## June 24, 2010 meeting minutes Cambridge GLBT Commission

## NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURS, SEPT 23, 2010 - no AUG MEETING

## I. Call to Order

Tony Wieczorek and Bob Parlin (at the end) recorded these minutes; John added some contextual information when typing it up.

Commissioners Present: John Gintell, Kevin Shpritzer, Lesley Phillips, Steven Lee, Tony Wieczorek, Mal Malme, Bob Parlin, Jeff Walker, Priscilla Lee

Commissioners Absent: (excused) – Toni Snow, Sarav Chidambaram, Colby Berger; (unexcused)- Mallory SoRelle; Julia Pallota has had 3 unexcused absences and is considered an inactive member not counting in quorum computations subject to replacement by the City Manager.

<u>Guests:</u> Supt. Chris Burke and Lt. Stephen Ahern, Cambridge Police Dept. and Linda Pinti, citizen.

- II. Cambridge River Festival, June 5<sup>th</sup> noon-6pm: This was the first time the Commission had a presence at the RiverFest (Thanks to the Arts Council rescheduling it so it didn't conflict with the Pride Brunch). Bob, Toni, Kevin, and John staffed the table thanks! A number of Tote Bags were given away for the "price" of filling out a questionnaire about the census, the Commission, discrimination polices at work, and bullying. 117 people responded; results attached. Will schedule presence at the Danehy Park event to give away the remaining bags with a new questionnaire.
- III. Pride Brunch, June 12: Much thanks to Lee Gianetti of the Mayor's office for all the help in putting on this event (banner, brochure, food arrangements, hall setup, publicity materials, program, brochure). This was the 20<sup>th</sup> year for the brunch at City Hall. MC (Sue Hyde), keynote (Rep Marty Walz), Rep Walz gave an excellent outline of the newly enacted Bullying law. Recognition awards to Chris Mason & Chris "Potter" LaBella for *Driving Equality*, Leslie Sterling for her work in the Episcopal ministry, and the Rose Lipkin award to Angela McKenzie CRLS student. John will get the proclamations onto the Commission Web pages. Transportation via busses (accessible) to the Boston parade was smooth and on-time. Attendance was definitely better this year than in the past several years.

Awards process should be formalized (Councilor Simmons may be putting in an order), soliciting input on our website, and perhaps "naming" the awards for the future.

**IV. LGBT Seniors Dinner Event:** (to be held monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – organized by Somerville Cambridge Elder Services, Boston LGBT Aging Project, and the Council on Aging). This was the first such event – held at Cadbury Commons which will be the regular venue. About 100 people were there. There will often be entertainment or appropriate information sessions included.

John attended and had the opportunity to speak to many people about Commission projects. Learned from Rep. Alice Wolf that there may be money on the State Budget for LGBT

training for Seniors and there is a curriculum development bill as well.

This would be an opportunity for the Commission to seek some input from this community, and obtain email addresses and tie into the Seniors Health and Housing project. Commission can help publicize via email list and web pages.

- V. Seniors Housing and Health Project: Planning meeting with Mayor's office and LGBT Aging project on July 14; John will attend (others are welcome to join). LGBT Aging project does training and has lots of expertise.
- VI. GLBT Youth Self-Defense Workshop: Mal volunteered to help organize and work with the Youth Center Organization who would host (at the West Cambridge Center) and help recruit. Perhaps October would be best after schools have started and appropriate publicity through the GSAs at CRLS and the Charter schools can be used. The idea would be that this is the first in a regular series. Priscilla volunteered to be there on training day and to help publicize with the GSAs.
- VII. Gender Neutral Bathroom Policy: Discussed Commissioner Steven Lee's report with an overview of the issues surrounding gender neutral bathrooms which had been distributed. Thanks to Steven for doing the research! The question before the Commission is what is the next step.

Consider asking the City Council to create a policy. We need a clearly defined "why" before we proceed. This is a complicated issue with potential backlash if not handled correctly. We had lots of constructive discussion about this topic. Clearly the extreme of making all bathrooms gender neutral would not be acceptable to many people, nor would requiring all bathrooms to be single user. Some places have family" bathrooms – but some people without small children feel they shouldn't use the family bathrooms; similarly for non-disabled people using designated bathrooms. There will be a range of solutions about the scope of the policy (city bldgs ... all commercial establishments?) and how to implement after being developed.

For places that have only multi-stall men's and women's rooms some transgender people and some parents with small children of the opposite sex have no bathroom that they feel comfortable going to.

As homework, some Commissioners will have informal discussions with managers in existing establishments to see what they think (choosing friendly ones to start). Also will talk to some architects. Jeff and Steven will schedule a meeting with Richard Scali, the License Commission head, to see what he thinks. Some informal talks with City Councilors would also be a good idea, also the Health department.

Perhaps we might formulate some questions to include in a questionnaire that we can use when we go to the Danehy Park Family day event (Sat, Sept 25).

## **VIII. Liaison to Charter Schools:** How to proceed?

Ed Byrne (CRLS) hasn't been in touch with Kate (Prospect Hill) but he will get the ball

rolling. Hearing some need for a GSA at the Cambridge Community Charter School. Bob offered to help set up training. Priscilla will try to go to Bullying task force meeting on Weds, June 30 since Bob can't go. The Human Rights Commission (HRC) has asked the police to appoint two co-chairs. ((Thanks Leslie for attending the HRC meetings)). Pursue idea of making private schools aware of GLBT issues in bullying training. (HRC will issue a survey about transgender people at homeless shelters.)

- **IX.** New Cambridge GLBT Commissioners: We should interview people interested in being new Commissioners, and invite them to attend a meeting. Try to get the appointments done in time for the January Meetings. Perhaps get the Manager to pick an alternate so that a replacement is readily available. John will propose a schedule for the next meeting.
- X. Public Comment, Linda Pinti: Linda Pinti came to update us on the situation that although she was elected as number 1 choice for the next Democratic City Committee appointee to the Election Committee the City Manager selected the number 2 choice after a long wait. (See May Minutes). Passed over twice now despite winning election the statue allows the Manager to choose from the slate of 3).

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.