



3/28/23

## Approved Minutes-Meeting of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission January 20, 2023

- I. Roll Call  
Meeting called to order by Chair Ordaz at 1:16 pm. Commissioners Mandsager and White appeared in person and Commissioners Ordaz, Kooiker and Lipski appeared virtually.
- II. Recognition of Staff, Public and Press. Alex Cleverley, Kaitlin Smith, Selma Jeteric, Anthony Pawnell, Jana Lomax, Jennifer Verhein, Katie Fiala, and Charles Hill in person. Frederick Sinkevich, Sierra Walker, and Roberto Rodriguez.
- III. Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2022, meeting.  
Minutes from the November 18, 2022, were presented and Commissioner Kooiker moved to approve. Commissioner Lipski seconded the motion. Discussion offered from Commissioner White regarding what was reported in the minutes related to her Commissioner Report. Minutes were unanimously approved.  
  
New Business
- IV. Public Comment-None  
  
Standing Business
- V. Director's Report
  - a. Commemoration of former Director Stan Thompson's service to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.
  - b. Staff Update—New hires: Jana Lomax and Jennifer Verhein joined as Civil Rights Specialist. No staff have resigned since the last meeting. Selma Jeteric joins as a part-time paralegal. Joshua Emory and Alex Cleverley joined as interviewers/investigators. The Commission is actively hiring for three CRS positions. Upcoming interviews for summer interns will commence shortly.
  - c. Coger 150 Year Recognition: Charles met with State Historical Museum staff, Director Kloewer and Curator Landis. Discussed Professor Woods written article on the event. He reported on the different options available through the museum to commemorate the event. History 101 presentations, pop-up displays, youth education packets sent to schools, short videos, and collaboration with the Governor's 99 county tour.
  - d. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights - Rulemaking: Charles updated the Commissioners on the steps staff have taken to prepare a draft of proposed rules in anticipation of the Federal Advisory Committee's recommendations. Rulemaking has been suspended in Iowa under Governor Reynolds' Executive Order #10. All agencies will receive a schedule on March 1, 2023, which will tell them the order their rules will be reviewed.
  - e. Attached Unit discussion: Proposed legislation to reduce the Governor's cabinet level positions from 37 to 16. Under the plan, the Commission would be an attached unit under Department of Inspection and Appeals. The Commission would retain its independence, but the director would not be a cabinet level official.
  - f. Production: Housing production is down in the first half of the fiscal year. Additional staff and resources have been committed to the housing department to correct this. Non-housing production is slightly down, however with newer hirers gaining experience, no loss of production is expected.

- g. Website Update: Kerry Hainline and Charles have been meeting with Webspec to finalize our new website.
- VI. Litigation Update – Assistant Attorney General Katie-comment on two housing cases in district court. One case pending in administrative law that Attorney 1 Walker is working with her on. Waiting in another admin case for a decision from an ALJ. Discussed the Respect for Marriage Act and any impact on Iowa and the ICRA. Discussed bona fide religious exemptions under ICRA. Follow up on the National Federation of Business and Ohio vs. OSHA.
- VII. Commissioners’ Reports
- a. Commissioner Sam Kooiker- Reported on Senate File 37 related to elevators requirements in new housing built with public funding. Discussed the renewed interest in “cold cases” at the Attorney General’s Office and the need to strengthen laws related to accessory to murder crimes.
  - b. Commissioner Patricia Lipski—no report
  - c. Commissioner Dennis Mandsager- Discussed three areas of Commission work. Education, processing complaints, and making recommendations to the General Assembly. Many news stories and legislation discussion take place without any mention of the ICRA. Education may be necessary to provide education to the general public to make them aware of the ICRA and the Commission can weigh in on substantive legislation involving civil rights. Request for monthly updates on pending legislation and education on Religious exemptions.
  - d. Commissioner Marcelena Ordaz- Report on her meeting with Director Johnson of Department of Inspection and Appeals and Charles.
  - e. Commissioner Holly White- Update on a local MLK Day event she attended.
- VIII. Set Next Meeting for February 17, 2023, at 1:15 p.m.
- IX. Adjournment at 2:54 p.m.