



MINUTES

Civil Rights Commission

6:30 PM - Wednesday, June 2, 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, June 2, 2021, at 6:30 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Selita Jansen, Frederick Brown, Okpara Rice, Angelica Vannatta, Kent Jackson, Chris Stoner, Jennifer Tibbetts, Bret Nilles, and Renae Forsyth-Christy

ABSENT: Dave Baumler

STAFF PRESENT: Amal Eltahir and Alicia Abernathey

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

PUBLIC FORUM

No one came forward to speak.

REGULAR AGENDA

Motion to approve the May 5, 2021 minutes

Moved by Tibbetts, seconded by Forsyth-Christy, to approve the May 5, 2021 minutes.
Approved unanimously

Executive Committee Report

Jackson stated the Executive Committee discussed how meetings have been lengthy and there is a desire to reduce meetings to approximately one hour. Jackson asked for Commissioner feedback. Through discussion, it was communicated having one hour meetings is ideal, but additional time should be granted when there is a guest speaker.

Vannatta indicated the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission (CRCRC) does not need to give a full verbal report at meetings as the documents are included in the agenda packet. Eltahir stated she is meeting with CRCRC to discuss reducing the report and focusing on Marion initiatives. Tibbetts suggested the CRCRC report continue to include upcoming

outreach events so the Commission can see what is coming up in order to coordinate partnerships.

Cedar Rapids Executive Director's Report

No report was provided.

Communication and Outreach Committee Report

Jansen stated Commissioner Brown volunteered for the Juneteenth event at NewBo City Market and a media release regarding the Marion Independent School District mascot was released on May 25th. Jansen stated the theme for July is LGBTQ, but she does not believe there are activities specific to LGBTQ planned. Jansen stated she will follow up with CRCRC regarding events.

Jackson asked if there would be a Pride event this year. Tibbetts stated there will not be a big event, but smaller events will take place. Tibbetts stated the CRCRC is working on an event for Pride. Brown pointed out the CRCRC report includes information on upcoming Pride events.

Community Equity Task Force Report

Tibbetts stated the task force is working to gather information to understand the goals and needs of the group and small groups met with the consultant hired by the City. Tibbetts stated discussions were focused on ensuring policies and procedures were equitable, including policies and practices of the police department. Tibbetts stated there will be a review of all current City policies to ensure there are no biases in the policies. Brown stated the consultant has a goal of wrapping up the task force's work to make recommendations to City Council by September.

Jackson asked how long the consultant has been working with the task force. Eltahir stated it has only been a few weeks. Vannatta asked if the consultant will lead the City through a formal assessment of policies, processes, procedures. Eltahir confirmed he would. Vannatta asked for a background of the facilitator. Brown stated the facilitator's bio was included in the task force agenda packet and he will send out the link.

Strategic Plan Discussion

Jackson stated the strategic plan is generally updated annually and he would like Commissioners to review the current plan before the next meeting in order to make recommendations at the next meeting. Brown stated Rice, Niles, Jackson and himself currently serve on the strategic plan subcommittee, but he would like to include someone from the outreach committee.

Vannatta asked when the plan was last updated. Brown stated he believes it was in 2019.

The Commission discussed various information they would like to see when updating the plan. The Commission also discussed options for meeting to discuss the plan. It was decided a special meeting held on a Saturday would likely work best. Abernathy will send out a poll to gather feedback on a meeting date and time.

Start Time of Meetings

Eltahir stated she would like to suggest moving the meeting time up to a start time of 5:30 p.m. The Commission discussed various start time options and the pros and cons of each. The Commission decided to change the meeting start time to 6:00 p.m. beginning in July. The start time will be reevaluate after December.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Tibbetts stated there is new legislation that removes lawful source of income from Marion protections, but HUD may request it as a protection under federal level. Tibbetts requested Commissioners keep it on their radar to ensure necessary actions are taken.

Forsyth-Christy stated Janet Abejo-Parker provided an intake process presentation at the previous CRCRC meeting. Forsyth-Christy stated the CRCRC will not have in person meetings until September. Brown stated the liaison report will be added back to the agenda.

Vannatta asked when the Executive Committee meets to prepare the agenda. Brown stated the committee tries to meet two weeks prior to the meeting. Eltahir stated items can be added to the agenda 24 hours ahead of the meeting.

ADJOURN

Moved by Angelica Vannatta, seconded by Bret Nilles, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by:
Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant