



Theresa Sparks
Executive Director

Edwin M. Lee
Mayor

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee Minutes of the October 16, 2012 Meeting

Committee Members Present: Commissioner Pappas, Amos Lim, Angie Perone, Amy Whelan, Bart Broome, Bianca Polovina, Corrin Buchanan, Diane Alcalá, Fayaz Rajani, Mark Murphy, Neo Veavea, Patrick Pablo, Paul Klees, Tracy Garza, and Vaughn Villaverde.

Committee Members Absent: Commissioner Mavis, Bill Ambrunn, Bonnie Miluso, Mark Snyder, Matthew Valdez, Mike Van Nguyen, Ray Rudolph, and Sterling Johnson.

Staff Present: Nadia Babella

Community Members Present: Dee Castellano, Michelle Alcedo, Ellyn Bloomfield, Jason Castleberry, David Froehlich, Steven Huang, Martine Barbier, Dawn Suratt, Cristina Mitra, Kevin Blackwell, Bill Beirensdorfer, Thomas Simpson, Ben Faataul, Iyanne Paorigo, Saia Topou, Alesana Tolai, and Joshua Taupau.

1. Call to order and roll call

Commissioner Pappas called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm. Nadia Babella called the roll. There was quorum.

2. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

None.

3. Approval of August 21, 2012

Motion was made to adopt the minutes. Motion was seconded and approved.

4. Panel Discussion on Issues Affecting District 10 LGBT Residents

Angie Perone gave an introduction to the work of the LGBTAC and this event. She explained that the event came out of a desire to have discussion on the needs of the LGBT community outside of the Castro. This is the second panel discussion to result from that discussion. Angie introduced each of the panelists. Villy Wang is the president and CEO of Bayview Hunters Point Center for the Arts and Technology (BAYCAT) and resides in Bayview Hunters Point. Dennis Jones is an Americorps Healthcare Community Navigator at Third Street Youth Service who grew up in Bayview Hunters Point, and graduated from Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts. Allie Ferrey grew up in Potrero Hill and attends Raoul High School, where she serves as president of the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). Perry Lang

is the Executive Director of the Black Coalition on AIDS and lives in Bayview Hunters Point. Michelle Alcedo works at Openhouse Community Services where she manages training and outreach programs for senior citizens.

Villy presented a clip from a video produced by BAYCAT to train service providers who work for and contract with the City and County of San Francisco to comply with San Francisco Ordinance 12N. Ordinance 12N requires all City departments to provide lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender training to all staff who have direct contact with youth, or whose work directly affects youth. Villy explained that BAYCAT developed the content of the video through focus groups with LGBT youth and conversations with service providers.

Diane Alcala moderated the panel discussion, asking the questions below.

Question for Villy: You have been doing some really great work through BAYCAT on the 12N Project. Can you tell us a little bit more about your organization's work and the 12N project?

BAYCAT is an organization that teaches youth, mostly from District 10, about all of the stages of video production. BAYCAT also trains the youth in soft skills that are necessary to succeed in the professional world. BAYCAT chooses projects carefully to make sure that they are sharing a message. BAYCAT works with nonprofits to help with branding, spreading messages through videos, etc. The BAYCAT videos are available online, and there are a number of LGBT related ones.

For the 12N project BAYCAT did focus groups with youth and service providers and will continue to do surveys to ensure that the video has a positive impact, and to find out if there are additional areas that the video should cover. Questions may arise about what kind of message should be sent and which stories can be told to clarify the information that the video seeks to convey.

My upbringing was far from the Brady Bunch "perfect" family, but I have learned that every story and every perspective matters. I believe that BAYCAT is about telling each person's story. BAYCAT can help a youth who is creative and wants an outlet – a way to find his or her voice. Recently, a BAYCAT summer participant came out. She worked with other youth to create a prize-winning video that told her story – a story that matters

Question for Dennis: What do you see as some of the biggest issues facing LGBTQ youth in District 10?

[Before Dennis answered Diane's question, he performed spoken word that he had written about a gay and religious youth who struggled with the way some interpret the Bible to consider LGBTQ people sinners.]

Every youth can benefit from resources and training related to STD prevention and that safe spaces are important for everyone, but LGBTQ youth are often hard to reach. I think this may be because lots of youth don't necessarily identify as LGBTQ and so it is hard to reach out to them. Bayview youth have a particularly difficult time accessing services because most of the services directed at LGBTQ youth are located in the Castro. Bayview LGBTQ youth find it challenging to get to the Castro and back safely

because it is often not safe for queer youth to be out at night, and the available transportation for them does not run very late. The biggest part of providing services is meeting people where they are at – which is Bayview.

Question for Dennis: What would you like to see for the LGBTQQ youth in District 10?

I see a lot of churches and religious places on Third Street, but I would like to see church allies for queer youth because I think it would benefit the entire community. I also would like to generally see more safe spaces for queer youth and allies who will help the LGBTQ community.

I also see a problem of stereotypes about gay guys being super feminine, but I see people on both sides of the spectrum and in between in Bayview. I see gay guys who are hyper feminine, guys who are hyper masculine, and guys who are in the middle. I think youth would benefit from not being subjected to this stereotype.

Question for Allie Ferrey: What do you see as some of the biggest issues facing LGBTQQ youth in District 10?

LGBTQ youth don't have the resources they need to understand about the process of coming out and identifying as LGBTQ. I have a friend who didn't know what to do when she was coming out. While this person was fortunate to have resources within the school district, she didn't feel comfortable where she lived. Now my friend is having trouble accepting who she is.

I live in Potrero Hill, and I believe that resources are not as easily available there for LGBTQ youth as they are in the Castro. Gay people are everywhere, and resources need to be available everywhere.

Question for Allie: What would you like to see for the LGBTQQ youth in District 10?

I would like to see a safety net formed so that LGBTQ youth feel safe being out late, and don't have to deal with being called "faggot" or other tormenting slurs. I would also like to see more resources for those youth, even if it means the provision of a bus to drop youth off right in front of their houses.

Question for Perry: You have lived and served residents of District 10 for many years. What do you see as emerging issues for LGBT residents in District 10?

Before I answer Diane's question, I want to give the audience a sense of who I was. I am a child of Baldwin, Malcolm and Martin. Each of those men have influenced who I am. [Perry recited his favorite prayer by Howard Thurman.] That prayer reminds me that even in my highest and deepest moment, *he* should not forget what is in my heart.

I do not think that what the LGBT community needs differs from what rest of community needs. LGBT and other people need supportive, affirming communities. They need to be able to age in place or find housing. They need appropriate jobs. But people do need to be more sensitive around issues, and that should be worked on. We shouldn't separate the needs of housing, food, jobs, and shelter from the LGBT needs. Our shared needs are what make us human and what bring us together.

Question for Perry: Do you see any barriers for LGBT residents of faith, and if so, what are they? What would you like to see for LGBT residents of faith in District 10?

I do not see an “us” and a “them.” I think that there is just one – an “all of us.” We need to promote faith communities that are progressive – in D10, in the Castro, and everywhere. We need faith communities that allow expression of whatever that community wants to express. There comes a time when faith leaders need the proper education. The leaders must understand the myths of theology and be able to dissect and discern for their congregations issues such as sin and power of prayer. Faith leaders need to help young people who won’t go for the same stories that older people went for, and need to find and use the scriptures that work in contemporary times. Faiths would benefit from having conversations on the Bible and sexuality. I believe that as we as a community raise the conversation, the whole community will rise. We need a progressive community that affirms everyone.

Question for Michelle: What do you see as some of the biggest issues facing LGBT and same gender loving elders in District 10?

I consider social and geographic isolation as huge issues for the senior LGBT community. Social isolation impacts all seniors, but particularly LGBT ones because they lack support. Additionally, LGBT seniors suffer from geographic isolation because many of the LGBT services (including those offered by Openhouse) are in the Castro, Noe/Mission, and Bernal Heights. Elders need to travel to those areas from places like District 10 to get services. Some even travel from the East Bay.

I also think that LGBT older adults feel vulnerable as they are aging, so it is important to have events that are accessible to them at the appropriate times – like morning and late afternoon.

Finally, I think that LGBT older adults would benefit from greater support, such as through affirming messages and cross-promotional partnerships in services.

Question for Michelle: What would you like to see for LGBT and same gender loving elders in District 10?

I believe that a GSA for senior assisted living that is run by people who live in the senior assisted living centers would benefit LGBT older adults by creating a community for them where they live. I also think an intergenerational partnership with BAYCAT would be great because I know LGBT adults who want to hang out with youth but are afraid to reach out to them. I want to see stronger partnerships with existing services and more housing.

Diane opened the discussion for questions from the public.

Question: I came from a religious background, but then came out and felt that there was no place for me in my religion. Do the panelists have any creative ideas to engage religious people who firmly believe that it is sinful to be gay? That conversation is so hard to have.

Perry: There are a number of progressive and affirming congregations in San Francisco, and those are the ones to try to work with. Some congregations are beyond help. Perry works with congregations of all backgrounds, and he is willing to support people at the pulpit if they welcome LGBT people, even if

they are not yet exactly where they need to be. He will support people who are bringing individuals of different faiths together, bridging different sects.

Commissioner Pappas: He works with the Interfaith Council in San Francisco, and has found that many of the congregations are welcoming to LGBT people, either silently or very vocally.

Comment: I live in D10 and think it is a waste to try to educate kids once they get older, and that it is necessary to educate children at a young age.

Comment: There has been a change in the demographics of Visitacion Valley. LGBT people are moving into the community, but there has not been much acceptance of them yet. There is a lot of disrespect from various communities, and it makes me angry. The LGBT community is probably about 8-9% and growing, but no one – including religious leaders – touches the topic.

Perry: There is an obligation of people already living in Visitacion Valley to say “welcome,” but the people coming in also must say, “here I am, how can I help?”

Comment: It is one thing to live in fear because of violence in Bay View, but another to live in fear because of who you are, and because you are scared of people calling you names or being ostracized.

Villy: BAYCAT was robbed at the end of the summer, and the laptops that had all of the students’ work on it were gone. The media took interest in the story and, as it often does, focused on the crime in District 10. I was able to use the media attention, though, to highlight one of the great things about District 10 – the work that youth are doing as part of BAYCAT – and raise a huge amount of money for BAYCAT. It is important not to ignore the negative, but to also talk about the positive things that District 10 offers.

Question: I have heard the panel talk about the safety issues for LGBT individuals, and about the many services in the Castro. How can we get those here?

Dennis: Awareness. People think only the Castro is where all the gay people are, and the Castro has a higher income - that’s why the Castro gets the most attention.

Perry: The Black Coalition on AIDS does programming for LGBT people. We want it to go beyond the confines of health and want people to go there for services. Also, we need diverse people going out to spread the message about LGBTQ issues – not just white lesbians and gays.

Question: Where is BAYCAT?

Villy: It is located at 2415 3rd Street, Number 230. We have 5000 square feet available for events and groups.

Question: Where is the Black Coalition on AIDS?

Perry: We are moving to a port property at Cesar Chavez and 3rd Street for more event space.

Comment: I like the idea of a GSA at senior centers, and think should also have spontaneous GSA pop-ups. The idea of using social media to make those pop-ups at restaurants in Bayview and Visitacion Valley makes sense. There is a diverse LGBT community, so what works in one place might not work in another. Also, the way of coming out has changed since the 1980’s. There used to be a cloistered view, but that doesn’t necessarily work any longer. LGBT people’s concerns are the same as the general public’s concerns – there is a fear of being a homeless elder, and there are concerns about schools. I recently spoke with a young black gay man who had never met anyone with AIDS before. There is a schism between youth and elders. I think we should flip the Castro model because youth, especially those of color, don’t feel comfortable there – why would we want to promote that?

Perry: We could go as an LGBT group to senior citizens' homes to read to them.

Allie: There should be a GSA for elders of all races and incomes. The GSA's should be in all areas of the city. People should feel comfortable coming out so that they can be their happiest.

Comment: Coming out is strategic, and if young people are reliant on their parents, they may not be able to come out yet. It is important that they have a safe space to keep their selves intact.

Dennis: I feel uncomfortable in the Castro because they expect me to be hyper masculine or feminine, and I can't be me. The Castro is centered on spending and nightlife.

Question: A lot of places provide after school services for youth. Is there a culture of being respectful and tolerant there, or do LGBTQ youth not feel comfortable using their services because they don't feel safe there?

Dennis: Youth need some guidance when coming out. There should be a space for elders and youth to share and feel comfortable.

Diane: Thank you to everyone for what you have brought. "Tu eres mi otro yo," you are the other me. We all have the same desire and dreams and want a nurturing community where we can feel safe.

5. **Announcements**

There will be a Pomo Afro Homos performance on October 17-28. Flyers were distributed.

The LGBT Advisory Committee of the HRC is recruiting now for next year, and people interested in coming up with topics affecting LGBT communities in San Francisco and working on them should apply. Information is available on the HRC website.

6. **Old/New Business**

None.

7. **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35.