Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission
Commission Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2021 | 6:00-7:30 p.m. ET | Zoom

Commissioners in Attendance: Bill Barnert; Susan Bernstein; Jessica Daniels; John Gintell; Kate Grams; Linden Huhmann; Steven Lee; Gregory MacDonough; Nefyn Meissner; Rebecca Oppenheimer; Aren Stone

Commission Staff in Attendance: Amelia Joselow

Commissioners Absent: Noe Kamelamela; Lesley Phillips

Commissioners Elect in Attendance: Bob Bordone; Soltan Bryce; Katy Harrison; Lauryn McNair; Cameron Van Fossen

Commissioners Elect Absent: Warner Santiago

Guests: Branville Bard (Cambridge Police Department), Mary Kowalczuk (Public Health Department), Annie (no last name given)

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 Co-Chair John Gintell facilitated the meeting with Co-Chair Nefyn Meissner recording meeting minutes.

● Commissioner and Guest Introductions Current Commissioners, Guests, and new Commissioners Elect introduced themselves to one another.

● Approved November Meetings The Commission approved the November Meeting minutes.

● Approved Agenda John asked for input and approval of the agenda. Aren added one item to the end of the agenda. The Commission approved the updated Agenda.

● Police Department Relationship
  ○ Approval of latest revision of statement
    ■ Jessica Daniels read the Revised Police Statement to the group.
    ■ John Gintell asked that Bill Barnert post this Statement on our website once approved and ready for publication.
    ■ Commissioner Bard spoke and:
      ● thanked the Commission for committing to maintaining our relationship for the residents of the City of Cambridge;
• noted that CPD has moved away from GOAL Training and is looking into alternative training modules;
• noted that SOGI training is also available to City staff;

■ Hate Crime report
• 15 hate crimes in 2020 (v. 19 in 2019)
  ○ race = highest category (10)
  ○ sexual orientation (4)
    ■ two of the four is from a community member who has filed a report before
    ■ one was from a local shelter
    ■ one was from another isolated incident
  ○ religion (3)
  ○ *racial and religious (2)
• Five Year Average: 16 a year
• Comm. Bard will forward the PowerPoint and Report to Jessica and the entire Commission

■ Police Academy Updates
• 24 members, with half from Cambridge (12)
  ○ demographics
    ■ LGBTQ+
      • 1 openly identifies as LGBTQ+
      • 1 is closeted
    ■ race
      • 4 African American
      • 4 Latinx
      • several female-identified
• cadets are currently going through virtual trainings due to the COVID-19 pandemic
• two cadets has successfully entered the police academy (one Black female; one Latino male) and force
• cadet recruitment is moving in the direction of reaching more local folks and diversifying the force

■ Questions from the Group:
• Jessica clarified if/how the Report and PowerPoints will be available
• Rachel asked for more background and detail on Hate Crimes report (Family & Social Justice Section of CPD and Detectives investigate)--they encourage folks to report everything, investigate, and then issue summons when appropriate which is then reviewed by a coordinator who proofs it before passing it along to Commissioner Bard
• Steven asked for more info on the new trainings
Comm. Bard says that we are all welcome to attend and experience it (notes Amelia and Bill were the only folks who could attend last time there was a demo training)

- two-hour video will be passed along to the Commission
  - Nefyn asked a follow-up question re: reporting
- John, Comm. Bard, and others named potential future partners for the Commission to work with, including: the Cambridge Fire Department; Harvard Police, MIT Police; Lesley Police; EMTs.
- Comm. Bard noted that Harvard Police does the same training that CPD does--not inclusive of SOGI.
- Commissioner Bard presented a discussion of LGBTQ+ trainings for CPD.

**City Request about Gender ID on forms**
- They City contacted us about gender markers, etc., on questionnaires and other forms.
- Amelia, Aren, Soltan, Lauryn, and Katy have volunteered to engage with the City on this matter.

**Working Group Reports**
- Diversity Working Group
  - Rachel moved that we revive the Diversity Working Group.
  - Rachel will lead the group and has invited all Commissioners to help determine the direction of the group.
  - New Members: Aren, Jessica, Rachel, Nefyn, Cameron, Susan, Bob, Katy
    - Open call to new Commissioners Elect and current Commissioners to join at any time
    - Prior members: Kimm, Aren, Mal, Susan, Bob, Silas, Noe, Maya, Rachel, and Nefyn
  - Rachel will email the entire Commission and then convene a meeting to kick off the Working Group.
  - Steven asked that we consider renaming the Working Group once we have better determined its scope and purpose; Rachel agreed.

- Domestic Partnership Ordinance
  - John shared updates from the latest Ordinance meeting.
  - John will coordinate the Working Group to ensure that the Working Group contacts the Ordinance group/City Council before the Ordinance moves forward.
  - Next meeting is Monday at 5:30 p.m. ET -- anyone can sign up to speak for three minutes; we have a few non-Commissioners who may speak.
  - Aren, John, Linden, and Nefyn discussed the various potential paths forward and outcomes.
  - Aren, Rachel, and others moved that the Commission grants full autonomy to the Working Group to carry this forward.
• Events
  ■ Amelia shared about the New Year Reflection event we have organized to be shown on CCTV. The event features local LGBTQ+ faith and community leaders and focuses on reflecting and setting new intentions for 2021.
  ■ Kate and Bill are working with Porter Square Books to do an event focused on queer writers--queer YA literature project in the works for April 1st.
• All Gender Restrooms
  ■ Amelia noted that she will follow up with Cameron re: restrooms in shelters, etc.
  ■ Amelia is trying to make inroads with local businesses re: all-gender restrooms.
• Community Center
  ■ Stalled due to COVID-19 and related issues.
  ■ Amelia is doing what she can and will continue to update the Commission.

• Aren’s Agenda Addition
  ○ Aren noted that Nancy Schlacter from the Human Rights Commission is retiring; Nancy has also served to supervise Amelia’s work on behalf of the Commission.
  ○ Law Dept will supervise Amelia in the interim until a successor is identified.

• Public Comments & Announcements
  ○ Rachel thanked Mary for attending.
  ○ Mary said she and the Health Department are eager to partner together.

• Closing The meeting was adjourned.

• Next Commission Meeting Thursday, February 25, 2021