

MARION CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday March 3, 2021, 6:30 pm
Location: Zoom Webinar ID: 859 5333 3504

Commissioners Present: Dave Baumler
Danielle Brazant
Frederick Brown
Renae Forsyth-Christy
Selita Jansen
Bret Nilles
Okpara Rice
Chris Stoner
Jennifer Tibbetts
Angelica Vannatta

Commissioners Absent: Kent Jackson

Staff/Other Present: Amal Eltahir
Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven
Ana Clymer
Alma Apolonio Bernal

- I. **Call to Order**
Commissioner Brown, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
- II. **Roll Call/Introductions**
Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.
- III. **Public Response**
None
- IV. **Director's Report**
Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven, Executive Director for the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission (CRCRC), stated Alma Apolonio Bernal is a new intern with the CRCRC and will work with the Commission through May 2021. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven shared outreach efforts of the CRCRC. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven shared how the CRCRC is utilizing a grant received from the U.S. Department of Housing (HUD). Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity are now protected under the Fair Housing Act. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven shared events or presentations that will be held at upcoming CRCRC meetings.
- V. **Approval of Minutes**
Commissioner Stoner pointed out a correction under Committee Reports indicating it was Commissioner Jansen that provided the Communication and

Outreach Committee report, not him. Commissioner Forsyth-Christy moved to approve the February minutes as corrected. Commissioner Rice seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

VI. Report from Chair

Commissioner Brown stated with Commissioner Jackson's absence there will be no report.

VII. Committee Reports

a. Executive Committee

Commissioner Brown stated the Executive Committee met on February 26th to set the agenda. The Committee also discussed the Community Equity Task Force and scoring of the LMI Housing Assistance Grant.

b. Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Liaison –

Commissioner Forsyth-Christy stated the CRCRC had Nick Maybanks as a guest speaker at their February meeting to discuss a Marijuana Diversion Program.

c. Communication and outreach Committee –

Commissioner Jansen stated the Committee created a plan for outreach for the next 12 months focusing on three major categories:

- Read and Respond
- Attend and Act
- Listen and Learn

Commissioners provided suggestions for modifications and additions.

Commissioner Jansen asked if the City could monitor social media posts from the CRCRC and reshare them on the Marion Facebook page.

VIII. Unfinished Business

a. Community Equity Task Force

Commissioner Brown stated the Community Equity Task Force reviewed the vision statement and through discussion it was determined residents are not familiar with what the task force is and what their purpose is. Therefore, the task force decided to create a Communication and Outreach subcommittee to determine best ways to communicate the mission and purpose of the task force and how the work ties to the Civil Rights Commission. Commissioner Tibbetts shared ideas the task force subcommittee came up with regarding outreach and communication to Marion residents. The Commission discussed various aspects of outreach.

b. Marion Low Income Housing Assistance Grant

Commissioner Nilles stated grant requests were received from ASAC, Willis Dady, Catherine McAuley, Marion Cares, and Waypoint.

Commissioner Nilles stated each grant was reviewed individually and scored based on the criteria used in previous years. Commissioner Nilles

stated it was decided to award \$7,000 to Willis Dady, \$6,500 to Marion Cares, and \$6,500 to Waypoint. Commissioners asked questions regarding the grant applications and had a discussion.

Commissioner Rice moved to approve the recommendation of awarding \$7,000 to Willis Dady, \$6,500 to Marion Cares, and \$6,500 to Waypoint. Commissioner Baumler seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with Commissioner Tibbetts abstaining.

IX. New Business

a. Public Statements

b. Lawful Source of Income

Commissioner Vannatta stated she would like to know if statements can be made from the Civil Rights Commission and if so, what is the process for making those statements. Commissioner Vannatta stated she was asked why the Commission did not make a statement against the Lawful Source of Income bill. Commissioner Vannatta also stated she thought it would have been appropriate for the Commission to make a statement in support of the school district changing their mascot and providing the reasons why. The Commission discussed how to show support or opposition to bills and other topics in the future.

Commissioner Rice moved to approve the Commission making a statement in support of Marion Independent Schools changing their mascot. Commissioner Forsyth-Christy seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

X. Good of the Order

Amal Eltahir, Commission Liaison, stated Commissioner Brazant was offered a position with a magazine writing about civil rights issues.

XI. Adjournment

Commissioner Nilles moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m. Commissioner Vannatta seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.