

**MINUTES  
LGBTQIA+ COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MAY 16, 2023**

Present: Chair Steven Kovach, Vice Chair Jennifer Billingsley, Commissioners, Sandy Aldieri, Dolly Haddad, Beth Shapiro, Cayes Jarda (left at 6:26 pm), Laura Timmons, and Assistant General Counsel Christopher Forte.

Members of the Public: Paige McLaughlin, Derek Cartagena, Haley Stafford, Captain Lozefski, Sage Delucia, Ray Tyrson, Nina Vasquez-Rosa, Vinnie Loffredo.

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Kovach called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.
2. **Approval of the Minutes for the April 18, 2023 Regular Meeting of the LGBTQIA+ Commission.**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to approve the minutes for the April 18, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Billingsley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:33 p.m. Commissioner Billingsley was absent for the vote.

3. **Public Session on Agenda Items.** Nina Vasquez-Rosa and Ray Tyrson introduced themselves to the Commission.
4. **New Business.**

**A. Submitted Applications for Proposed Events.**

- I. **Gayme Night, Monday July 17 from 6-9pm at Board Game Café (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce).** Commissioner Haddad updated the Commission on the dates and times of the event, together with the proposed budget, and answered questions from commissioners regarding logistics.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Aldieri made a motion to recommend approval of the event. Commissioner Jarda seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:40 p.m.

**B. Middletown Pride Scholarship Program (AGC Forte and Nina Vasquez-Rosa).**

AGC Forte and Nina Vasquez-Rosa updated the Commission the proposed idea of starting a Middletown Pride Scholarship Program for 2024. Commissioners were very receptive to the idea. Commissioner Timmons recommended a collaboration with Pratt and Whitney for STEM scholarships. Commissioner Shapiro and Commissioner Billingsley stated interest in serving on the sub-committee.

If you require special accommodations for any meeting, please call the ADA Coordinator at (860) 638-4540, (voice) or (860) 638-4812 (TDD/TTY), or the Town Clerk's Office at (860) 638-4910 at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled meeting.

- C. Invitation to attend Middlesex Health Flag Raising at 8:30 am on June 1 (AGC Forte).** AGC Forte relayed Middlesex Health's invitation to attend their annual Progress Pride Flag and Juneteenth flag raising at Middlesex Health.
- D. Senior Center Update (AGC Forte).** AGC Forte relayed the updates from Andrea Gregg on pride activities the senior center is doing.
- E. Pride Resolution (Commissioner Mangiafico).** AGC Forte introduced the pride resolution drafted by Commissioner Mangiafico to be adopted by the Common Council on June 5. AGC Forte relayed Commissioner Mangiafico's invitation to the Commissioners to attend the Council meeting and stand with him as the resolution is read to honor pride month.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to recommend approval of the motion. Commissioner Aldieri seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:55 p.m.

## **5. Old Business.**

- A. Review of Drag Artist Story Hour at Earth Day Event on April 22, 2023 at 1:30 pm (Commissioner Billingsley and Russell Library).** Commissioner Billingsley updated the commission on the event, where Hella Swagg, Rory Roux Lay, and Frizzie Borden performed. AGC Forte stated that he attended the event and it was amazing to see so many families brave the cold and wind to come watch.
- B. Middletown Pride 2023 (AGC Forte).**
  - I. Pride Kick-Off Event on June 1 (AGC Forte).** AGC Forte updated the commissioners on the logistics of the event, which will start at 10 am at the pride crosswalk on Main Street and will continue to City Hall for the pride flag raising and Mayoral proclamation.
  - II. Middletown PrideFEST 2023 on June 3 (AGC Forte).** AGC Forte updated the commission on the progress of PrideFEST, which is going well. Haley Stafford provided a rundown of the numbers of sponsors, vendors, marching groups, and volunteers that have signed up so far. Performer contracts are being received.
  - III. Drag Artist Story Hour at PrideFEST 2023 from 11:30 am – 12:00 pm (Commissioner Billingsley and Russell Library).** No updates.
  - IV. Queer Speed Dating and Friending! Monday, June 5, 2023 from 6-10 pm at Relish (Commissioner Jarda).** No updates.
  - V. Book Discussion at Russell Library on June 7 from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm (Russell Library).** No updates.

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- VI. Gay Spirit Radio Documentary and Panel at Buttonwood Tree on June 14, 2023 at 7 pm (Jesse Nasta).** No updates.
- VII. Band Night at Wadsworth Mansion on June 22 from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm (Commissioner Aldieri).** Commissioner Aldieri updated the Commissioners on the event and stated that she needed assistance getting out contracts for the event. Commissioner Aldieri also asked the commissioners for volunteers to assist with the event.
- VIII. Pride Flag Tie Dye Events on June 24, July 22, and August 19 at Russell Library (Russell Library).** No updates.
- IX. Open Mic Event at the Buttonwood Tree (Commissioner Kovach).** Commissioner Kovach stated that the event will take place on June 29 from 7-9pm at the Buttonwood Tree, and will be hosted by Kenya Mone Heart.

**\*COMMISSIONER JARDA LEFT THE MEETING AT 6:26 P.M., AND QUORUM FOR THE MEETING WAS LOST. NO OTHER BUSINESS TOOK PLACE AFTER SUCH TIME, BUT THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS WAS HAD BY THE COMMISSIONERS AND ATTENDEES.\***

Commissioner Timmons stated that the LGBTQ+ Religion movie night will be postponed to a date in August. It was cancelled because the venue became unavailable.

**C. Update on LGBTQIA+ Commission Initiatives and Events.**

- I. LGBTQIA+ Commission Monthly Community Event Updates:**
  - a. May 25, 2023: LGBTQIA+ Workshop, Common Council Chambers, 6-8pm. (Brianna Skowera).** AGC Forte will be running the event. No other updates.
  - b. Gayme Night, Monday July 17 from 6-9pm at Board Game Café (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce.** See above. No other updates.
  - c. August 2023 (Will Kenny, OutFilmCT Movie Night).** No updates.
  - d. August 2023 (Commissioner Billingsley, Queer Swim).** Commissioner Billingsley is working with Recreation to find a date, time and location. Will probably occur on a Monday.
  - e. September 2023 (Commissioner Shapiro, Karaoke).** Commissioner Haddad recommended a location. No other updates.

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- f. **October 20, 2023 (Tileen Sebastiano, 80s Dance Party).** No updates.
  - g. **October 2023 (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce, Game Night).** No updates.
  - h. **November 2023 (Commissioner Timmons, Thanksgiving Dinner).** Commissioner Timmons is working with First Church to hold an event.
  - i. **December 2023 (Commissioner Timmons).** Commissioner Timmons stated that she would like to see an ice skating event, or other events during December as it is typically light in programming.
- II. Safety for LGBTQIA+ Community in Middletown (Commissioner Timmons and Mangiafico).** Commissioner Timmons attended a Public Health and Safety meeting, and will be meeting with the Chief of Police to get additional LGBTQIA+ training for front line officer.
- III. Middlesex Health and Middletown Pride (Commissioner Jarda).** No updates.

**6. Adjournment.**

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