



LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission: History, Authorities and Operations

February 16, 2023

OVERVIEW



- History and Commission's Charge
- Membership
- Program Areas
- Operations: Open Meeting Law, Public Records, and Conflict of Interest.

LGBTQIA+ RAINBOW COMMISSION'S HISTORY & CHARGE



LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission Background

Article 13 of the 2017 Annual Town Meeting

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town Bylaws to establish a Pride or GLBTQ Commission to advocate for a culture of respect, promote GLBTQ positive policies and to monitor progress toward equality of all persons with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity within the Town; setting forth the membership, duties and responsibilities, administration and requirements of such Commission; or take any action related thereto.

(Inserted by the Select Board)

LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission

Background

- In 2014, Anna Watson, the eventual first elected Chair of the Commission, approached the Human Rights Commission about the creation of a central place in town to post LGBTQIA+ events, to provide information about issues important to the LGBTQIA+ population and the gathering of advocates to address and support equity affirming policies.
- A 2015-16 survey conducted as part of the Town's Vision 2020 initiative revealed a strong level of community wide support for the establishment of a Commission that would focus on issues important to the LGBTQIA+ community and all residents of the town of Arlington.
- As shown in the previous slide, a warrant article to establish the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission was submitted to the 2017 Annual Town Meeting. The article was unanimously supported by the Select Board and was passed at Town Meeting with 94.03% voting in favor of the Commission's establishment.

Scope of Charge

The Town's bylaw indicates that the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission was established to “promote equality-affirming policies regarding the full spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities, and to bring greater visibility and empowerment to the LGBTQIA+ population through education, advocacy, and collaboration with other Town agencies, schools, and community groups.”

- Title II, Art. 13, Sec. 1 of the Town Bylaws

LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission Membership

When the Commission was first established in 2017, it consisted of 7 members with terms that were staggered by year for initial terms only, with two members serving one year, two members serving two years and three members serving three years. All subsequent terms of service are three years. Pursuant to the bylaw, six of the members were appointed by the Town Manager (subject to approval by the Select Board) and one member was appointed by the School Committee.

At the Town's Special Town Meeting in 2018, the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission bylaw (Title II, Article 13) was amended to increase the Commission's membership from a fixed number of 7 to a flexible membership number of 7-9. As amended, the Town Manager may, by the majority vote of the Rainbow Commission, appoint up to two additional members, for a maximum total of 9 members, with a maximum of 8 appointed by the Town Manager.

At the time that the Warrant Article came before the Select Board in 2018, the Board noted that the Commission had already established a record of progress and a significant workload in its first year and that because the Commission represents a wide range of groups, an expansion of membership would allow for greater representation among such groups.

(Report of the Select Board, Article 4, 2018 Special Town Meeting)



Operations

1. The LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission shall not meet or conduct business without the presence of a quorum. A majority of the members of the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission at any given time shall constitute a quorum and the Commission shall approve its actions by majority vote of the quorum. (Title II, Article 13, Sec. 3 of the Town Bylaws)
2. To support the work of the entire Commission, there are several smaller, non-quorum numbered working groups made up of Commission members and Commission liaisons that focus on the following issues:
 - a. Education;
 - b. Community Engagement;
 - c. Town Systems and Policies;
 - d. Community Advocacy;
 - e. Communications; and
 - f. Finance.
3. The Commission generally meets on the third Thursday of each month from 6:30 - 8:30 pm and the meetings are currently held in a hybrid fashion. In person attendance is at the Arlington Community Center and the meetings may also be attended by livestream online via Zoom. All Rainbow Commission meetings are open to the public.

PROGRAM AREAS



Program Areas

Charge

Promote equality-affirming policies regarding the full spectrum of sexual orientation and gender identities.



Program

Co-Hosted LGBTQIA+ Community Conversation with the Arlington Public Schools' Rainbow Task Force and the AHRC. Highlighted the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students and staff from APS.

Program Areas

Charge

Bring greater visibility and empowerment to the LGBTQIA+ population through education, advocacy and collaboration with other Town agencies, schools and community groups.

Program

Commissioners and their families participated in the Arlington Heights Window Painting with QSA, GSA and the Rainbow Alliance student groups from APS.



Program Areas

Charge

Bring greater visibility and empowerment to the LGBTQIA+ population through education, advocacy and collaboration with other Town agencies, schools and community groups.

Program

Commissioners hosted over 300 people for Pride Festival at Town Hall Gardens -
“Arlington values equity, diversity and inclusion.”



Program Areas

Charge

Promote equality-affirming policies regarding the full spectrum of sexual orientation and gender identities.



Program

Co-sponsored a candlelight vigil in honor of Transgender Day of Remembrance to honor the lives of transgender and gender diverse individuals that have been lost to bias related violence.

Program Areas

Charge

Promote equality-affirming policies...through education, advocacy and collaboration with other Town agencies, schools and community groups.

Program

Submitted a warrant article to Town Meeting to amend Arlington's domestic partnership bylaw to make it more equitable for domestic partnerships of more than two people and successfully advocated for its passage.



Regulations, Open Meeting Law, Public Records, and Conflict of Interest



Legal Department Guides

For Detailed Open Meeting and Conflict of Interest Guidance, including OML Checklists and links to resources, refer to:

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/legal>

Conduct of Meetings & Members

Conduct of Meetings

- Chairs are Afforded Considerable Discretion
- The Open Meeting Law Affords Significant Latitude on the Conduct of Meetings

Conduct of Members

- Act as a Public Body