

**COUNCIL BLUFFS CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2009 MEETING**

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m. by Chairperson Alba. Roll call was answered by Alba, Barzydlo, Carle, Christie, Jacoby, Mendoza, and Wallace. Absent were Martinez and Reed; none were excused. Additionally present was Director Tamra Madsen.
2. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Jacoby and seconded by Carle. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.
3. The draft of the minutes of the March 16, 2009 meeting were reviewed and discussed. A motion was made by Jacoby to approve the minutes, seconded by Barzydlo. This motion was approved unanimously.
4. Several items were discussed under New Business:
 - A. Madsen introduced the idea of the Commission participating in the Brush-up Nebraska Paint-a-Thon project in August. Mendoza discussed the program at length, since she has been involved with this community event for many years. The program assists lower-income elderly and disabled persons by painting their homes and providing other minor repairs and yard work to assist them. Mendoza is an experienced team leader of a group where she works, and her group is called, "Picasso's Pride". After further discussion about the merits of this program and its tie-in with the Commission's emphasis on issues affecting the elderly this year, several members of the Commission felt that a one-story home, sponsored by a group formed by the Commission and the City of Council Bluffs employees, would be an excellent start of the Commission's involvement in this program. Barzydlo moved, seconded by Mendoza, to have the Commission field a team in the Brush-up Nebraska Paint-a-Thon this year. Madsen will serve as team leader and coordinate efforts with the City's employees as well.
 - B. A Fair Housing Conference was sponsored by the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights which Madsen attended in April. The conference was free and was underwritten by a generous grant

from HUD. The speakers were excellent and Madsen e-mailed the Commissioners some information from one of the speakers regarding fair housing rights and recent legal decisions. Although the Commission does not often deal with fair housing issues, all agreed that more knowledge in this area is helpful to the Commission's mission of ending discrimination and promoting diversity.

C. Jacoby discussed an upcoming meeting of the League of Human Dignity that she plans to attend. The meeting will address the needs of the elderly and the disabled, and community input is invited and needed for this organization to continue its important work. If anyone else on the Commission would like to attend, he/she can e-mail Jacoby, who has details on the upcoming meeting.

5. There were a number of items discussed under Old Business:

A. The group discussed its involvement in the Celebrate CB! Parade. The Commission publicly thanked the Council Bluffs Community Alliance for its assistance with the Commission's entry, and also publicly recognized Wal-mart for its generous donation of candy to distribute to children along the parade route. An estimate of spectators who turned out for the event was a conservative 5,000. All agreed that the magnets purchased for this event were a great success. The Commission discussed purchasing T-shirts with some type of logo for next year to identify our group as Commission members, and to provide a better description of our group to be read by the parade organizers as our entry passes City Hall. Overall, the event was a success, but more assistance will be necessary next year.

B. Madsen updated the Commission on the current status of our search for a VISTA member to assist the Commission in the coming year. A list of the current applicants was distributed; several applications are complete and references are being contacted. One initial telephonic interview has been completed. Many of the applicants appear to be very well-qualified. A sub-committee of the Commission, composed of Carle and Christie, is assisting Madsen with the search and selection of an appropriate

VISTA member for the Commission. Madsen also discussed the VISTA Supervisors Training which she attended in early April in Dallas. The Training was completely funded by the federal government to assist new supervisors to understand the VISTA process and how to best recruit, choose, fund, supervise, and utilize VISTA members' services. Madsen stated it was an extremely positive experience, with the chance to interact with many other new VISTA supervisors, some of whom were former VISTA members, and an opportunity to gain much knowledge about the VISTA program, process, and goals.

- C. At this time, the film screening of the film regarding Darfur in cooperation with Iowa Western Community College has been put on hold. The film may be shown in the fall.

- D. Madsen reported on the League of Iowa Human & Civil Rights Agencies quarterly meeting and Legislative Breakfast held in March in Des Moines. The breakfast was an excellent opportunity to meet many state legislators and discuss pending civil rights bills with them. The quarterly meeting was a wonderful networking experience, and a much more effective way to communicate with other civil rights commission members, directors, and staff throughout the State than using a conference call or the ICN system. Many important issues and goals were discussed for the coming year for civil rights commissions throughout Iowa. A copy of the minutes from the meeting was e-mailed to each Commissioner. Madsen hopes that there will be sufficient budgetary funds so that some of the Commissioners can attend the next in-person League Meeting, because the chance to network and exchange ideas with others was so meaningful.

- E. The Commission discussed the Elder Forum, which was held at the end of March. All agreed that it was a success. Mendoza suggested that the next time we conduct a forum with a panel of speakers, it may make more sense to have the biographies of the panel simply presented in written form or perhaps shortened since reading them was a bit time-consuming. Madsen commented on a few glitches that occurred with the facility, including the use of a microphone in the room in which the forum took place, and the timing of the refreshments; she will deal with both of those issues

with the relevant parties at a later time. Overall, everyone agreed that the Elder Forum was a good experience and a success. It was very informational, and Madsen has continued to receive telephone calls since, asking for additional information and referrals for additional services. All agreed that Christie and Reed did an outstanding job in their pivotal roles at the Elder Forum.

6. Community Education:

- A. All agreed that the Paint-a-Thon would be an excellent community involvement event this summer.

Mendoza excused herself from the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

- B. Further discussion ensued regarding ideas for the coming year or perhaps a focus or theme for community education. Wallace mentioned the possibility of providing information to persons recently released from incarceration. Jacoby suggested information for those with disabilities and the new amendments for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Alba suggested targeting schools so that children can learn about diversity and inclusiveness at an early age. Barzydlo mentioned using bulletin boards in schools or providing diversity-themed coloring books for school-aged children as an educational tool. All agreed that much work is left to be done, but many good ideas are out there on which to focus.

Wallace excused himself from the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Jacoby suggested that the Commission needs to be more visible to the city officials, and asked if there was any interest in attending a City Council meeting together. Carle's idea was to perhaps send an e-mail to the Mayor and the City Council introducing the Commission to them and including biographies of each member.

7. Per the Municipal Code of the City of Council Bluffs, § 1.40.070, Barzydlo moved, seconded by Carle, at 5:39 p.m., to go into Executive Session to discuss pending cases. The motion was approved unanimously. Barzydlo moved, seconded by Carle, to return to regular session at 5:47 p.m. This motion passed unanimously.

8. Under Other Business, Madsen discussed a change to the next meeting date. Because she has a federal jury trial commencing on Monday, July 20, 2009, she asked that the Commission's next meeting be re-scheduled to Monday, July 27, 2009. All were in agreement. Madsen will send out an e-mail to the Commissioners with the dates of the meetings for the rest of the year.
9. A motion to adjourn was made by Carle and seconded by Barzydlo. It passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. by Chairperson Alba.

Minutes prepared by:

Tamra L. W. Madsen