

**CITY OF DUBUQUE  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES OF  
February 8, 2010**

Commissioner Allen called the meeting of the Dubuque Human Rights Commission to order at 4:25 p.m. on Monday, February 8, 2010, in Conference Room 2 at the City Hall Annex.

**Roll Call:**

Present:	Jim Allan Anthony Allen, Vice Chair Lori Apel Marcos Rubinstein, Chair	Colin Scott R.R.S. Stewart Lynn Sutton Katrina Wilberding
Absent:	Pam Sharrad	
Staff:	Kelly Larson	Molly Menster

**Multicultural Family Center – Tara Velez**

Tara distributed the Center's newsletter, gave a brief overview of the Center and provided information on the various programs offered by the Center. She stated that most programs are offered in partnership with other organizations due to their small operating budget. Commissioner Rubinstein asked how the Commission could help the MFC. Tara expressed a need for adult volunteers; help with promoting the center, and monetary donations.

**Oath of Office**

Commissioner Stewart took Oath of Office.

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Allan moved and Commissioner Allen seconded to approve the minutes of January 11, 2010. Commissioner Allen pointed out that Commissioner Allan had moved to adjourn, not Commissioner Allen. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously as corrected.

**Review History of Housing Testing/No Testing in Dubuque**

Kelly stated that in approximately 1997 there had been a recommendation from the Human Rights Commission to do housing discrimination testing in Dubuque, and that the City Council at that time was opposed to doing that. At this point the Commission needs to decide if they are interested in pursuing testing and how they want to proceed. Commissioner Rubinstein asked about funding for the project and Kelly stated that they have HUD funding that they may be able to use for testing, but would need to get their approval. HUD's policy is enforcement action if there is evidence of a violation. Additionally, HUD would probably require a proposal prior to them allowing us to use HUD funds for testing. The cost would depend on whether they did phone or in person testing; and we would need to hire someone to come in to train testers. Kelly will check with the Cedar Rapids Human Rights Commission and the Iowa Civil Rights Commission to see what the costs of their testing programs were.

Commissioner Wilberding questioned the type of civil penalties that would be assessed. Kelly stated that based on the type of violation found, staff would look at the settlements of other agencies that have done testing, along with the Department of Justice, to see what type of settlements they put in place for the various types of violations. Commissioner Wilberding felt it was important to determine that piece prior to taking it to the City Council. Commissioner Allan suggested some sort of pilot program before they launch a full scale testing program to determine the need for education or enforcement based testing.

Commissioner Wilberding suggested that as a Commission, they start with approaching the Landlord Association to explain the law and let them know that we are trying to avoid testing, and if they want to work with us then we can avoid it. Commissioner Sutton commented that it may be difficult dealing with the leadership of that group. Commissioner Scott recommended just inviting them about community concerns and if they say no, then we proceed with the testing. Commissioner Sutton added that with enforcement, there still has to be an educational component.

Commissioner Rubinstein proposed to reactivate the Housing Subcommittee and work on a proposal to present, discuss and vote on at next month's meeting. He stated that he had sent an email to the Chair of the Housing Commission to see about meeting to discuss relevant issues.

Commissioner Allen moved to table the discussion until they have clarified information from the meeting with the Housing Commission. Commissioner Allan seconded. Commissioner Rubinstein offered a friendly amendment to table this discussion until the March meeting, not until clarification is received from the Housing Commission so that they can continue the dialog. Commissioner Allen accepted the friendly amendment. Commissioner Allan moved to engage in testing to gather data as grounds of any further action. Commissioner Allen seconded. Commissioner Stewart moved to suspend the tabling motion so they can discuss Commissioner Allan's current motion. Commissioner Allen seconded. All in favor.

Commissioner Rubinstein offered a friendly amendment adding wording that it is the sense of the Human Rights Commission that testing in the area of housing discrimination is needed. Commissioner Rubinstein withdrew his friendly amendment. Roll call:

Rubinstein	Yes	Wilberding	Yes
Allen	Yes	Scott	Yes
Allan	Yes	Stewart	Yes
Sutton	Yes	Apel	Yes

Motion carried.

Commissioner Rubinstein restated Commissioner Allen's main motion to table the discussion until the March meeting. Roll call:

Rubinstein	Yes	Wilberding	Yes
Allen	Yes	Scott	Yes
Allan	Yes	Stewart	Yes
Sutton	Yes	Apel	Yes

Motion carried. Commissioner Rubinstein stated that the subcommittee will meet and have at least a proposed timeline and action steps available to share with commissioners at the March 8th meeting. Commissioners interested in participating on the Housing Subcommittee should meet with Commissioner Rubinstein after the meeting.

### **January 2010 Caseload Report**

Commissioner Allan commended staff on the quantity of speaking engagements. Commissioner Wilberding questioned if there was something that commissioners could be doing to better assist staff. Kelly explained that people enjoy the Speakers' Bureau and that any contacts commissioners can make to set up those kinds of engagements would be helpful. Additionally, just doing general speaking and going out as commissioners to groups like the Rotary or Kiwanis and give just a 10 – 20 minute presentation on this is what the Human Rights Commission is about and this is who you call.

At 5:20 p.m. Commissioner Wilberding moved to extend the meeting 20 minutes to complete the agenda. Commissioner Allen seconded. All in favor.

### **Chairperson's Report**

No report given.

### **Director's Report**

Written report for January was submitted.

### **Request from One Iowa to Join the Partners Program**

Commissioner Wilberding questioned whether this request is an issue by issue basis. Kelly replied that this request is issue specific to the constitutional amendment issue. Commissioner Stewart moved to partner with One Iowa to use the Dubuque Human Rights Commission's name as being opposed to a constitutional amendment to the state constitution regarding marriage.

Commissioner Allan seconded.

Rubinstein	Yes	Wilberding	Yes
Allen	Yes	Scott	Yes
Allan	Yes	Stewart	Yes
Sutton	Yes	Apel	Yes

Motion carried.

### **Review Goals**

Commissioner Wilberding moved to schedule the Town Hall Meeting in conjunction with the April 12 Commission meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Multicultural Family Center. Commissioner Scott seconded. All in favor. Staff will check with the MFC to see if it is available.

Commissioner Stewart suggested that the topic of the Town Hall Meeting be housing discrimination. Commissioner Sutton suggested not just housing, but for discrimination for people seeking housing.

### **New Business**

Commissioner Apel reported that the National Origin Subcommittee is meeting Thursday from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. at the Lantern Center.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Stewart moved to adjourn and Commissioner Sutton seconded. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

The next regular meeting is March 8, 2010.

Minutes approved as submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes approved as corrected: \_\_\_\_\_