



Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee Minutes of the August 17, 2010 Meeting

Committee Members Present: Commissioner Cecilia Chung, Alex Baty, Corrin Buchanan, Ruby Cymrot-Wu, Elizabeth Labeledz, Allison Laureano, Mark Murphy, Joseph Peralta, Bianca Polovina, Poonam, Fayaz Rajani, Ray Rudolph, Donna Sachet, and Amy Whelan.

Committee Members Absent: Jane Aceituno, Bart Broome, Samer Danfoura, Mark Dunlop, Amos Lim, Dominique Leslie, Martin Rawlings-Fein, Mark Snyder, Lindasusan Ulrich, and Vaughn Villaverde.

Staff Present: Nadia Babella and Domenic Viterbo.

Guests Present: Daniel Redman, National Center for Lesbian Rights and Todd Rising.

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

Commissioner Chung called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. Nadia Babella called the roll.

2. **Public Comment For Items Not On The Agenda:**

No public comments were made.

3. **Approval of the July 20, 2010 Minutes (Action Item):**

This item has been tabled for next month's meeting.

4. **Panel Presentation on Aging In – Aging Out: Ageism, Adultism, and Cross Generational Inclusion in the LGBT Community:**

Ray Rudolph introduced the panel and stated that the panel included a representative group of individuals from around the community that have been working on cross generational events and programs. There are many events, individuals and organizations that are focusing on ways to serve the LGBT community with respect to seniors and to bridge the gaps between younger and older members. Ageism is defined as a process or expression of ideas in which stereotyping and discrimination against people occurs by virtue of their age. Ageism applies particularly to actions directed at older people but it can apply to any discrimination due to chronological age. Adultism is a predisposition towards adults and is defined as behaviors and attitudes based on assumptions that adults are better than young people and are entitled to act upon young people without agreement. Adultism is popularly used to describe discrimination against



young people. Ray hopes that this panel will begin a dialogue first within the advisory committee and then within the broader community. As the committee moves forward it can find ways to educate the LGBT community on this issue, to promote continuation of the dialogue, coordinate a resource of the people and organizations in the community that work in this area across generational issues, and perhaps plan a community wide event that showcases the emerging work and possibilities of this area.

Ray then introduced **Frank Pietronigro**. Frank is an interdisciplinary artist and co-founder and project director of Zero gravity Arts Consortium. He is also an associate fellow at the Studio for Creative Inquiry College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon University and he is a faculty member of web design at the Academy of Art University.

(Refer to attached handout for Frank's presentation)

Ray then introduced **Marc Smolowitz**. Mark is an academy award nominated film television and media producer for over twenty years with diverse management level experience through all aspects of the entertainment business. His forthcoming film and media projects include the HIV Story Project a short film compilation that will mark the 30th global anniversary of the HIV/AIDS endemic in 2011 by bringing together leading Bay Area film-makers to work in collaboration with people living with HIV and AIDS.

Marc spoke about the HIV Story Project and specifically about a program called Generations HIV. He began with by speaking about his personal experience. He's a twenty year San Franciscan who came here in 1990 when he was 22 and he's really dedicated to San Francisco being his home for the long haul and being part of these communities that care about the elderly so when Marc Dunlop reached out to him to come talk about the HIV story project it really dawned on him that he had something to say about ageism now that he's in his 40's. He was reading an article "When Generations Collide," a very eloquent piece written about life as a gay man in 2010, going out in the Castro in his mid 40's, and it struck him that when he came here they were a very young group of Generation X largely activist queers fighting HIV and AIDS, that he had very few mentors that would help him, they lost many of their gay men and LGBT mentors and he missed that tremendously. He felt a real sense of loss and he was searching for that connection looking to his elders. He was mindful of the fact that with respect to HIV and AIDS there was tremendous pressure to keep the faith. As protease inhibitors largely became a solution to the problem of living with HIV and AIDS he too tested positive and his behavior was not what he was so proud of and he suddenly realized that he didn't learn that lesson. There are a lot of complex reasons for that and there are a lot of complex reasons why LGBT people don't learn lessons but he thinks the fact that he lost mentors has a lot to do with that. He has his own personal back story but with that said everyone has a story. So as he worked through his journey with HIV/AIDS into the 2000's and his film career really took off showing you can live with HIV and still be really successful. He became increasingly aware that he had a calling which was to make films and over time he began to make a film about organ donation and transplantation issues which is in the process and going very well. He was increasingly making public service announcements for HIV and AIDS organizations in San Francisco and he realized there was huge need for messaging that was powerful and it seemed that there was this gap between the stories that we see in our daily lives and the stories that are shown to the community at large and friends of his who worked in public health reported to him that there would be these discussion groups and the over 55's would say in discussion that HIV in their community was not a topic which was discussed and the under 25's would say what are you talking about it's everywhere. He kept hearing this, a disconnect, a lot of public awareness but not a lot of public discussion and maybe there was room for a project to discuss these issues. So came up with HIV Story Project.

The Project involves live real-time story telling about HIV. Individuals open-the-door to a booth with a camera, close-the-door and ask a question and of other generations, or answer prerecorded questions

from other generations. The booths are at Out of the Closet and will travel. The booth is not just about being HIV positive. It's about a place to think about how we live with this together.

Ray then introduced **Bernadette Montez**. Bernadette Montez is the youth program coordinator for TILT which stands for Teaching Intermediate Literacy Tools which is a youth program. She also coordinates the Generation film workshop which is an inter-generational video production and media literacy workshop for LGBT youth and elders. As a media and visual artist and educator for 8 years Bernadette has worked with youth and adults at institutions such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, UC Berkeley, International Center for Photography and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She's going to talk about the opportunities they present and the ways that they address ageism in the classroom and show a video.

(A short film was shown)

Intergenerational is a film workshop for LGBT teens, youth and elders. Young people and elders learn together, sharing stories that are important to them and the process is a collaboration between youth and elder. Month long workshops take place on Saturdays. Participants come up with ideas, best idea is acted on and they learn about film, sound and lighting together as a collaborative project. First day is community building day. The inter-generational workshop is explained and it is emphasized that it is not just elders working with elders and youth working with youth, but a collaborative process. To address ageism they do a stereotype activity and discussion where they let people identify/ expose stereotypes of youth and elder and discuss what it means for the workshop and society at large. They also do an interview activity put youth and elder together and ask questions of each other to find commonalities and shared interests and sharing stories. They talk about issues like coming out and talk really openly about expectations. It's really about dialogue and letting people get to know each other and that's what inter-generational workshops have to offer. The workshop builds dialogue and trust. All the movies that come out of Generations are wonderful. The one she showed is especially interesting because everyone in that group had been bullied when they were a young person. It's empowering and meaningful to make the film, talk about and share their experiences. Generations has been going on for about five years.

Ray then introduced **Brian de Vries**. Brian is a professor of gerontology at San Francisco State University and is co-chair of the Lesbian and Gay Aging Issues Network as well as a policy advisor for AARP California.

He's primarily a researcher for LGBT aging, especially but not exclusively social relationships and friendships in particular. He just finished large project on recently bereaved older spouses and partners both here and Salt Lake City yet a lot of similarity in the experiences of grief which speaks to common emotional relational core which occurs independent of religion, gender etc. He came to SF in 1996 from Vancouver. His research focused on older persons, so what he can speak to comes from the perspective of the older person. He defines older as persons in second half of life. He conducted two national surveys on LGBT boomers. There are only two truly national surveys of LGBT boomers both MET Life. First the 2006 survey made 60,000,000 media impressions and provided another window on aging. In the 1970's there was a lot of research on lesbian and gay aging. Attention to AIDS unfortunately pushed attention away from LGBT aging to survival in the present. So momentum to understand LGBT aging was lost when all the energy was diverted to fighting AIDS. It's only been last 10-12 where LGBT aging has risen to surface again. Momentum has been recaptured and now a lot is going on to look at what life is like for older LGBT people. A study was conducted in San Francisco of about 13,000 people ranging from 18-92 to look at needs of this population. Communities themselves have an interest in learning about their aging representatives. Federal government has not been forthcoming in helping at this point in a national sense. He wants to formulate national image of LGBT aging beyond boomers (the survey that has already been done).

Of interest is that very few older lesbians and gay men, especially lesbians, identify as queer. They identify as homosexual, whereas the younger generation identifies primarily as queer and not homosexual. These are not just terms, it represents the context within which their experiences are understood by themselves and presented to others.

LGBT older persons are more likely to be caregivers than heterosexuals, not hugely but significantly and this is especially true for men. 60% of LGBT boomers self-identify as having a family, this is logical kin as opposed to biological kin. Ideally this involves inter-generational contact but we know so little about it. More likely than not though, they are within generational contacts rendering them different from more prototypical families. LGBT boomers expressed fear of dying alone and being alone disproportionately to heterosexual boomers. This is more common in LGBT boomers in states where same sex relationships are not recognized. Where same sex relationships are recognized LGBT boomers have fewer fears about aging. So recognition of same sex relationships has implications beyond just those relationships to fears of aging of LGBT community as a whole. He wants to create a format where LGBT elders can talk about fears of aging about and with their logical as opposed to biological families to talk about issues related to aging and how the logical family which is often not defined and recognized in society can deal with these issues. The recognition of the logical family is important to creating support systems for elderly LGBT community members.

Advisory Committee members asked the panelists questions.

Fayaz asked Brian if he came across other identity issues e.g. gender, race, ethnicity? He was curious to know what distinctions play out in terms of age issues in different communities

Brian answered that in terms of what do we know, very little, and we need more research. With that as a preface, there has been some work done on multiple jeopardy, what it means to be a part of multiple stigmatized group of which age could be one. This started with old lesbians of color which created an appreciation of overlapping circles and complexity that is revealed. There is an awareness of dynamics that multiple identities play even though not a lot of information on it.

Joseph asked Marc if he could you talk about the demographics he's noticed so far with the project. Marc replied that it's been diverse and that he's proud of that. They're committed to that. They have diversity at the table so they can outreach and encourage diversity of participation. Some things he couldn't do because of the beta. Because design of app is not multi-lingual. It is a learn as you go model. Non-profit participation is really important and they try to recruit volunteers.

Amy asked Brian to talk more about aging and state laws with respect to marriage. What evidence, studies of real harm that people suffer is there. Brian replied that a paper has been published called, "Sexuality Research and Social Policy." In that paper a special section has national sample looking at LGBT young adults and boomers and those LGBT's living in states where there was initiative prohibiting same sex marriage and the psychological effects on them. From this national sample it was clear there was significant negative psychological effect in living through the rhetoric of what it means for a community to vote on your relationship. There are several studies along those lines.

Cecilia asked Brian that the study seems to focus on couples and what are psychological effects on those not married? Brian replied that interestingly, the effects are independent of relationship status. Single people feel threatened, and have negative emotions caused by banning of same sex marriage just as LGBT's in relationships do.

Daniel asked Brian, what are the challenges our community faces in terms of ageism and what are the unique aptitudes we bring to this challenge. What are the resources our community has that we can draw

on to deal with this issue. Brian stated that LGBT's should be better prepared for later life than heterosexuals because of their crisis competence. They already know what it is to be stigmatized. LGBTs disproportionately age without partners and without children, more than two-thirds of older gay men are without partners and about half of older lesbians are without partners. 40% of older lesbians have children mostly through previous heterosexual marriage and less than a quarter of gay men. For care, heterosexuals turn to partner first, then adult children then extended family, then friends. For LGBTs it is the opposite. Friends are the most common care-giver. That why we should nurture these friendships that mean so much but sometimes fall through the cracks through our inability to speak them.

Cecilia asked if it affect our psyche to constantly be in crisis mode? Brian replied that yes and some people do not accept crisis competence theory.

Allison posed a question to Brian and Bernadette regarding the challenges to getting the population size that you need to get reliable surveys of the bi and trans segment of the community and get them to buy in? Brian replied that it's difficult to know if the surveys are truly representative with respect to bi and trans; it requires direct outreach to change that. Some LGBT's feel threatened by this academic outreach.

Bernadette explained that the workshop attempts to create a safe space for everybody by talking about it.

Advisory committee members commented on the difficulty of hearing the violence in the movie shown and thought that it might be prefaced with an advisory, so that people are prepared.

5. Finalizing the 2010 Housing Right Work Group Work Plan (Discussion Item):

Housing work group not here

6. Work Group Reports:

The asylum workgroup, Senior/Alternative Family workgroup, Housing Workgroup, and Outreach Workgroup updated the Committee on their work in the previous month.

7. Commissioner Report:

Commissioner Chung reported that Shirley Breyer-Black, former Commissioner with MTA has been appointed to the Commission. She came with amazing bio. Commissioner Julius Turman, Michael Sweet and Chung were reappointed and the Commission is expecting a new Commissioner in September.

The Executive Director made a number of presentations on the state of the HRC's budget and it appears better than anticipated. It was thought that they would have to layoff seven to eight staff, but were able to reduce that number to three. Interestingly, the current budget allows for the hiring of additional staff and replace the head of the LGBT and HIV division. The report also shows that even with reduced staff and resources, staff efficiency has increased dramatically.

She reported that the Mayor's Office contacted today to tell her that she had been reappointed as a Commissioner to the HRC for four more years.

Lastly, she encouraged the members to identify a neighborhood where the committee can hold one of its meetings. On the Commission level, the next community meeting is going to be in the Tenderloin. Any suggestions are to be submitted to Poonam.

8. Staff Report:

Applicants are being interviewed for Manager III position, Larry Brinkin's old position. On Thursday Sept 23, 2010 at 6:00 PM, the Commission will hold a hearing on surveillance and profiling of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians.

9. Old/New Business:

None

10. Announcements:

Announcements of upcoming events were made.

11. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.