

LGBTQ+ Commission Minutes – July 22, 2021 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Commissioners Attending: Bill Barnert, Susan Bernstein, Soltan Bryce, Jessica Daniels, Noelani Gabriel, John Gintell, Kate Grams, Linden Huhmann, Steven Lee, Greg MacDonough, Lauren McNair, Rachel Oppenheimer, Aren Stone, Commission Research Associate Amelia Joselow also attended.

Guest: Puja Kranz-Howe, from the YWCA

Commissioners Absent: Bob Bordone, Katy Harrison, Nefyn Meissner, Lesley Phillips, Warner Santiago, Cameron Van Fosse. Noelani Kamelamela is on a leave of absence.

Approve Minutes from June

The minutes were approved.

Strategic Planning Working Group, Pending Policy Updates from Steven Lee

Three policies (Leave of Absence, Attendance, and Selecting Co-Chairs) have been discussed over a two-year period and are now ready to be approved by the Commission. The policies will all need final approval from the city.

The Commission voted to approve all three new policies, which are attached. They will now move on for review by the City's legal department.

Communications Working Group -- Marketing/social media management platforms

Bill supplied the following report in writing:

Brochure: We got some good feedback from the Commission when we sent the proposed changes around, but we have not yet designed the replacement.

We met two days ago, and Lauryn & I will meet again soon to start the new brochure design, but we won't finalize it until we know where the Commission will be meeting when we start meeting in-person again. (The current brochure lists Windsor Street.)

We're working on a newsletter.

Only Amelia can edit our web pages because the city restricts that function to its employees. Bill and Amelia will meet separately to collect proposed changes.

Bill is working on getting our Instagram account transferred over to our real email address.

Future Events

Trans Athlete Event – August 1, Danehy Park

The organizers would like for someone from the Commission to speak at the event, but the organizers are still developing plans. Former Commissioner Kimm Topping is the lead on the event and the mayor's office is also involved.

Starlight Square – September 11

Our next event at Starlight Square will be on the evening of Saturday, September 11. The Events Working Group met before tonight's full-Commission meeting and made great progress. There are entertainers on tap and all that is needed is the final plan.

Cambridge Carnival – September 12

Amelia will organize a team of tablers. Bill confirmed that we have brochures and swag to distribute at the event.

Report from Amelia

LGBTQ+ Community Center

The Working Group has been meeting monthly and will soon start meeting more frequently. Currently working on identifying space and funding for the center. Working with Taha Jennings.

Ongoing Projects

Amelia has been working with the Art Department to review public art in Cambridge, with a goal of ensuring diversity.

All Gender Restrooms

Amelia will update the website to note which city restrooms have been turned into all-gender restrooms.

Reports from Working Groups

Police

Commissioner Bard will attend our September meeting. Nefyn will take on leading the working group for the near future. The working group has changed its name to “Public Health and Safety Working Group,” in recognition that we are now working with the Cambridge Health Department, and also to create a platform for reaching out to other public health and public safety agencies throughout the city.

Events

As noted, our next event will be at Starlight Square on the evening of Saturday, September 11.

Guest Speaker

Puja Kranz-Howe provided information about the YWCA’s Gender Expansive Youth Focus Group (GEY), which builds on a previous group, GOLD, which had been limited to girls. The new group is open to anyone in middle school and high school, and meetings have included discussions of social justice. Meetings have been very well attended, and parents have asked for activities for younger children as well. Though there are many groups for youth in the Boston area, there is still a need to support trans and gender non-conforming youth.

Future Meetings & Events

Commissioner Social Event: Potluck at Bill’s – Aug 26

Public Comments / Announcements

There were no comments or announcements.

Next Commission Meeting: Thursday September 24, 2021, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Attachments – New Policy Proposals

Policy #1: LGBTQ+ COMMISSION ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission expects Commissioners to attend all scheduled meetings during the year. As stated in the ordinance that established the Commission, “If any Commissioner is absent without excuse from three (3) meetings of the Commission during a calendar year, the City Manager shall have authority to declare that position vacant and appoint a replacement.” An excused absence is defined as a medical need, family emergency, or other significant issue to be determined by the Co-Chairs. A Commissioner is expected to give notice of any absence as early as possible and definitely before the start of the meeting. If a Commissioner is absent three (3) times in a calendar year, the Co-Chairs will meet with them and discuss their future participation with the Commission.

A Commissioner must be present at a meeting for at least two-thirds (2/3) of the meeting time for it to count as attended. Failure to be present at a meeting for at least two-thirds (2/3) of the meeting time will count as an unexcused absence. The notetaker at each meeting is responsible for recording attendance.

Policy #2: LGBTQ+ COMMISSION LEAVE POLICY

If a Commissioner cannot actively participate in Commission business and activities for more than a month, they may request a leave of absence. During a leave of absence, the Commissioner is relieved of the responsibilities of their role. A Commissioner on a leave of absence will not actively participate in official Commission work or communications. A person on leave may attend Commission meetings as a member of the general public, but may not cast votes and will not count toward forming a quorum in meetings.

An approved leave of absence may be for up to three (3) months at a time. A Commissioner may request a leave of absence a maximum of three (3) times within a 12-month period. Requests should be sent to the Co-Chairs. If after three consecutive leaves of absence the Commissioner is still not ready to resume their duties, the Commissioner may be asked to resign from the Commission. A Commissioner who resigns from the Commission due to a pro-longed leave of absence will be deemed to have resigned in good standing and will be welcomed to apply for an open seat in the future.

Policy #3: PROCESS FOR GOVERNING CO-CHAIR ELECTIONS

Election of Co-Chair

Election for Co-Chair seats will occur annually in November. Any active Commissioner not on leave during the November meeting, including a current incumbent Chair, may nominate themselves at the November Commission meeting or at any prior Commission meeting during that calendar year. It is encouraged that only Commissioners who intend to remain on the Commission for another full year run for a Co-Chair seat. At the September Commission meeting, the election of Co-Chairs will be brought forth as an agenda item to remind Commissioners of the November election.

Votes in a Co-Chair election will be cast by open ballot. Each Commissioner can cast two votes, one for each Co-Chair seat available. Only active Commissioners who are present at the November meeting and who are not on leave of absence will be able to cast votes. A candidate for Co-Chair does not have to be present at the

November meeting to be eligible to receive votes. The counting of votes will occur immediately after the vote and during the meeting. The top two vote-getters will be declared the winners. In the case of a tie, a second and, if necessary, subsequent vote will occur until a tie no longer exists. The newly elected Co-Chairs will begin their term in January of the following calendar year.

Special Election of Co-Chairs

If a Co-Chair steps down from their post during their term, and there are at least six months remaining before the next election cycle, a special election will take place in the next administratively feasible scheduled Commission meeting. The process will be the same as in the annual election process.

No Confidence Vote

If any Commissioner feels a Co-Chair should be removed from their duties, they may initiate a request for a vote of no confidence. The request must be sent to the Co-Chair who is not the subject of the request and to the chair of the Strategic Planning Working Group. They will review the request and determine if it warrants further action, including bringing it to the full Commission for review. If a full Commission review is to occur, the petitioner will be responsible for presenting the case for the removal of the Co-Chair at a Commission meeting. The Co-Chair who is the subject of the petition may also respond to the petitioner's case at that time.

The removal of a Co-Chair from their duties requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Commissioners present at the meeting. The removal of a Commissioner from their Co-Chair duties does not remove them from their Commissioner position.