

LGBTQ+ Commission Meeting Minutes May 24, 2018

Attending: John Gintell; Aren Stone; Kate Grams, Greg MacDonough, Bill Barnert, Bob Parlin, Silas Winer, Abby Duker, Kimm Topping, Mal Malme, Susan Bernstein, Noe Kamelamela, Maya Escobar, Linda Daniels, Lesley Phillips

Absent: Anna Weick (on leave), Jessica Daniels, Rachel Oppenheimer, Steven Lee

Guests: Melody Brazo, Welcoming Schools Coordinator, Cambridge Public Schools
Amelia Joselow, LGBTQ+ Commission Research Associate

Update from Melody Brazo

As coordinator for Welcoming Schools Cambridge, Melody advocates for LGBTQ+ students and families within the CPS district. She reported to the Commission on services and programs. All of the Cambridge Upper Schools have Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs); one school has a group for 7 and 8th graders and a separate group for 6th graders; one school has a GSA and also an affinity group for LGBTQ+ identifying students.

Among other policy changes, Welcoming Schools has addressed gender designations on school forms (i.e. permission slips that read "son or daughter" instead of "child"). The school district has adopted a non-binary gender category for student records.

(https://www.cpsd.us/news/non_binary_gender_category_in_student_records)

All-gender restrooms are also a priority. All schools do have at least one inclusive restroom, which is also the handicapped restroom. One challenge Melody reported was keeping faculty and student restrooms separate.

Welcoming Schools web page now includes gender diversity resources. The school district is redesigning their webpage over the summer; please submit any suggestions as soon as possible.

Commissioners who tabled at Youth Pride reported that one Cambridge 8th grader mentioned that some teachers do not use correct pronouns. Melody was asked what recourse students have in this situation. Melody mentioned several challenges in getting comprehensive staff training in sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) as training time for staff is limited.

We would like to see SOGI training for *all* school staff, not just teaching faculty, that is more proactive than reactive. Melody suggested contacting the school superintendent, Kenneth Salim, and Ellen Semenov, Assistant City Manager in charge of Human Services. Melody requested that we let her know before we reach out.

Melody reported that sex education is LGBTQ+ inclusive. There was a change in who teaches sex education; formerly was through the Cambridge Equal Opportunity Committee, who used the Know Your Body curriculum. It is now in-house with health instructors who are less experienced with teaching to younger grades. Suggested contact to find out more about this: Kim Andrade, Program Developer for Health at CRLS.

Research Associate Report:

Amelia is almost finished with the Out-of-School-Time survey and best practices report. She shared pamphlet and flyer versions that are summaries that can be easily shared and posted in youth organizations. Commissioners had some minor edit suggestions and agreed that these were valuable as not too many people would read through the whole report. There were some

questions about improving image quality. Images were limited by those available on Microsoft Word. Bill will look at possibilities with Amelia.

Amelia is also working on a Story Map of best practices for youth organizations.

Aren, John, Nancy Schlacter (Director of Human Rights Commission, and Taha Jennings (Aide to the City Manager), have been editing and advising on each piece of the project. It will soon be sent to the City Manager and then to the participating organizations and the public. The Story Map will be on our web page.

Amelia created a new flyer highlighting the LGBTQ+ Commission. It includes the Commission's mission statement and advertises the monthly meetings. We can use them at events.

Pride Brunch!

Aren, Susan, John, and Kate have been planning. The Commission discussed and chose awardees:

Community Recognition Awards

- Transpositions, CRLS student-led trans acapella group.
- Freedom for All Massachusetts.
- Jeff Perrotti, director of the MA Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Youth.

Bayard Rustin Service Award

- Eva Martin-Blythe, Exec. Director of the YWCA.

Aren will contact Transpositions, and also ask them if they would be willing to perform. Bob will contact Jeff Perrotti. Kimm will contact Freedom for All MA. Aren will contact Eva Martin-Blythe.

Silas will speak about the Commission's working relationship with the Cambridge Police. Silas will write up an outline of presentation and send to Commissioners. Aren will let our Police Dept. liaison and the Police Commissioner know ahead of time about planned remarks.

Library Events

We are cosponsoring and tabling at two events at the Main Library for Pride Month:

1. June 12. "A Celebration of Pride Month: A Panel Moderated by Councillor E. Denise Simmons"

Silas and Kimm are panelists for what promises to be a very diverse and interesting event.

2. June 16. "Call Them by Their Name: A Lecture on Non-Binary Identity" given by AC Dumlao, an educator and activist.

Freedom for All Massachusetts Town Hall Meeting

Freedom for All Massachusetts approached the Commission, through Amelia, about having a meeting to inform people about the upcoming ballot question which, if passed, would eliminate the public accommodations portion of the transgender rights law. Freedom for All Massachusetts would handle the bulk of planning this event. We decided that we would cosponsor this event. Amelia will contact them. It is worth noting that a Yes vote would maintain the law as it is currently and a no vote would take current protections away.