

**MINUTES  
LGBTQIA+ ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 15, 2020**

Present: Chair Beth Shapiro; Committee Members Dan Barry, Christine Santacroce, Dolly Haddad, Sandy Aldieri, and Laura Timmons. Staff: Assistant General Counsel Christopher Forte

Public: Kaya Cook, Kitty Guo, Alison Williams, and Jennifer Billingsley.

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Approval of the Minutes for the October 20, 2020 Regular Meeting.**

**MOTION:** Committee Member Aldieri made a motion to approve the minutes for the October 20, 2020 Regular Meeting. Committee Member Barry seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved at 5:36 p.m.

**3. Public Session on Agenda Items.**

None.

**4. New Business:**

**A. Meeting Schedule for 2021.**

**MOTION:** Committee Member Barry made a motion to set the time, dates and locations of the February 2021 – January 2022 meetings of the LGBTQIA Advisory Committee to occur on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in Room 208 at City Hall, 245 deKoven Drive, Middletown, CT. Committee Member Santacroce seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved at 5:43 p.m.

**B. Creation of LGBTQIA+ Commission.** Assistant General Counsel Forte introduced a draft ordinance for the creation of an LGBTQIA Commission for the Advisory Committee to consider. The LGBTQIA Commission would take the place of the LGBTQIA Advisory Committee, and would be advisory to the Mayor and the Common Council, and its mission would be broadened from focusing solely on pride events, to any and all issues affecting the LGBTQIA community in Middletown as a whole. As a result, the draft ordinance proposes that the total number of Commission members be expanded from 9 to up to 12 members who will serve for 3 year terms. Attorney Forte explained that this ordinance was being proposed because both LGBTQIA Advisory Committee members, as well as others, have approached him to expand the mission of the LGBTQIA Advisory Committee, and expressed a desire to have a commission who is able to consider and address issues affecting the LGBTQIA community in Middletown.

RECEIVED  
20 DEC 16 AM 10:01  
TOWN CLERK  
MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

Committee Members Barry, Timmons, Haddad, Shapiro and Aldieri all expressed their support for this proposed Commission. No changes to the draft ordinance were presented.

**MOTION:** Committee Member Santacroce made a motion to refer the draft ordinances creating the City of Middletown's first LGBTQIA Commission (Ordinance §§ 14-59 through 14-61) with a favorable recommendation to the General Counsel Commission. Committee Member Haddad seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously at 6:00 p.m.

## 5. Old Business.

- A. Planning for Pride 2021.** Assistant General Counsel Forte informed the Committee that Pride 2021 may need to be virtual, due to the fact that COVID vaccines would not be sufficiently trusted in time to guarantee a safe event in early June. Forte informed the Committee that the City, the Chamber, Wesleyan University and the Russell Library have all approved holding a virtual event in June.

Committee Member Timmons stated that we could have small in-person gatherings in June, in conjunction with a virtual event, and suggested the Wadsworth Mansion and Palmer Field as options. Committee Member Timmons also suggested doing a car parade, like one that was done for Holiday on Main. Committee Member Haddad also stated that in-person events should be considered, as well as moving the date of Pride 2021 from June 5 to September. Forte stated that any in-person gatherings would need to comply with the State's COVID guidelines and those would need to be enforced. Forte also informed the Committee that moving the date of Pride to September presents some logistical problems, but that those problems are not insurmountable.

Committee Member Barry and Jennifer Billingsley stated that they did not know whether the general public would be comfortable enough to attend in-person events by June. Committee Members Santacroce and Haddad agreed. Committee Members Santacroce, Haddad and Jennifer Billingsley stated that they would like to see another Pride event in October, when hopefully the COVID-19 restrictions would be lifted. Forte informed the Committee of some initial ideas for holding a virtual event, and informed the Committee that by next month's meeting in January, the Committee should have concrete ideas on how to implement a part virtual and in-person pride in June. Committee Member Timmons stated that the Committee should keep an open mind to having in-person events on June 5.

**MOTION:** Committee Member Santacroce made a motion to recommend that Pride 2021 to be held on June 5 be composed of both virtual and in-person events that comply with COVID-19 guidelines and best practices. Committee Member Haddad seconded the motion. For discussion on the motion, Committee Member Timmons stated that the motion should be tabled until January, so that the

Committee can have some additional time to decide whether Pride 2021 should be virtual or in-person, or both. Forte informed the Committee that it must address the motion on the table first, and if Committee Members would prefer to table this motion until next month, they should vote no on this motion, and then move to table the item until the January meeting. The motion was then approved at 6:43 p.m. by a vote of five in favor (Committee Members Shapiro, Barry, Santacroce, Haddad and Aldieri), with Committee Member Timmons abstaining.

- I. **Update from Staff.** Assistant General Counsel Forte informed the Committee of some initial ideas for holding a virtual pride in 2021, including: remote Middletown STREAM event and drag queen story hour in the morning; hiring a videographer to put together an introduction to Middletown Pride and interviewing the partners of pride—the Mayor, President of Wesleyan University, President of the Chamber and Russell Library Director; having the grand marshals record a speech regarding their work for the LGBTQIA community and to highlight a cause of importance to them; hiring the emcee’s to host a broadcast of our pride performers, which could also be prerecorded; reach out to sponsors to provide videos and scripts that can be read as part of the broadcast; work with local businesses to generate an economic impact during pride month; having a dance party with the Pride DJ; virtual pride parade; getting recordings of dignitaries to share, and to select a cause or non-profit in Middletown or Connecticut that supports the LGBTQIA community that Middletown Pride can highlight, raise money and awareness for.
- II. **Update from the Russell Library.** Jennifer Billingsley informed the Committee of the virtual events with which the Library was assisting the Digital and Virtual Outreach Subcommittee. Billingsley also shared an idea to assist our GSA’s with fundraising for either them or a cause of their choice, and to feature that in Pride 2021. Billingsley also informed the Committee of the fact that Middletown Pride is working with a local attorney to get a video out on Middletown Pride’s social regarding questions that arose during one of our online meetings.
- III. **Update from Wesleyan University.** None.
- IV. **Update from the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce.** None.
- V. **Update from the Sponsorship Subcommittee.** Committee Member Santacroce detailed the subcommittee’s efforts in reaching out to new sponsors, getting outreach together, and their intent to work with the Chamber to create a virtual sponsorship package to provide to potential sponsors.
- VI. **Update from the Entertainment Subcommittee.** Committee Member Aldieri stated that the Subcommittee has been reaching out to performers, who have expressed continued interest in performing for Pride 2021.

VII. **Update from the Digital and Virtual Outreach Subcommittee.** None.

VIII. **Update from the Middletown High School Gay Straight Alliance.** Kaya Cook informed the committee that the GSA has converted their faculty presentation to a community presentation, recorded by members of the GSA. They also are planning on organizing an initiative during no name calling week from January 18 through January 22, and will work with the Chamber and the Russell Library to take over our social media accounts that week.

**B. Ice Skating Rink Event.** Committee Member Timmons asked what could be done to turn this idea into a reality. The Committee discussed and proposed a date of February 27 at the outdoor skating rink in Veteran's Memorial Park. Committee Member Timmons stated that the event should be free, and it would be great if food or performances could occur, and if Middletown Pride could have a table to sell Pride merchandise. Kaya Cook stated that we could have people come at different times so that more people can attend over the course of the day. Forte stated that any City-event would need to comply with COVID-19 guidelines, and that he would reach out to the Mayor's Office, and Parks to make sure this could be done and what the limitations there are. Committee Member Santacroce stated that maybe the Chamber can provide hot chocolate and popcorn like they have done for other events.

## **6. Adjournment.**

**MOTION:** Committee Member Barry made a motion to adjourn. Committee Member Timmons seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.