

Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission November Meeting Minutes 11/21/2019

Commissioners in Attendance: Catherine Grams, John Gintell, Aren Stone, Silas Winer, Meesh Zucker, Susan Bernstein, Britt Huhmann, Bill Barnert, Rachel Oppenheimer, Lesley Phillips, Mal Malme, Steven Lee

Commission Research Associate: Amelia Joselow

Commissioners Absent: Nefyn Meissner, Jessica Daniels, Maya Escobar, Leo Austin-Spooner, Kimm Topping, Noe Kamelamela, Greg MacDonough, Bob Parlin (leave of absence)

Minutes from October: Approved **Approve/Modify Agenda:** Approved

All Gender Bathrooms

- John and Amelia met with City Manager Louis DePasquale, Assistant City Manager Lisa Peterson, of Commissioner of Inspectional Services Ranjit Singanayagam, and City Solicitor Nancy Glowa.
- The City Manager asserted his commitment to making progress on adding more gender neutral bathrooms to city buildings during new builds and renovations, and by changing signage to existing single stall bathrooms.
- Amelia and the Disability Commission have been helping to choose the signage.
- A reminder was made to make sure that signs letting people know there are all gender bathrooms be put in a place where they will be easily seen rather than in the single gender bathrooms.
- Another meeting will take place in January.
- Next steps include educating and supporting existing commercial establishments to change single gender, single stall bathrooms to all gender bathrooms.

LGBTQ+ Senior Housing Surveys

- Amelia reported that she has collected data from 53 staff and 74 tenants in Cambridge senior housing projects. Ten identified as LGBTQ+. These residents especially cited the need for safety, a welcoming environment, and a need for staff training to support LGBTQ+ seniors.
- Amelia is working on finalizing the report and will create a Story Map and a one-page handout about the findings.
- The conference LGBT Elders in an Everchanging World is on March 20, 8:30-4:00 at Monserrat College of Art in Beverly.
- Bill will attend Kate's Café, Cambridge's congregate meal program for LGBTQ+ seniors on January 22 (5:00 S&S Deli) and will talk with people there about our senior housing project.

Strategic Planning Committee Report

- The Committee has plans to meet again in January. Questions and suggestions Commissioners posed to the Committee include:
- What is our leave policy?
- Do we have a clear absence policy? We have one but it isn't publicized to newer members. Are people consistently missing more meetings than is good for the governance of the Commission? What is an excused vs. an unexcused absence?
- How are absences kept track of and what is the protocol if a Commissioner is absent a lot? Do the Chairs have a way to address this?
- Discussion of whether and how to include absences in our minutes
- A suggestion was made that we review whether our current meeting time, the 4th Thursday of the month, is still the best time for us to meet.
- Steven will draft a well-being survey to check on how Commissioners are feeling about being on the Commission. The draft will go to the Committee to review and refine, then to the Commission as a whole.
- Outreach and engagement: Are there resources we're not using? Is there a way to get non-Commissioners involved in planning events, tabling, etc.? There isn't a clear pathway for non-Commissioners to be involved. Should we have a system/protocol for non-Commissioners to work with us so we could tap into it as needed? Can we introduce Commissioners on social media?
- Community Center: Amelia and the Youth Committee were working on this. As the Youth Committee meets with GSAs they were planning on asking for opinions on a Community Center—would they use one? Youth only? With Seniors? We don't want to create something that the community doesn't want/need. Amelia and the Youth Committee can do more research.
- Youth-Senior dialogues: We brainstormed several suggestions including dinners, pop-up spaces, a "speed-dating" event where youth and seniors talk with each other. The Arlington Rainbow Commission have done similar events. We may be able to talk with some of their Commissioners for ideas.
- SOGI Training: Will the city continue the SOGI training that was created with our input and at our request? Aren will contact the city's new Training Coordinator.
- Steven will arrange a Strategic Planning Committee in January and will include some of these points in the meeting discussion.
- We will create a Community Center Committee at our January Commission meeting.

Rainbow Room

- An event showcasing music and spoken word performances. The first one that we put on featured Transgender and Nonbinary performers.
- We have established a committee (Mal, Meesh, Susan, Bill, Maya, Aren) but no lead.
- Mal will send out a doodle for a meeting. Meesh will be interim lead.
- At this meeting the committee will brainstorm about the event, including what community partners to reach out to.

Logos/Flags

- Aren had requested that we review our flags and logos to decide if we wanted to make any changes, including adding the brown and black Philly flag stripes.
- Meesh presented a history of the Pride Flag, other flags, including the Bisexual, Transgender, and Asexual flag, and options for a new logo.
- Decisions/discussion so far:
- Buy a Philly, Transgender, and Bisexual flag to fly at City Hall in June.
- We might buy other small flags for tables at Pride Brunch and our tabling events, as well as information sheets that include some explanations of terms.
- Possibly change our logo to an option similar to those Meesh presented. She'll include a black and brown stripe into these logo options.
- We'll look at these again in January.

Announcements

- Lesley noted that the Mass. Registry of Motor Vehicles will now allow for a Gender Neutral X marker on licenses and that the state Democratic Committee is creating protocols for gender nonbinary delegates to be able to officially be identified as such.
- Rachel encouraged people to volunteer at the Y2Y homeless youth overnight shelter in Harvard Square especially during college vacations, as they are staffed primarily by students and are short-staffed at these times. Mal noted that they also need a lot of cold weather gear and there is a list of needs on their website. <https://www.y2ynetwork.org/get-involved/>
- Kate reported that the craft store gather here in Inman Square was sewing bags for toiletry kits for the homeless and were taking donations of toiletries. Throughout the year they sponsor various donations to community organizations. <https://gatherhereonline.com/blogs/news>
- Susan reported that Boston's Mayor Walsh announced that Boston was giving \$5 million to homeless youth and wondered if Cambridge was doing anything similar.