I. Call to Order
Commissioner Igram, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

II. Roll Call/Introductions
Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

III. Public Response
No public response.

IV. Fair Housing Month Celebration
Guest Speaker: Carrie Slagle, Managing Director of Critical Services at Waypoint
Bernie Walther, Investigator, introduced Carrie Slagle stating Ms. Slagle has worked in the field of homelessness for 18 years and is currently the Managing Director of Critical Services at Waypoint.

Carrie Slagle, Managing Director of Critical Services at Waypoint, stated Waypoint offers various services including homeless/housing services, childcare and domestic violence services. Ms. Slagle stated as of July 25, 2018, there were 238 individuals residing in homeless shelters throughout Cedar Rapids, which included 95 men, 78 women and 65 children. Ms. Slagle stated in July 2015, there were 446 individuals residing in homeless shelters throughout Cedar Rapids. Ms. Slagle stated these numbers show the number of individuals utilizing homeless services in Cedar Rapids has gone down over the years.

Ms. Slagle stated barriers to getting housing include affordability, credit scores, and criminal backgrounds. Ms. Slagle stated Waypoint housing services include centralized intake, diversion and prevention, shelter, Rapid Rehousing, and the tenant academy. Ms. Slagle stated centralized intake includes one point of contact that will assist individuals in connecting with any of the five homeless shelters in Cedar Rapids. Ms. Slagle stated the Madge Phillips Center Shelter is owned by
Ms. Slagle stated the average time it takes to get someone into housing through the Rapid Rehousing program is three and half months. Ms. Slagle stated 73 percent of the individuals in Waypoint’s Rapid Rehousing program do not return to homelessness in a two-year period as compared to the national rate of 80 percent. Ms. Slagle stated the Tenant Academy offers courses to tenants to teach them money management, how to search for housing, move-in and move-out processes, how to take care of the home, etc. Ms. Slagle stated it has served over 130 people so far.

Commissioner Arrington stated he was previously part of a group that included the Willis Dady Emergency Shelter and Mission of Hope and the group was attempting to collaborate with the City of Cedar Rapids to address homelessness issues but unfortunately, it fell through. Commissioner Arrington asked if Waypoint was currently collaborating with the City of Cedar Rapids. Ms. Slagle stated there was no current collaboration with the City of Cedar Rapids.

Janet Abejo-Parker, Acting Executive Director, asked if the Tenant Academy was open to anyone or just those experiencing homelessness. Ms. Slagle stated it is open to anyone who would like to participate and takes place once a month. Ms. Abejo-Parker suggested the Commission partner with Waypoint to provide a fair housing piece in the Tenant Academy.

Commissioner Topinka asked if Waypoint will work with felons to find them housing. Ms. Slagle stated there are barriers to finding individuals with a criminal background housing but Waypoint will work with them. Ms. Slagle stated they have done a lot of relationship building with landlords and some landlords will negotiate with individuals that if they participate in the Tenant Academy, they will rent to them.

Renae Forsyth-Christy, Marion Civil Rights Commission Liaison, asked if the services were provided in Cedar Rapids only or if they are available county wide. Ms. Slagle stated they serve the county. Commissioner Topinka asked if men are able to stay in the family units. Ms. Slagle stated men are able to stay in the family units if they are with their family but cannot stay in the family units as individuals. Commissioner Topinka asked if the Mission of Hope shelters were back open. Ms. Slagle stated they are open. Commissioner Topinka asked if the two shelters are separated between males and females. Ms. Slagle stated they are separated.

Commissioner Arrington asked if each shelter competes for funding separately or collectively. Ms. Slagle stated all of the shelters work together in an attempt not to duplicate services but each organization applies for funding separately.

Carrie Slagle and Bernie Walther left the meeting following discussion of this agenda item.

V. Approval of Minutes

February 25, 2019 meeting
Commissioner Topinka moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Rippy seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

March 20, 2019 meeting
Commissioner Rippy moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Topinka seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

VI. Report from Chair
Commissioner Igram, Chair, stated this is the last meeting where she will serve as Chair and Commissioner Rippy will serve as Vice Chair. Commissioner Igram stated she would like to thank Janet Abejo-Parker and her team for all of their hard work. Commissioner Igram welcomed
Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven back to the Commission. Commissioner Igram stated she and Commissioner Rippy met with City employees to finalize the decision on the search firm that will hire the next Executive Director. Commissioner Igram stated the selected firm has not been made public yet but the Commission will be informed when it is made public. Commissioner Igram stated the City of Cedar Rapids has requested she and Commissioner Rippy continue to work through the hiring process of the Executive Director as they have been involved thus far.

Commissioner Igram stated she would like to thank everyone for their help over the years as she served as Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioner Igram stated there were hurdles but she has no regrets. Commissioner Igram stated it was a pleasure and honor to serve as Chair and Vice Chair.

VII. Committee Reports

Outreach Committee Liaison

Commissioner Freie stated Investigator Walther is requesting Commissioners look through the list of summer outreach events and sign up to assist staff in coverage of these events. Commissioner Freie stated staff continues to do their normal outreach and is looking to connect with the Affordable Housing Commission.

Marion Civil Rights Commission Liaison

Ms. Forsyth-Christy stated she was not at the last Marion Civil Rights Commission (MCRC) meeting. However, because the MCRC recently received new Commissioners, there has been some StarPower presentations to bring the new Commissioners up to speed on how the game works.

VIII. Mission Moment – Commission’s 2019 Public Service Announcement

Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she would like to give kudos to Briana Gipson, Intern, as the concept for the 2019 Public Service Announcement (PSA) was her idea. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she, Bernie Walther, Alicia Abernathey, Keenan Lee and Briana Gipson all had a part in the PSA. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated the PSA focuses on sexual harassment in housing and came after the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) indicated they had a joint effort to combat sexual harassment in housing. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated a representative from the DOJ spoke at the recent Landlords of Linn County annual meeting and addressed sexual harassment in housing. The Commission viewed the 2019 PSA.

IX. Director’s Report

Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she would like to thank Commissioners Igram and Rippy for their guidance over the last six years serving as Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven will return to the Commission as a full time Investigator. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated Ms. Munsterman-Scriven has invaluable contributions to the Commission and also has a personal interest in civil rights. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated Ms. Munsterman-Scriven previously worked for the Commission for seven years and she is grateful to have her back. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant, also applied for the Investigator position and was very impressive throughout the hiring process. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she is working on succession planning for Ms. Abernathey to prepare her for future positions with the Commission. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated Ms. Abernathey will attend mediation training in September as part of the succession planning. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she would like to thank Commissioner Toingar for his participation in the hiring process.

Ms. Abejo-Parker stated the Commission currently has two bus advertisements that are displayed internally on all City buses. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated there are also two advertisements on two bus shelters in the City. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she would like to give kudos to Investigator Walther
and Administrative Assistant Abernathey for managing the coordination of those projects. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated the advertisements are currently up and will run until March 2020.

Ms. Abejo-Parker stated there are two “Not Without Me” events coming up at the African American Museum in April and May.

Ms. Abejo-Parker stated Keenan Lee, Intern, worked on the 2019 Fair Housing Poster Contest and Commissioners are welcome to vote on the posters to help determine a winner. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated Keenan Lee and Briana Gipson, Interns, will graduate in May and will be leaving the Commission. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated an open house will be held to give Commissioners an opportunity to say goodbye to Mr. Lee and Ms. Gipson. Commissioner Arrington stated Mr. Lee is everywhere in the community and will be very successful in the future.

Commissioner Igram stated she conducted Ms. Abejo-Parker’s annual review and she received feedback from staff in Ms. Abejo-Parker’s performance. Commissioner Igram stated all staff said the same thing and Ms. Abejo-Parker exceeded all expectations, especially doing her job as the Senior Investigator and serving as the Executive Director. Commissioner Igram stated she is proud of Ms. Abejo-Parker and is proud to work with her. Commissioner Igram stated it will be 90 to 120 days after the recruitment firm is selected before a new Executive Director will be hired. Commissioner Igram stated the Commission’s team speaks volumes.

Commissioner Freie stated Dr. Buck with the Cedar Rapids Community School District is a finalist in a job opening and may be leaving the school district.

Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she forgot to mention, in the Behnke V. Subway (Mt Vernon Rd) case, the Respondent was served a notice the case was going to small claims court. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she was notified by Alex Anderson, Assistant City Attorney, the Respondent has defaulted and it was the court’s decision the Respondent is to pay the money owed to the Commission. Ms. Abejo-Parker stated she will work with the City’s Finance Department to pursue collections of the money owed to the Commission.

X. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Alicia Abernathey*