



MINUTES

Civil Rights Commission

6:00 PM - Wednesday, August 7, 2024

Marion Public Library, 1101 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, August 7, 2024, at 6:00 PM, in the Boardroom of the Marion Public Library, 1101 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Kent Jackson, Denise Bridges, Cody Crawford, Renae Forsyth-Christy, Katie Tanner, and Mary Beth O'Neill

ABSENT: Brian Chubb, Kathy Hagler, and Dylan Brooks-Forseth

STAFF PRESENT: Alicia Abernathey and Kim Downs

OTHERS PRESENT: Dale Nuss, Gretchen Lawyer, Ana Clymer and Jennifer Tibbetts

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC FORUM

Gretchen Lawyer shared support for the CR Pride Fashion and Drag Show held on June 29, 2024. The full letter of comments from Ms. Lawyer is attached.

Dale Nuss shared support for the CR Pride Fashion and Drag Show held on June 29, 2024.

[Gretchen Lawyer Comments](#)

REGULAR AGENDA

Motion to approve the June 5, 2024 minutes

Moved by Jackson, seconded by O'Neill, to approve the June 5, 2024 minutes.

Approved unanimously

Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission (CRCRC) Report

Jennifer Tibbetts, CRCRC investigator, shared information on recent and upcoming CRCRC community engagement. Tibbetts shared there has been an increase in complaints that are filed with the CRCRC and shared what happens when probable cause is found in a discrimination complaint.

Staff Liaison Report

Alicia Abernathey provided the staff liaison report including an update on intakes and inquiries.

Outreach Discussion

- **Community Outreach Debrief**
- **Upcoming Community Outreach**
- **Outreach Plan Check In**

Community Outreach Debrief

Tanner provided a debrief of the Pride Fashion and Drag Show on June 29. It was well attended and members of the public were thankful for events like this in Marion. A few community members indicated they purposefully spent money at the businesses in the area to show support for this event. Tanner requested the City look into alternatives for a pride display that is not chalk.

Forsyth-Christy provided a debrief of the 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act event on July 2. It was put on by the African American Museum of Iowa and featured a question and answer format with author Dr. Dave Markward.

Upcoming Community Outreach

Abernathey indicated the Commission will not attend Festival Latino this year due to lack of volunteers. The Commission will partner with the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission for Asian Fest. The Commission will attend Veterans Stand Down and the Intercultural Festival was cancelled. O'Neill suggested the Commission utilize volunteers to assist in outreach events or partner with other City departments. Bridges suggested youth assist in outreach events as well. Abernathey will review the ad hoc members portion of the ordinance and add it to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

Outreach Plan Check In

Tanner requested feedback from the Commission on the current outreach plan as they work to develop and adopt a 2025 plan. The Commission provided recommendations including:

- Using the current outreach plan as the base for review and changes each year
- Utilize ad hoc members and volunteers to attend outreach events
- Partner with other City departments to attend outreach events
- Focus more on Marion events instead of Cedar Rapids events
- Include a footnote in the plan that the Commission aspires to achieve these goals but may not be able to fulfill all commitments
- Building partnerships with other entities (i.e. Marion Chamber of Commerce, Marion Public Library) to engage in their outreach and education
- Collecting and analyzing data

The Commission checked in on needs for volunteers for the remainder of the year.

PUBLIC FORUM

Ana Clymer shared support for the CR Pride Fashion and Drag Show held on June 29, 2024. Clymer stated it is important the City exercise the equity statement and thanked the

Commission and the Marion Public Library for their participation in the event. Clymer shared disappointment other City departments were not present at the event and there was no social media posts regarding the event. Clymer shared disappointment the Commission was not present at the CR Pride Fest event this year. Clymer stated the Marion Alliance for Racial Equity met with the Marion Chamber and MEDCO to discuss their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and to encourage them to do things like highlight minority owned businesses in the community.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Jackson stated the police department previously came to a meeting to discuss issues within the police department that are tied to civil rights. Jackson requested the police chief talk to the Commission about things like racial profiling and excessive force.

O'Neill stated minority owned businesses in the community should be tracked. O'Neill stated the Commission focuses on event participation but suggested some decisions be based on data to assist in promoting initiatives on a larger scale.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Alicia Abernathey, Executive Assistant