

CEDAR RAPIDS CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION  
Second Floor, Veterans Memorial Building  
26 September 2007

Commissioners and staff met for the regular meeting of the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission at Noon, Wednesday, 26 September 2007, in the Conference Room, Ecumenical Community Center, 1035 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. A quorum was recognized.

Commissioners Present:        Mr. Roy Porterfield, Chair  
   Ms. Miriam Amer  
   Mr. George Holmes  
   Ms. Janet Johnson  
   Mr. Momodu Kamara  
   Ms. Dolores Reisinger  
   Ms. Nancylee Ziese

Commissioners Absent:        Ms. Beth Freeman, Vice Chair  
   Mr. Virgil Gooding  
   Mr. Kavi Parupally  
   Ms. Tara Youells

Staff Present:                    Mr. Kenneth White, Director  
   Ms. Jan Alderton, Investigator  
   Ms. Christina Larsen, Staff Administrative Assistant

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Noting a quorum, Roy Porterfield, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Nancylee Ziese motioned to approve the minutes to the August 29, 2007 Commission meeting as printed with Dolores Reisinger seconding the motion. The minutes were approved as printed by unanimous voice vote.

Janet Johnson motioned to approve the minutes to the September 13, 2007 Commission meeting as printed with George Holmes seconding the motion. The minutes were approved as printed by unanimous voice vote.

#### **PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE**

Janet reviewed the formal definition of Point of Information:

A procedure where a member requests information in order to vote on a motion. This procedure cannot be used for debate of the current motion. The question must be answered immediately and should be answered by the Chair should if answer is known. If the Chair is unsure of the answer, they can refer to another member who is certain. The request should be answered to the member's satisfaction before moving forward.

Further discussion ensued regarding clarification of when the point of information can and should be used.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **DIVERSITY COMMITTEE**

Janet explained to the Commission that Committee planned rather than to seek an outside speaker, they would ask members of the community to speak. There was a question of whether this should be a one day or two day conference. Roy Porterfield suggested possibly one or two consecutive Saturdays.

### **ADVANCED TRAINING ON ADA**

George updated the Commission that Mr. Martin, a 2007 RECCR speaker, had sent him a 28-page presentation noting that the information covers sections 1, 2, and 3 though not 4 and 5.

### **COMMERCIAL ON LOCAL TV STATIONS**

Kenneth White stated he wanted to delay the advertisements until after the office move due to the address changes that will take place.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Jan Alderton began discussing a handout that was presented to the Commissioners a few minutes prior. Kenneth noted that this was a document that he has not reviewed. NancyLee stated that prior to any discussion of a topic, that specific topic should appear on the agenda and this had not. Roy also stated that there was no opportunity to digest the information properly prior to discussion. He clarified that Commissioner business routes through him first and staff business should route through Kenneth first. There was no further discussion.

### **TRAILWAYS CORRESPONDENCE**

Dolores questioned if there was any response received by the Commission or staff from Trailways. There has not been. Roy stated that we had agreed to follow up with the company after one month and will do so.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **POSTING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

There was discussion regarding whether to post the Commission meeting minutes on the City's website. NancyLee, also a member of the Iowa Child Advocacy Board, reviewed options noting that at one of her previous meetings it was recommended that the minutes of an agency's meeting be available on the agency's website adding that there would be an approved version after a vote. Discussion ensued regarding what is public and how it is obtained.

NancyLee motioned that from this point forward on the City's website a skeleton draft version of the current meeting's minutes will be posted that is comprised of only actions taken, which is clearly labeled as draft, and contains a note that a full version will be posted after the next Commission meeting. Dolores seconded the motion. Janet Johnson offered a friendly amendment: have a different title such as "Motions That Were Voted on at the Latest Meeting" versus calling them draft minutes. NancyLee accepted the amendment. Miriam Amer offered a friendly amendment that the above will be done with approval by the City IT department. NancyLee accepted the amendment. The motion, with the noted amendments, passed by unanimous voice vote.

### **IOWA OPEN MEETINGS LAW**

Email issues with the open meetings law were discussed mostly concentrating on how many commissioners are in the chain of email conversation at the same time that can or does result in an action.

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Roy noted that we haven't produced a newsletter since February 2007. Kenneth informed the Commission that he has talked to a recent PR graduate who would like to take on this activity for us. Janet questioned how long the graduate would be available. Kenneth replied that he is not sure though it was clear they would be available at least long enough to get it up and running. Miriam questioned the cost of the graduate. Kenneth replied that some of the project will be volunteer work, some will be paid. Momodu Kamara stated that the Commission should discuss what the content should be at a formal meeting.

## COMMISSIONER SUPPORT OF ACTIVITIES

Dolores thanked the Commission for supporting her activities for the National Blind Awareness Month. Dolores briefly overviewed her activities that she has accomplished and the ones upcoming.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kenneth updated the Commission on his recent activities:

This has been a very busy month, though I will give some ideas of the activities I am involved in. During the past month I may have neglected the staff and I apologize for that:

1. We are on the City Council agenda today seeking approval to enter into a lease agreement for the new office space. We have provided the City Clerk's office with all the documents and the City Attorney has reviewed the lease and modifications have been made as a result.
2. In anticipation of the affirmative votes from the Council I am tentatively planning an open house for some time in February. I have made preliminary contact with Congressman Keith Ellison from Minnesota, first Muslim Congressmen to participate in the Open House.
3. Also, I had some preliminary discussions regarding an Annual Civil Rights Commission Awards Banquet. We are looking at some dates in April and May 2008. We plan to approach Obama's office to check on his availability as a keynote speaker.
4. I have met with Thomas Moore from the African American Museum and he has agreed to provide the Commission with space in the museum to create a Fair Housing exhibit. Additionally, we discussed the possibility of this being a traveling exhibit that would be available though out the State of Iowa.
5. I am planning a Civil Rights Tour for 7th & 8th graders from March 28 - April 4, 2008 (spring break). Stops on the tour include: Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati; Gullah Islands, SC; MLK Center in Atlanta; 16th Baptist Church and Civil Rights Museum in Birmingham. We would trace the Selma to Montgomery March, cross the Edmund Pettis Bridge, and meet the Mayor of Selma (1st black Mayor; it took him 3 times to defeat the longtime Mayor who was in office at the time of the march). We would also tour the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Central High School, State Capitol Memorial, and the Clinton Library. Commissioners are welcome to join us; however, you may need to double as chaperone due to limited space. I am developing a Civil Rights educational training program for the trip. I plan to solicit corporate

donations to underwrite the cost of the trip. 36 kids & 12 Chaperones. The AA Museum has offered to assist with the solicitation of funds.

6. I am developing a handbook for the staff and Commission. Upon completion of the draft, I will submit copies to the Commission for their input.
7. I met with a U of I law professor and students for an update on their progress with the review of our ordinance. They plan to have something available by the end of the semester which is just prior to the holidays; however, there maybe be a possibility it may overlap into the next semester.
8. I was in Iowa City and met with the Mayor and the Civil Rights Director. We agreed that we would contact the Waterloo Director and began to meet on a monthly basis and discuss issues in the East Iowa Corridor.
9. On Saturday, I am participating in the 3-mile AIDS/HIV walk co-sponsored by the American Red Cross AIDS project.
10. I spent last weekend with an African American physician from Mississippi who is considering relocating to Cedar Rapids. Dr. Michael Jackson and I were the tour guides for the weekend. We attended a show at the Theater Downtown, a comedy show at Legends, and had dinner at Blends compliments of Mercy Hospital.
11. Ralph Rosenberg, Iowa Civil Rights Commission Director, and I have drafted a letter with a brochure under both of our signatures to go out to members of the faith communities to discuss our work and mission. 2008 marks anniversaries 40th passage Fair Housing Act & 40 years ago Martin Luther King was killed.
12. Attended the African American Women's Leadership Conference and the Diversity Focus' Leadership Conference.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Miriam questioned why there are no cases currently assigned to Commissioners. Kenneth stated he is addressing cases that have been on the books for more than 365 days. Miriam also questioned how all cases can be under investigation right now? Christina Larsen explained that now all incoming cases are assigned immediately upon filing therefore it appears on the spreadsheets as all cases are currently under investigation.

Dolores motioned to adjourn with Miriam seconding the motion. The meeting adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 1:20 PM.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting will be at 4:30 PM, Wednesday, 24 October 2007, in the Ecumenical Center conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Larsen  
Administrative Assistant III