

## **LGBTQ+ Commission Minutes – May 27, 2021      6:00 - 7:30 p.m.**

Commissioners Attending: Bill Barnert, Susan Bernstein, Bob Bordone, Jessica Daniels, John Gintell, Kate Grams, Katy Harrison, Linden Huhmann, Steven Lee, Greg MacDonough, Lauren McNair, Nefyn Meissner, Rachel Oppenheimer, Lesley Phillips, Warner Santiago, Aren Stone, Cameron Van Fosse. Commission Research Associate Amelia Joselow also attended.

Guest: Jack Treanor, Somerville's LGBTQ+ Liaison, Mukesh Baral, Boston CASA

Commissioners Absent: Noelani Gabriel, Soltan Bryce, Noe Kamelamela (Leave of Absence)

### **Approve / Modify Minutes**

The minutes were approved.

### **June Pride photo Exhibit in Harvard Square**

A history museum for Cambridge has been approved and, in that spirit, a photo exhibit for June Pride will be displayed in five Harvard Square windows. Aren has been working on selecting the photos that will appear in the windows. The Commission voted to co-sponsor the event.

### **Jack Treanor – Somerville LGBTQ Liaison – Introduction**

Jack is the new liaison for Somerville and he listed upcoming events including the Pride Flag Raising on the afternoon of June 9, and the Big Gay Dance Party on June 11 in Union Square. His office is within the Health & Human Services department and he works primarily with the high school's GSA, as well as the Council on Aging.

### **Working Group (WG) Reports & Discussion**

#### Strategic Planning – next meeting June 2

The WG will be working on the draft policies on selecting chairs and on attendance, hoping to finalize them and send them along to the city solicitor.

#### Events planning

- Starlight Square – June 12: The Events WG has been working with several groups (Somerville LGBTQ Commission, Arlington Rainbow Commission and others), as well as Mayor Siddiqi, to organize the event in Starlight Square. Two events – a session for families from 1:30-2:30 and two performers at 3:30. Bill asked for additional volunteers. Email him if you can help.
- Starlight Square – September 23: An event is taking shape with multiple performers. The Commission voted to change the date of its September meeting to make it possible to be at the Starlight Square event.

Communications – Bill will schedule a meeting soon.

Diversity – Rachel will schedule a meeting soon.

City Forms – The group met and decided on some language and is waiting to hear back from a business group.

All-gender bathrooms – Amelia reported that there hasn't been any motion on the initiative, but the city has

sent information to businesses about the lifting of COVID restrictions and Amelia will try to find a good time to reach out to businesses. Signage in government buildings has been updated and city employees have been notified.

Police – Jessica invited new members to join the working group. John asked that we follow up with Commissioner Bard to stay on his radar for future training sessions.

### **Report from Amelia and Discussion**

All-Gender Bathrooms – Amelia’s comments are included with the working group notes above.

LGBTQ+ Community Center – Amelia is currently reaching out to other centers to ask about best practices. Several other commissions and organizations are represented in the committee considering a community center. It was suggested that we set up a 501c3, which isn’t possible for a government commission. Cambridge DPW recently did a survey of available spaces, and Amelia also asked to identify spaces.

The report will be finalized in a couple of months, but the process will be long. There are still several major questions, starting with whether the “Center” will be a physical space or if it will take another form.

Commissioners noted that there is significant enthusiasm for a Center in the larger LGBTQ+ community. Rachel suggested developing talking points or an elevator pitch for commissioners who have the opportunity to present the idea before city leaders.

Public Health Committee – Amelia is on the mental health group for the Cambridge Public Health survey so that she can keep the LGBTQ+ community on their radar.

Inclusion in public housing – Amelia had completed a report in 2020, but it was submitted to the city manager just before the COVID shutdown. A member of his staff has been reviewing the report more recently and the project will start moving soon, now that COVID restrictions are lifting. The next step is for the report to go to the law department and then back to the city manager’s office, and then Amelia can go back to organizations that participated in the survey to tell them about the findings.

### **Public Comment/Announcements**

Mukesh Baral put a note in the chat saying that, on behalf of Boston CASA, he has “been trying to expand resources for the benefit of Transitional Age (TAY) LGBTQ Youth. We appreciate the support of LGBTQ Commission on trainings so far.”

**Next Meeting: Thursday, June 24, 6:00-7:30**