

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

**MEETING MINUTES**

**December 16, 2015 5:30 p.m.**

Civil Rights Commission

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

Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

**Commissioners Present:** Mr. Keith Rippy, Chair  
Ms. Salma Igram, Vice Chair  
Mr. Leland Freie  
Ms. Laura O’Leary  
Mr. Robin Tucker  
Ms. Ashley Reynolds  
Dr. Ruth White  
Mr. Keith Wiggins

**Commissioners Absent:** Dr. Emily Bowman

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

**Guests:** Councilwoman Susie Weinacht, Brett Nilles, Al Soukup, Casey Drew,  
Annette Lorenz, Amanda Grieder

**I. Call to Order**

Commissioner Rippy, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**II. Roll Call/Introductions**

Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

**III. Public Response**

No public response.

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

Commissioner Igram moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner White seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

**V. Departmental Finances Update**

Al Soukup, Finance Budget Analyst, stated for FY15 there was a small amount of surplus in the general fund that was due to position vacancies. Mr. Soukup stated there was an excess amount of revenue from selling furniture in the office move, billing Marion for services, revenue from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC) and costs for speaking at events.

Mr. Soukup stated for the current fiscal year, FY16, revenue is currently at 115% of the budget due to billing Marion more than what was budgeted. For personal services the Commission is on target as 42% has been spent 42% through the year. Mr. Soukup stated discretionary funds are currently below target as they are 9% spent at 42% through the year.

Mr. Soukup stated the two main FY17 budget requests include an Assistant Director position and moving the building rental under the general fund. The Assistant Director budget request is for an amount that will cover any of the current staff becoming the Assistant Director.

VI. **Chapter 22.A Proposed Revisions**

Amanda Grieder, SAFE-CR, stated the goal of the SAFE-CR program is to discourage nuisance activity, protect the quiet enjoyment of neighborhoods, ensure properties are well maintained, etc. Ms. Grieder stated 356 properties were designated as nuisances with 207 being rentals, 141 owner occupied and 8 commercial. Of those 356 properties 182 are still active nuisance properties and 174 are in now compliance. Ms. Grieder stated there have been 44 administrative appeals in which 34 were upheld, 9 were overturned and 1 is still pending a decision. Ms. Grieder stated a total of 54 properties have been billed with a total amount billed of \$39,729.95.

Ms. Grieder stated focus groups were created to review Chapter 22A to ensure it does not penalize victims of crime. Ms. Grieder identified members of the focus groups and discussed the timeline of events that took place in reviewing Chapter 22A for corrections. Ms. Grieder identified the proposed revisions recommended by the focus groups including definitions, additional language that was needed, clarifying language, etc.

VII. **Report from Chair**

Commissioner Rippy stated he and LaSheila met with City Attorney Jim Flitz and they are in the process of amending the 28E Agreement with Marion. Once the recommended changes are identified it will be presented to Marion for discussion as an addendum to the current agreement.

VIII. **Committee Reports**

*Finance Committee*

Commissioner Igram stated there is no report as the Committee meeting consisted of the Finance information presented at tonight's meeting.

*Outreach Committee*

Commissioner Freie stated Mediation training for the public will be February 9<sup>th</sup> and movie night for the movie "Selma" will be January 17<sup>th</sup>. Participants must register to attend both events. There is currently a civil rights walking display in City Hall and will be taken down next week.

LaSheila Yates, Executive Director, stated there was a Human Rights Month Proclamation at the December 15<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting and there will be a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Proclamation at the January 12<sup>th</sup> City Council meetin.

*CRCSD Diversity Committee Liaison*

Commissioner White stated the committee will meet in January and on area of interest includes course work that targets diverse populations.

Commissioner Reynolds arrived at 6:21 p.m.

*Marion Civil Rights Commission Liaison*

Brett Nilles, Marion Commission Liaison, stated Marion will select new officers in January and the Commission has started having educational trainings at their meetings each month.

Commissioner Tucker stated Marion educational trainings included Marion's Police Chief at the December meeting in which he spoke about body cameras and car cameras. Commissioner Tucker stated Marion also has public outreach scheduled for February in which they will host the simulation of the game StarPower.

IX. **Director's Report**

Ms. Yates stated the Commission now has two interns and Investigator Janet Abejo was the lead in

the hiring process. Ms. Yates stated she will be out of the office December 21<sup>st</sup> through January 8<sup>th</sup> and Judy will serve as the person in charge. Ms. Yates stated the current average caseload is 44 days old. Ms. Yates stated the annual report will go out in February and Alicia will be contacting all commissioners for updated bios.

X. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Rippy stated he would like to thank Councilwoman Susie Weinacht for serving as the Civil Rights Commission liaison to the City Council. Commissioner Rippy stated Councilman Scott Overland will be the new Commission liaison.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Alicia Abernathy*