navigate the fine line between expressing personal opinion and representing official capacity, Bullerman talked about ethics and the expectations from those with an official role focusing on public meetings and forums settings.
Regarding Zoom behavior, Bullerman advised on being conscious of ones surroundings. Regarding Political statements, she cautioned commissioners recommending being mindful of what might cause controversy and highlighting the importance of maintaining neutrality, especially as civil rights commissioners.

IV. **Public Response**

None

V. **Director's Report**

No intake was reported for January 2021.

VI. **Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Nilles moved to approve the January minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Forsyth-Christy, motion passed.

VII. **Report from Chair**

Commissioner Jackson participated in and spoke highly of the Equity Conversation sessions led by United Way.

VIII. **Committee Reports**

- a. *Executive Committee*- Commissioners met on January 25th to set the agenda. The Committee discussed Community Equity Taskforce and the LMI Housing Assistance Grant.
- b. *Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Liaison* - Renae Forsyth-Christy
No Report
- c. *Communication and outreach Committee* -Commissioner Jansen
Commissioner Vannatta will be participating on the subcommittee. Commissioner Jansen is looking for feedback and input from the Commission regarding the framework of the outreach plan. Commissioners previously discussed the need for revamping the events calendar plan and distribution channels. Committee sees the opportunity in leveraging technology to make up for COVID Impact on outreach.

IX. **Unfinished Business**

- a. Community Equity Taskforce
Commissioners Brown briefed the commission stating that the taskforce met on January 14th. Agenda included two presentations regarding police response data and the Equity Survey results. Great discussion regarding policy that will be continued next meeting and potential targeted focus groups, a civil Rights Commission idea, that resonated well with the group.
- b. **Marion Low Income Housing Assistance Grant**
Commissioners Brown stated that application deadline is February 12th.
Committee received a report from Willis Dady regarding last year's grant.
- c. Events planning

Consensus is: There is a need for raising awareness around discrimination, civil rights content, and the Marion Civil Rights commission. Commissioners brainstormed outreach ideas and discussed with great interest virtual speakers and other engagement series, heavy visibility, leading the equity conversation, and social media presence.

X. **Good of the Order**

Commissioners Brazant shared she had a speaking opportunity to talk about mental health with Steve Mossier.

Ana Clymer wrote asking about whether the city has an ethics training for boards and commissions to eliminate bias. Vannatta underlined the question regarding history and bias training. Eltahir described the city's expectations, screening, and onboarding process and that the onboarding process include general awareness and could be improved with civil rights training.

XI. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Rice moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Brazant, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.