

**MINUTES
LGBTQIA+ COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING APRIL 20, 2021**

Present: Chairman Anthony Mangiafico, Commissioners Sal Uccello, Philip Pessina (left 5:59 p.m.), Dolly Haddad, Beth Shapiro, Christine Santacroce, Sandy Aldieri, Cayes Jarda, Dan Barry, and Laura Timmons (arrived at 5:41 p.m.) Staff: Assistant General Counsel Christopher Forte

Members of the Public: Matthew Phillips, Jennifer Billingsley, Haley Stafford, Kaya Cook, and Kitty Guo.

1. Call to Order By Chair

Meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:36 p.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes for the March 16, 2021 Special Meeting of the LGBTQIA+ Commission.

MOTION: Commissioner Pessina made a motion to approve the minutes for the March 16, 2021 Special Meeting of the LGBTQIA+ Commission. Commissioner Haddad seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved at 5:36 p.m. Commissioner Timmons was absent for the vote.

3. Public Session on Agenda Items. Assistant General Counsel Forte informed all present that while this is now a Commission, which is more formal than the previous Advisory Committee, the Commission has always been one that is more casual and encourages community participation at all points during the meeting, not just the Public Session, and encouraged all people present to participate. No other discussion occurred.

4. New Business.

A. Establishment of Agenda Items and Priorities for the Commission. Assistant General Counsel Forte informed the Commission that this item is the time for Commissioners to discuss what their goals are for the Commission, and what priorities they will have in the next year.

Commissioner Santacroce raised the idea of having an art installation on the green located at the corner of Grand Street and Main Street. The goal would be to have it set up for June this year. Commissioner Santacroce has been working with a sponsor company to cover the costs of the installation. Commissioners Haddad and Jarda stated that this idea sounded great and that it is great to get the community, and community artists involved. Commissioner Pessina stated that this sounded like an outstanding idea, and Commissioner Aldieri stated that she would be happy to share all the photos that were taken during Pride 2019 to display. Commissioner Barry stated that he wanted to make sure that this installation and the information was secure and could not be hacked or stolen.

RECEIVED
APR 21 AM 11:08
TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, OH

Assistant General Counsel Forte informed the Commission that the property in question was owned by the City and is leased to CHC, so permission from both the City and CHC would be required in order to move this forward.

MOTION: Commissioner Santacroce made a motion to recommend that the Grand and Main Street Art Installation be added to the agenda and to recommend approval by the City of Middletown. Commissioner Jarda seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved at 5:53 p.m.

Commissioner Haddad then stated that she loves how visible Middletown Pride is, and would like to see if the Commission could create a safe-space sticker or something that local businesses can display in their windows to show that their business is a safe space. Commissioner Aldieri suggested that they could display a Middletown Pride sticker. Commissioner Uccello recommended that we reach out to the Connecticut Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce to see if they have a similar program. Commissioner Timmons stated her preference that businesses show that they sponsor Middletown Pride, and actually contribute to Middletown Pride or the LGBTQIA community in order to receive the sticker. Mr. Phillips informed the Commission that after a google search, he found a lot of ideas of logos and types of displays that could be used. Commissioner Barry wanted to ensure that there was a statement of values behind the sticker or some ascertainable standard for how these stickers are doled out. Commissioner Haddad then clarified her statement, stating that it makes an impact seeing a sticker indicating that the business is a safe space, so would want that to be available. Commissioner Aldieri stated that we should table this idea until after Pride 2021 in June is over, so the Commission can focus on Middletown Pride.

MOTION: Commissioner Haddad made a motion to recommend that an item called Safe Space Businesses be added to the agenda moving forward. Commissioner Santacroce seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved at 6:10 p.m. Commissioner Pessina was absent for the vote.

B. Middletown Pride 2021.

1. Selection of Performers for Middletown Pride Showcase Concerts for 2021. Assistant General Counsel Forte informed the Commission that the decision was made at the end of February and beginning of March to change the format of Pride for entirely virtual to a hybrid virtual and in-person event. The decision was made then to have two shows this year, instead of only one like in 2019, so that with the COVID-19 restrictions, more people would have the opportunity to come out and see a show and be a part of Middletown Pride 2021. Applications for performers opened in March and closed on April 12. Like in 2019, Commissioners Aldieri and Uccello and Mr. Phillips was asked to review the applications and provide their recommendations to the Commission. Commissioner Uccello was unable to assist this year, and instead Commissioner Aldieri

and Mr. Phillips reviewed the applications and provided their recommendations to the Commission for review and approval.

Mr. Phillips stated that in reviewing the applications, weight was given to the drag performers who have been actively performing during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the lineup presented includes two four hour shows and includes four bands.

MOTION: Commissioner Timmons made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed performer lineup for the two Middletown Pride Showcase Concerts. Commissioner Santacroce seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously at 6:23 p.m. Commissioner Pessina was absent for the vote.

2. **Update from Staff.** Assistant General Counsel Forte updated the Commission on the many updates regarding Pride 2021 since last month's meeting, including that the organizers of Pride are working and meeting with all relevant City department to ensure Pride will be implemented according to plan. AGC Forte also told the Commissioners to encourage people and businesses that they know to sponsor and volunteer at Middletown Pride, and to also encourage them to submit videos to our Virtual Pride Parade. AGC Forte also answered questions from the Commissioners regarding Pride 2021.
3. **Update from the Middletown High School Gay Straight Alliance.** Kaya Cook and Kitty Guo, the president and vice president of the Middletown High School Gay Straight Alliance, updated the Commission on the activism that they have been performing in the past month. The GSA has been working on their video submission for the Virtual Pride Parade, as well as their pronoun presentation for June 1. The GSA also is sharing their video with the faculty at Middletown High School. Finally, the GSA stated that since both Kaya and Kitty are seniors, they will attend next month with the newly elected president and vice president of the GSA.
4. **Update from the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce.** Ms. Stafford informed the Commission that submissions for the Virtual Pride Parade are slow, and encourages Commissioners to get the word out to people to submit videos. Ms. Stafford also informed the Commission on the Chamber's efforts to get the flags up throughout downtown by June 1, and that they have been working with the City on a weekly basis to provide logistics and support for Pride.
5. **Update from the Russell Library.** Jennifer Billingsley updated the Commission on the many virtual events that will be occurring during Pride 2021, including the Trans 101 presentation and the idea of a virtual panel on June 24th involving Commissioner Timmons as well as Andrea

Vickie Boisseau.

6. Update from Wesleyan University. Not present, no updates.

C. New Agenda Items. No action taken.

5. Old Business. None.

6. Adjournment.

MOTION: Commissioner Santacroce made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Aldieri seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m. Commissioner Pessina was absent for the vote.