

**CEDAR RAPIDS CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION (CRCRC)**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**November 18, 2015 5:30 p.m.**

Civil Rights Commission

50 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Bridge

Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

**Commissioners Present:** Ms. Salma Igram, Vice Chair  
Dr. Emily Bowman  
Ms. Laura O’Leary  
Mr. Robin Tucker  
Ms. Ashley Reynolds  
Dr. Ruth White

**Commissioners Absent:** Mr. Keith Rippy, Chair  
Mr. Keith Wiggins  
Mr. Leland Freie

**Staff Present:** Ms. LaSheila Yates, Executive Director  
Ms. Janet Abejo, Investigator  
Ms. Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant

**Guests:** Brett Nilles

**I. Call to Order**

Commissioner Igram, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

**II. Roll Call/Introductions**

Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

**III. Public Response**

No public response.

**IV. Approval of Minutes from October Meeting**

Commissioner O’Leary moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Tucker seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**V. Report from Chair**

*State of Equity Report Update - Education*

Commissioner Igram stated she had no updates to present.

**VI. Closed Session**

**The Commission may go into closed session to discuss the filing of one or more complaints, information gathered during investigation of such complaints, and attempts to eliminate such alleged discrimination pursuant to Iowa Code Sections 21.5(1)(a) and 216.15(5) (2012).**

*Pearson v. Seldin Properties, LLC*

Commissioner Bowman moved to go into closed session. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. The motion carried on a unanimous vote and the Commission went into Closed Session at 5:40 p.m.

Commissioner White joined the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

Commissioner Bowman moved to return to open session. Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. The motion carried on a unanimous vote and the Commission returned to Open Session at 6:58 p.m.

Commissioner Bowman moved to approve the ALJ's finding with modifications for case number 3423. Modifications are to include monetary damages for the complainant in the amount of \$15,186. The \$15,186 includes \$5,658 for humiliation, embarrassment and emotional distress and was determined by providing \$23 per day for 246 days (number of days tenant resided in unit). The \$15,186 also includes \$7,028 for physical pain and was determined by providing \$200 per week for 35.14 weeks (number of weeks tenant resided in unit). The \$15,186 further includes \$2,000 for moving expenses and \$500 for inconvenience. Further modifications to the ALJ's finding include the addition of a missing Prima Facie element "That the landlord was aware or should have been aware of the disability" and order for the Respondent to review and revise its Reasonable Accommodation policies and procedures as recommended by staff.

(Staff Recommendation for Reasonable Accommodation policies and procedures:

Moreover, the Respondent shall review their Reasonable Accommodation policy and procedure(s) to assure conformity with all fair housing laws. The Respondent's revised policy must include the following provisions.

- i. Tenant has a right to file a complaint with the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission within 360 days of the last incident of alleged housing discrimination.
- ii. It is illegal for the landlord to retaliate against a tenant for participation in protected activity such as filing a complaint
- iii. Management is required to post signage and provide documentation to current and prospective tenants outlining reasonable accommodation policy and process.)

Commissioner O'Leary seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

## VII. **Committee Reports**

### *Finance Committee*

Commissioner Igram stated there is no report as the Committee meeting was cancelled.

### *Outreach Committee*

Commissioner Bowman stated the Outreach Committee met on Monday. There will be a civil rights walking display in City Hall in December, the EEOC training is still undetermined as the contract is being finalized and there will be a movie night for the movie "Selma" on January 17<sup>th</sup> that will include a job fair. Commissioner Bowman also stated staff will attend Mediation training this week and the Mediation training for the public will be February 9<sup>th</sup>.

LaSheila Yates, Executive Director, stated there will be a Human Rights Month Proclamation at the December 15<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

### *Marion Civil Rights Commission Liaison*

Commissioner Tucker stated Marion reviewed their budget at their last meeting and they will have a community event in February featuring the game StarPower which is a poverty simulation that relates to lawful source of income.

Commissioner White left the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Ms. Yates stated Marion was provided with a list of tasks CRCRC staff has completed since 2012 in support of the Marion Commission.

**VIII. Mission Moment – Smartphone Application**

Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant, walked the Commission through the Smartphone Application showing them the various features including signing up for the newsletter, getting the Commissions contact information, finding out more about the Commission, reading featured stories and filing a complaint. The Smartphone Application is available on iPhone, iPad and android devices and was released in October.

**IX. Director’s Report**

Ms. Yates stated she apologized for the late notice on her recent absence from the office. During that time Janet served as the person in charge. Ms. Yates stated her next leave of absence will be from late December to mid-January. Ms. Yates stated staff is doing an excellent job with investigations as the average case is being closed within 50 days of being opened.

Commissioner Reynolds left the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Ms. Yates stated the 28E Agreement with Marion is under review with the attorney’s office.

**X. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Alicia Abernathey*