

LGBTQ+ Commission September 27, 2018 Minutes

Welcome

Minute Taker - Noelani Kamelamela

Introductions

There were no invited police at this meeting.

In Attendance:

Commission (present)

John W. Gintell; Aren Stone; Bill Barnert; Susan Bernstein; Jessica Daniels; Abby Duker; Maya Escobar; Noelani Kamelamela; Mal Malme; Greg MacDonough; Rachel Oppenheimer; Bob Parlin; Lesley Phillips; Kimm Topping

Amelia Joselow, LGBTQ+ Research Associate

Commission (absent)

Catherine Grams; Steven Lee; Silas Weiner

Guests

Youth On Fire: Katherine, Jasper, Nate

Department of Children and Families (DCF) - Elise Levine (Family Resource Recruiter) and Robin

Approve Minutes from July Meeting - Minutes Approved

Approve / Modify Agenda - Agenda Approved

Guest Speakers

- Elise Levine, Family Resource Recruiter, Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Robin Ruidiaz, DCF

The DCF is reaching out to increase the diversity of the foster families available in Cambridge, specifically increasing the amount of LGBTQ+ and LGBTQ+ friendly foster homes. They would love any assistance with increasing publicity-Elise will send Aren a blurb which the Communications Committee can put into the regular newsletter.

There are different foster homes:

1. Kin/kinship: related to the foster child
2. Child-specific: teacher/advocate/coach/etc whom already knows the foster child
3. Unrestricted: completely unrelated to the foster child

The primary goal is reunification with the family unit, but the typical long term stay can be up to 6-9 months. In some cases, adoption may become the goal over time.

There are defined short term situations:

1. Hotline Home: for a very short term, no longer than a week. These are interim stays.
2. Respite: for a short defined term as the foster child requires.

The steps which foster homes must take before taking in foster children:

1. The DCF reviews Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check on members of the household
2. The DCF reviews the history of the household
3. A safety check of the house and the room the foster child will stay in is conducted
4. The foster parents must take a Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) course which is 30 hours, 10 separate 3 hour module classes (with an LGBTQ+ module) which prepare people for the challenges of caring for a foster child.

Regarding age: at age 14+ adoption must be agreed to by the child and at around 16 it is possible that attention will shift from fostering/adoption to preparing the child for an independent life. Technically, the DCF still has funding to provide to children in the system until they have reached the age of 22, but this requires the child to still participate in the system.

There will be LGBTQ+ data gathered of foster children who wish to self-identify: this tracking started in May 2018.

- Staff and members of Youth on Fire Katharine and Nate, Case Managers, Jasper, Youth Advisory Board

YOF is a drop-in center for youth ages 14-24 years old; currently co-located with Y2Y at 1 Church St in Harvard Square. Move has meant they see more MA locals and not as many travellers. Once a week they do street outreach with food and depend on word of mouth to reach the people they hope to serve. They are funded through the next 5 years and hope to expand Peer Leadership. Y2Y and YoF have an overlap in members.

There are different levels of services for active YoF:

1. Basic: 3 days/week hot meals, showers, laundry, clothes donations, hygiene items, syringe exchange
2. Case Management: centers around Harm Reduction
3. Leadership: members are appointed and hired as Peer Leaders to serve on a Youth Advisory Board which meets once a month

Things we can help them with:

1. Neither Y2Y or YoF have a great relationship with the Cambridge Police Department or the CPD Homeless Liaison. How can we help with this?
2. They need donations, especially for the winter months. They have an Amazon Wishlist. <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/1RLUC7C7J0428>

Police Department Discussion: Report from Police Subcommittee

- Questions to ask our liaison, Det. Brian O'Connor at the October meeting:
 1. Does CPD attend other Commission meetings?
 2. What are stakeholder meetings? When? Where?
 3. Police recruits are trained at the Lowell Police Academy by the Gay Officers Action League (GOAL). Can Commissioners attend a training? Are the trainings updated? Is there any follow-up training?
 4. Who is the CPD Homeless Liaison and how does that person work with the homeless population, especially LGBTQ+ young people?
 5. What are the policies for LGBTQ+ people in custody in the Cambridge jail?
- Brian is attending Commission meetings quarterly. Commissioners can email questions to Kimm for future meetings. She will bring them forward to a Commission meeting to finalize and then send them to Brian so he is prepared.
- Commissioner Bard is welcome at meetings when Brian attends.
- The Subcommittee will write a statement to inform the wider community about our decisions and process about our work with the Police Department and the Communications Committee will distribute.

Future Events

- Tabling at Oktoberfest, 10am-6pm Sunday October 7th
- Mayor's Town Hall: Supporting Cambridge Youth. Cosponsored by us. 6pm City Hall Thursday Oct. 11th. Organized by Amelia, Kimm, and Aren with Ana Barros, Mayor's Deputy Chief of Staff.

Committee Meetings

- Communications: The Commission has files on Google Drive which we can all access for different work, an email will be sent.

Public Comment/Announcements

- No public comments
- Yes on 3-November Vote-Please volunteer
- Boston Asian American Film Festival has a Queer Film Series coming up in October

Next meeting: Thursday, October 25th 6:00-7:30 Windsor Health Clinic