



# AGENDA

## Civil Rights Commission

6:30 PM - Wednesday, May 5, 2021

City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

This meeting will be recorded.

**NOTE: Based on COVID-19 guidance from Linn County Public Health and the State of Iowa to limit the size of groups gathering, this meeting is able to be viewed online. To watch, go to Zoom.com, select Join a Meeting, and enter the Meeting ID# 849 0089 7111. A link is also provided at [www.cityofmarion.org](http://www.cityofmarion.org). Audio only can be heard by calling 1-646-558-8656 and entering the same Meeting ID listed above.**

**Anyone who wishes to comment on an agenda item may submit their comment during the meeting by selecting Q&A and entering your name, address and comment. All comments will be acknowledged during the meeting.**

Page

### CALL TO ORDER

### ROLL CALL

### PUBLIC FORUM

This time is for comments from the public on topics listed on the agenda or general comments related to work of the Commission. Please understand the Commission will not take any action on comments that are unrelated to the current agenda due to requirements of the Open Meetings Law, but may do so at a future meeting.

### PRESENTATIONS/GUEST SPEAKERS - NONE

### REGULAR AGENDA

1. Motion to approve the April 7, 2021 minutes 3 - 5  
[Civil Rights Commission - Apr 07 2021 - Minutes - Pdf](#)
2. Chairman's Report
3. Executive Committee Report
4. Cedar Rapids Executive Director's Report 6 - 19  
[MCRC ED Report 5.5.21](#)  
[Marion Inquires & Intakes May 2021](#)  
[2021 Art Contest Winners](#)
5. Review and Approve Statement Regarding Marion Independent School District's Mascot 20  
[MCRC MISD Mascot Statement](#)

6. Outreach

- Report from Communication and Outreach Committee
- Community Education Discussion
- Pride Month Proclamation Discussion
- Upcoming Proclamation - Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month - May 6

7. Community Equity Task Force Report

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

During this portion of the meeting, Commissioners may bring forward communications, concerns, and reports on various matters.

**ADJOURN**

Any visually impaired or hearing impaired person needing assistance to participate in this meeting should contact the Civil Rights staff liaison at (319) 743-6301 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.



# MINUTES

## Civil Rights Commission

6:30 PM - Wednesday, April 7, 2021  
City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

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*\*Minutes are in draft format until approved at the next meeting\**

The Civil Rights Commission of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met virtually on Wednesday, April 7, 2021, at 6:30 PM, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Frederick Brown, Okpara Rice, Angelica Vannatta, Danielle Brazant, Kent Jackson, Chris Stoner, Jennifer Tibbetts, and Brett Nilles

ABSENT: Selita Jansen, Dave Baumler, and Renae Forsyth-Christy

STAFF PRESENT: Amal Eltahir and Alicia Abernathey

OTHERS PRESENT: Lata D'Mello, Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven, and Alma Apolonio Bernal

Based on COVID-19 guidance from Linn County Public Health and the State of Iowa to limit the size of groups gathering, this meeting was held electronically. The agenda and City's website provided instructions on how others could participate in the meeting.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners, staff, and guests introduced themselves.

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

No one came forward to speak.

### **PRESENTATIONS/GUEST SPEAKERS**

#### **Discussion on Hate Crimes**

Lata D'Mello, Monsoon Asians & Pacific Islanders in Solidarity (Monsoon Iowa), provided a background of what Monsoon Iowa does. D'Mello stated Iowa's population is 2% Asians and .1% Pacific Islanders, and is primarily in the larger cities of Iowa. D'Mello discussed hate crimes and the connection with gun violence.

#### **Lawful Source of Income**

Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven, Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission, provided a presentation on lawful source of income. Munsterman-Scriven explained Senate File 252 and the impacts it would have on lawful source of income protections if it is passed.

Vannatta asked if the City of Marion registered against the bill. Eltahir confirmed the City

did register against the bill. Munsterman-Scriven stated the City of Marion is not declared as a lobbyist. Eltahir stated the City of Marion does not have a lobbyist due to it's size, but staff reached out to the governor and shared City Council's resolution. Vannatta recommended the Commission make a statement and send out a press release on the resolution. Eltahir stated the resolution was shared with a reporter who interviewed the City Manager. Eltahir stated Commissioners are welcome to reach out to the governor as individual Commissioners.

Vannatta stated it would be beneficial to host a community conversation on the topic to better educate the public. Jackson requested community education be listed as a discussion item at the next meeting.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **Motion to approve the March 3, 2021 minutes**

Moved by Rice, seconded by Nilles, to approve the March 3, 2021 minutes.

Approved unanimously

### **Chairman's Report**

Jackson stated there have been several positive news articles that put the spotlight on Marion over the last few months. Jackson recommended Commissioners point out the Commission whenever they get the chance, especially with media outlets

### **Director's Report**

Munsterman-Scriven shared initiatives of the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission (CRCRC) that took place in March and what is coming up in April and May.

Brazant shared the Marion Public Library agreed to distribute the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Do It Yourself educational kits provided by the CRCRC.

### **Executive Committee Report**

Brown stated the Committee met to determine the April agenda.

### **Cedar Rapids Liaison Report**

Forsyth-Christy was not present to provide a report.

### **Communication and Outreach Committee Report**

Vannatta stated a draft statement was created regarding the Marion mascot with the intention of having it go public in June or July 2021. Stoner provided an overview of the statement regarding the mascot. The finalized statement will be reviewed for approval at the May Commission meeting.

### **Community Equity Task Force Report**

Tibbetts stated there is an outreach subcommittee of the task force. They are working on getting information out about the task force and the Civil Rights Commission and they created an elevator speech about what the task force does. Brown shared Commissioners can watch task force meetings online on the City's website. Brown stated the task force is working on their framework and are working to form additional subcommittees, including one focused on police operations. Brown stated an article about the task force will be shared in the next Marion Messenger.

**Proclamation List Review and Discussion**

The Commission discussed and provided feedback on the proposed list of proclamations for 2021.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Brazant stated for the Do It Yourself kits she would like City staff to coordinate with Library staff the delivery of the materials. Brazant volunteered to assist in getting the materials to the Library.

Vannatta shared a volunteer group in Cedar Rapids that will reach out to the Commission to get the Commission involved in an upcoming conference on diversity.

**ADJOURN**

Moved by Rice, seconded by Nilles, to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by:

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant

**Marion Civil Rights Commission (MCRC)**  
**Executive Director's Report**  
May 5, 2021

**OFFICE/STAFF UPDATES**

- Staff members attended the virtual White Privilege Conference

**OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

***Events in April***

- **Fair Housing Month: Art Contest for Youth**
  - April 21: Announced winners during the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission meeting.
  - See attachment for winners and their art work/poetry!
- **Fair Housing Month: Cedar Rapids “House Party”**
  - In partnership with Neighborhood Finance Corporation, Horizons, and other City of CR departments, information about fair housing rights, purchasing and refinancing a home, forgivable loans for home repairs and/or renovations, selecting a contractor, etc. was shared during a virtual event held on April 24. Umaru Balde was the presenter.
- **Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Virtual Presentation**
  - In partnership with Riverview Center and Amani Community Services, CRCRC hosted a virtual presentation discussing sexual assault awareness, misconceptions, defining advocacy, available resources/services, and how the community can and should respond.
  - We chose April 27 because April 28 is *Denim Day* and we wanted to inform people of the relevance of that day so they can participate in it.
    - [Link to Video Recording](#)
    - [Transcript of Recording](#) (Transcript begins at minute 7.40)

***Events in May***

- **Film Screening and Panel Discussion – May 6 at 6:00pm**
  - To honor Asian/Pacific American Heritage month, give voice to concerns, and discuss the rise in hate crimes and discrimination against Asian and Pacific Americans, we are hosting a panel discussion and a screening of, “*Do We Belong?*”, a documentary that shares the story of an immigrant from India who was shot and killed in a senseless hate crime in Kansas. The event will make space to discuss violence against the Asian/Pacific American community in order to raise awareness and educate the community on the issue.
  - Please register here: <http://bit.ly/CedarRapidsAPI2021>
- **Celebration of Cultures – May 1 through May 31**
  - DIY educational kits will be distributed throughout the month of May in honor of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.
  - Kits including a lei craft will be available starting May 1. May 1 is Lei Day and the celebration begins in the morning of May first every year and continues into the next day.
  - Kits including an origami craft will be available starting on May 15.
  - These educational and fun kits will be available for pick up at the Downtown Cedar Rapids, Marion, and Hiawatha Public Libraries.

## HUD UPDATES

- **HUD Partnership Grant Projects – Partnership with Catherine McAuley Center**

- *Know Your Rights Videos:*
  - Production of 6 videos in multiple languages, including French, Spanish, Swahili, Lingala, Kirundi, and English.
  - The English version of this video will have ASL interpretation.
  - Videos will explain basic fair housing rights and how to file a civil rights complaint.
  - Production of videos almost completed and will be released soon.
- *Storytelling Videos:*
  - Production of 5 short videos of immigrants and refugees sharing their experiences of living in our community.
  - Production of videos in process and will be released in June for World Refugee Day

## COMMISSIONER AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### **Speakers and Topics at Upcoming Commission Meetings**

- May: Senior Investigator Janet Abejo-Parker will present about mediation, conciliation, and peace circles at the May Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission meeting. (May 19, 5:30pm)

## INTAKES/INQUIRIES

- List of received intakes, calls, emails, or walk-ins from January 2020 to present included in meeting packet.
- If an inquiry is not a discrimination matter, staff refers the individual to appropriate agencies for assistance.

Respectfully,  
Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven  
Executive Director

| Marion Intakes/Inquiries Received Since April 1, 2021                                |                   |                      |   |  |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| Complaints were referred to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, HUD, or another agency |                   |                      |   |  |
|  | Date              | Area                 | Basis   | Details  |
| 1  | January 2, 2020   | Education            | Race  | Child being harrassed, followed, and "grabbed" by teachers   |
| 2  | February 11, 2020 | Housing              | Association, Mental Disability, Physical Disability, Sex, National Origin | Feels harassed regarding emotional support animal, such as receiving notices regarding barking; feels landlord is mointoring her unit, activities, and guests; getting in trouble for smoking when males don't     |
| 3  | April 23, 2020    | Housing              | Race  | Landlord accusing tenant of dealing drugs from unit because of numerous visitors. Visitors are bringing supplies/food due to COVID-19. Landlord threatened to report tenant to Leased Housing if visitors continue |
| 4  | May 4, 2020       | Housing              | Physical Disability   | Landlord requiring tenant to pay for accessible parking sign and indicating parking space cannot be located near the entrance, but would need to be 10 spaces away   |
| 5  | May 4, 2020       | Housing              | N/A   | Tenant is having issues with a "nuisance neighbor" and landlord will not do anything about it  |
| 6  | June 5, 2020      | Public Accommodation | Race  | Differential treatment of children based on race   |
| 7  | June 26, 2020     | Employment           | Race  | Differential treatment based on race   |
| 8  | July 14, 2020     | Housing              | N/A   | Tenant is having issues with a neighbor and indicated the HOA will not do anything. No protected class. Referred for legal advice  |
| 9  | November 20, 2020 | Housing              | Disability/ESA  | Tenant states she was denied her ESA by her HOA. She will officially request the ESA and follow up with our office with the results  |
| 10   | December 31, 2020 | Public Accommodation | N/A   | Caller stated she felt discriminated against but did not indicate protected class or basis of discrimination.  |



# Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Fair Housing Art Contest Winners

# Grades K-2

- **1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Rajita Shadrak (Kindergarten)



# Grades 3-5

- **1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Callie Buck and Avery Jennings (5<sup>th</sup> grade)





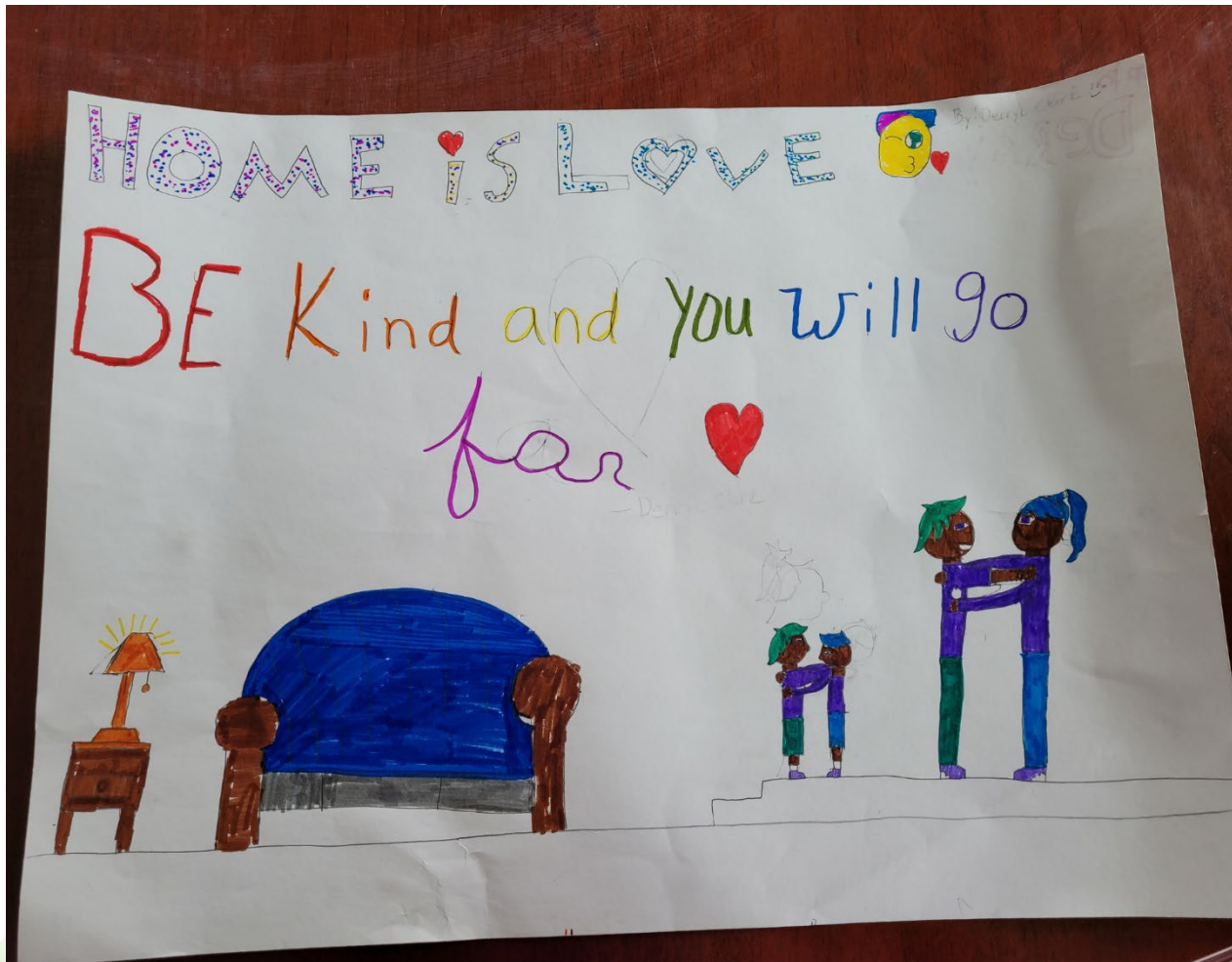
# Grades 3-5

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Adriona Schmelzer (5<sup>th</sup> grade)



# Grades 3-5

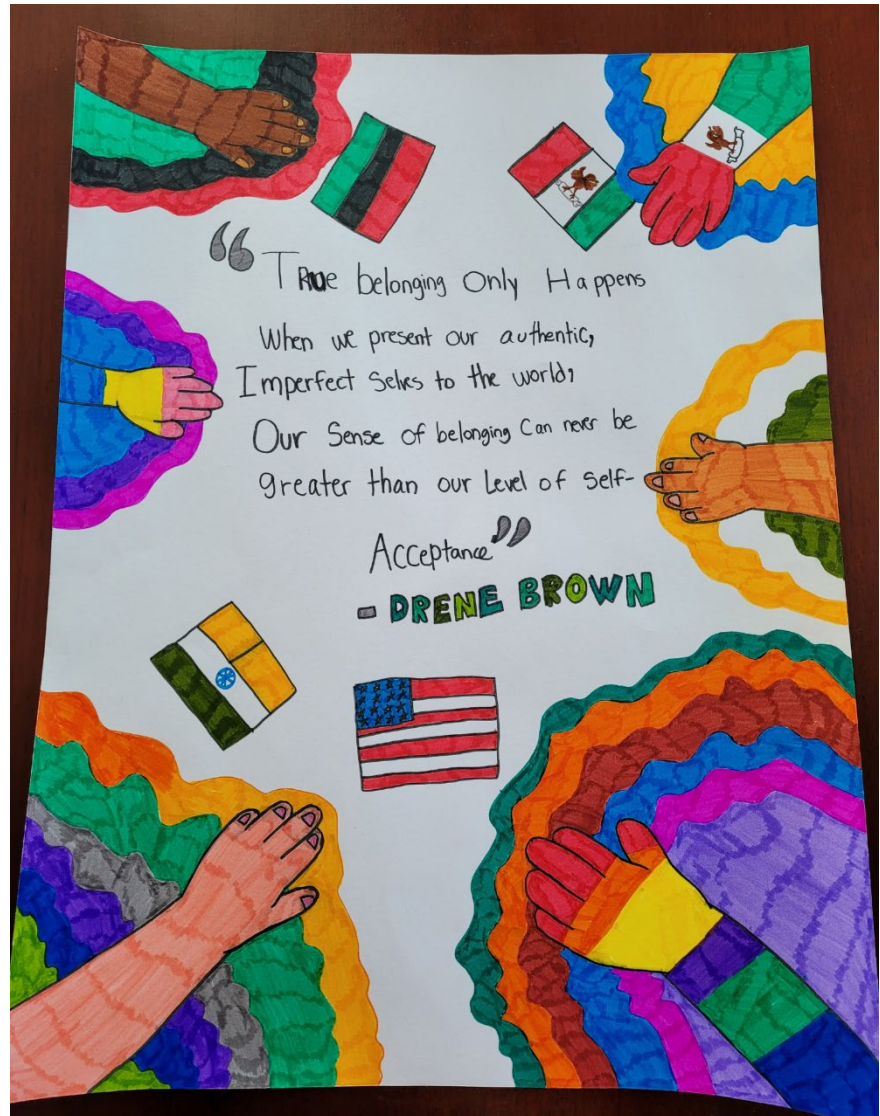
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Derryck Clark (5<sup>th</sup> grade)**





# Grades 6-8

- **1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Catherine Quezada (8<sup>th</sup> grade)



# Grades 6-8

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Sujan Shadrak (8<sup>th</sup> grade)





# Grades 6-8

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Place:** Amaya Clark (7<sup>th</sup> grade)





# Grades 9-12

- **1<sup>st</sup> Place:  
Johnnie  
Each (10<sup>th</sup>  
grade)**

*If you ask me where home is, I will tell you:*

Home is the corn I husk every summer, the silk sticking to my fingers like a butterfly kiss,  
a nickel earned for every worm I find.

Home is bucking bronco rides on my daddy's back,  
and watching my mamma's fingers caress guitar frets and hymn books.

Home is trading gardening tall tales with our immigrant neighbors from India,  
and listening to their stories of lands I've never seen through the haze of campfire smoke.

Home is football coaches and preachers and farmers and women with  
backbones made of opinions. (which they passed on to me with a wink and a grin)

Home is sharing my 3rd Street church with the Banyalumenge people after the  
storm blew theirs away. Learning how to say "praise God" in a new language.

Home is melted wax on Christmas Eve,  
and my dad's wrinkly pastel button up on Easter.

Home is sticky summers, the glow of fireflies hugged to my chest in a mason jar,  
and driving around on humble gravel roads- just because.

But mostly, home is right here, in Iowa.

It holds the graves of my grandfathers, and the rippling fields they loved so faithfully.

It holds the hardworking, the weary and the worn, the steadfast, and their brothers.

I know that some think my home is too plain and too simple,  
but I think it is beautiful.



# Grades 9-12

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Place:**  
**Mika**  
**Ndikumana**  
**(12<sup>th</sup> grade)**

My Home is my family

...

Tanzanian, American, Immigrant or refugee

None of these begin to define me.

We all came here for the opportunity & belonging

Yet I continue to struggle with what my song is

Discrimination, implicit bias, and hate

Those are the struggles I continue to face

No matter where I live I'm not fully expected

Because of the color of my skin I feel as I'm rejected

I wish things were different I wouldn't be so drained

My family with me resilient I remain

Faced with challenges my family gets through as one

My family as a whole we can never be undone

...

Forever I will scream

My home is still my family and family is my team



# Grades 9-12

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Place:**  
**Molly**  
**Bourgeois**  
**(12<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Home is a sanctuary, a good place

To be yourself, to be mindful

It's a comfortable, and safe space

There are countless times

Where I've cried, grieved

Though all in my location prime

My home has my room

A box with personality

It is a spot for me to bloom

Living in my home has taught

So many things, more often than not

How to love, how to relieve, how to cope

All my feelings and any loss of hope

Home is so important to me

It is where I've grown, much like a tree

Where my family has lived so many years

And where I've cried so many tears

I don't know what I'd would do without it

I'd have no place to pour my heart out

So many memories, the good and the bad

I've been so fortunate for the times had

I hope someday I will own

A place that which the wind has blown

Over the roof and through the trees

A place to enjoy the summer breeze

I look forward to the day

Where I get to say

"Go play, just be home for dinner,"

Such a simple phrase, yet it seems to convey

The family I've always wanted

The future home I wish for dearly

I can see it in my future clearly

Home means a place where you can unwind

A healthy place that is good for the mind.



The Marion Civil Rights Commission would like to express its support for the Marion Independent School District's ongoing work toward selecting a new high school mascot.

The Marion Civil Rights Commission envisions a Marion community that is welcoming, inclusive, and preserves the personal dignity of all people.

By valuing feedback from the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa, as well as from MISD families and other Marion residents, the Marion Independent School Board has taken a critical step toward making Marion a community where everyone is valued, respected, and embraced.

We look forward to the day when the Marion Independent School District has a mascot that every citizen of Marion can take pride in and cheer on without hesitation.

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The purpose of the Marion Civil Rights Commission is to "To secure for all individuals within the City of Marion, freedom from discrimination because of age, color, creed, disability, familial status, gender identity, lawful source of income, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation."

The Marion Civil Rights Commission meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30. Currently the meetings are held virtually - the meeting's zoom link can be found on the City of Marion's calendar at [www.cityofmarion.org/about-us/calendar](http://www.cityofmarion.org/about-us/calendar). To file a civil rights complaint, call (319) 286-5036 or email [civilrights@cedar-rapids.org](mailto:civilrights@cedar-rapids.org).