

LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission Minutes
Thursday, December 20, 2018
Jefferson Cutter House, 611 Massachusetts Avenue, Lower Level

Commissioners present: Bill Gardiner, Mel Goldsipe (vice-chair), Brooks Harrelson, Lisa Krinsky, Helene Newberg, Anna Watson (chair)
Absent: Julia Forsythe

Guest: Bonnie McFarlane (strategic planning facilitator)

Meeting called to order at 6:07 pm.

Commissioner Goldsipe moved to adopt the following calendar of monthly meetings for 2019, and Commissioner Newberg seconded: Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 14, Apr. 11, May 16, Jun. 6, Jul. 18, Aug. 15, Sep. 19, Oct. 17, Nov. 21, Dec. 19. Motion passed unanimously.

Facilitator Bonnie McFarlane paired up Commissioners and had them run through a series of questions designed to help them understand each other's interests and working styles, to enhance their experience and effectiveness on the Commission. The group suggested that it would be helpful to incorporate the questions into an information form for all Commissioners and volunteers to complete. A draft form was developed.

The Commission reviewed its activities and partnerships from the current year, which were included in a report submitted to the Special Town Meeting in December:
<https://rainbowarlington.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/rainbow-commission-stm-report-dec-2018.pdf>

Commissioner Goldsipe reported that STM voted to add 2 optional Commissioners, increasing the size of the Commission from 7 to 9 in the coming year. The Commission can contract down to 8 or 7 as the needs of the community change.

Commissioners discussed their desired role in recruiting and selecting new Commissioners. The School Committee appoints 1. Town Manager appoints all others and may invite a couple of current Commissioners to participate in the interview process. Commissioner Watson will speak with Christine Bongiorno regarding the process.

Commissioner Goldsipe will use previous advertisements to draft a suggested job ad for the Commission to review and approve for submission to Christine. Commissioners noted the current a lack of demographic diversity, including the fact that there is no representation of gay men, people of color, persons with disabilities, nor wide range of ages or income levels. Commissioners expressed a hope that the new appointments might address these gaps and also bring in people who would be interested in chairing the commission in the future and leading event planning and volunteer management.

Three main areas were been identified in previous meetings and discussions as requiring attention:

- Structure of the Commission: Membership; Processes; Decision-Making Clarity; Scheduled Meetings and Retreats
- Resources: Commissioners and Volunteers; Funds; Collaborations
- Agreements on Activities and Programs: Review of the current list; Add, enhance, or delete activities; Create a 1 to 3 year plan

Facilitator Bonnie McFarlane led Commissioners through the Backwards Mapping Process to examine how well activities and programs support an organization's mission and vision, and to identify changes that might be needed.

Then Commissioners broke into two groups, one of which discussed activities for 2019, and one of which discussed a structure for the committee. The following section is the report from the subgroup that focused on activities for 2019. The group will need to determine what success would look like for each of these items and how they would go about measuring that.

Proposed 2019 Activities

- Submit required annual report in December. Have a Commission member give a verbal synopsis of the report to the Town Meeting in April.
- Submit required annual budget request to the Town in November.
- Hold a Pride Event in June
- Have a Booth at Town Day in September—Commissioners to take shifts.
- Hold an educational event, such as a Parent Forum on LGBTQIA+ issues.
- Hold an event to celebrate one of the LGBTQIA+ holidays.
- Update the Municipal Equality Index for the Town.
- Develop and maintain online information and resources.
- Plan for how to handle unplanned events and hate incidents.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

- Provide support for LGBTQIA families.
- Review the Human Rights Commission's needs assessment survey of LGBTQIA issues, which was done several years ago.

Commission Structure and Roles

The group suggested creating subcommittees, which would be headed by Commissioners and would recruit outside volunteers to be members of the subcommittees. The following subcommittees were suggested: Events, Collaborations, Training, Systems/Policy (HRC Municipal Equality Index), Advocacy, Social Media/Visibility/Resources

The Commissioners agreed that the current system of having the Chair and Vice-chair handle approval for most event co-sponsorships with other organizations and groups is working well, and should continue.

A suggestion was made that it would be good to have liaisons or representation from the Arlington Housing Authority and the Disability Commission.

Other Discussions:

Commissioners Watson and Goldsipe volunteered to write a letter to the editor for the *Advocate* thanking Police Chief Ryan for his leadership on LGBTQIA+ issues in honor of his retirement.

The Commission will need to develop rules and regulations to submit to the Town of Arlington. It would be useful to get the rules and regulations of other Commissions to use as a template. This will be a good tool for creating clarity about decision-making within the Commission.

Several people mentioned that it would be useful to examine and possibly restructure the agenda of the Commission Meetings for more effective use of the time available.

Next Steps:

The Commission would like to schedule a retreat for early spring to wrap-up the planning process that was begun in June 2018. Commissioner Watson will speak with Christine Bongiorno about finding funding for the event. Commissioner Goldsipe will set up a doodle poll to select the best possible date for the retreat.

Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Minutes submitted by Facilitator Bonnie McFarlane and Commissioner Mel Goldsipe.