

**Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission
Commission Meeting
November 19, 2020 Virtual Zoom Meeting**

Commissioners In Attendance: Bill Barnert; Susan Bernstein; Jessica Daniels; Maya Escobar; John Gintell; Catherine Grams; Britt Huhmann; Noe Kamelamela; Steven Lee; Greg MacDonough; Nefyn Meissner; Rachel Oppenheimer; Aren Stone;

Commission Staff in Attendance: Amelia Joselow

Public in Attendance: Madelein McCormick, Chief of Staff to Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui

Commissioners Absent: Lesley Phillips

These minutes reflect overall themes. Effort was made to record direct comments as carefully as possible to preserve the voices of the Commissioners making them.

- **Opening** Nefyn Meissner facilitated the meeting with Catherine Grams recording meeting minutes.
- **Introductions of Attendees**
- **October Meeting Minutes** The Commission approved the October Meeting minutes.
- **Domestic Partnership Ordinance**
 - The Cambridge Law Department accepted many of our recommendations on amending this proposed ordinance
 - Requirement that Domestic Partnerships exclude married and non-married members was removed
 - Requirement that members of the Partnership live together was removed
 - Requirement that members of the Domestic Partnership provide evidence of how they hold their relationship out in the world will remain as optional
 - The Cambridge Law Department did not advise amending the provision so that Domestic Partnerships continue on the death of one of the members. The Legal Department believed that this “may constitute a legal deformity.” Members of the Commission had several concerns with this provision.
 - The Commissioners were concerned that surviving members of the Partnership could lose legal protections immediately after the death of a member of the Partnership.
 - Surviving members of a Partnership should not be subject to the 6 month waiting period after the death of a member.
 - The Commission’s Domestic Partnership Working Group, Linden, John, and Lesley, will seek further legal guidance on legal wording to address the above concerns.
- **Election of Co-Chairs**
 - 13 voting members are present

- The charter for the Commission calls for annual election of 2 members to serve as co-chairs.
 - Nominations were invited at the last Commission meeting
 - Current co-chair Aren Stone had announced several months ago that she would not seek another term in order to encourage new leadership.
 - Nominations were made for John Gintell and Nefyn Meissner
 - Both candidates for co-chair made short statements on their candidacy.
 - The vote for John was 13 yay / 0 nay
 - The vote for Nefyn was 13 yay / 0 nay
 - The co-chairs of the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission for the year 2021 will be John Gintell and Nefyn Meissner
- **Working Group Reports**
 - **Recruiting Working Group**
 - The City Manager has let the Commission know that there are currently 10 applicants for the 7 open positions on the Commission. The City Manager will continue to take applications until the 12/4/20 deadline and then provide the Commission with the applications for review
 - Once the applications are received by the Commission, the working group will review the applications and contact potential members for remote interviews in December.
 - The working group will then make recommendations to the City Manager around the first of the year with the plan to have new commissioners approved prior to the January Commission meeting.
 - Members of the Commission were encouraged to continue to reach out to local organizations to advertise the Commission openings.
 - **Strategic Planning Working Group**
 - There has been no meeting since the last Commission meeting
 - The working group plans to meet in December or January
 - **Communications Working Group**
 - There has been no meeting since the last Commission meeting
 - Event videos have been uploaded to Facebook and YouTube
 - The recent newsletter highlighted recruitment
 - Commissioners who ran the Instagram and Twitter pages have left the Commission. The passwords will be changed for these accounts and they will be spearheaded by other members
 - **Police Relations Working Group**
 - Jessica emailed Police Commissioner Bard but has not heard back.
 - The Commissioners discussed the importance of refocusing the relationship with the police / fire department / paramedics around accountability and training (especially around transgender issues)
 - It was recommended that the Commission consider creating similar relationships with the Public Health Department and similar departments in the City. The Chief Public Health Officer has been asked if he or another Public Health Department employee would be our liaison.

- The Commission will continue to discuss pluses and minuses of having police presence at the Commission meetings vs having the Commissioners attend meetings with the police.
 - The Commissioners agreed that a statement should be drafted that outlines the relationship that the Commission has with the Police Department to define for our constituents the nature of that relationship and the benefits to the community.
 - The working group, Jessica, Aren, Rachel, Greg, Steven, Noe, and Susan, will review previous written statements and work on a more comprehensive document, including proposals to the Commission.
 - The Commission will also reach out to other Commissions (Human Rights, Immigrant and Refugee, Women's Commission) about their relationship with the Police Department.
 - The Commission will also address ways to include the Harvard and MIT Police departments in this discussion.
- **Creation of Events Working Group**
 - Amelia suggested that The Commission form an Events Working Group.
 - Interested Commissioners included Nefyn, Bill, Kate, and John. Additional members for this group may be found in the new Commissioners joining in January.
 - The Commission's email list and Facebook could be used to both crowdsource ideas and find additional volunteers when the working group decides on some event topics.
 - The goal will be to plan a few virtual events, including an event in January.
- **Closing** The meeting was adjourned on time.