

**COUNCIL BLUFFS CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 2008 MEETING**

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:37 p.m. by Chairperson Alba. Roll call was answered by Alba, Barzydlo, Christie, Jacoby, and Mendoza. Absent were Martinez, Reed, and Wallace. Additionally present were City Attorney Dick Wade, Director Tamra Madsen, and guests Gilda Bettis and Morgan Wade. After initial introductions were made, Wade excused himself from the meeting.
2. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Jacoby and seconded by Christie. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.
3. The minutes of the September 15, 2008 meeting were reviewed and discussed. Several minor non-substantive changes were made. A motion was made by Barzydlo to approve the minutes, as amended, seconded by Mendoza. This motion was approved unanimously.
4. Several items were discussed under New Business:
  - A. Tamra Madsen introduced herself as the new Director of the Council Bluffs Civil Rights Commission. The Civil Rights Commission is one of her main responsibilities as an Attorney I in the City Attorney's Office.
  - B. Denise Carle is a newly-appointed commissioner. Unfortunately, due to family illness, Ms. Carle was unable to attend the meeting. She expressed her regrets in a telephone call to the City Attorney's Office, and looks forward to meeting everyone at the January meeting and becoming involved with the commission's work.
  - C. Madsen discussed some discrepancies she has noticed in a review of the commission's attendance records. Specifically, she expressed concerns over the lack of attendance of several members of the commission, and the lack of quorums over the last several years. She feels that this is a serious issue which needs to be addressed so that the commission can better-function and fulfill its goals and mission statement. Madsen suggested that she further research the issue of possible removal of commissioners for lack of

attendance and discuss removal and appointment of new commissioners with the Mayor.

After further discussion on the issue of attendance and the lack of quorums hampering the commission's efforts, Barzydlo moved, seconded by Mendoza, to have Madsen review in-depth the commission's attendance records and bring the issue of non-attendance, possible removal, and new appointments to the Mayor, and report back to the commission at the next meeting, with the view toward possible action in the near future on this issue. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- D. Gilda Bettis, a special guest, gave a presentation regarding her position as the Director of the New Iowa Center, which is a branch of Iowa Workforce Development. Ms. Bettis was invited to attend the meeting and make a presentation by Commissioner Wallace. Ms. Bettis explained her program, which is headquartered in the Omni Building in downtown Council Bluffs. The New Iowa Center's mission is to help new workers in this area by providing, among others things, help with ESL classes, GED completion assistance, computer training, job-search skills, housing referrals, and citizenship classes.

The commission thanked Ms. Bettis for her informational presentation and asked if Ms. Bettis would be interested in possibly serving on the Commission; regrettably, Ms. Bettis lives outside of the city limits of Council Bluffs, and is thus not eligible to serve on the commission. The commission noted it may refer some clients to the New Iowa Center as appropriate.

5. Under Old Business, the pending docket of cases was discussed. Madsen explained that in her new role as Director, she takes a very active part in personally reviewing and investigating all pending files, closing old files, and speaking personally with all persons who call or walk in with questions or concerns that may result in claims before the commission.
6. Christie led the discussion about the upcoming community education forum on elder discrimination issues in March of 2009. The Commission has chosen a Tuesday evening for the forum. The format will be a panel discussion focused on age discrimination. The commission discussed the

format for choosing topics and questions for the panel to discuss, as well as choosing a facilitator for the event. Madsen's portion of the program will include the introduction and closing of the event: explaining what the commission is and what its goals are; she will also bring along an ample supply of her business cards and packets of informational/complaint forms for those who are interested in the commission or who may have a civil rights issue. Mendoza will work on possibly having snacks donated by Hy-Vee or Panera for the event. Jacoby will schedule the date, place, and see that coffee will be provided for guests and the panel.

Christie also shared that Iowa Western Community College ("IWCC") will be screening a film in the spring entitled "Darfur Diaries". This may be another possibility for the commission to partner with IWCC in its community education efforts.

7. Under Other Business, Madsen explained to the Commission some additional ideas which she has for the Commission in terms of community education such as editorials in the local newspaper, more community outreach through educational partnerships with IWCC and community forums, and greater community awareness. She also shared her concern that many valid civil rights claims are not being addressed because the public is unaware that the Commission exists or what its role is in the community.
8. A motion to adjourn was made by Christie and seconded by Mendoza. It passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m. by Chairperson Alba.

Minutes prepared by:

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Tamra L. W. Madsen