



Annual Report for 2017

I. Executive Summary

The Commission name was officially changed from *GLBT Commission* to *LGBTQ+ Commission* to reflect modern terminology with the + added to be inclusive of the many variations of gender identity, expression and sexual orientation. The Commission initiated the change in 2016, after careful consideration of many options. The Ordinance was modified accordingly and approved by the City Council in February 2017. Kimm Topping and Minh Nguyen conducted a training for the Commission on the meanings of + so that all Commissioners would be able to articulate and answer questions about its significance.

We completed part 1 of our survey of policies and practices for LGBTQ+ seniors housed in Cambridge Housing Authority facilities. We shared the report, "LGBT Inclusive Housing for Older Adults in Cambridge: Part 1: A Review of the Policies and Practices of the Cambridge Housing Authority", with the Housing Authority and published it on our web pages. We prepared and posted a Story Map of best practices and resources for housing and healthcare for LGBTQ+ adults.

We started a project to survey youth out-of-school activities on their LGBTQ+ policies and practices.

We continued our outreach and visibility by having tables with Commission information at several public events. We also made presentations or participated in panels at other organization's events.

We co-sponsored and co-organized with the Mayor's office a Town Meeting titled: "Come Out of the Margins" and the annual Pride Brunch where Community Recognition Awards and the Bayard Rustin Service Award were given.

Partnering with the Immigrants Rights and Citizenship Commission we conducted an event about LGBTQ+ Asylum Seekers.

The Commission has a part-time Research Associate. Through mid-September this position was filled by Elysia Chandler, who executed the surveys and reports. The hours for the position were increased, and responsibility was augmented to formally include liaison with other Commissions and departments where we have common interests. Advertising for the position yielded 82 applicants, we interviewed 7 and our first-choice person, Amelia Joselow will start in mid-January.

Supervision of our Research Associate is shared by the co-chairs, John Gintell and Aren Stone, with support from Nancy Schlacter - Executive Director of the Human Rights and Immigrants Commission, and Taha Jennings, Assistant to the City Manager's office. Much of the work outlined above is done by Commissioners who volunteer many hours of their time outside of regular meetings.

II. Event participation

Presentations / Tables in outside organization conferences/fairs

March 28 – **Ethos**, a seniors services organization in Boston held an information fair. John Gintell and Elysia Chandler participated with a table. They showcased the Storymap.

April 12 - **Somerville/Cambridge Elder Services (SCES) Fair** is an annual wellness and resources fair held in Somerville. John Gintell staffed a table to share our work with participants.

April 13 - The Commission and the Mayor's office co-sponsored a Town Meeting in City Hall - **Come Out of the Margins**. Aren Stone and John Gintell worked with the Mayor's office on planning the meeting. About 100 citizens attended and there were many city staff persons there. This was an opportunity to share some of our work. After presentations by Mayor Simmons, the Commission, and others, the attendees broke into groups to discuss concerns they have in Cambridge, especially due to discrimination or challenges because of being "in the margins".

June 10 - **Pride Brunch**: This annual event is sponsored by the Commission and the Mayor's Office occurs on the morning of Boston Pride. Silas Weiner, Aren Stone, Bill Barnert, John Gintell, Susan Bernstein, and Jessica Daniels worked with the Mayor's office to organize the event. Students from CRLS performed scenes from "Angels in America". The following awards were given:

Bayard Rustin Service Award to the founders of the "Rainbow Times": Grisel Martinez Ocasio and Nicole Lasbomb.

Community Recognition Awards to Cambridge Public Schools employee Melody Brazo, Black Lives Matter Cambridge, and the cast and crew of the CRLS production of "Angels in America".

Rose Lipkin Award was given to CRLS senior Calvin Lyster.

Nov 9 - **LGBTQ+ Immigrants and Asylum Seekers: Challenges, Experiences, Freedom**: The Commission, partnering with the Commission on Immigrant Rights & Citizenship, held this event in the library. Attorneys specializing in immigrant rights, asylees from Jamaica and Uganda, and an asylum seeker from Cameroon were featured. Bill Barnert, Greg MacDonough, Susan Bernstein, Noe Kamelamela, Kimm Topping, Aren Stone, and Elysia Chandler were the Commission organizers.

Dec 9 - **Junior State of America** held a conference for young people. Silas Weiner and Bill Barnert were part of a panel focusing on LGBTQ+ rights.

Dec 12: **Mass LGBTQ Youth Commission** meeting: John Gintell and Elysia Chandler gave a brief presentation on the Youth Out-of-School Activities project and were panelists in a session about Youth Homelessness.

Welcome / Information Tables at Public Events

At each of these events, Commissioners staffed a table with informational literature, announcements about upcoming events, and give-aways with our logo. Festivals and other public events provide a great opportunity to inform the public about the Commission and to talk with people about LGBTQ+ issues.

MayFair - Sunday, May 7, **Youth Pride** - Saturday, May 20, **River Festival** - Saturday, June 3,
OctoberFest - Sunday, October 8

III. Seniors Housing Project

At the end of 2016 we completed the survey of LGBTQ+ policies and practices with Cambridge Housing Authority staff, met with CHA staff to share results, completed the report and created a story map giving resources and other information. These were published in early 2017 are on our web pages. In 2018 we will extend the survey to smaller organizations offering housing facilities and associated services for seniors and also meet with some of the tenant councils in CHA buildings.

IV. Youth Out-of-School Activities Project

We identified and surveyed organizations that provide youth out-of-school activities to learn about their policies and practices with regard to LGBTQ+ youth. We will continue collecting data, preparing a report, and then follow-up with the organizations.

V. All Gender Bathrooms

In 2012 at the Commission's request via the City Council, the City Manager created a working group which drafted a policy issued by the City Manager about Gender Neutral Bathrooms. More work is needed to implement this policy. This year several members of the Commission joined the Human Rights Commission and the Licensing Commission and planned a training for commercial establishments for early 2018 on the recently passed Public Accommodations Law regarding Transgender people (which is in jeopardy due to a State-wide referendum in 2018). LGBTQ+ Commissioner Kimm Topping will be one of the trainers. We expect to devote more focus on this topic in 2018 especially city buildings and information about signage.

VI. Relationship to Police Department

We continue to have an excellent relationship with the Police Department. Det. Brian O'Connor, LGBTQ+ Commission Police Dept. Liaison, comes to our meetings and gives a report on various activities. Acting Commission Larabee attended one meeting and newly appointed Commissioner Bard attended two meetings, each emphasizing that they want to work with us. We also had a guest from the Police Advisory board attend one meeting. We have requested that the training done at the Lowell Police Academy on working with LGBTQ+ residents be extended to the Fire Department and EMT organizations.

VI. LGBTQ Cultural Competency Training or City Employees

Several years ago the Commission requested that the city train all city employees on working with LGBTQ+ residents. Happily, this training was developed and completed this year. Aren Stone and John Gintell served on a team to review vendors, develop training ideas, and give feedback during this process. The Commission was very happy to work with the city and the Fenway Institute, the chosen vendor, on defining, planning, and piloting this new training, "Inclusive Service for All: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Cultural Competency Training" for city employees. Several Commissioners attended sessions and reported that it was excellent.

VII. Subcommittees

Our subcommittees include: Communications, Strategic Planning, Diversity, and All-gender Bathrooms. Ad-hoc committees are created as needed.

VIII. Commission Roster

Commissioners for 2017: Susan Bernstein, Rachel Oppenheimer, Aren Stone, Maya Escobar, Kimm Topping, Jessica Daniels, John Gintell, Linda Daniels, Bill Barnert, Mal Malme, Anna Weick, Steven Lee, Bob Parlin, Lesley Phillips, Silas Weiner, Kate Grams, Abby Duker, Noe Kamelamela, Greg MacDonough, and Devontae Freeland.