

**June 25, 2015 meeting minutes
Cambridge GLBT Commission**

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2015

Call to Order.

Kevin Shpritzer recorded these minutes.

Agenda for the June 25 meeting was accepted.

The minutes of the May 28 meeting were approved.

Commissioners Present: Jessica Daniels, Mal Malme, Maya Escobar, Kevin Shpritzer, Aren Stone, Bill Barnert, John Gintell, Neil MacInnes-Barker, Paul Miller, Anna Weick, Kristina Mastropasqua, Rachel Oppenheimer, Steven Lee, Lesley Phillips

Commissioners Absent: (excused) – Bob Parlin – (unexcused) – LaTayna Purnell – (leave of absence) – Maggie Giles

Guests: Chris Burke (Superintendent of Cambridge Police)

I. Police Report

- a. Chris met with Taha Jennings, Aide to the City Manager, and Jackie Phillips, City Training Coordinator, to follow up on getting cultural competency training for municipal employees.
 - i. The City is willing to put some funds toward the training.
 - ii. They are narrowing down the goals for the training and getting closer to identifying a presenter.
 - iii. The idea of a two-tiered training was brought up.
 1. One tier for the entire workforce
 2. A second, additional training for the supervisory level.
 - iv. They will meet again on July 16 and August 20.

II. Event Reports

- a. River Festival and Mayfair went well.
- b. Pride Brunch award recipients:
 - i. Community Recognition Awards
 1. The late *Marcia Diehl*, an activist who worked tirelessly in the queer, feminist, and racial justice movements, and one of the pioneers organizing in the LGBT community of Cambridge with the Cambridge Lavender Alliance.
 2. *Robin Ochs* who is a renowned activist, writer, and speaker in the LGBT community who has contributed greatly to the awareness, understanding, and support of bisexuality.
 - ii. Rose Lipkin Awards
 1. *Andy Robinson* for his unwavering commitment to standing up for the LGBT community at CRLS and beyond, and in particular has changed the hearts and minds of many with his telling of his personal story in assemblies and trainings.

2. *Molly Katz-Christy* for her role as a leader in Project 10-East, the CRLS queer-straight alliance - especially for her work in planning National Coming Out day assemblies, teacher trainings and speaking out in support of her peers.
- iii. Bayard Rustin Service Award
 1. *Corey Yarbrough* and *Quincey Roberts*, who are the co-founders of the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition, an organization dedicated to support of LGBT people of color through community building, activism, support services, and education. These two individuals embody the qualities of Bayard Rustin with activism, personal responsibility, pride, and empowerment
- c. Pride Brunch notes:
 - i. We'd like to add a page onto our website listing previous winners of the awards.
 - ii. Kristina pointed out that attendance was a bit sparse at the event.
 1. Neil suggested reaching out to a younger population.
 2. Aren tabled the increased-outreach discussion for early 2016.

III. **Future Events**

- a. We have a film event coming up in the fall.
- b. The organizing committee is Bob, Maya, Mal, Rachel, Anna, Aren, Jessica, John, and Bill, with Bob taking the lead.
- c. Maya reserved the Lecture Hall at the Library for October 15.

IV. **Strategic Planning Committee**

- a. The goal is to meet and discuss long-term ideas on which we, as a Commission, should focus.
- b. Steven will send out a poll to wrangle members for this committee.

V. **Seniors Project Update**

- a. Bill helped Elysia (Commission intern) fine-tune the slideshow presentation of our project.
- b. Next steps are to discuss the report with the City Manager and Deputy City Manager before sending it to the participating and non-participating Cambridge healthcare organizations as well as the public.

VI. **Housing Committee of the City Council – June 22**

- a. Aren shared updates about the Commission at this meeting.
- b. Neil spoke with Philippe Saad who is interested in speaking to the Commission about LGBT-friendly housing in Boston and perhaps creating a partnership with us.

VII. **Gender Neutral Bathrooms**

- a. In 2012, the City created a policy regarding the inclusion of gender-neutral bathrooms in City buildings as well as other public spaces.
- b. Since that time, no steps have been taken.
- c. John asked the Commission for ideas on how we can get the City to make more progress on this issue.
- d. Bill suggested we do some data collection on our own to help strengthen our case.
- e. Aren thought that we should ask the City to collect said data.

- f. Paul suggested that we should take the lead making phone calls to City buildings and possibly draft our own ordinance to present to the City Council.
- g. Aren suggested the idea of creating an informational postcard of sorts to hand out to public facilities (bars, restaurants, stores, etc.) regarding the benefits of gender-neutral bathrooms.
- h. Anna told us about an app called Refuge Restrooms where people can find safe restrooms around them to access.
- i. We agreed to form the Gender Neutral Bathroom Committee.
- j. Mal, Kristina, John, and Lesley volunteered to join this committee.

VIII. **Human Rights Commission collaboration**

- a. John has been approached by members of the Human Rights Commission about formalizing our relationship with them.
- b. Lesley suggested that we have a joint meeting with both commissions, perhaps in late summer or early fall.
- c. Aren tabled the discussion for a later date, as we need a better idea of the purpose of joining the two commissions together.

IX. **Commissioner Updates**

- a. Maggie has asked to take a leave of absence and hopes to be back in September.
- b. Mike has decided to retire from the Commission as he is mostly based out of Cambridge now.
 - i. Steven and Bill will take over Mike's role as the manager of the email outreach list we have collected over the years.
- c. Paul is leaving the Commission to focus on his work career and other volunteer commitments.
- d. Kara is resigning as she no longer works or lives in Cambridge.

X. **Attendance and Absence Policy**

- a. Our ordinance states that Commissioners will be removed from the Commission after three unexcused absences in a year.
 - i. When Commissioners miss a meeting without contacting the co-chairs, it is considered an unexcused absence.
 - ii. Commissioners are reminded to email the co-chairs if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- b. We discussed the idea that repeated/consistent Commission absences can be problematic, even if they are considered excused.
- c. Paul suggested keeping those who are unable to attend meetings still involved in the Commission in some manner.
 - i. Neil seconded this idea and added the idea of creating a designation such as "ally to the Commission".
- d. Kristina pointed out that it's challenging to work with the Commission without attending meetings. It's easy to feel out-of-the-loop.
- e. Jessica pointed out that non-Commission members can already attend meetings and work with us if they choose, and this is a less complicated way to involve people without having a separate designation.
- f. Lesley reminded us that, as a City Commission, we need to keep ordinances in mind when suggesting changes to our attendance policy.
- g. Aren asked the Strategic Planning Committee to continue this discussion.

XI. Diversity on the Commission

- a. Neil brought up the lack of diversity on the Commission.
- b. He suggested the formation of a Diversity Committee to help address this issue.
- c. The committee would meet quarterly to address the diversity challenge.
- d. After much discussion about the meaning of diversity, we agreed that our goal should be to get ourselves out into the community in a way that makes our Commission attractive to all community members.
- e. The Commission agreed to form the Diversity Committee.
 - i. Aren, Maya, Anna, and Neil volunteered for the committee.

XII. Announcements

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm