

GLBT Commission Minutes January 22, 2015

NEXT MEETING: PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN START TIME: February 26, 2015, 6:00-7:30

Commissioners Present: Anna Weick, Aren Stone, Bill Barnert, Bob Parlin, Jessica Daniels, John Gintell, Mal Malme, Maya Escobar, Mike McKenna, Neil MacInnes-Barker, Paul Miller, Rachel Oppenheimer Steven Lee

Commissioners Absent: Kara Smith, Kevin Shpritzer, Kristina Mastropasqua, LaTayna Purnell, Lesley Phillips, Maggie Giles

Guests: Sarah Boyer, Cambridge Historical Commission
Elysia Chandler GLBT Commission Intern

Call to Order.

Approved December meeting minutes.

Added to and accepted January meeting agenda.

Introductions and welcome to new members Jessica Daniels and Maya Escobar.

LaTayna Purnell, also a new Commissioner, couldn't attend tonight.

Future Events

True Colors: Out Youth Theater: We have agreed to sponsor and organize an October showing of the documentary about this group. Organizing committee: Bob, Maya, Mal, Rachel, Anna, Aren, Jessica, John, Bill, with Bob taking the lead. We'll need to plan the program (with the filmmaker and theater group), food, reserve the library, etc.

Possible Events:

Transgender education/support/empowerment

Supreme Court marriage equality ruling

We'll discuss more at our February meeting

Teacher Event: Ed Byrne (Mayor's liaison to the Commission) has said that the Mayor's office will organize with us. Paul will contact him. Organizing committee: Paul, Bob, Kara, Bill

Meeting with Taha Jennings:

John and Aren met with Taha (City Manager's liaison to the Commission) to discuss the following:

LGBTQ Cultural Competency Training: City Manager is still committed to fulfilling our request for this training for all city employees (except Public Safety and School Dept., who get their own trainings). With the help of Chris Burke (Police Department liaison to the Commission) they have researched whether other cities have done a similar training and haven't found any. They would like our help looking for trainers and curriculum. Suggestions: SpeakOut, MTPC (Mass. Transgender Political Coalition), looking at corporations who have done similar trainings. Taha will be setting up a brainstorming meeting with the city's training manager and two Commissioners. This would likely be a

daytime meeting. Any Commissioners interested should let John or Aren know. Bob expressed interest.

Gender Neutral Bathrooms: Several years ago the City Council passed a policy about increasing gender neutral bathrooms in the city, especially in city buildings. Little has happened since then. Recently signs were posted in some buildings (51 Inman St., Main Library, though it was inside the men's room rather than outside where people could see it) as to the location of gender neutral bathrooms. Taha will look into doing an assessment of current bathroom status and the plumbing code issues. He also suggested that the Community Development Dept. and Planning Board be educated so that they can incorporate the promotion of gender neutral bathrooms when they make suggestions to developers, builders, and others. We'd like to create a flyer or postcard to use as a tool to educate, promote, and encourage businesses and institutions about the importance of these bathrooms. One suggestion was to reach out to communities who would benefit (transgender people, parents with opposite-sex children, caretakers, etc.). We may form a subcommittee at our February meeting to draft a flyer.

Intern: The City Manager has funded the Commission's intern for the rest of the year. Our current intern, Elysia Chandler, would like to remain in the job and finish the current project, assessing the policies and practices of healthcare facilities as they pertain to LGBTQ seniors, and work on the next projects, similar surveys for senior housing and youth organizations.

Proposal to Change Meeting Time:

A proposal was made to start the meetings later so that more people could arrive on time after work. After a lengthy discussion a motion was made and accepted to change the start time of the meetings from 5:30 to 6:00. A motion was made and accepted to keep the current end time of 7:30. We will pilot these changes for three months and re-evaluate in April. It was asked that Commissioners arrive at 5:45 if possible, in order to start right at 6:00, that the Chairs and other Commissioners work to keep the discussions efficient to help maintain a meeting time of 90 minutes.

Sarah Boyer, Oral Historian, Cambridge Historical Commission:

Sarah passed around her resume and previously published books, all oral histories of various Cambridge communities, and available from the Historical Commission as well as local bookstores. Sarah was asked by the Commission several months ago to consider partnering on an oral history of the LGBT community in Cambridge. She explained the intricacies and labor intensiveness of such a project and that each of her previous books have taken 3 ½-5 years. She would need help transcribing and editing and is looking into a software program that helps edit oral accounts into narratives. She is very interested, would need to get paid for her work, and would need the Commission to be able to follow through on a long-term commitment. We discussed possible grant funders and other options, such as video or website, besides a book. Sarah will give us a projected budget and timeline and we will discuss at our February meeting whether we want to move forward.

Intern Report on Assessing Policies and Practices of Health Care Facilities as they Pertain to LGBTQ Seniors:

Elysia explained the project again and reported on her progress. The on-line survey link has been working well. Several assisted living and nursing home facilities have answered and three have indicated that they would like support from the Commission in looking at and perhaps amending their policies and practices.

Elysia has been talking and emailing with administrators at the hospitals and Cambridge Health Alliance and is receiving more completed surveys from both, including some from direct care providers, as well as administrators. She reports that it is difficult to find the right people to talk to within large and complex organizations.

We discussed the complications of having direct care staff receive surveys, especially at nursing homes and assisted living facilities where these staff usually don't have desks and computers. Commissioners expressed concern that the responses from administrators might not reflect the true understanding practices of the direct care staff. It was mentioned that even if this were true, at least the administrators want to talk with us about their practices and training for staff, and this is a very positive sign.

One assisted living/rehab facility responded that they were not interested in taking the survey. It was suggested that Elysia follow up and ask if they would be willing to speak with someone in person.

Suggestions: Give paper surveys to direct care staff if allowed by administrators. Elysia will look into this. Provide incentives (coffee and donuts?) to increase survey return. Elysia will bring this up at her next meeting with Taha Jennings.

Next steps: 1. Meeting with the head of Elder Care Services at Cambridge Health Alliance and other providers 2. Surveying LGBTQ senior patients 3. Preparation of a semi-final report before our next meeting

Announcements

A bill has been filed in the State legislature to fill the gap of the current statewide nondiscrimination laws pertaining to gender identity and expression in public accommodations in Massachusetts.

Ayala Livny has left her position as Program Coordinator at Youth on Fire. She will be working for the new Youth Housing Initiative to build an overnight shelter in Harvard Square for homeless young adults. The Commission worked with Ayala on our Youth on Fire event last year.

Adjourned

Minutes submitted by Aren Stone with help from Rachel Oppenheimer