Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee
Minutes of the July 17, 2012 Meeting

Committee Members Present: Commissioner Pappas, Amos Lim, Angie Perone, Amy Whelan, Bart Broome, Bianca Polovina, Bill Ambrunn, Bonnie Milluso, Cynthia Yeung, Diane Alcala, Fayaz Rajani, Mark Snyder, Mark Murphy, Matthew Valdez, Neo Veavea, Patrick Pablo, Ray Rudolph, Sterling Johnson, Tracy Garza.

Committee Members Absent: Commissioner Mavis, Corin Buchanan, Marcelle Million, Mike Van Nguyen, Paul Klees, Vaughn Villaverde.

Staff Present: Nadia Babella

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Commissioner Pappas called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Nadia Babella called the roll. There was quorum.

2. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda

Clarisa Sanchez from Refugee and Immigration Services, Catholic Charities CYO in San Francisco spoke about the resettlement program in her agency. They handle about 10-15 refugee resettlement cases per year. They are having a hard time finding affordable housing. For example, a recent young Somali refugee who is gay was referred to them for resettlement. He only knows one person in the Bay Area. Fortunately, they were able to connect with other local organizations and found him temporary housing. She asked that LGBTAC to work with her by referring her to other organizations that work in the sectors of housing and employment. Their goal is to build-up their Resettlement Program and welcome LGBTI refugees. She invited LGBTAC to attend an event that is taking place at St. Mary’s Cathedral – located at 1111 Gough Street – on Wednesday, July 18, from 6 – 8 p.m. to discuss President Obama’s recent announcement regarding undocumented youth and their option seeking employment in the U.S. without fear of being deported.

2. Approval of April 17 and May 15, 2012 Minutes

Motion for approval of both minutes was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Follow-up Discussion on the May 15, 2012 Housing Panel

Bonnie reported that she was very happy with the panel, not only because we had great attendance but it was very informative for everyone. Bianca noted that the workgroup is considering their next steps, and encouraged LGBTAC members to give their ideas. Nadia informed everyone that one of the handouts for today’s meeting was a list of recommendations made by the panelists. Bonnie noted that a key issue for those present was funding, and even though we cannot donate money we can raise the organizations’ concerns to the Board of Supervisors and other elected officials.

Commissioner Pappas stated that he was struck by the difficulties faced by transgender shelter residents. There is a need to implement more or better sensitivity training for shelter staff. Another issue was the
complaint system. Shelters are supposed to be compliant with San Francisco’s nondiscrimination policies, so we want to facilitate a better complaint system not just with ECS but with other shelters, too.

Nadia noted that shelters have their own internal shelter complaint system, but that shelter residents accused of harassment have due process rights before a shelter may issue a denial of services (i.e. removed from the shelter). It’s difficult for shelter residents who are harassed to prove their case in a hearing, unless there are witnesses. The complaint process can be onerous and not used by residents. Shelter residents can also file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission. HRC tries to mediate. HRC has received numerous complaints of discrimination based on gender identity in shelters. The discrimination comes from both other residents and from staff. One issue of working with a shelter resident and trying to settle a complaint is difficulty with continual communication with the complainant because they are transient and do not always have phones. Complaints can only do so much because complaint driven enforcement puts the work on the people being harassed to make change. We need more creative preventative strategies.

LGBTAC member asked what happens to repeat offenders at shelters and if there is a consolidated list, i.e., citywide list of repeated offenders in shelters so that others may pinpoint to residents that continually harass LGBTIQ shelter residents? Sterling recommended that we help create an LGBTIQ space in each shelter to show that the shelter is LGBTIQ friendly.

Mark who works with Transgender Law Center expressed that just recently about 20 people have called TLC to complain about shelter-related issues. Issues mentioned by callers were problems with staff, lack of safety in the shelter (particularly in the showers), and robberies.

Commissioner Pappas recommended that the housing workgroup create a list of questions and he will subsequently give those questions to the CEOs of shelters and religious leaders that help run/fund shelters to not only raise awareness about this but to also learn more of shelters’ internal policies.

Nadia recommended that the housing workgroup review the a hearing spearheaded by Supervisor Campos regarding LGBT safety in shelters. Also, she recommended that we look at the work of the Shelter Monitoring Committee to see if they have addressed LGBT safety issues. The housing workgroup will make their final recommendations by the end of this year.

5. Presentation by Amy Whelan on S.B. 1172 “Sexual Orientation Change Efforts” and Resolution in Support of the Bill

Commissioner Pappas stated that this was a timely piece of legislation and requires action from the LGBTAC regarding the resolution. The resolution will then be presented to the full Commission.

Amy Whelan gave a presentation on SB 1172. The bill was authored by Ted Lieu and Assemblywoman Fiona Ma. The bill will prohibit mental health providers in California from engaging in sexual orientation change efforts, also known as, “reparative therapy” with patients that are less than 18-years-old (minors), and if they do they can be subjected to disciplinary action from their licensing board.

The bill has gotten a lot of press. The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) has been involved in the drafting process. All major medical associations have issued warnings that “reparative therapy” may be harmful and may cause depression and suicide. This bill is intended to show that “reparative therapy” is not based on medical science. Also, it is important to note that former supporters of “reparative therapy” have come out and retracted their support. The one study that is continuously cited by supporters of “reparative therapy” was then retracted by its author. The position of the bill’s authors is that these attempts fall into a long historical line of psychological attempts to change one’s sexual orientation, which included electric shock therapy. The bill only applies to minors and can only be enforced by professional licensing boards.

Sterling asked why the bill did not include “gender identity” change efforts. Nadia noted that this is a question others have raised. The resolution passed by the Youth Commission in support of SB1172
contains language on gender identity. The Resolution before the LGBTAC speaks of “sexual orientation” because the bill only speaks of “sexual orientation” and not “sexual orientation or gender identity,” however the Youth Commission’s Resolution did include “gender identity.” Amy noted that the bill does cover transgender minors and the findings speak about transgender minors. It was recommended that the resolution add language that acknowledges that proponents of ‘reparative therapy’ conflate sexual orientation and gender identity and that sexual orientation change therapy is used against transgender minors.

Bart recommended that we strengthen the language of our resolution and ask that the Mayor and Board of Supervisors urge the legislature to pass the bill and the Governor to sign the bill.

LGBTAC voted to adopt the resolution with the above recommendations.

Commissioner Pappas stated that the resolution will be heard at the August 9 Commission meeting. He invited committee members to attend and speak in support of these two bills.

There was no public comment.

6. Workgroup Report Back

Beyond Castro

Angie informed everyone that the next Committee meeting on August 21 will be held in Bayview. The panel discussion will be tied to last year’s panel. The group will then do a write-up about the project. The goal is to compile a comprehensive summary of the process, and provide recommendations for moving forward to keep coalitions strong and to replicate these efforts in other districts. The Workgroup’s next meeting is on August 7.

Commissioner Pappas suggested the workgroup invite Supervisor Cohen and her staff to the August panel. Angie noted that she has been invited and will touch base soon to check if she will be able to attend.

LGBT Youth

Patrick informed everyone that this past Wednesday the LGBT Youth Workgroup met to look at the LGBTQ student services in schools. Each school in the San Francisco Unified District is supposed to have an LGBT liaison, and each liaison receives an $800 dollar stipend at the end of the year. Mark noted that they recently reviewed the school board resolution at the SFUSD Curriculum Committee. Kevin Gogin and the Associate Superintendent were there and will report back to the School Board Commissioners. They have been doing great work but recognize that more things need to be done.

Patrick informed the committee that they are working on a youth panel for the September meeting. Each panelist will have questions given to them prior to the panel.

Angie asked about youth’s willingness to speak out and participate in public events. Mark stated that they discloses to youth that the meeting is public, and the youth they worked with were out. Bonnie recommended that LGBTAC open an online forum for youth to be able to make comments anonymously while still informing us of their needs and concerns.

Tracy noted that there is an invitation on Facebook to have an LGBT panel at their next Compassion Research Day. Facebook has this event, generally, every 6 months. Facebook is looking into how youth use electronic media to bully.

Mark raised the problem of working with undocumented LGBT youth. Some undocumented youth are afraid of self-identifying because of possible legal repercussions. Mark mentioned that they are
addressing this by working with Olga Talamante from the Chicana/Latina Foundation. Overall, we need to increase the LGBTAC’s access to undocumented youth.

7. Member Reports on Activities in the Community

Mark informed everyone that there is also another key bill in our State Legislature, A.B. 1856. The bill addresses the issue of a lack of youth LGBTQ cultural competency by those that work in the foster care system. Tom Ammiano authored the bill. Mark recommended that the Committee author a resolution expressing their support for this bill.

Matthew informed everyone that the Equal Employment Commission (EEOC) just ruled that Title VII covers transgender individuals. The plaintiff applied for a job as a man and she then transitioned and was let go of soon after. Her employer told her it was because of funding and subsequently hired someone else to cover her previously held position. She sought the legal services of TLC and the EEOC’s ruling now covers transgender employees under Title VII. This is huge. The language of the ruling is not just limited to those that are transgender, but also to those that are gender-nonconforming. The ruling applies to all employers with fifteen employees or more.

8. Commissioner Report

Commissioner Pappas thanked Nadia and LGBTAC members that were involved in putting together the pride contingent. This was his first parade, and it was a great experience.

He attended the “No on Hate Campaign” shoot which just took place here in S.F. The AIDS Walk collected nearly $2.7M dollars. He also recently met with representatives from the Ohlone Tribe and he hopes to engage them in the future. Tomorrow, he will attend an anti-bullying meeting at the Jewish Community Relation Council.

Commissioner Pappas informed the committee of the plan to transition HRC contract compliance work to the City Administrator’s Office. The transition will be complete on August 1. Complaints and policy along with the LGBTAC and the Equity Committee will remain with the HRC.

9. Staff Report

Nadia reported that the 12N training video is near complete. Also all city employees that work with youth will have to watch the video. Hopefully, this will be picked up in other places. We will have a preview of the video in the near future. The Youth Commission, DPH and David Miree from HRC worked with Baycat production company to produce the video. Baycat is located in Bayview – we might invite them to our August panel.

Nadia also informed everyone of efforts to make sure the LGTB Senior Task Force with the Board of Supervisors is diverse. They are working with Daniel from NCLR to put together a community meeting for LGBT seniors of color.

Lastly, Alex Baty and Tom Temprano resigned from the Committee because of time commitment issues.

10. Announcements

Sterling handed out flyers for a Broadway performance. The funds raised will support key local LGBT organizations. The performance will be taking place on August 5 at the Herbst Theater.

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m.