



Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee Minutes of the May 15, 2012 Meeting

Committee Members Present: Commissioner Pappas, Commissioner Mavis, Amos Lim, Angie Perone, Amy Whelan, Bart Broome, Bianca Polovina, Bonnie Milluso, Corrin Buchanan, Bill Ambrunn, Diane Alcalá, Fayaz Rajani Marcelle Million, Mark Murphy, Matthew Valdez, Mike Van Nguyen, Neo Veavea, Patrick Pablo, Paul Klees, and Ray Rudolph.

Committee Members Absent: Alex Batty, Cynthia Yeung, Mark Snyder, Mark Dunlop, Sterling Johnson, Thomas Temprano, Tracy Garza, and Vaughn Villaverde.

Staff Present: Nadia Babella.

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:**

Commissioner Pappas called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. Nadia Babella called the roll. There was quorum.

2. **Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda:**

An audience member expressed her frustration about the treatment of transgender individuals at some of the homeless shelters here in the City and County of San Francisco. Bonnie Milluso thanked the audience member for raising awareness about this matter, and she also informed her that the panel was going to address that particular issue.

3. **Housing Panel**

Commissioner Pappas welcomed everyone. He informed audience members of the history of the S.F. Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the HRC's LGBT Advisory Committee. Commissioner Pappas informed audience members that it was in May of 1975 that the LGBT Advisory Committee was established by legislation passed by the Board of Supervisors. The LGBT Advisory Committee was created to advise the Board and City on issues of discrimination affecting LGBT communities, recommend policies to the Board and City's agencies, and also to educate LGBT individuals about policies that impact their communities.

Commissioner Pappas briefly spoke of how the panel came into fruition. Each year, the LGBT Advisory Committee identifies and proposes issues to address for a particular year, and for 2012 one of the issues chosen was that of addressing the needs of LGBT individuals that are homeless, low-income and/or marginally housed. The idea was solidified with the creation of the LGBT Advisory Committee's Housing



Work Group (the Group). The Group is responsible for today's event. Commissioner Pappas thanked XO Café for donating the food for the night's event. XO Café is located on 1799 Church Street (between 30th Street and Day Street). Commissioner Pappas also thanked the Asian Pacific Islander (API) Wellness Center for providing the venue for the panel, and he then introduced the panel's moderator, Bonnie Milluso.

Bonnie Milluso thanked everyone for attending tonight's event, and she informed the audience of the group's goals at tonight's panel and beyond. The group's goals for 2012 are to identify and provide policy recommendations focusing on housing accessibility within the LGBT community, particularly by those that are disabled and/or with HIV/AIDS. Tonight's panel is a step toward achieving the group's goals because panelists were told to provide the group with policy recommendations to the group so that the Group may, subsequently, create an official list that will be submitted.

Each panelist was allotted seven minutes to speak, and each panelist was given the same set of questions by the Group. Each panelist was presented with the following questions: 1. How does your Organization serve the LGBT communities? 2. Does your Organization have any data or statistics about the individuals that you serve? 3. Do you provide sensitivity training? If so, what is offered? 4. What services do you provide to the transgender community and gender nonconforming individuals? 5. What do you see as barriers to housing LGBT individuals? 6. What additional services do members of the LGBT community need? 7. In your opinion, what causes homelessness? 8. What policy changes would help you?

Panelists included: Bevan Dufty from Housing Opportunity, Partnerships and Engagement (HOPE), Jodi Schwartz from Lavender Youth Recreation & Information Center (LYRIC), Kathy Treggiari and Scott Ecker from Episcopal Community Services, Lee Harrington from AIDS Emergency Fund, Seth Kilbourn from Openhouse, Brian Basinger from AIDS Housing Alliance, and Gregg Miller from the S.F. Rent Board.

Bevin Dufty (HOPE): Mr. Dufty noted that in his job he is focused on improving outcomes for those that are living in shelters, are homeless or in need of subsidized housing. He informed everyone that the Housing Authority approved a site-based waiting list for two buildings that will be for low-income individuals only. One of the two sites that was approved will be located on 141 West Hotel. He informed audience members that the City's Section 8 list has not been open since 2001 – there are currently 10k people on that list. Applications for these two buildings will be open until the 31st of May. The units are SRO units.

In his role at HOPE, Mr. Dufty is focused on positive outcomes by learning to do a better job with existing resources and better using City's monies. Mr. Dufty noted that the City needs to provide services to young people, and a way of achieving this is by implementing a harm-reduction program rather than a zero-tolerance program because it works. He encouraged audience members to inform themselves about the programs implemented in Canada and Seattle. Mr. Dufty also informed people of the hurdles that people must endure to make sure that they get a bed in a shelter. He encouraged everyone to attend the Shelter Committee Monitoring meetings and empower those individuals that are trying to better address the needs of the homeless, and, generally, someone from the Mayor's Office is also there.

Mr. Dufty made a few recommendations. He would allow for individuals to make reservations at shelters by dialing 311 and placing them in a lottery to win a bed at shelter for 90 days. Second, the City could pair up with Twitter and make use of their MSM system. The MSM system allows for Twitter to text people, and have Twitter text people letting them know if they have secured a bed in a certain shelter or directing them to go to a certain place rather than the status quo of today – people wait in line for hours without an assurance that they will secure a bed in the shelter on a day-to-day basis. In Los Angeles, the City is providing homeless individuals with a cell phone to be able to give them better access by connecting with them and creating peer-to-peer relationships. HOPE is committed to helping people secure long-term housing, and focusing on working with queer seniors. He does not accept the law enforcement approach, for example, he did not support the City's "Sit and Lie," because the easiest thing to do is to jail poor people

rather than creatively implement new solutions. The affordable housing units that are available, unfortunately, over 98% go to those on a priority transfer list. This is a problem because it means that no new families are being allowed to access affordable housing. We should create a program where those on SSI are paid for taking care of animals in the City's shelters. For example, the City spends up to \$450 dollars to keep a dog in a cage in a shelter. Mr. Dufty recommends taking that money and paying someone on SSI to care for the animal and also give them rent credit. People need jobs and access. He is also pushing for the creation of a 5 Keys School, the schools that are in our jails and help those that are incarcerated become literate or get their GED.

Jodi Schwartz (LYRIC): LYRIC works with LGBT youth that are 24-years-old or younger. They provide everything but housing at LYRIC; however, they are an access point to other resources. Her first policy recommendation is to encourage service providers to learn to work collaboratively. For example, LYRIC is currently a member of an eight-member organization that, since 2005, has been addressing LGBTQQ needs in the City. Second, helping youth become economically self-sufficient is something that can be better addressed by policy changes. People need, at what they call at LYRIC, a triangle of support: housing, jobs and behavior health support. LYRIC is a peer-led, adult-youth partnership. Another barrier faced by LYRIC is lack of resources. Also, there are problems with NIMBY-ism – “Not in my back yard” – where people, for the most part, don't want a shelter to open in their community. For example, in the Marina there has been an ongoing fight about opening a shelter there. And, there is a lack of diversity amongst those that provide services.

To summarize, her policy recommendations are as follows: 1. economic self-sufficiency for youth and some of the City's recently enacted policies have really cut into the City's youth resources. For example, LYRIC use to hire 60-70 youth annually but this year was only able to afford 20. 2. Also, she was followed the recent increase in policies that are funding more intensive programming for youth is with the Department of Youth and Family Services where the focus is on higher dosage programs and the gradual eradication of drop-in programs. 3. More public space for youth to be able to go to and feel safe. For example, we currently witnessed the problem between youth gathering at the Castro and business leaders being bothered by that, calling it “loitering.” 4. Increase resources for LGBTQQ-specific housing.

Kathy Treggiari (Director of ECS Shelters) and Scott Ecker (Director of Housing at ECS): Ms. Treggiari spoke first and was followed by Mr. Ecker. ECS runs two year-round shelters, Next Door (334 beds) and The Sanctuary (200 beds). ECS does provide senior services. They also have an Education and Skills Center where they assist low-income individuals work on their GED, build their resume and improve their literary skills. ECS also has a Chef Program. People spend three months in a class improving their culinary skills and then intern at a restaurant for three months putting those newly-acquired skills to use.

Mr. Ecker supervises nine housing sites in the Tenderloin. ECS houses over 1100 individuals every night, and the process always starts by people being given a case manager. ECS also houses support groups and community events within their buildings in an effort to create a community.

Ms. Treggiari stated ECS is feeling the financial crunch because they are, partly, funded by the City. She also noted that shelter access is a huge issue. You have women waiting in line for hours to get a bed in the shelter because of the day-to-day reservation that is currently required of everyone. ECS is “dumping ground” for those that need mental health assistance and are inappropriately released by the hospitals and by recent former prisoners. ECS no longer has any clinics to provide health care within their shelters. Another issue is that of case management. In 2002 ECS had 14 case managers and now they currently have 7. So, ECS currently has 7 case managers for 1,134 beds.

Mr. Ecker stated that they house approximately 1,100 residents, and of those about 14% self-identified as LGBT and 2% as transgender. These numbers are based on the in-take applications everyone coming into

the shelters must fill out. And, there are a good number of people that refuse to disclose that information, too, and others do a “false report” by identifying as heterosexual for fear of discrimination. ECS staff recommended that there be more targeted services toward the LGBT communities.

Bonnie asked that the panelists please give her whatever documentation they brought with them so that HRC may read it and include it in their final policy report.

Seth Kilbourn (Openhouse): Openhouse is a housing and service agency for the LGBT senior population. Openhouse is primarily known for their project to build welcoming, affordable housing. They are partnering with Mercy Housing to net 110 affordable housing units for seniors. Openhouse expects their new project – 110 units on Laguna Street – to get started in the next few years because they are sorting out their funding arrangements. Openhouse also provides social services programs for over 500 LGBT seniors by working with seniors that have been evicted or those that are facing eviction and help them plan ahead and learn of their options. They primarily work with very low-income people. Openhouse also invites seniors to come in and talk with a case manager for 45 minutes and have a complete assessment of their immediate and long-term goals in relation to affordable housing.

Openhouse provides sensitivity training to residential facilities and organizations make sure that everyone welcomes LGBT seniors. They also try to identify LGBT-friendly housing to make housing recommendations that are safe places for LGBT seniors to go to and feel welcome. One of the big barriers that they have experienced is that as one gets older one becomes more fearful about asking for help, and you then layer on top of that the experience of being LGBT and mistrusting the system. Seniors fear the system because they fear being judged or not being welcomed.

We need to make service providers collect more LGBT data, and data collecting is also difficult. Also, there is a need for more intensive case management. They are seeing a rise in seniors coming to Openhouse with multiple issues.

Lee Harrington (AIDS Emergency Fund): AIDS Emergency Funds serves clients with following demographics: 46% Caucasian, 28% Latino, 83% male, 13% female, 4% transgender, 57% gay, 11% bisexual, and 4% declined to state. They have 2 types of programs. The first is a regular grant of \$500 per year and a reservation fund to prevent eviction and/or paying costs of the move. The amount for this grant is capped 1,000. However, \$500 is not much and rarely covers rent. Most of their recipients earn anywhere from \$600 to \$900 dollars a month (primarily from SSI). For a regular grant, an individual may get up to 5,000 (that amount is the lifetime cap per person) because the organization is supposed to be short-term fix. Their funding, at the federal level, was reduced by 8M and in July of 2013 they will see a 10M reduction; he is not sure if the City will be able to cover that funding gap.

The organization, overall, has been successful. For example, their move-in grants are about 80% successful, and 66% of their grants go to subsidize household and 14% to transient individuals. This 14% indicates that the 14% of City’s population may be homeless. They also have partnered with forty agencies that they then refer their clients to, but it is hard to keep people housed.

Brian Basinger (AIDS Housing Alliance): AIDS Housing Alliance provides homeless prevention for people with HIV/AIDS. They have been able to provide back rent to a broad section of people with HIV/AIDS to keep their housing. Mr. Basinger is the Founder and Executive Director of the AIDS Housing Alliance here in San Francisco. They provide move-ins, deposits and short-tem rent subsidy that is tied to a job training program. This year, they have protected nearly 300 households by helping them retain the housing that they do have. They also engage in landlord mediation, and are linked to other organizations that provide supportive services. Also, 80% of their current staff are people with HIV/AIDS, are disabled

and on SSI. They see themselves as a housing organization even though they are, at their core, also an organization for people with AIDS.

He encouraged people to see housing as a human right because once we understand that housing is a human right we then see the violations and become warriors for human rights in this City. People have more power than they imagine. One of the obstacles that he sees is of how the LGBT community sees housing and our relationship to housing as a human right. The service provider does a tiny bit when it comes to the totality of the need that exists -- the need is much bigger. He encouraged everyone to think bigger and more strategically.

People fail to see the interconnectedness between HIV infection, sexual behavior, and homelessness. If you are not homeless then you don't have to go from "trick to trick" to pay for secure housing. It was this realization that spearheaded him into action. Mr. Basinger helped enact legislation at 55 Laguna. He informed those around him and made sure that housing build there was below market rate and affordable to many San Franciscans. Mr. Basinger ended by saying that there needs to be a housing justice movement in the LGBT and queer communities.

Bonnie opened the floor for questions, and she recognized the attendance of Stephanie Perreira from Larkin Street Youth Services. Larkin used to have 29 units of housing but they are currently down to 22 units that are exclusively for queer youth. She noted that there isn't an interest in funding for homeless youth. She also expressed dissatisfaction between the recent territorial spat between the Castro's business owners and youth "loitering" there. The youth feel exploited, and she would like to see business owners get together and get creative about what they can do rather than just trying to get rid of the youth in the one neighborhood they identify with. She also recommended that the City prioritize housing for LGBT youth – there is only one housing program in the City that works exclusively for them.

An audience member stated that she has lived in SF for 27 years; she is homeless, cannot find housing and is HIV-positive. She expressed a need for help, and noted that she has good credit, pays bills and needs a steady place to live in. Brian Basinger encouraged her to see him.

Gregg Miller from the S.F. Rent Board spoke and thanked the panel for their work. He informed the audience that since 1979, rent has been regulated by the City and that this has provided huge number of people with affordable rent below market rates. He informed the audience that the City currently does not track their LGBT and disability applicants but thinks that the City eventually will begin to do so. Brian said, based on numbers available to him, 25% of last year's evictions targeted people that were disabled or LGBT. Question posed by an Audience Member to Mr. Gregg, What portions of this City are rent controlled? Mr. Miller noted that a majority of tenants do live in a rent controlled building because the City Ordinance applies to property that was build before 1979, which is much of the City. The annual increase for rent this year was 1.9%, but it varies every year.

Audience member, Destiny, expressed her frustration at ECS for the disrespect that she, and other transgender individuals, continually endure at ECS shelters. Bonnie asked Destiny if she had any recommendations on how to make the situation at the shelters better. Destiny recommended there a floor in a shelter designated for transgender individuals or a shelter exclusively for LGBT individuals. Brain informed everyone that the City is in the process of building a shelter exclusive for LGBT adults.

An audience member noted that the City used to have a Comprehensive Affordable Housing Strategy Task Force, and that we should reinstitute something like it. She recommended a City-wide coordinated effort to ensure more affordable housing and to streamline resources for those seeking them.

Another audience member encouraged the panel to push for same-sex marriage, changing immigration law she can't help adjust her partner's legal status because they are same-sex, and to build LGBT-centered housing because she is tired of the discrimination that she has endured. She also recommended the creation of an LGBT organization centralized database, and encouraged more cultural training for floor monitors that work in existing shelters. She wants San Francisco to set the tone for the rest of the world. It would be great to have shelters that cater only for LGBT individuals, a home for the rainbow community.

An audience member echoed what Destiny said about the trials and tribulations that transgender individuals are experiencing at ECS's shelters. She gave an example of a floor monitor that constantly makes trans-phobic comments. She noted that staff at ECS has been told many times of this but nothing gets done.

Kathy reiterated that ECS needs more help in the shelters. For example, the third floor has 115 women but only two staff – they need help, specifically, more staffing. They do have transgender sensitivity training but the problem is that the volume of staffing compared with those staying at the shelter is too small.

Nadia informed shelter residents that San Francisco and California law prohibit discrimination and harassment of transgender people. The staff has the obligation to stop others residents from harassing LGBT residents. If that is not happening HRC is more than happy to take complaints and try to mediate and resolve any issues. She encouraged the posting of signs indicating that ECS welcomes LGBT, or also maybe having those staying at the shelters to sign something informing them that they can't discriminate.

An audience member informed Nadia the ECS's rules are stated clearly and that they do have signs posted on each floor. She thinks it's not a misunderstanding but rather a lack of enforcement by the staff.

Another audience member brought up the issue of data collection on the number of LGBT shelter residents. Jodi stated that data collection is a huge issue and one of the barriers is lack of resources by the City agency. However, the City's Department of Public Health is in the process of changing their data collection. Also, there are organizational cultural barriers within City agencies and community based organizations. Does asking someone about their sexual orientation put the person at risk or make them feel uncomfortable? She thinks not because people have the option to answer the question or not. Seth agreed. It's crucial for the City to take down information in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. Data helps because it can be used for not just housing needs but other public services. We need to know how many LGBT people are in San Francisco to be able to meet their needs. All City agencies should ask. Brian also agreed that data collection is extremely important, and he firmly believes that LGBT people are not getting fair and equitable access to housing resources. Currently, he tries to identify surrogate data points. Also, HUD recently issued a ruling stating that HUD providers may not ask a person about LGBT status because it is discriminatory to do so.

An audience member asked the panel if any of their organizations provide bilingual services. The majority of the organizations do.

Fayaz recommended that the AC and the LGBT community work with shelters to help them fill the gap of lack of resources and use existing community resources to connect with and network with LGBT people in the shelters.

Amos thanked everyone in attendance, and expressed his difficulty in finding resources for LGBT API community. He also asked if anyone had an update about Care not Cash in San Francisco. Scott answered for ECS. ECS's housing programs are funded, in part, by Care not Cash and their housing retention rate is 95%. He said, overall, it's working but that it is not the best solution. Brian noted that, from a disabled perspective, he finds it discriminatory because its shelter and housing based on the

person's source of income and we have rules that deal with discrimination based on income. The access points are not easily there for many.

Bonnie made closing remarks, and she thanked everyone for attending.

4. Announcements:

Commissioner Pappas invited everyone to attend HRC's 24th of May meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Room 416 in City Hall. HRC will be discussing a resolution to amend the City's Code to create an LGBT Senior Task Force. This idea was brought forth by Board of Supervisors: Scott Wiener, Christina Olague and David Campos.

5. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.