

**MINUTES
LGBTQIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING AUGUST 18, 2020**

Present: Chair Beth Shapiro; Committee Members Sandy Aldieri, Sal Uccello, Phil Pessina, Christine Santacroce, Cayes Jarda, and Laura Timmons (listened by phone). Staff: Assistant General Counsel Christopher Forte.

Public: Jennifer Billingsley

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Chair Shapiro at 5:35 p.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes for the January 21, 2020 Regular Meeting.

MOTION: Committee Member Pessina made a motion to approve the minutes. Committee Member Santacroce seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously at 5:36 p.m.

3. Public Session on Agenda Items. None.

4. New Business:

A. Update from Staff. Assistant General Counsel Forte recapped the status of Middletown Pride since our January meeting with regards the decision to postpone Middletown Pride from June 20, 2020 to August 29, 2020, and then the later decision to cancel Middletown Pride 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Jennifer Billingsley detailed her successful efforts on behalf of the Russell Library that transitioned Middletown Pride 2020 to a digital event called Middletown STREAM that involved educational performances of drag queens for children, and a dance party featuring Committee Member Jarda as DJ. Jennifer also discussed her efforts in collaborating with Cinder & Salt for a Downtown Middletown Main Street cleanup effort in conjunction with the Russell Library and Middletown Pride, organizing over 100 people in cleaning up downtown Middletown.

B. Discussion on Structure of Committee for Pride 2021. Assistant General Counsel Forte discussed the structure of the LGBTQIA Committee created last year that separated the Committee into three subcommittees: Education and Outreach, Entertainment, and Sponsorship. The question was posed as to whether the Committee thought that this structure was successful or should be changed. The Committee unanimously agreed that the subcommittee structure should continue through Middletown Pride 2021. Committee Member Pessina suggested that the Committee plan to have Middletown Pride 2021 as a virtual event if need be. Committee Member Jarda suggested that a fourth subcommittee be created to organize and execute digital programming that would allow Middletown Pride to

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be virtual in 2021, and to also create programming leading up to Pride 2021. Jennifer Billingsley stated that she would be interested in participating in such a subcommittee.

- C. **Planning for Pride 2021.** Committee Member Jarda suggested that Middletown Pride create an online forum during the COVID-19 pandemic that would allow LGBTQIA residents to meet and check in on each other, and potentially collaborate with Wesleyan University and CHC if they are interested. Committee Member Jarda also suggested that Middletown Pride incorporate an open mic night where individuals could submit stories, feature artists in the community, and talk about their coming out experiences.

Discussion was then had regarding the date of Pride 2021. Assistant General Counsel Forte advised the committee that Middletown Pride, which for the past two years has fallen on the third Saturday of June, is tentatively scheduled for June 19, 2021, pending approval. The Committee then discussed that this date will fall on Juneteenth, and the Committee discussed that if Pride will move forward on Juneteenth, that we should collaborate with and invite the Black community in Middletown.

Committee Member Barry discussed his intention to create a social calendar for LGBTQIA events and programming in the Middletown area, which Assistant General Counsel Forte advised could be hosted on the Middletown Pride website as a resource for the community. Committee Members Barry and Aldieri, and Jennifer Billingsley also discussed collecting impactful stories of coming out experiences as a result of Pride, but also stories on why members of the community feel that they cannot come out.

Committee Member Santacroce discussed getting a start on fundraising efforts for Pride 2021, and suggested that Middletown Pride reach out to sponsors to see if they would like to create programming for the LGBTQIA community, including but not limited to a monthly cooking or baking night.

5. Adjournment.

MOTION: Committee Member Uccello made a motion to adjourn. Committee Member Aldieri seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m. Committee Members Pessina and Timmons were absent for the vote.