



MINUTES

Civil Rights Commission

6:00 PM - Wednesday, December 1, 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 on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at 6:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Selita Jansen, Okpara Rice, Angelica Vannatta, Kent Jackson, Chris Stoner, Jennifer Tibbetts, Bret Nilles, Dave Baumler, and Steven Moshier

ABSENT: Renae Forsyth-Christy and Ann DiGiacomo

STAFF PRESENT: Amal Eltahir and Alicia Abernathey

OTHERS PRESENT: Anthony Schoepske

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

PUBLIC FORUM

No one from the public wished to speak.

REGULAR AGENDA

Motion to approve the November 3, 2021 minutes

Moved by Nilles, seconded by Vannatta, to approve the November 3, 2021 minutes.

Approved unanimously

Executive Committee Report

Jackson stated the committee met to discuss the agenda and also discussed the recommendations from the equity task force. Jackson stated a meeting is scheduled in January with the Linn-Mar & Marion Independent school districts.

Cedar Rapids Executive Director/Liaison Report

Vannatta shared information provided in the report from the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission (CRCRC). Vannatta asked Commissioner Rice to share his experience regarding the Racial Equity Allyship Panel event. Rice stated the event included a diverse panel with diverse experiences.

Dave Baumler joined the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Commissioners discussed the racial equity event. Vannatta stated she would like more information from the CRCRC on the Legislative 101 virtual events so the Commission can participate.

Inquiry & Complaint Update

Abernathey explained changes made to the inquiry and complaint spreadsheet and asked for feedback. Commissioners indicated they would still like the document included in the packet even if there are no inquiries or complaints for the month.

Tibbetts asked if the website could be updated to include additional information on filing a complaint. Abernathey indicated she plans to create intake forms for the Commission and will add the forms and additional information to the website upon completion.

Community Equity Task Force Report

Tibbetts stated the task force met and gave final approval on recommendations that will go to City Council next week. Tibbetts outlined the four groups of recommendations the task force approved. Tibbetts stated the recommendations will go to City Council next week for their review and approval.

Rice asked if the topic of review boards will be discussed again in the future. Eltahir stated discussions regarding a review board included how there is not enough data at this time to make an educated decision. Eltahir stated City Council will review the data and the idea of a review board at a later date. The Commission discussed review boards including their purpose and effectiveness.

Baumler asked who is responsible for the education portion of the recommendations. Moshier stated the task force recommendations include a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) position that will assist in holding the City accountable and will work on outreach. The Commission discussed the DEI position including the job description, duties of the position, the timeline for hiring, etc.

Tibbetts requested the Commission have a topic on the agenda each month to continue conversations the task force recommendations to ensure things are getting done. Abernathey stated she will change the standing item on the agenda to focus on an equity discussion.

School Districts Meeting Report Out

Vannatta stated another meeting was held with the school districts and a discussion was had regarding the school districts issuing a statement on the importance of diversity, equity,

and inclusion. The Commission discussed recent incidents in the school districts and ways to assist them in making changes.

Motion to approve the 2022 Strategic Plan

Vannatta stated the Commission will need to determine action steps for each objective after the strategic plan is approved. Vannatta stated the Commission will be held accountable in completing the strategic plan.

Abernathey pointed out an error in the table of contents. Commissioners pointed out a few grammatical and formatting errors.

Moved by Nilles, seconded by Baumler, to approve the 2022 Strategic Plan with formatting and grammatical corrections.

Moshier stated the Commission will not go anywhere unless there is a voice in the community. Moshier suggested a reorder of the objectives moving objective 4 to the beginning. Discussion was held on the order of the objectives.

Approved by the following votes:

Ayes: Jansen, Rice, Vannatta, Jackson, Stoner, Tibbetts, Nilles, and Baumler

Nays: Moshier

Chair and Vice Chair Nominations

Eltahir and Abernathey explained the process of voting for the Chair and Vice Chair positions that will take place at the January Commission meeting. Eltahir and Abernathey asked the Commission to share nominations or recommendations for each position so staff can adequately prepare for voting at the January meeting. The Commission nominated Commissioners Jackson and Vannatta for the Chair position. The Commission nominated Commissioner Tibbetts for the Vice Chair position, along with whoever does not win the Chair position.

Commission Vacancies

Eltahir stated there will be three vacancies on the Commission. Jansen and Stoner shared why they would like to step down from the Commission. Eltahir shared DiGiacomo will also step down from the Commission. Eltahir shared there are no current applications on file and requested Commissioner assist in promoting the vacancies.

Commissioners thanked to Jansen and Stoner for their service and contributions to the Commission.

Discussion on Human Rights Proclamation: December 9, 2021

Abernathey indicated a proclamation will be read at the December 9th Council meeting and asked if a Commissioner would be willing to accept the proclamation on behalf of the Commission. Nilles volunteered.

PUBLIC FORUM

No one from the public wished to speak.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Rice stated Black History Month is in February and Brandon Fleming will serve as guest speaker at an event. Rice stated he will send information out on the event.

Moshier recommended Commissioners review materials from Dr. Phil Goff.

ADJOURN

Moved by Moshier, seconded by Vannatta to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by:

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant