

**MINUTES
LGBTQIA+ COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING JULY 18, 2023**

Present: Chair Steven Kovach, Vice Chair Jennifer Billingsley, Commissioners, Sandy Aldieri, Dolly Haddad, Beth Shapiro, Laura Timmons, Dan Barry, Christine Santacroce, and Assistant General Counsel Christopher Forte.

Members of the Public: Robin Kamp, Mia (aka Robert Crowley), Christine Rebstock, Ethel De Luxe (aka Jeremy Michaud).

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Kovach called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.
2. **Approval of the Minutes for the May 16, 2023, and June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting of the LGBTQIA+ Commission.**

MOTION: Commissioner Haddad made a motion to approve the minutes for the May 16, 2023 and June 20, 2023 meetings. Commissioner Aldieri seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:35 p.m.

3. **Public Session on Agenda Items.** Robin Kamp from CT Forest and Parks introduced themselves to the Commission and asked for participation in Connecticut's Trail Days event on June 2, 2024, which would include guided hikes, and a general time for the community to hike on designated trails. Commissioners Shapiro and Haddad were interested in working with them.
4. **New Business.**

- A. **Nominations for and Election of Chair and Vice Chair.** Commissioner Kovach was nominated to serve as Chair from July 2023 through June 2024 and Commissioner Billingsley was nominated to serve as Vice-Chair from July 2023 through June 2024.

MOTION: Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to close nominations for Chair. Commissioner Haddad seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:46 p.m.

MOTION: Commissioner Billingsley made a motion to elect Commissioner Kovach as Chair. Commissioner Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:46 p.m.

MOTION: Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to close nominations for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Santacroce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:47 p.m.

If you require special accommodations for any meeting, please call the ADA Coordinator at (860) 638-4540, (voice) or (860) 638-4812 (TDD/TTY), or the Town Clerk's Office at (860) 638-4910 at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to elect Commissioner Billingsley as Vice-Chair. Commissioner Santacroce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:47 p.m.

B. Creation of Subcommittee for the Middletown Pride Scholarship Program (Jennifer Billingsley, Beth Shapiro, Nina Vasquez-Rosa, and Trevor Charles.)

MOTION: Commissioner Haddad made a motion to create a subcommittee for the Middletown Pride Scholarship Program with Jennifer Billingsley, Beth Shapiro, Nina Vasquez-Rosa and Trevor Charles as members. Commissioner Aldieri seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:51 p.m.

C. Holding of Meetings Hybrid or In-Person.

MOTION: Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to continue to hold meetings in a hybrid manner, both in-person in Room 208 and virtually. Commissioner Timmons seconded the motion. The Commissioners discussed, and agreed, on the importance of hybrid meetings for the Commission. The motion passed unanimously at 5:54 p.m.

D. Middlesex United Way Grant (AGC Forte). AGC Forte informed the Commission that he was able to obtain a \$10,000 grant from the Middlesex United Way to assist with the funding for the LGBTQIA+ Commission's monthly community events and our youth programs with Q+.

E. Submitted Applications for Proposed Events. AGC Forte informed the Commission that Brianna Skowera is planning a trivia night on August 23, 2023 at the Middletown Recreation Center from 6-8 pm. Budget of no more than \$500.

MOTION: Commissioner Billingsley made a motion to approve the event as presented. Commissioner Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:59 p.m.

5. Old Business.

A. Band Night at Wadsworth Mansion on July 20 from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm (Commissioner Aldieri). Commissioner Aldieri provided an update on the event and requested that the commissioners promote it.

B. Review of Queer Speed Dating and Friending! Monday, June 5, 2023, from 6pm – 10 pm at Relish. (Commissioner Jarda). No updates.

C. Review of Book Discussion at Russell Library on June 7 from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm (Russell Library). No updates.

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- D. Review of Gay Spirit Radio Documentary and Panel at Buttonwood Tree on June 14, 2023 at 7pm (Jesse Nasta).** Commissioner Timmons remarked on how wonderful the event was.
- E. Review of Pride Flag Tie Dye Events on June 24, July 22, and August 19 at Russell Library (Russell Library).** No update.
- F. Review of Open Mic Event at the Buttonwood Tree, June 29 from 7-9 pm (Commissioner Kovach).** Commissioner Kovach stated that the event was a great success, with over 20 people in attendance and a variety of talent performed that night. Will look to hold again.
- G. Review of Gayme Night on July 17 from 6-9pm at Back Again Board Game Café (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce).** Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce stated that this event was a huge success, with 41 people in attendance. Of those, 18 were from Middletown, the rest were from surrounding communities, showing our reach, and that people both in Middletown and around the state are interested in our events. Will look to hold again in October, and potentially, more frequently.
- H. Review of Middletown Pride 2023 and New Ideas for Pride 2024 (AGC Forte).** Mia and Ethel De Luxe stated that the drag community performing on the Main Street Stage had a negative experience. Solutions presented were to not have a second stage, have the second stage be for bands, include a check box on the application to perform for prospective applicants to state whether they would be comfortable performing on either stage, and to be more mindful on the run of show.

Mia and Ethel De Luxe also stated that the event ran smoothly backstage. Ethel stated that we could add a deaf/blind section with chairs close to the stage in order to make PrideFEST more accessible.

Commissioner Timmons and Billingsley stated that there were good vibes at PrideFEST and people remarked how this was their favorite pride that they attended.

Commissioner Timmons stated that they will be working with OutFilmCT regarding a movie event and asked what type of movie the Commission would want to see. The consensus was a film with an adult theme.

- I. Update on LGBTQIA+ Commission Initiatives and Events.** No updates.

- I. LGBTQIA+ Commission Monthly Community Event Updates:**

- a. Senior Center Event.**

- b. August 2023**

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- c. **September 2023 (Commissioner Shapiro, Karaoke)**
 - d. **October 20, 2023 (Tileen Sebastiano, 80s Dance Party)**
 - e. **October 2023 (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce, Game Night)**
- II. Safety for LGBTQIA+ Community in Middletown (Commissioner Timmons and Mangiafico).** No updates.
- III. Middlesex Health and Middletown Pride (Commissioner Jarda).** No updates.
- 6. Adjournment.** Commissioner Timmons made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:55 p.m.

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