

Chairperson
Aaron Richman



Members:
Lilian Chukwurah
James Kobialka
LaToya Lewis
Lauren De Oliveira
Deidre Padgett
Edward G. Robinsin

Vice-chairperson
Jacqueline Yang

**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Clerk
Elizabeth O'Callahan

**Monthly Meeting Summary – Monday, September 9th, 2019, 6pm
Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber, 3rd Floor, 455 Main St., Worcester, MA**

Members present: Aaron Richman, Elizabeth O'Callahan, Lauren De Oliveira, James Kobialka, Edward Robinsin, LaToya Lewis, Jacqueline Yang

Members absent: Lilian Chukwurah and Deidre Padgett

Staff: Jayna Turcek

1. Call to order and introductions

A quorum was established and Chairperson Richman officially called the meeting to order at 6:13 pm. Commissioners introduced themselves. The Chairperson welcomed members of the commission, and those present, including two new commissioners, LaToya Lewis and Lauren De Oliveira.

2. Approval of August 5th, 2019 meeting minutes

Commissioner Yang motioned to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Kobialka seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

3. New Business:

A. Annual activity report from WPD LGBTQIA+ Liaison (Officer Sharon McQueen)

Commissioners were joined by the Worcester Police Department's LGBTQ Liaison Officer, Sharon McQueen. Officer McQueen explained role and recapped recent undertakings to make Worcester a safer, more inclusive community.

- Role: help interpret LGBTQIA+ to law enforcement and vice versa
 - Police officer 33yrs
 - Part of LGBTQIA+ community for over 40
- Philosophy: Law enforcement has a lot in common with LGBTQIA
- Focus on gender fluid/non-binary members of community
- Use of pronouns

Focus on Pronouns and Law Enforcement

- Used to say "My preferred pronouns"
- The community through discussions, decided, "since when are pronouns optional?"
- Now email signature says "My pronouns are she and her"



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- Make sure people feel comfortable
- Members of the public are clients
- Non-binary driver's licenses will soon come into effect
- Focus on training law enforcement to understand non-binary individuals and use of introduction to include pronouns
- Also emphasize to law enforcement that if you make mistakes, apologize and move on, don't get hung up.

Iteration of flags on the LGBTQIA+ Liaison Desk

- Intended to make people feel welcome.
- First added flag with original pride colors.
- Changed flag to include people of color and the trans community
- Important to include people of color on the flag and in the conversation because the "reason we've made strides is because of struggle of African American communities"

Work with Care Providers

- If somebody is the victim of crime, care providers will be first person they tell
- Want to make sure they can reach out
- Proactive work to be proactive reaching out to other organizations

2017 statistical analysis for 2019 annual report

- 14.3% of students identify part of LGBTQIA+ community
- 11.5% LGBTQIA+ skipped school in the past month because it felt unsafe vs
- 3.3% of non-LGBTQIA+
- 5.2% LGBTQIA+ vs .09% of non-LGBTQIA+ abused heroin in lifetime
- 2.2% LGBTQIA+ youth vs .08% non-LGBTQIA+ youth struggling with homelessness

Challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ Youth:

- Getting disowned by family members
- Minimized/Dismissed
 - Hurtful sentiments that come from a family member are especially painful
- Bullying
- Homelessness

Resources for Youth

- Support groups in the area to support these children
- Visibility at Safe Homes program showing life does get better
- Efforts to make sure all youth get good education

Pride and History

- Gene Crompton Riots in San Francisco - not reported on
- "When newspapers don't report your history, it erases you"
- Pride - Started 1973 after riots;
- Pride is about visibility

Conversation about LGBTQIA+ Board Commission - people may not feel comfortable

Staying in the Closet vs Coming Out

- Important to weigh options
- Internal pain and struggle, worrying about others finding out
- Coming out carries risks
 - Being rejected by people in their life
 - Risk of losing community
 - Workplace discrimination

4. Old Business:

A. Discussion and approval of FY19 annual report and goals for FY20*

Neighborhood Watch Meeting Survey Initiative Executive Summary*

- Add back in some details that were removed for the sake of brevity
- Add continuing work of Human Rights Commission

Add recently hosted book (White Fragility) and movie (“The Hate U Give”) community discussions at Dynamy and Temple Beth Israel.

Vice-Chair Yang motioned to approve the annual report with the discussed additions to the Executive Summary. Commissioner Robinson seconded. Motion passed with all in favor

Chairperson Richman met with the City Manager last week

Discussed CCOPS, Movement happening

City Manager suggested we talk to Jim Brooks and Andy Taylor in Economic Development related to housing and neighborhood development.

Neighborhood Meeting Initiative:

- Create workshop
- Training for organizers
- Greater outreach on city’s website with more translations
- Creating toolbox

The City Manager suggested the new immigration/ New Americans area with the library construction project as maybe something HRC can potentially collaborate. Also encouraged to identify work where we have the capacity to make change.

*Copies of these documents are available through the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities

5. Public Comment

John Finn of Worcester asked for clarification regarding the nature of neighborhood meetings

6. Next meeting: Monday October 7th, 2019, City Hall Eleanor Hawley Chamber

7. Adjournment at 8:02