Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Committee
Minutes of the October 20, 2009 Meeting

Committee Members Present: Commissioner Cecilia Chung, Jane Aceituno, Alex Baty, Bart Broome, Samer Danfoura, Bill Doggett, Allison Laureano, Dominique Leslie, Amos Lim, Joseph Peralta, Donna Sachet, Lindasusan Ulrich, Brad Vanderbilt, Vaughn Villaverde.

Committee Members Absent: Commissioner August Longo (excused), Mark Dunlop, Mark Murphy (excused).

Staff Present: Nadia Babella, Larry Brinkin, Domenic Viterbo, Tamra Winchester, Matthew Harris (intern).

Guests Present: No guests were present.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Commissioner Chung called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Nadia Babella called the roll.

2. Public Comment For Items Not On The Agenda:

None.

3. Approval of July 17 and August 20, 2009 Minutes (Action Item):

The August 20 draft minutes were not completed, but will be ready for vote along with the October minutes at the November 17 meeting.

Brad Vanderbilt moved to approve the July 17, 2009 draft minutes as written. Martin Rawlings-Fein seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Introduction of Matthew Harris, LGBTH Division Fall Intern:

Matthew Harris, who is visiting the U.S. for a few months from Manchester, England, is a registered nurse at the Royal College of Nursing in Manchester. He came to intern at the HRC to learn about the HRC and how it serves the LGBT communities in San Francisco. One of his projects is indexing the many themes and topics from the Committee’s minutes that have been posted on the website. He is also working on adding content information to the City’s Height and Weight Ordinance. Nadia Babella and Larry Brinkin both said that staff has benefited from all his hard work and enthusiasm.

5. Overview of the Equal Benefits Program: Tamra Winchester (Discussion Item):

Tamra Winchester, Contract Compliance Officer in the LGBTH Division, has worked in the Equal Benefits Program since the 12B Ordinance came into effect in 1997. She provided background on how the 12B Ordinance originated: In
the 70s, same-sex marriage attempts were stalled because the State of California changed its laws to say that instead of marriage being between two people, it was between a man and a woman. Around 1982 there were community discussions on domestic partnerships and how to realize those relationships. Larry Brinkin was involved in the first lawsuit in which he asked for three days of paid bereavement leave after his partner of 11 years passed on; however, he lost the case because the judge agreed with the employer that there no validation of his 11 year relationship even though there was proof. Around 1985 the City of Berkeley became the first city to establish a domestic partner registry and to offer domestic partner benefits to their employees. Around that same time, the S.F. Board of Supervisors voted to develop a domestic partner ordinance in San Francisco, but Mayor Feinstein vetoed it. In the late 80s, the Village Voice, the ACLU, and other employers began to offer domestic partner benefits. On Valentine’s Day of 1991, San Francisco opened its Domestic Partner Registry. Then on June 1, 1997, the Equal Benefits Ordinance went into affect which requires City contractors to offer the same benefits to employees with domestic partners as they do to employees with spouses. The basic philosophy is equal pay for equal work: benefits count for 30-40% of compensation and it’s really that domestic partners have access to that part of their compensation as well. The secondary benefit of the Equal Benefits Ordinance is that it’s been an important public education tool. Even employees who don’t take advantage of domestic partner benefits now have it in their handbooks and are thinking about it more, as are employers. Domestic partners are defined as same-sex and opposite-sex couples who are registered with any government registry. There are now about 80 domestic partner registries across the country. The City doesn’t tell employers what benefits to offer; it just says that whatever benefits are offered, to offer them equally. When it comes to retirement benefits, we make sure that the distribution choices are the same for spouse and non-spouse beneficiaries. To become compliant with the 12B Ordinance, companies fill out the Declaration of Nondiscrimination in Contracts and Benefits form and submit any documents that would support the benefits they provide. We try to encourage vendors to comply early in the contracting process, but that takes time. There are a lot of reasons to provide domestic partner coverage, but most of all, it’s the right thing to do. When the Ordinance was first implemented, there were only 500 companies offering domestic partner coverage and less than 15 insurers to underwrite domestic partner coverage. Now, we’ve received almost 20,000 declarations; about 14,000 of them are in compliance; 8,000 of them comply because they’re small companies or don’t have employees and don’t provide benefits; 6,000 of them comply and do provide domestic partner benefits. This number represents 3.5 million employees who have access to this benefit. There are contractors in 45 states who offer equal benefits; Alaska, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, and West Virginia do not have vendors that comply with the ordinance.

6. **Follow-up to the HIV Structural Intervention Panel (Discussion Item):**

Donna Sachet provided some background information on this item. The work group wants to draft a letter thanking Stop AIDS Project for participating on the panel and to Michael Scarce for raising the issue. They do not feel that a public forum is necessary, but will need to meet to discuss possible next steps. Commissioner Chung said that this would be an opportunity to start larger discussions on how to frame HIV prevention research, structural interventions to have language within a human rights framework to prevent unintended consequences. She emphasized that the discussion should be expanded to look at research, especially if it involves human subjects and how to preserve their human rights. Members felt that both sides gave good presentations, but raised more questions than answers. Possible next steps may include further research and/or education on sexual networking, and developing guiding principles. The members want further discussion to include Mr. Scarce and the organization.

7. **2010 Recruitment (Discussion Item):**

Nadia Babella distributed the Committee information cards that were handed out during this year’s Pride Parade so that Committee members can distribute them throughout the city. She asked the Committee to think about 3-5 people who’d make good candidates and encourage them to apply for membership on the Committee, but also to keep diversity in mind. Committee members are also to identify various LGBT organizations and find out who would make good candidates. Committee members will report on who they’ve contacted at next month’s meeting. Staff will find a way to provide access to materials for monolingual, non-English speaking applicants.
8. **Work Group Reports:**

**Youth Report:**

Nadia Babella reported that Vaughn Villaverde chaired last month’s meeting where they talked about continuing to work on implementing the 12N Ordinance that says that all City employees that work with youth must receive training on LGBT youth cultural competency training. Also City agencies that fund $50,000 or more to youth organizations must undergo annual LGBT youth sensitivity training. Mario Yedidia, the Program and Policy Coordinator at the Youth Commission and member of the work group, talked to Supervisor Dufty’s office who led inquiries to major City agencies asking if they implemented the 12N Ordinance. Responses from the various departments include details of what they’ve done so far. Now that they’ve been made aware of the 12N Ordinance, departments will need to set aside funds to implement it. The second thing they’re working on is looking for people to conduct the trainings. The ordinance is very specific about what needs to be in the trainings: trainings need to address issues affecting homeless youth, youth of color, immigrant youth, youth with HIV/AIDS, youth with sexual abuse history, etc. - the various issues affecting LGBT youth and to make sure that the trainings go into depth on these issues. They also talked about coming up with a request for qualifications to see which agencies, either by themselves or in collaboration with other agencies, can come up with a good training curriculum that would serve the diversity within the LGBTQ youth community. Lastly, the joint resolution that the Committee passed with the Youth Commission, was presented to the School Board, but was given back to them asking to make the language stronger, to make the resolves more concrete because they seem a bit vague. Mark Murphy and Mario Yedidia met with Sandra Fewer, Board of Education, and Christian Castaing, the original drafter of the resolution.

**Outreach Report:**

Samer Danfoura reported that they’re busy working on the upcoming event: Beyond Marriage: Recognizing Alternative Familial Relations, a panel presentation and public forum on Thursday, October 29, in the Ceremonial Room at the LGBT Center at 6:00 p.m. The idea underlying the forum is that even after marriage equality is achieved, there will a lot of our families that are not being recognized legally and will be facing the same legal battles that same-sex couples face now or have faced in the past and getting recognition for those families and helping to support laws and other policies that will help families overcome their obstacles. They talked about getting as many Committee members at the event as possible and would appreciate their being there and inviting people to attend either as speakers or audience members. Bart Broome said that if Committee members attend, they would have one absence taken off their record. Three prominent people in the LGBT advocacy community are taking their time out to create this public forum. Part of it is encouraging public participation and to create a public record on which to build state legislation to document the problem. Individual stories would be helpful; however, some people in these relationships don’t want to talk about their experiences because they can be quite upsetting. Commissioner Chung said that in addition, there are two event pages on Facebook to use for inviting friends to participate. Executive Director Theresa Sparks will emcee the event. Mr. Danfoura said that he and Hadas Rivera-Weiss of staff have prepared a menu for the event. Larry Brinkin said that the Friends of the HRC agreed to pay for the event including the food. Joseph Peralta said that the Center will provide childcare.

**Bisexual Invisibility:**

Lindasusan Ulrich said that they’re progressing with the report; Marty Rawlings-Fein will be contacting various organizations on services for bi folks. They’re also making progress on the main overview and the section on bi health. Bill Doggett gave the work group a little gift for their archive that may have specific interest and/or research value: a copy of a Newsweek from 1995 which covers bisexuality. It may be of some interest to research the thinking of that time to incorporate in their report.

9. **Commissioner Report:**

Commissioner Chung reported that the Commission had to reschedule its meeting that was going to be held in the Bayview/Hunters Point District on October 22 because the proposed meeting venue is not ADA accessible. Their next scheduled community meeting will be held on December 10 in the Mission District. A list of other communities being considered will be forwarded to the Committee members. Staff is continuing with its strategic planning process and that the strategic planning committee is meeting on October 23 to talk about how to move forward with the
recommendations. She congratulated Committee member Samer Danfoura who was sworn in as a Commissioner to the Immigrant Rights Commission.

10. **Staff Report:**

In regards to the strategic planning process, Nadia Babella reported that HRC Executive Director Theresa Sparks and Boris Delepine of staff will meet with Mayor Newsom and the Board of Supervisors about the restructuring of the HRC with the hope of receiving more resources before entering the new budget process. The final product of the strategic planning process will be ready by the end of this year. The HRC’s website has been revamped and has a new address: [www.sf-hrc.org](http://www.sf-hrc.org) and asked that Committee members who don’t have, or have incomplete bio information contact her. They also hope to incorporate Matthew Harris’ work and high-definition video footage from the Lezbitopia and Alternative Familial Relations Forum to improve it even more. The HRC’s first e-newsletter has been produced and will be ongoing. LGBT sensitivity trainings to all City police officers are ongoing. Lastly, the various databases used by the HRC are being looked at to see how they can be more efficient.

11. **Old/New Business:**

Per Amos Lim’s 7X7 presentation on immigration reform, a letter has been drafted and will be emailed to the Committee members and will be discussed at next month’s meeting.

12. **Announcements:**

Lindasusan Ulrich, on behalf of Bill Doggett, announced that B/GLAM is having a “family” reunion reading at the San Francisco Public Library. The GLBT Historical Society will deliver a keynote address on Vicki Starr, a transgender performer, on November 19.

Martin Rawlings-Fein announced that he has a new 8-1/2 minute film that will be shown at Trannyfest: Transgender Film Festival will take place on November 6. Lindasusan Ulrich provided the soundtrack on the film.

Allison Laureano announced that Donna Sachet is the first drag performer to sing the national anthem at a major league baseball game. She also announced that the Transgender Law Center (TLC) is celebrating its seventh anniversary on Thursday, November 5, at The EndUp, 401 6th Street, from 7:00-9:30 p.m.; the VIP reception is from 6:00-7:00 p.m. One of this year’s recipients of TLC’s Vanguard Award is Commissioner Chung. Chaz Bono is one of the special guests attending the event. Go to [www.transgenderlawcenter.org](http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org) for more event information.

Justin Jones announced that the Mayor’s Office, via Alex Randolph, has begun initial conversations with community stakeholders on disaster preparedness and community resiliency for the LGBT community. They had their first meeting last Friday and are waiting for language from Mr. Randolph on how to invite new people to the conversation. They’re looking at forming a steering committee to work for the next year or two on this issue.

13. **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.