



MINUTES

Civil Rights Commission

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

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