



MINUTES

Civil Rights Commission

6:00 PM - Wednesday, October 6, 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, October 6, 2021, at 6:00 PM, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Selita Jansen, Okpara Rice, Angelica Vannatta, Kent Jackson, Jennifer Tibbetts, Bret Nilles, Ann DiGiacomo, and Steven Moshier

ABSENT: Chris Stoner, Dave Baumler, and Renae Forsyth-Christy

STAFF PRESENT: Amal Eltahir

OTHERS PRESENT: Ana Clymer

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

PUBLIC FORUM

Ana Clymer, Marion Alliance for Racial Equity (MARE), stated there will be a follow up meeting with the school boards in November and she asked Commissioners to think about agenda items or recommendations that should be taken to that conversation. Clymer stated members of MARE met with Ashely Balius to discuss equity and housing conversations that will be held. MARE members will reach out to Commissioners to have a conversation on the topic.

PRESENTATIONS/GUEST SPEAKERS - None

REGULAR AGENDA

Motion to approve the September 1, 2021 minutes

Moved by Vannatta, seconded by Nilles, to approve the September 1, 2021 minutes.
Approved unanimously

Executive Committee Report

Vannatta stated agenda setting discussions included prioritizing recommendations for the Community Equity Task Force and understanding where the Commission can align with

the task force and the recommendations. Vannatta stated the report out on the school board meeting was all deemed important for discussion.

Cedar Rapids Executive Director's Report

Eltahir stated the report is included in the packet. Eltahir stated three intakes were received in September. Tibbetts stated there was a shift from zero complaints in January 2021 through July 2021 to five complaints in the last two months. Commissioners expressed interest in receiving more detailed information on calls/complaints that come in for Marion. Eltahir stated the City is looking into bringing the complaint process in house. Jackson asked if existing staff would handle it or if new staff would be brought onboard. Eltahir stated existing staff will handle it for now and additional staff may be brought on in the future.

Community Equity Task Force Report

Moshier stated three documents were sent out prior to the meeting but there was confusion on what the documents were and the best approach to discussing them. Therefore, the documents will be shared again and discussed at the next meeting. Moshier stated the recommendations are not framed in support of a citizen review board, which will likely lead to a lengthy discussion.

Tibbetts stated no recommendations were voted on at the task force meeting for approval. Tibbetts requested feedback from the Commission to take back to the task force. Rice asked if the work with the consultant will end when the task force ends or if the consultant will continue to work with the City. Eltahir stated the consultant was hired to facilitate the task force conversation and based on his work with the task force he has suggested three recommendations. Nilles asked if there will be an opportunity for the public to comment on the recommendations. Eltahir stated when the recommendations go before City Council there will be an opportunity for public comment.

Commissioners provided feedback on the task force recommendations and agreed to email additional feedback to Commissioners Moshier and Tibbetts.

Vote Regarding Community Equity Task Force Recommendation

The Commission did not discuss this agenda item.

School Board Meeting Report Out

Jackson stated several members of the Commission participated in a meeting with the Linn-Mar and Marion Independent School Districts. Tibbetts, Jackson, Moshier, and Eltahir shared take-aways from the meeting. DiGiacomo asked if the school districts shared data on their cultural climates or shared any goals they have. Tibbetts stated it was not shared. Jackson stated it is reasonable for the Commission to request that data.

Community Outreach

- **Indigenous People Day**
- **Election Day Outreach**

Vannatta stated these are two suggestions for community outreach and requested feedback from Commissioners. Commissioners agreed to meet in a small group to discuss possibilities for outreach.

Annual Chair & Vice Chair Election Update

Jackson stated elections will take place in January for the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Jackson suggested Commissioners with interest in either position let staff know. Commissioners discussed how elections were held in the past.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Vannatta stated the strategic plan meeting scheduled for October 20th will be held virtually based on how the City is handling open meetings. Vannatta asked if Commissioners wanted to continue to have the meeting virtually or postpone it. Commissioners expressed interest in moving forward with the meeting.

ADJOURN

Moved by Nilles, seconded by Rice to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Approved unanimously

Respectfully submitted by:

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant