



TERRY BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

IOWA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION  
DON GROVE, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## MINUTES

### MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS

Iowa Civil Rights Commission

1:00 pm Friday, April 24, 2015

Meeting Room B, Burlington Public Library, 210 Court St., Burlington IA

## AGENDA

1. Roll Call – 1:08 pm  
ICRC Commissioners Williams, Lipski, Hou, Cunningham, Oelschlaeger, and Conley attended. Burlington Human Rights Commission Commissioners John Carroll, J.R. Ritters, and Den Powell attended. Stephanie Stuecker (Director of Administrative Services, City of Burlington IA) attended. Katie Fiala (Assistant Attorney General), Kaitlin Smith (ICRC Civil Rights Specialist), and Don Grove (ICRC Acting Executive Director) also attended.
2. Recognition of Public and Press  
Approximately 25 persons, residents of Burlington or surrounding area, attended. William Smith, Reporter, The Burlington Hawk Eye, also attended.
3. Commissioners' Reports
  - Commissioner Angela Williams – No report.
  - Commissioner Patricia Lipski – No report.
  - Commissioner Lily LiJun Hou – No report.
  - Commissioner Lawrence Cunningham – Has assisted ISU in hiring a new Chief Diversity Officer. ISU has hired a consultant firm to further assist. ISU hopes to receive applications in the next couple of months. ISU has done a very good job in listening to all of the stakeholders to ensure the hiring makes sense for the institution and the community.
  - Commissioner Doug Oelschlaeger – Noted his parents lived in Burlington area for several years, and he spent three summers in the area while attending college.
  - Commissioner Tom Conley – Shortly after Ferguson, Rudy Simms, former director of the Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission, started a community conversation involving residents, clergy, and law enforcement (including the police department, sheriff's office, and county attorney), in Polk

County. The meetings are held monthly and, in his opinion, have been very constructive. One outcome so far that he has found particularly interesting and potentially very productive was the call for police officers to attend services at churches predominantly attended by African Americans. He believes other communities may want to consider the Polk County Model if/when a decision is made locally to engage in such a conversation.

4. Approval of January 30, 2015 Meeting Minutes  
Commissioner Cunningham's report corrected – "Director of Diversity" replaced with "Chief Diversity Officer"; then unanimously approved.
5. Acting Director's Report
  - Complaint Processing Numbers – Intake and Resolutions
    - In January 2015, ICRC received 98 new complaints and resolved 106. In February, ICRC received 128 and resolved 113. In March, ICRC received 151 and resolved 119. At the end of March, ICRC had 20 cases pending investigation. Two other key numbers to consider -- By statute, ICRC is directed to notify the parties within 20 days of receiving a new complaint. ICRC's goal is seven days. ICRC is meeting that goal. ICRC is also directed by statute to conduct a preliminary review of cases (i.e., screen cases) within 120 days of filing. ICRC is also meeting that directive.
  - Education Events – Recently Held and Scheduled
    - ICRC conducts six to eight public education events or workshops on average per month. Most of those events relate to fair housing. Two very important events are scheduled in April and May 2015 designed to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the "Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965" -- 11:00 am Monday, April 27, Rotunda, State Capitol (Governor Branstad signs the Proclamation) and 6:30 pm Wednesday, May 20, State Historical Building (Speakers: Professor Arthur Bonfield, Attorney Roxanne Conlin, and Polk County District Court Judge Ramonda Belcher).
6. Burlington Human Rights Commission's Report
  - Recent and Planned Work/Activities
    - The Burlington Human Rights Commission has no budget, no staff. The Commissioners are volunteer. Over the past several years, the Commission has struggled with its identity – its purpose or mission. The Commission is looking for ideas on how better to serve the community. The Commission has, for the past few years, supported the Juneteenth Celebration by giving away books for all ages on Black History. The Commission also supports the NAACP Banquet by purchasing an ad in the publication advertising the event. The Commissioners are eager for training on civil rights issues.
    - Discussion involving ICRC Commissioners, Burlington Commissioners, and the public followed. Ideas discussed included – letting the community know of your existence and purpose; creating and communicating a clear charter or mission statement; asking ICRC staff to record training sessions

and making those recorded sessions available for use by area businesses and residents; working collaboratively with businesses and developers to sponsor and support fair housing and other civil rights initiatives; asking ICRC to send local or county-specific complaint numbers and other case processing information on a regular basis to be reviewed/discussed at meetings and then, perhaps, shared with the city council; exploring the possibility of creating/offering “Civil Rights 101” educational podcasts accessed by all Iowans via the ICRC website; figuring out a way to accept complaints or grievances and then track/monitor those complaints/grievances as they progress through the ICRC complaint process; reaching out to the various homeowners’ associations in an effort to inform property owners of the local commission’s existence and interest in learning more about any fair housing issues; considering the possibility of getting funding from the city council to pay for staff to provide training or process complaints; exploring the possibility of engaging residents, schools, NAACP, and law enforcement in community discussions regarding race and the impact of race in school administration and police-related decisions and actions; and proposing an amendment to the section in the “Iowa Civil Rights Act” regarding the creation/maintenance of local human rights commissions by imposing a required set of duties/functions based on population ranges (e.g., cities between x and y populations size must fund a commission that can perform a particular set of duties, cities with a greater population must fund a commission that can perform a different or greater (more expensive) set of duties, including the processing of complaints).

7. Date/Time/Location of Next Two Meetings
  - 10:00 am Friday, May 15, 2015, Conference Room 3N Central, Grimes State Office Building, 400 East 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines IA
  - 10:00 am, Friday, June 12, 2015 (place to be determined)
8. Adjournment – 2:06 pm