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Executive Director

LGBTQ+ Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 24, 2024, at 6:00 P.M.
Location: Hybrid on Zoom and In-person at 51 Inman St.

Present: Chair Bill Barnert, Commissioners Gregory Macdonough, Kat Long, Linden Huhmann, Noelani Kamelamela, Bob Bordone, Caitlin Egleson, Emmy Howe, Finley Foster, Evan Mackay, Sukia Akiba, and Vincent Monrreal

Staff: Executive Director Carolina Almonte, Director of Operations Sarah Binney, LGBTQ+ Program Leader Phoebe Hallahan, LGBTQ+ Research Associate Amelia Joselow

Members of the Public: Zyaire Xamica, Bob Parlin

Absent: Chair Zachary Dresser, Commissioners Cindy Telingator, Mary Gardner, Frank Arce

1. **Call to order**
 - Chair Barnert called this meeting to order at 6:10pm.
2. **Review and approval of agenda**
 - No Commissioners had any additions to the agenda.
3. **Review and approval of April 2024 minutes**
 - Commissioner Macdonough moved to approve the April 2024 minutes. Commissioner Huhmann seconded.
4. **Introductions**
 - Commissioners introduced themselves and shared what they would like to accomplish on the Commission. Commissioners expressed interest in resources for queer families, social events, programs for black and brown LGBTQ+ youth, intergenerational queer programming, and queer healthcare.
5. **Staff Reports**
 - ED Almonte
 - Events:
 - 20th Anniversary of Marriage Equality Event took place on Saturday, May 18. It included speeches from Mayor Simmons and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, a performance by the Boston Gay Men's Chorus on the lawn, and refreshments.

- Cambridge Pride Brunch will be on Saturday, June 8, from 9:00am-11:00am. The event will have brunch catering, an award ceremony, facepainting, poster making, and temporary tattoos. At the conclusion of the event, shuttles will take participants to Boston Pride.
 - Task force update: The LGBTQ+-Friendly Housing Task Force, which ED Almonte is co-chairing and Commissioner Linden is a part of, has been working hard preparing recommendations to share with the City Manager this upcoming the fall. The Task Force hired a consultant to summarize key findings and recommendations to make Cambridge a more welcoming and inclusive place.
 - New Protected Classes: ED Almonte shared that we are waiting for relationship status and family structure to move through the legislature so that they can be added as protected classes to the Human Rights Ordinance and Fair Housing Ordinance in Cambridge. She hopes for an update soon.
 - Budget: The FY25 budget for the LGBTQ+ Commission has been approved by the City Council. The Commission will have \$16,000 in allocated funding.
 - DOO Binney
 - The Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship (CIRC) is having an event called "Cambridge Welcomes" on May 31, from 5:00pm to 8:00pm on the front lawn of the Cambridge Main Library. The goal of the event is to welcome and celebrate Cambridge's immigrant communities. The event will feature food, performances, activities for kids, and a resource fair. Chair Barnert and Commissioner Monrreal volunteered to help out at the event.
 - DOO Binney will send a request for t-shirt sizes to Commissioners and order Commission t-shirts.
 - LGBTQ+ PL Hallahan
 - The Longfellow Pride Picnic will be on Sunday, June 30. The event will be in partnership with the Longfellow National Historic site. The LGBTQ+ Commission will provide the catering. Commissioner Kamelamela volunteered to table at the event.
 - LGBTQ+ RA Joselow
 - RA Joselow provided a general overview of research position and previous projects. Overall goal of RA position is to identify issues and needs of Cambridge LGBTQ+ community through engagement and providing proposal/s to Commission. Projects highlighted were LGBTQ+ youth in out-of-school programs, LGBTQ+ in affordable housing, LGBTQ+ in healthcare (report done, next steps include editing, law department approval, Story Map, presentations for Commission, healthcare leaders, community/public.)
 - Commissioner Monrreal asked about how this report relates to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Equality Index. RA Joselow shared that the HRC Index only reviews based on written policies, rather than patient experience. The goal of the report is to learn from patients about their experience in the healthcare facilities.

6. Working Group Reports

- Chair Barnert explained all of the existing working groups and invited new Commissioners to join them. Working groups must post agendas in advance and take minutes, in compliance with Open Meeting Law.

- **Housing-** Commission Huhmann reviewed two ongoing efforts of the Housing Working Group
 - Zoning petition to enable households of unrelated people to live together in Cambridge:
 - Cambridge’s zoning ordinance currently doesn’t enable households with more than 3 unrelated people to live together in most housing in Cambridge. The LGBTQ+ Commission’s Housing Working Group has been working towards getting the city to remove this restriction for the past 2 years.
 - Since our April LGBTQ+ Commission meeting, two more meetings were held on the Zoning Petition.
 - On May 7, the Planning Board met to discuss the Zoning Petition and ended up sending it to the City Council with a favorable recommendation.
 - In May, the Ordinance Committee of the City Council met to discuss the Zoning Petition and 7 city council members were present. They sent the petition to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.
 - LGBTQ+ Inclusivity for City of Cambridge Housing Programs
 - At the April Commission meeting, the Commission voted on a set of recommendations to make the City of Cambridge’s affordable housing programs could be more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people, with a focus on gender inclusivity and inclusivity of diverse household and relationship structures.
 - Commissioner Huhmann presented that set of recommendations to the LGBTQ+ Friendly Housing Task Force on Tuesday, May 21.
 - There was one suggestion about whether the City could improve how it handles names for gender-diverse people, such as enabling an applicant or resident to specify a preferred name in addition to their legal name and using the preferred name when possible.
 - Commissioner Huhmann will work on drafting a recommendation for this and will send it to ED Almonte.
- **Public Health and Safety-** DOO Binney reviewed the public health and safety guidelines approved by the Commission in the July 2023 Commission meeting. Commissioner Monrreal volunteered to be a part of this working group in the future.
- **Senior Working Group-** Commissioner Akiba asked about a working group for programs and resources for LGBTQ+ seniors. Chair Barnert explained that there is not a working group, but PL Hallahan organizes events for LGBTQ+ Seniors at the Cambridge Citywide Senior Center. Commissioners Akiba, Monrreal, and Mackay, RA Joselow, and Zyaire Xamica expressed interest in creating a seniors working group.

7. Announcements

- Commissioner Monrreal shared about zir organization “Space Alt Tech + Nabar Society” and encouraged Commissioners to join future events.

- Commissioner Howe shared about “Camp Out,” a summer camp for kids from queer families and LGBTQ+ kids. This camp happened in years past and is being revived for this summer. The camp is still looking for counselors, CITs, and campers to register.
 - Commissioner Akiba shared that she is hoping to create a Cambridge Black Pride in 2025.
8. **Next Commission Meeting:** Thursday, June 27, 2024, 6pm-7:30pm, Hybrid at 51 Inman St. 2nd floor and on Zoom. During the break in meetings in August, the Commission will be holding a social gathering for Commissioners and Staff.
 9. **Adjournment:** Chair Barnert called to adjourn the meeting at 7:31pm. Commissioner Kamelamela seconded.