CEDAR RAPIDS CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION (CRCRC)
MEETING MINUTES
August 21, 2019 5:30 p.m.
Civil Rights Commission
50 2nd Avenue Bridge
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Commissioners Present:  Mr. Leland Freie, Chair
                         Mr. Anthony Arrington, Vice Chair
                         Ms. Salma Igram
                         Mr. Keith Rippy
                         Mr. Esaie Toingar
                         Dr. Ruth White

Commissioners Absent:   Ms. Linda Topinka

Staff Present:           Ms. Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven, Investigator
                         Ms. Alicia Abernathey, Administrative Assistant / Intake Specialist

Guests:                 Renae Forsyth-Christy, Cory Johnson

I.  Call to Order
    Commissioner Freie, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

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

III. Public Response
    Cory Johnson stated he works for Iowa Workforce and is also on the NAACP board. Mr. Johnson stated he was in attendance to learn more about the Civil Rights Commission.

IV. Approval of Minutes from July 17, 2019 meeting
    Commissioner Igram moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Arrington seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved, with no discussion.

V.  Action Item
    Review and approval of updated Committee Charters
    Stefanie Munsterman-Scriven, Investigator, stated the charters were included in the agenda packet and are redlined with the purposed changes. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated the charters were updated to align with current practices and best practices. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated staff is requesting a vote to approve the charters to begin following them.

    Commissioner Freie stated changes include the Chair appointing committee members and Teresa Feldman, the City’s Human Resources Director, would like to follow the charters in hiring the new Executive Director. Therefore, the Commission needs to approve the purposed changes to the charters before they are effective. Commissioner Igram asked who is on the Development and Personnel Committee. Commissioner Freie stated he is on the Committee as Chair and Commissioner Anthony Arrington is on the Committee as Vice Chair.
Commissioner Rippy moved to approve the Committee charters for the Development and Personnel Committee, Finance Committee and Outreach Committee as presented. Commissioner Igram seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved, with no further discussion.

VI. **Report from Chair**
Commissioner Freie, Chair, stated he met with Teresa Feldman, the City’s Human Resources Director, to discuss the recruitment of a new Executive Director. Commissioner Freie stated now that the Committee charters are approved, Ms. Feldman will meet with the consultant and they will figure out the process for hiring the new Executive Director. Commissioner Freie stated an open house to meet the candidates for the position is a possibility, as well as having final interviews with the entire Commission.

Commissioner Rippy asked if the recruiting firm was Mercer and asked if they would come to Cedar Rapids to meet with the Commission. Commissioner Freie stated it is Mercer and they will come to Cedar Rapids as necessary. Commissioner White asked if there was a timeline for the recruitment process. Commissioner Freie stated he will check with Ms. Feldman.

Commissioner Freie stated he and Commissioner Arrington, Vice Chair, will be on the hiring committee. Commissioner Freie stated he felt a little awkward about being involved. Commissioner Rippy stated there is no need to feel uncomfortable. Commissioner Rippy stated he went through several Executive Directors and Interim Executive Directors in his time on the Commission and he is happy to not be involved. Commissioner Rippy stated it is appropriate for the current Chair and Vice Chair to be involved in the hiring process.

VII. **Committee Reports**

*Outreach Committee Liaison*
Commissioner Freie, Chair, stated the Outreach Committee has not met recently but the Outreach Report was included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated the Commission hit 2,500 likes on Facebook recently.

Commissioner Freie asked if anyone attended the I Am Walk. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated Investigator Bernie Walther attended the event on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Freie stated the Intercultural Festival is this Saturday. Commissioner Toingar stated the event will be held at the Tuma Sports Complex on C Avenue. Commissioner Toingar stated the event was previously held at Kirkwood Community College but because of the addition of volleyball they had to move the location.

Commissioner Freie asked if the Commission will have a booth at Veterans Stand Down. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven confirmed staff will be present at the event.

Commissioner Freie stated Festival Latino is September 15th and he plans to attend.

*Marion Civil Rights Commission Liaison*
Renae Forsyth-Christy, Marion Civil Rights Commission (MCRC) Liaison, stated the MCRC confirmed committee assignments at their last meeting and also planned the 5th Anniversary Celebration of the MCRC. Ms. Forsyth-Christy stated the anniversary celebration will be September 4th at Lowe Park, in the Hickman Room, from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. Ms. Forsyth-Christy stated everyone is welcome to attend and the event will take place during their regularly scheduled September meeting. Ms. Forsyth-Christy stated they are currently working on a guest speaker.
VIII. **Affordable Housing Commission Update**
Commissioner Rippy shared a draft handout of the Affordable Housing Commission’s (AHC) goals and initiatives. Commissioner Rippy stated the AHC meets every other month and have had four meetings so far, with the first few meetings being structural in nature. Commissioner Rippy stated the AHC has four subcommittees and each Commissioner is assigned to a subcommittee. Commissioner Rippy stated timelines for completion of goals and initiatives will be developed for each subcommittee. Commissioner Rippy stated there are 21 members on the AHC.

Ms. Forsyth-Christy asked if the AHC was working with someone with the housing fund. Commissioner Rippy stated he is not sure as he does not know every Commissioner yet. Commissioner Rippy stated all Commissioners are key people in areas of housing. Commission Rippy stated the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission (CRCRC) has a permanent spot on the AHC and he is currently the representative for the CRCRC. Commissioner Rippy stated the CRCRC can vote in December for a representative to serve on the AHC in 2020.

Commissioner White asked who on the board represents the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Commissioner Rippy stated he is not sure as he does not know every Commissioner yet.

Commissioner Freie asked if the AHC had metrics to track success. Commissioner Rippy stated they absolutely will but they are not in place yet. Commissioner Rippy stated he hopes the metrics will be in place by the end of the year. Commissioner Rippy stated he will update the CRCRC on progress of the AHC at the October and December CRCRC meetings.

IX. **Director’s Report**
Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated Janet Abejo-Parker, Acting Executive Director, is out of the office so she will provide the Director’s Report in her absence.

Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated she and Ms. Abejo-Parker attended Restorative Justice training in July and it led to a possible partnership with Kids First to conduct Peace Circles at McKinley Steam Academy (McKinley). Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated staff is excited about the opportunity to partner with Kids First and McKinley to be involved in this work. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated Ms. Abejo-Parker met with Chair Leland Freie and Vice Chair Anthony Arrington to get their feedback before moving forward. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated she and Ms. Abejo-Parker also met with Commissioner Dr. Ruth White to get her feedback, as well, before moving forward. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated she will meet with representatives from McKinley in the coming weeks to meet everyone and get everyone on the same page. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated she will shadow Judy Goldberg, with Kids First, before doing Peace Circles on her own. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven explained the process of Peace Circles and indicated it was included in the suspension protocol.

Commissioner Igram asked if this was geared toward middle school. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated McKinley is a middle school.

Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated she is also working with Kids First to develop metrics to track the success of Peace Circles.

Commissioner Arrington stated he recently attended a training on Restorative Justice and the facilitator was getting her PhD in Restorative Justice. Commissioner Arrington indicated he would send her information to staff.
Ms. Forsyth-Christy asked when the program would start. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated school starts next week so Kids First will start right away and she will help some afternoons after shadowing Ms. Goldberg from Kids First.

Commissioner Igram asked if McKinley has always had this program. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated the program was used more in depth for the first time last year. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated they want to continue the program at McKinley and the long term plan is to use it in the feeder elementary schools as well. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated representatives from Tanager Place and Four Oaks also have a presence at McKinley.

Commissioner Igram asked why it is only at McKinley. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated it started at McKinley because of the high rate of suspensions. Commissioner Igram stated Roosevelt Creative Corridor Business Academy (Roosevelt) also has a high rate of suspensions. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated Kids First hoped to go to Roosevelt as well but it comes down to funding issues. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven clarified Tanager Place and Four Oaks are present at McKinley to provide counseling to students and are not there to conduct Peace Circles.

Commissioner Igram asked how it was funded. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated it was funded through grants that Kids First received as well as grants that McKinley received. Commissioner Igram asked if the Commission would be paid. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated the Commission will not be paid as it is a volunteer partnership. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated staff saw this as a relevant partnership because it involves students who are members of protected classes.

Commissioner Freie asked if Restorative Justice and Peace Circles were a new initiative. Commissioner White stated it is not new but it is reemerging. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated the Iowa City Community School District utilizes Peace Circles.

Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated staff recently attended the HUD Regional Conference in Omaha and the topics covered at the training are outlined in the Director's Report.

Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated the Commission office will be closed on Monday, September 2nd for Labor Day. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated the closure will be communicated to current Complainants and Respondents, as well as communicated on social media accounts.

Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated in the Nelson V. Executive Estates Unit XVII HOA case, Assistant City Attorney Trish Kropf is going to reach out to the Complainant’s lawyer to see if any progress has been made.

Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated in the Behnke V. Subway (Mount Vernon Road) case, the Respondent has officially been enrolled in the City’s debt collection program.

Ms. Munsterman-Sriven reminded Commissioners of the upcoming Freedom Fund Banquet on September 7th and indicated the Commission has one ticket available if anyone else is interested in attending. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated staff needs to know if anyone wants the last ticket by tomorrow, as the list of attendees are due Friday.

Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated the Commission also has four tickets available for attendance at the History Makers Gala. Ms. Munsterman-Sriven stated if anyone is interested in attending please let staff know.

Ms. Munsterman-Sriven shared upcoming outreach events.
X. **Case Summary Review Presentation**  
Ms. Munsterman-Scriven provided a presentation as a refresher to Commissioners on conducting case summary reviews. Ms. Munsterman-Scriven went through Commissioner roles and outlined the investigative process.

Ms. Munsterman-Scriven reiterated the importance of confidentiality and indicated if Commissioners are asked about cases on file they can simply state “I can neither confirm nor deny the filing of a case.” Ms. Munsterman-Scriven pointed out the Commission conducting testing is also considered confidential information.

Ms. Munsterman-Scriven stated staff is working to update the Commission’s intake form.

Ms. Munsterman-Scriven pointed out if a case goes to a public hearing, the City’s Attorneys Office does not technically represent the Complainant, but represents the Commission and the investigation conducted by the Investigator.

Commissioner Igram left the meeting at 6:30 PM.

Ms. Munsterman-Scriven shared common documents that are seen during a case review.

XI. **Adjournment**  
Commissioner Rippy moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m. Commissioner Arrington seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved, with no discussion.

*Respectfully submitted by Alicia Abernathey*