

Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission Meeting Minutes December 9, 2021 (rescheduled from November)

In Attendance: Nefyn Meissner (co-chair), John Gintell (co-chair), Susan Bernstein, Bill Barnert, Aren Stone, Linden Huhmann, Steven Lee, Bob Bordone, Soltan Bryce, Amelia Joselow (Research Associate), Jennifer Matthews (Executive Director), Lauryn McNair, Kate Grams, Lesley Phillips, Rachel Oppenheimer

Absent: Greg MacDonough, Noelani Gabriel, Noelani Kamelamela, Cameron Van Fossen, Warner Santiago

On Leave: Katy Harrison

Public: Bob Parlin, Jessica Daniels, Nancy Wechler

Welcome

Minute Taker – Rachel Oppenheimer

Introductions

Approve Minutes from October - Approved

Approve / Modify Agenda

Introduction: Jennifer Matthews, new Executive Director of the Commission

- Jennifer introduced herself, shared her background, and explained her role with the Commission.

Co-Chair Elections - Currently no commissioner up for co-chair. Nefyn and John will remain in these positions until at least April 2022.

- Discussed redefining role/expectation for this position and what leadership can look like moving forward. This will be an ongoing discussion.
- It was suggested there be a regular minute taker rather than asking for a volunteer each meeting. For example, one person agree to this role for at least one year.
- Suggested a template be created to make each meeting's notes standard across meetings.

Report from Amelia:

- **Community Center** – This project continues to move forward well. There is a plan to ask the city manager to use an existing space for this purpose. Amelia is working on a proof of concept to this effect. Amelia and Jennifer met with Susan Pacheco (Executive Director for the Cambridge Council on Aging) to discuss sharing space and a possible collaboration i.e. an intergenerational

LGBTQ+ group. The research is mostly done with some minor analysis and writing to complete and then a presentation will be created for the city manager.

- **All-Gender Bathrooms** – Discussed how to get signage out to places and potential costs of this signage, hoping to have city help fund signage as an incentive for businesses this but may be cost-prohibitive. Amelia has created a needs/interest survey to send to Cambridge businesses and hopes to get this sent out January 2022.
- **Other** - Better able to update the Commission's website and will continue to do so. Jennifer added that she is in conversation with the recently hired director for training for the city regarding SOGI training in general, and for another city department that recently asked for assistance in LGBTQ+ training.

Commissioner Recruitment:

- There have been three applications thus far, deadline date was this past Monday 12/06/21. Deadline now extended to 01/03/2022 in an effort to garner more applications. The Commission was asked to use their networks for recruitment. There are *** openings to fill.
- Emphasized continuing to improve our diversity within the Commission. Encouraged Commissioners to add potential organizations to existing Excel sheet created last year.

Potential Collab: The Massachusetts Human Rights Coalition (Bill Barnert)

- Bill asked that, at our next meeting, we discuss potentially joining this coalition. He shared the other groups currently in the coalition and shared why he feels this could be a positive collaboration.

Potential Art Project (Bill Barnert)

- Bill discussed an art project that is currently recruiting participants, "Jukebox", by artist Elisa Hamilton. It will consist of a 1960's jukebox that plays – instead of 45's – audio stories from Cantabrigians. For now the project is looking for only 25 individuals. Elisa is hoping that a few members of the LGBTQ+ Commission will be part of the first 25 stories. If interested, contact her at [Hello@FoundryJukebox.org](mailto>Hello@FoundryJukebox.org). Bill showed some slides from the Jukebox presentation and encouraged people to get in touch with him if they are interested in being a part of this project.

Teen Health Survey - Request from local parent (Bill Barnert)

- Discussed a recent question put to the Commission via the Facebook page regarding recent teen survey at CRLS regarding genderqueer and female-identified students. Amelia shared she is the LGBTQ+ liaison to the Mental Health Working group as part of the Community Health Improvement Plan and confirmed this issue is currently being addressed in the working group. It was decided to respond to this Facebook comment that we are, indeed, involved in this discussion via Amelia's liaison role. Susan has a connection who may be able to advise and will connect Amelia to this person.

Virtual Senior Center (Bill Barnert)

- Bill showed a brief presentation about starting this group. He asks if any Commissioner is interested in joining the effort to get this going to get in touch with him.

Cross-town LGBTQ+ Groups (Bill Barnert)

- We don't have a name yet, but Bill is part of a new cross-town collaboration group of LGBTQ+ municipal & community groups. Born from the collaborations from the Starlight Square events, the group is a way for different groups to share information (including publicizing each other's events), and collaboration on projects as they come up. Recently, we collaborated on events for Trans Day of Remembrance, and will be meeting again in January to decide where we're going next. And to think of a name for the group.

The group currently has members from the Arlington LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission, Bridgewater Communities for Civil Rights, Belmont LGBTQ Alliance, Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission, Greater Boston PFLAG, LexPride, Network for Social Justice, & the Somerville LGBTQ+ Liaison.

Anyone who wants to join should contact Bill Barnert <TheBilby@gmail.com>.

Reports from Working Groups

- Communications (Bill Barnert) - Haven't met recently, no report.
- Youth Working Group (Bill Barnert) – This group had started to interview local GSAs. However, only one GSA was interviewed right before COVID shut this down. Bill will contact the others in this working group to discuss getting this going again.
- Diversity (Rachel Oppenheimer) - Haven't met recently, no report. Discussed potential assistance from Jennifer in getting the Commission into whatever anti-racism/anti-oppression training the city provides.

- **Events (Amelia Joselow)** - An email will be sent to this working group to begin gathering ideas for 2022 events.
- **Public Health & Safety (Nefyn Meissner)** - Haven't met recently, no report. An invite to schedule a time to meet January 2022 will be sent in the coming weeks. We plan to have the new Cambridge Police Department, Commission Elow, present along with the public health liaison Mary Kowalczyk. Nefyn also shared that Commission Warner Santiago was asked, and he accepted, to serve on an advisory community board.
- **Strategic Planning (Steven Lee)** – Haven't met recently, no report. Gave brief history of the creation of this working group and its role. There was a call for a Commissioner to volunteer to lead this group with Steven's exit. Steven plans to upload his notes related to this working group, along with his notes for the Recruiting working group.

Future Meetings & Events

Public Comment / Announcements

- Several Commissioners shared their thoughts and thanks or those leaving the Commission.

Next Meeting: January 27, 2021