



AGENDA

Civil Rights Commission

6:00 PM - Wednesday, March 2, 2022

City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

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 the work of the Commission.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Motion to approve the February 2, 2022 minutes 3 - 13
[Civil Rights Commission - Feb 02 2022 - Minutes - Pdf](#)
2. Staff Liaison Report (Amal)
3. Cedar Rapids Executive Director/Liaison Report (Stefanie/Renae) 14
[MCRC ED Report 3.2.22](#)
4. Inquiry & Complaint Update (Alicia) 15
[Complaint Inquiries & Intakes As of 2.23.22](#)
5. Equity Report (Angelica)
 - School Districts Partnership (Jennifer)
 - Marion Alliance for Racial Equity Partnership (Steve)
6. Low & Moderate Income Housing Assistance Grant Update & Committee Selection
7. Strategic Plan Discussion 16 - 20
 - How we got here
 - Objective #2[MCRC Strategic Plan - 2022](#)
8. Proclamation Discussion 21 - 22
[Current Proclamations](#)
[Additional Proclamations Request](#)
9. Women's History Month Discussion (Jennifer)

PUBLIC FORUM

This time is for comments from the public on topics listed on the agenda or general comments related to the work of the Commission.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

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

ADJOURN

Upcoming Proclamations -

- Women's History Month: March 3, 2022
- Fair Housing Month: April 7, 2022

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

6:00 PM - Wednesday, February 2, 2022

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, February 2, 2022, at 6:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Angelica Vannatta, Kent Jackson, Jennifer Tibbetts, Bret Nilles, Dave Baumler, Renae Forsyth-Christy, and Steven Moshier

ABSENT: Okpara Rice

STAFF PRESENT: Amal Eltahir and Alicia Abernathey

OTHERS PRESENT: Jo-Smith Brizard and Rafaela (Rachel) Cadena

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

PUBLIC FORUM

Rafaela (Rachel) Cadena and Jo-Smith Brizard introduced themselves.

REGULAR AGENDA

Motion to approve the December 1, 2021 minutes

Moved by Vannatta, seconded by Forsyth-Christy, to approve the December 1, 2021 minutes.

Approved unanimously

Election of Chair

Abernathey stated Commissioners Vannatta, Jackson, and Moshier were nominated as Chair. Abernathey explained the voting process. Jackson, Vannatta, and Moshier shared why they feel they should be Chair of the Commission. The Commission voted by ballot.

The following are the results of the ballot vote:

Results of Ballot No. 1: Commissioners Baumler, Moshier, and Nilles voted for Steve Moshier. Commissioners Forsyth-Christy, Tibbetts, and Vannatta voted for Angelica Vannatta. Commissioner Jackson voted for Kent Jackson.
Proceeded to second vote between Steve Moshier and Angelica Vannatta.

Results of Ballot No. 2: Commissioners Baumler, Moshier, and Nilles voted for Steve Moshier. Commissioners Forsyth-Christy, Jackson, Tibbetts, and Vannatta voted for Angelica Vannatta.

Moved by Tibbetts, seconded by Forsyth-Christy, to elect Angelica Vannatta as Chair.
Approved unanimously

Vannatta presided over the remainder of the meeting.

Election of Vice Chair

Abernathy stated Commissioner Tibbetts was previously nominated for Vice Chair, but other Commissioners, including those who were not elected Chair, could be added to the ballot. No one wished to be added to the ballot.

Moved by Moshier, seconded by Baumler, to elect Jennifer Tibbetts as Vice Chair.
Approved unanimously

Executive Committee Report

Vannatta stated the executive committee did not meet in January. Vannatta stated when the executive committee met in December they briefly discussed the meetings with the school boards, the Commission, and the Marion Alliance for Racial Equity (MARE).

Cedar Rapids Executive Director/Liaison Report

Forsyth-Christy stated she attended the January meeting of the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission (CRCRC) and the main priority of the agenda was to discuss changes to Chapter 69, their guiding ordinance. Forsyth-Christy stated the CRCRC is looking to clean up language and define certain items. Forsyth-Christy passed around a document that was shared at the CRCRC meeting (attached).

Forsyth-Christy stated the CRCRC has interns starting soon and one intern will be tasked with working on mapping complaints. Commissioners indicated they would like to learn more about the mapping project and are interesting in seeing the results.

Moshier stated the Commission should look at the changes the CRCRC is making to their ordinance in order for the Commission to incorporate the same changes into our ordinance.
[Proposed Changes to Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Ordinance](#)

Inquiry & Complaint Update

Abernathy stated there were no inquiries or complaints filed since the last meeting. Abernathy indicated the intake forms have been finalized and will be on the website within a week. Tibbetts requested a social media post go out when the intake forms are on the website notifying the public.

Equity Check-In

Vannatta requested an update on the diversity position that was proposed as part of the Community Equity Task Force recommendations. Eltahir stated staff recommended a hiring freeze for the next fiscal year so the diversity position will not be approved for the next year. Eltahir provided an update on other items outlined in the task force recommendations.

Moshier asked if this topic was necessary to discuss each month if there are no new updates. Vannatta stated the executive committee will discuss which items to include on the agenda as the agenda is determined for each meeting. Moshier suggested a report out from Eltahir be included each month instead of an equity check-in. Tibbetts indicated she sees value in keeping the equity check-in on the agenda.

School Districts Partnership

- **Meeting Report Out**
- **Shared Priorities**
- **Equity Statement**

Vannatta stated a meeting was held with the school districts in January and the group discussed shared priorities and how the schools, MARE, and the Commission could support each other. Vannatta stated the group plans to discuss the equity statement at the next meeting in March.

Moshier stated the meeting included a discussion of the strengths of each school, but also included a discussion on the work that needs to be done. Eltahir stated the discussions are beneficial as a way to have a shared understanding of each group and for the group to determine the best ways to work together.

Black History Month Discussion

Vannatta asked if someone was accepting the Black History Month proclamation. Abernathey stated Moshier volunteered to accept the proclamation.

Commissioners shared Black History Month outreach events they are aware of and discussed ways the Commission could celebrate the month. Tibbetts volunteered to put together proposed social media posts for Black History Month and will share them with staff.

Commission Housing Grant Reports

Eltahir stated each organization that receives the housing grant is required to provide a report at the end of the year to outline how the grants were utilized. Eltahir stated the recipients of last years grant provided their reports, which were included in the agenda packet. The Commission discussed the process for reviewing applications for the housing grants. Eltahir stated the grant program will be open for applications this month. Commissioners Nilles, Jackson, and Forsyth-Cristy volunteered to review the grant applications. Tibbetts requested the organizations who were grant recipients last year provide a verbal report at an upcoming meeting.

Commission Vacancies

Vannatta stated several interviews have been held for the vacant positions of the Commission. Abernathey stated at this time two appointments are public information and the two selected to fill vacancies include Rafaela Cadena and Jo-Smith Brizard. Abernathey stated their appointments will be official following City Council's approval at the meeting on February 3. Eltahir stated the other vacancy will be filled following City Council's approval at the meeting on February 17.

PUBLIC FORUM

Rafaela (Rachel) Cadena suggested for Black History Month in the future the Commission partner with local schools to have a contest focused on MLK or other black leaders. Jo-Smith stated in addition to joining the Commission he was also asked to serve on the Linn-Mar parent equity task force.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners thanked Jackson for being Chair.

Tibbetts stated she is working on a project with the state to provide diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) trainings and requested assistance in identifying DEI trainings that already exist.

Moshier requested the next agenda include a item to establish a subcommittee to review Chapter 31.

ADJOURN

Moved by Moshier, seconded by Baumler to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant



Guide to Proposed Amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 69

The Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Ordinance January 2022

Submitted by the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission

Dr. Ruth White, Chair

Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven, Executive Director

Commissioners

Julia Freeman, Commissioner

Cierra Roquette, Commissioner

Scott Schipper, Commissioner

Esaie Toingar, Commissioner

Linda Topinka, Vice-Chair

Dr. Ruth White, Chair

Monica Vallejo, Commissioner

Proposed Changes to Chapter 69

The revised code clarifies the duties of Commissioners, the Executive Director, staff, and other individuals with regard to the complaint process; including filing, investigations, determinations, mediations, adjudications, and appeals.

Most significantly, **69.13(e)(4)** explains the process for review of a decision when the assigned Commissioner disagrees with a Final Investigative Report finding proposed by staff. The well-defined process was deemed necessary when a proposed finding was initially rejected by a Commissioner following review of the Final Investigative Report. To alleviate any concerns of lack of clarity, the section was added to the Ordinance.

69.13(e)(6): Language was added based upon recommendation by the City Attorney.

69.13(e)(8): Language updated to align with current and best practice.

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS 69.14

Per guidance from HUD, information was included stating the section applies to all complaints filed under Chapter 69, except for Fair Housing complaints, which is covered separately in 69.19. Added **69.14(a)**.

REMEDIES 69.15(b)(3), 69.15(c)

Language regarding restrictions of conciliation agreements was removed at the guidance of the City Attorney's office. New language was added to show that the Commission can investigate compliance with agreements, orders, findings, etc.

JUDICIAL REVIEW OF COMMISSION ACTION 69.16

Language was updated to state that judicial review of Commission action will follow that which is provided by Iowa law. The Ordinance previously outlined a process that did not align with the Iowa judicial review process.

JUDICIAL REVIEW – ENFORCEMENT 69.17

Language was updated to state that enforcement of Commission orders will follow that which is provided by Iowa law. The Ordinance previously outlined a process that did not align with the Iowa law concerning enforcement of Commission orders.

ADMINISTRATIVE RELEASE 69.18(a)(2), 69.18(b)

Language was updated to state the Iowa Civil Rights Commission issues the release stating complainants have the right to commence action in District Court. The Ordinance previously stated the Commission issued the release.

FAIR HOUSING 69.19

Aggrieved Persons 69.19

Definition: 69.19(a)(1) same as 69.03

Per guidance from HUD, the term "aggrieved person" was included throughout 69.19 to allow for expansive protections and consistency with the Fair Housing Act

Commission as Complainant 69.19(a)(2)

Language was added to allow for the Commission to be a complainant for clarity related to Commission related complaints as authorized by 69.05(b).

Insertion of Date - Design and Construction 69.19(b)(6)(iii)(c)

Proposed Changes to Chapter 69

Absence of a Commissioner 69.04(b)

The previous version of the Ordinance stated a member who missed three consecutive meetings or four meetings within 12 months will be replaced; however, special or unusual circumstances will be considered. This was modified to align with the policies of other City Boards and Commissions to say if a Commissioner misses more than 25 percent of all meetings during one calendar year, the Chairperson shall speak with the member, and if it appears such frequent absences may continue, or if the absences do continue, the Chairperson may request removal of the member.

Commission Meetings 69.04(g), 69.05(l)

The current version of the Ordinance requires meetings every month, resulting in meetings with no purpose other than to meet the requirement. The proposed modification states meetings shall be held as needed, at least four times a year. Staff will be prepared to meet each month, as desired by the Commission. However, this will prevent meetings for the sake of abiding by the requirement if there is no Commission business to discuss. This also alleviates challenges when there is need to reschedule a Commission meeting due to inclement weather or a crisis, e.g. COVID and the derecho.

POWERS AND DUTIES 69.05(g)

Language added to align with current protected areas

UNFAIR UNEMPLOYMENT PRACTICES 69.06

Employers and Reasonable Accommodations 69.06(a)(5)

Language was added to comply with current EEOC rules.

UNFAIR PRACTICES - PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS 69.07

Public Accommodations Services Animals 69.07(b)(7)(ii)(c)

Language was added to align with verbiage in the ADA in regards to service animals.

Auxiliary Aids and Services 69.07(7)(iii)(a)

Inserted language in alignment with the ADA regarding what may be used as an auxiliary aid.

Insertion of date to comply with ADA standards 69.07(b)(7)(iv), 69.07(b)(7)(vii)

The current version of the code included a line in more than one section that said "insert date that is one year after effective date of 2011 code revision." This line has now been replaced with the correct date of "on or after March 15, 2012," to comply with ADA standards.

SEX OR AGE PROVISIONS NOT APPLICABLE TO RETIREMENT PLANS 69.12

Age Provisions Pertaining to Retirement Plans

69.12(a)(1): Provisions were revised to comply with the current Department of Labor rules.

69.12(a)(2): Removed, no longer in effect after 1980.

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION 69.13

Administration and Enforcement 69.13

Proposed Changes to Chapter 69

The current version of the code included a line that said "insert date that is one year after effective date of 2011 code revision." This line has now been replaced with the correct date of "on or after March 15, 2012," to comply with ADA standards.

Removal of Exemption 69.19(c)(1)(v)

Per HUD guidance, an exemption related to housing advertisements on the basis of sex was removed because it is no longer in effect, per the Fair Housing Act.

Exemptions for Religious Organizations, Associations, or Societies 69.19(c)(3)

Language updated to align with the Fair Housing Act.

Complaints and Answers 69.19(h)(1)(iii)

Per HUD guidance, "shall" should replace "may" to ensure the Commission pursues civil action to enforce a conciliation agreement.

Final Investigative Report 69.19(h)(2)

Per guidance from HUD, updates were made to language and in reference to processes to ensure clarity and consistency regarding the Final Investigative Report.

Investigation Report and Conciliation (69.19)(h)(2)(iv)

Information included regarding making conciliation agreements public unless all parties determine disclosure is not required; this was added to align with the Fair Housing Act.

Failure to Comply with Conciliation Agreements 69.19(h)(3)

Per HUD guidance, "shall" should replace "may" to ensure the Commission recommends civil action to enforce a conciliation agreement.

Hearings, Findings and Conclusions and Order 69.19(j)(6)

Provided language and process clarity.

Review by Commission – Service of Final Order 69.19(k)

Provided language and process clarity and aligns with best and current practice.

Public Hearing 69.19(q)(3)

Language was removed requiring that names and contact information be provided to respondents in the event of a public hearing. This was removed as it is not current practice.

CHANGES THROUGHOUT ORDINANCE

Incorporation of Gender Neutral Language

It is best practice to ensure language is gender-neutral to help create inclusion.

Movement of Sections

Some sections were moved to provide better flow and clarity. For example, the definition of "direct threat," was moved from the Public Accommodations section to the Definitions section.

- Specifically,
 - Section 69.04(b) concerning Commissioner absences, moved to Section 69.04(h)

Proposed Changes to Chapter 69

- Section 69.07(b)(5) concerning additional provisions related to disability discrimination in public accommodations moved to Section 69.07(c)
- Section 69.07(d)(5)(vi) concerning public accommodation facility architectural and communication barrier removal priorities moved to Section 69.07(d)(4)(iii)
- Section 69.07(e) concerning City's adoption of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (28 CFR 36 Subpart D) moved to Section 69.07(d)(6)
- Section 69.14(f)(3) concerning discriminatory practices that occurred in the course of a business subject to licensing or regulation by a governmental agency moved to Section 69.15(c)

Addition of Missing Information

Language was added to conform to federal and state law. For example, a paragraph was added in the employment section to align with current practice and with the requirement by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that employers provide reasonable accommodations to those with disabilities.

Removal of Typographical Errors and Redundancies and Rewording Confusing, Outdated, or Inaccurate Language

Examples include:

- Current version of Ordinance states in 69.04(f) the Commission hires the staff when in fact the Executive Director hires staff
- Replacing an "and" with an "or"
- Removing redundant language
 - Specifically:
 - Section 69.14(f)(2) concerning issuance of final orders requiring respondent to cease and desist from the discriminatory or unfair practice and to take necessary remedial actions as it is redundant of Section 69.15(b).
 - Section 69.14(f)(4) concerning Commission actions following an Administrative Law Judge's order as it is redundant of Section 69.14(f)(1).
 - Section 69.14(f)(4)(a) concerning judicial review of Commission action as it is redundant of Section 69.16.
- Lower case for complainant, respondent, and aggrieved parties
- Provide clarity on processes

Proposed Changes to Chapter 69

What Changes Are Recommended?

DEFINITIONS 69.03

Definition of Agent 69.03(a)

The definition of Agent was added to the Ordinance, in consultation with the City Attorney's Office, after it was determined the language was necessary to allow for the investigation of cases involving entities which authorize others to conduct business on their behalf.

Definition of Support Animals (69.03)(b)(1)

The Ordinance retains the definition of "support animal" in as one providing emotional support, comfort, therapy, companionship, or therapeutic benefits, promotes the individual's emotional well-being, or by their mere presence and without training, ameliorates one or more identified symptoms or effects of the individual's mental or emotional disability. Provided clarity that there are no certification, training, or identification requirements for Support animals. The term "assistance animal" is reserved only for use as the term to describe the category of animal that falls under the service and support definitions.

Definition of Service Animals 69.03(b)(2)

In previous versions of the Ordinance, the term "assistance animal" was used both as an umbrella term under which service and support animals fell and also in some instances as the definition of "service animals." The proposed Ordinance now clearly defines "service animal" as an animal either individually trained to do work or perform or provide a service, function, or a task for the benefit of an individual with a disability or, despite the lack of individual training, be able to work or perform or provide a service, function or a task for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Provided clarity that there are no certification and identification requirements for service animals. The term "assistance animal" is reserved only for use as the term to describe the category of animal that falls under the service and support definitions.

Definition of Creed 69.03(g)

The definition of Creed was added to the Ordinance, in consultation with the City Attorney's Office, after it was determined the language was necessary to clarify which cases would fall under the basis.

Definition of Intellectual Disability 69.03(i)(1)(ii)

This definition, used in the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) replaces the outdated phrase "mental retardation."

Definition of Sexual Orientation 69.03(u)

Removal of an outdated sentence in the definition of sexual orientation stating "Sexual Orientation does not include participation in acts which are prohibited."

CEDAR RAPIDS CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION 69.04

Number of Commissioners 69.04(a)

The previous version of the Ordinance stated the Commission shall consist of seven (7) members. This number was increased to nine (9) after a discussion with Commission Chair and Vice Chair on May 15, 2019. This number aligns with the average number of Commissioners on other Iowa Civil and Human Rights Commissions.

Proposed Changes to Chapter 69

Why Are We Recommending Changes?

- It is best practice to regularly review governing documents to ensure they are in compliance and are relevant.
- In addition, staff noticed some portions of the Ordinance were difficult to read, and in some cases, inaccurate.

Are There Any Substantive Changes To The Ordinance?

- No, the modifications were made so the Ordinance would be easier to read and to bring it up to date.

Are Any Protected Classes Being Added?

- No protected classes have been added, nor have any bases been added.

How Did the Commission Decide What To Change?

- Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission staff conducted a review of the current Ordinance and made proposed changes with the goal of making the Ordinance easier to read and to conform to current best practices and relevant laws.
- The proposed ordinance was provided to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for review, and their recommended edits were incorporated.
- HUD provided final review of the updated ordinance and certified it as “substantially equivalent to federal housing laws”. This is required in order for the Commission to continue to receive federal funds.
- The Ordinance was reviewed and approved unanimously by the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission on October 20, 2021.

What Are The Next Steps?

- The Ordinance was submitted to the Legal Department of the City for formatting and one final legal review, expected completion of review is by the end of November
- Once reviewed by the Legal Department, the Commission will submit the Ordinance for review and approval by the City Council in three public readings.

Marion Civil Rights Commission (MCRC)
Executive Director's Report
March 2, 2022

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- ***Executive Director speaking engagements/media since February Commission Meeting***
 - Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU): Discussed Inclusive ICR, DEIB, and civil rights
 - KGAN Interview: "Why is it important to teach Black history"
 - Daybreak Rotary: Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and civil rights
 - Inclusive ICR Coalition Meeting: Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and civil rights
- ***"Legislative 101" Sessions (Nonpartisan, virtual) processes, issues, and communication***
 - Session 1: National and State policymakers, February 25 at 10am
 - Session 2: Local policymakers (March, date TBD)
- ***Book Discussion (virtual)***
 - *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, Ibram X. Kendi
 - Dates chosen to lift up that Black History should not only be honored in February, but all year long.
 - February 28, 6-8pm and March 14, 6-8pm
- ***Community Survey***
 - Survey sent to community on February 9 and as of February 11, we have 31 responses.
 - Purpose: determine interests/topics; preference for types of outreach (books, movies/documentaries, etc.); preference for outreach events (dates/times), etc.
- ***DEI Index***
 - Inclusive ICR is preparing the launch of DEI Index in April 2022.
 - This in-depth assessment will be available to all employers who have the desire to understand where they currently exist in the DEI space, using five pillars (Community Outreach, CEO Commitment, Diverse Suppliers, Diverse People, and Internal Policy) and opportunities to grow.
 - This assessment is free to all employers in the ICR Region.
 - Sponsors: Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, Iowa City Area Development Group, and Iowa City Area Business Partnership
 - How CRCRC is involved: Stefanie serves as co-chair of Inclusive ICR and is on the Outreach and Resource Development Committees. CRCRC will be listed as a "Champion" of this initiative.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

- We welcome Megan Mineart, our intern from Mt. Mercy and Jasmine Alejo, our intern from Coe College

Respectfully,
Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven
Executive Director

Marion Intakes/Inquiries Received by CRCRC Since January 2, 2020

Complaints were referred to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, HUD, or another agency
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	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.
11	August 4, 2021	Employment	Sex	Differential treatment based on sex; has not been paid for several hours of work
12	August 31, 2021	Housing	Service Animal	Landlord is asking tenant to pay a monthly pet fee for her service animal
13	September 1, 2021	Housing	N/A	Water is shut off for several hours several times each month during the spring and summer months; tenants have been unable to reach landlord
14	September 24, 2021	Public Accommodation	Physical Disability	Local business does not have adequate wheelchair access to the building
15	September 24, 2021	Housing	N/A	Mobile home park manager asked tenant to give them the title to his mobile home so they can tear it down; told him they would charge him for tearing it down if he doesn't give them the title

Marion staff took over the handling of intakes/inquiries for Marion complaints on October 28, 2021
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Marion Civil Rights Commission

Strategic Plan

January – December 2022

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Marion Civil Rights Commission is “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.”

To this end, the Commission will:

- *Administer Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code of the City of Marion, which covers the civil rights laws of the State of Iowa within the corporate limits of the City of Marion,*
- *Initiate, receive, investigate, conciliate, and determine the merits of discrimination complaints,*
- *Serve as a source of information relative to civil rights,*
- *Report to the Mayor and City Council on work performed by the Commission.*
- *By fulfilling this purpose, the Commission envisions a Marion community that is welcoming, inclusive and preserves the personal dignity of all people, particularly in the areas of employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and education.*

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Commission shall consist of 11 members, appointed by the Mayor with approval of the City Council. Membership on the Commission shall be broadly representative of the City’s population and shall have diverse representation of the City’s population and its protected classes. The term of office is three years and members shall continue to serve until reappointed or replaced.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Commission agrees to review the strategic plan at least once per quarter during a regular Commission meeting to assess progress and make recommendations to achieve our objectives.

Objective 1: Protect the personal dignity of all individuals from discrimination

- 1.1 *Speak up on behalf of protected classes as outlined in Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code of the City of Marion including age, color, creed, disability, familial status, gender identity, lawful source of income, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation*
- 1.2 *Enforce the civil rights ordinance to prevent discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, credit, public accommodations, and education*
- 1.3 *Recommend policies, processes, or procedures that advance equity and create a community of belonging*

Objective 2: Educate the public about human and civil rights

- 2.1 *Generate a list of community stakeholders who value diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice to learn more about their priorities*
- 2.2 *Build and strengthen relationships with community organizations to learn how they connect with their stakeholders about civil rights and discuss the needs and barriers they face as it relates to equity and belonging, specifically city departments, community libraries, coalitions, faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and school districts*
- 2.3 *Train Commissioners to deliver presentations around the following topics: Know Your Rights, Overview of the Complaint Process, Fair Housing, & Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)*
- 2.4 *Participate, sponsor, and organize community outreach events in partnership with the City of Marion and the City of Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission*

Objective 3: Engage in open and meaningful dialogue with protected classes and marginalized communities

- 3.1 *Identify neighborhoods and groups that represent marginalized communities where or for whom discrimination complaints have been filed*
- 3.2 *Build and strengthen relationships with affinity groups aligned with protected classes to discuss the needs and barriers they face as it relates to equity and belonging*
- 3.3 *Create opportunities for inclusive conversations such as focus groups, community forums, and discussing groups*
- 3.4 *Plan and facilitate community events that celebrate culture, justice, diversity, and inclusion*

Objective 4: Promote the Marion Civil Rights Commission to residents, businesses, and community members

- 4.1 *Create an annual outreach plan which includes proclamations, social media posts, and press releases that focus on protected classes, issues related to civil rights, and creating a community of belonging*
- 4.2 *Develop a process to handle media requests, interviews, and presentations and create a speaker's bureau of trained, qualified Commissioners to speak on behalf of the Marion Civil Rights Commission*

Civil Rights Proclamations

Martin Luther King Jr. Day – 3rd Monday of January

Black History Month – February

Women's History Month – March

Fair Housing Month – April

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month – May

Pride Month – June

Juneteenth – June 19

National Disability Independence Day – July 26

Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 – October 15

National Disability Employment Awareness Month – October

Human Rights Month – December **OR** International Human Rights Day – December 10

Additional Proclamations Request

Older Americans Month - May

Older Americans Month got its start in 1963 as a result of a meeting between President John F. Kennedy and the National Council of Senior Citizens when May was designated as "Senior Citizens Month." At that time about 17 million Americans had reached their 65th birthday, about one-third of older Americans lived in poverty and the number of programs to address their needs were minimal. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter designated Senior Citizens Month as "Older Americans Month." Today, Older Americans Month is celebrated each May to honor and recognize older Americans for the contributions they make to our families, communities and society. The Administration for Community Living, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, issues a theme for Older Americans Month.

Native American Heritage Month - November

In response to an effort by many to gain a day of recognition for the great influence American Indians have had upon the U.S., Congress designated a week of October to celebrate Native American Awareness Week in 1976. Yearly legislation was enacted to continue the tradition until August of 1990, when President Bush approved the designation of November as National American Indian Heritage Month. Each year a similar proclamation is issued. President Clinton noted in 1996, "Throughout our history, American Indian and Alaska Native peoples have been an integral part of the American character. Against all odds, America's first peoples have endured, and they remain a vital cultural, political, social, and moral presence." November is an appropriate month for the celebration because it is traditionally a time when many American Indians hold fall harvest and world-renewal ceremonies, powwows, dances, and various feasts. The holiday recognizes hundreds of different tribes and approximately 250 languages, and celebrates the history, tradition, and values of American Indians. National American Indian Heritage Month serves as a reminder of the positive effect native peoples have had on the cultural development and growth of the U.S., as well as the struggles and challenges they have faced.