

**MARION CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
October 1, 2014, 6:30 pm**

Marion City Hall
1225 6th Avenue
Marion, IA 52302

Commissioners Present: Mr. Dave Baumler
Ms. Deborah Brydon
Mr. Joseph Ellis
Ms. Janet Evans
Ms. Queen Githaiga
Ms. Elizabeth Hilkerbaumer
Mr. Kent Jackson
Mr. Steve Moshier, Chair
Mr. Bret Nilles

Commissioners Absent: Ms. Janet Powell
Mr. Joe Stutler, Vice Chair

Staff/Other Present: Ms. LaSheila Yates, Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission
Mr. Johnny Alcivar, Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission
Ms. Amanda Kaufman, Assistant to the City Manager, City of Marion
Ms. Amber Bisinger, Communications Coordinator, City of Marion
Mr. Robin Tucker, Liaison to the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission

I. Call to Order

Noting there was a quorum, Commissioner Moshier, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

II. Roll Call/Introductions

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

III. Public Response.

There was no public response.

IV. Approval of Minutes from September Meeting

Noting three changes: addition of the word “Cedar” to Robin Tucker’s job title, Commissioner Janet Evans as being not absent from the meeting, and the next meeting listed as October 1, Commissioner Nilles moved and Commissioner Baumler seconded a motion to approve the minutes as amended. No additional discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

V. **Report from Chair**

Commissioner Moshier, Chair presented the report. He noted that he'd like to have commissioners who are assigned with special tasks to present updates at future meetings. He reminded the Commission that the officers will begin serving in their roles at the beginning of the next calendar year. He thanked Ms. Yates and her staff for their work to help the Marion Civil Rights Commission. Mr. Moshier said the Commission needs to continue moving forward and increasing its visibility in the community.

Commissioner Hilkerbaumer joined the meeting at 6:43pm.

VI. **Commissioner Janet Powell Resignation**

Commissioner Janet Powell submitted her resignation letter to the Marion Civil Rights Commission. Commissioner Jackson moved and Commissioner Ellis seconded the motion to accept the resignation letter. No discussion, the motion was approved unanimously. The resignation letter will be sent to the Marion City Council to be received and filed. Gender balance must be maintained in filling this vacant position.

VII. **Committee Reports**

Executive Committee

Commissioner Moshier, Chair presented the executive committee report. He stated that he and Commissioner Stutler, Vice Chair met with Virginia Sipes and LaSheila Yates to discuss the Rules of Practice. The amended document has been forwarded to the Marion City Attorney for review. Commissioner Moshier reiterated the importance of having consistency between Marion's Rules of Practice and Cedar Rapids' Rules of Practice

Cedar Rapids Liaison Report

Commissioner Nilles presented the Marion Liaison report. He attended the Cedar Rapids meeting on September 17th. He stated that possible ways for Marion to be involved was discussed. Other items discussed included the Cedar Rapids budget, the upcoming office move, and the need for an administrative assistant.

Mr. Tucker presented the Cedar Rapids Liaison report. He pointed to the importance of monitoring the cases in process and introduced the commissioners to the monthly case report. A sample case report was included in the agenda packet. During the most recent Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Meeting, a question regarding a potential Friends Committee and its importance/appropriateness. Concerns regarding this potential committee were raised at the Cedar Rapids meeting and assignments have been made to look into this further; a report will be made at the next regular meeting of the Cedar Rapids Commission. At this time, there is no need for comment from Marion, but he will pass on that the Marion Civil Rights Commission is interested in a Friends Committee. He also stated that the Cedar Rapids Commission is looking forward to the upcoming move to new offices.

VIII. Director's Report

Executive Director Yates provided the Director's Report. She provided a staff update on Daryl Lipscomb, a former Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission staff person that passed away. A memorial service will be held at the Unity Center of Cedar Rapids at 2pm on Saturday, October 4.

Two investigators have completed the National Fair Housing Training Academy. Two other investigators will also be recognized at the annual Cedar Rapids City recognition ceremony.

Alicia Abernathey has been hired as the new administrative assistant; she comes from the Cedar Rapids Community Development Department.

Ms. Yates referred Commissioners to the Rules of Practice information included in the agenda packet for further reading.

A matrix has been assembled for training opportunities; it was included in the agenda packet. Training will be held during the regular meetings of the Marion Civil Rights Commission. Fair Housing training has been tentatively scheduled for the upcoming meeting on Wednesday, November 4.

Ms. Yates addressed the current backlog of cases. Staff has assembled a report of cases that are over 300 days old (some outliers that are over 1,000 days old), and what will be done to address this backlog of cases. A case processing timeline will be assembled and based off of national and regional standards. A recommendation or initial research will be presented to the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission in October. Commissioners asked clarifying questions about this issue.

A public hearing regarding a credit case was held Monday, September 29. This was related to a Cedar Rapids case.

A tentative agreement was received to move the Civil Rights Commission office to Veterans Memorial in Cedar Rapids on December 1.

Cases were discussed among commissioners. Commissioner Brydon, who received the first case, commended the Cedar Rapids staff for their guidance through this process.

Mr. Alcivar-Zuniga discussed upcoming events:

- The Latino Professional Development Institute will be held in Iowa City on October 3 from 8:30-4:30pm. Commissioners are urged to attend this event.
- The Roll of the Dice event will be held on November 18 from 6:00-9:00pm at Mount Mercy. Logistics are being worked out; Ms. Munsterman-Robinson will be the lead staff person for this event.
- The Fair Housing Media Contest has been postponed to April 2015, due to lower than anticipated interest; when new deadlines have been set, information will be provided to Commissioners.
- A Fair Housing movie night event will be held in early November; final details will be determined within the week.

- A conversation regarding police force with the Cedar Rapids Chief of Police, the Linn County Sheriff, and the Linn County attorney will occur next Tuesday at 7pm at Mount Mercy.

IX. **Old Business**

“Roll of the Dice” update

Commissioner Baumler provided an update on the “Roll of the Dice” event. He is planning to attend the November event being hosted at Mount Mercy. Following this event, he will provide an update to the Marion Civil Rights Commission on what to expect. The event will be held in Marion sometime in spring 2015.

Media Relations Training

Amber Bisinger, Communications Coordinator for the City of Marion provided media relations training to the Commission.

X. **New Business:**

Commissioner Nilles brought up the interaction among commissioners and is interested in organizing a social event. The commissioners expressed interest in getting together in a social setting. Commissioner Nilles will send out a request via email to organize an event.

Commissioner Ellis asked about the annual report. Commissioner Moshier, Chair said he will plan to pull in a few commissioners to create this report and present it to the Marion City Council. He will be sending out a message for volunteers.

XI. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Ellis, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 5, 2014 at 6:30 pm at 1225 6th Avenue, Marion, Iowa.

Respectfully submitted by Amanda Kaufman