

**MINUTES
LGBTQIA+ COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 19, 2023**

Present: Vice Chair Jennifer Billingsley, Commissioners, Beth Shapiro, Laura Timmons, Cayes Jarda, Anthony Mangiafico, Christine Santacroce, and Sandy Aldieri, and Assistant General Counsel Christopher Forte.

Members of the Public: Mel Cordner, Christine Rebstock, Paul Brindimore, Haley Stafford, Captain John Lozefski, Heather Wiick, Brianna Skowera, and Kristana Esslinger.

1. **Call to Order.** Vice Chair Billingsley called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.
2. **Approval of the Minutes for the August 15, 2023 Regular Meeting of the LGBTQIA+ Commission.**

MOTION: Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to approve the minutes for the August 15, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Mangiafico seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:37 p.m.

3. **Public Session on Agenda Items.** Paul Brindimore and Heather Wiick introduced themselves to the Commission.
4. **New Business.**

A. Submitted Applications for Proposed Events.

- I. **Middletown Pride Mutual Aid Program (Brianna Skowera).** Brianna Skowera introduced and explained the idea for Middletown Pride to host this program, with the aim of allowing LGBTQIA+ groups to connect and provide calls to action, information, and referrals to other agencies. AGC Forte stated that this is a great idea. The Commission asked Brianna to conduct some research and to develop the idea further for approval.
- II. **Queer Speed Dating at Relish, October 9, 5-8 pm (Commissioner Jarda).** Commissioner Jarda explained the details of the event and the proposed budget of \$766.25.

MOTION: Commissioner Aldieri made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed event. Commissioner Santacroce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:59 p.m.

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.

III. Star GAY-zing at Van Vleck Observatory, October 12, 7-9 pm. (AGC Forte). AGC Forte explained the details of the proposed event with Wesleyan's Astronomy Department, with the budget of \$250.

MOTION: Commissioner Mangiafico made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed event. Commissioner Jarda seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:02 p.m.

IV. Queer Youth Open Mic at Downtown Trick or Treat, October 21, 11am-2pm on the South Green (Mel Cordner). Mel Cordner introduced the event for an open mic section at the Downtown Trick or Treat event, together with the proposed budget of \$1,325.

MOTION: Commissioner Mangiafico made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed event. Commissioner Aldieri seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:05 p.m. with Commissioner Billingsley abstaining from the vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Aldieri made a motion to amend the agenda to move up section 4(E). Commissioner Mangiafico seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:07 p.m.

B. Recommend approvals for Middletown PrideFEST 2024:

I. Recommend approval of June 1, 2024 as date for Middletown PrideFEST 2024

MOTION: Commissioner Santacroce made a motion to recommend approval of the date of Middletown PrideFEST. Commissioner Jarda seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:21 p.m.

II. Recommend approval of the Pride March to start at 1 pm.

MOTION: Commissioner Billingsley made a motion to recommend approval of the commencement of the Pride March to start at 1 p.m. and for the Pride Rally to start at 2:30 pm and to conclude at 4:00 pm. Commissioner Mangiafico seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:24 p.m.

III. Recommend approval of the Pride Rally to start at 2:30 pm and to conclude at 4:00 pm.

MOTION: Commissioner Billingsley made a motion to recommend approval of the commencement of the Pride March to start at 1 p.m. and for the Pride Rally to start at 2:30 pm and to conclude at 4:00 pm. Commissioner Mangiafico seconded the motion. The motion passed

unanimously at 6:24 p.m.

- IV. Recommend approval of theme of Pride Rally.** AGC Forte stated that he thought a good idea for a theme for the Pride Rally would be on the importance of LGBTQIA+ education in schools, especially now where it is not being taught but instead is openly banned in some districts, and where in some states it is legal for teachers to out transgender students to their parents. AGC Forte stated that this would be apt with the launch of the Middletown Pride Scholarship Program this year. Vice Chair Billingsley stated that it would be impactful to have Commissioner Jarda speak at the Rally this year.

MOTION: Commissioner Aldieri made a motion to recommend approval of the theme for the Pride Rally to be on the importance of LGBTQIA+ education in schools. Commissioner Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:28 p.m.

- V. Recommend approval of the Pride Showcase Concert to commence at 4 pm and run until 7 pm.**

MOTION: Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to recommend approval of the Pride Showcase Concerts to run from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. Commissioner Jarda seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:44 p.m.

- VI. Recommend approval of having 2 stages at the Pride Showcase Concert—one at the South Green and one at Spear Park.** Discussion was had regarding having two stages and how to allocate performers at each stage.

MOTION: Commissioner Mangiafico made a motion to recommend approval for having 2 stages at the Pride Showcase Concert. Commissioner Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:44 p.m.

- VII. Recommend approval of Tea Dance to commence at 7 pm and run until 10 pm.**

MOTION: Commissioner Aldieri made a motion to recommend approval for Tea Dance to commence at 7 pm and to run until 10 pm. Commissioner Santacroce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:44 p.m.

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. Recommend approval of the following dates and deadlines for Middletown PrideFEST 2024:

I. Grand Marshals. Nominations open: January 1, 2024. Deadlines for Nominations: January 31, 2024. Decision for Grand Marshals by LGBTQIA+ Commission: February 20, 2024.

II. Performers. Applications open: January 1, 2024. Deadlines for Applications: February 29, 2024. Decision for Performers by LGBTQIA+ Commission: March 19, 2024.

III. Hosts. Applications open: January 1, 2024. Deadlines for Applications: February 29, 2024. Decision for Hosts by LGBTQIA+ Commission: March 19, 2024.

IV. Event Approval. Recommend approval of April 1, 2024 deadline for LGBTQIA+ Commission Approval for Pride Month events.

MOTION: Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to recommend approval of the deadlines set forth in Section 4(C)(I) through 4(C)(IV). Commissioner Mangiafico seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:16 p.m.

D. Sponsorship for Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective's One Big Event Gala in November (AGC Forte). AGC Forte explained that the HGLHC has reached out to Middletown Pride to sponsor their 40th Gala Event. AGC Forte recommended a \$200 sponsorship.

MOTION: Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to recommend approval for a \$200 sponsorship of the HGLHC's Gala. Commissioner Timmons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:50 p.m.

E. Q+ Community Grant Program 2023-2024 (Mel Cordner). AGC Forte and Mel Cordner explained the pricing and services offered for this year's Middletown Pride Community Grant Program to Q+, to bring 4 events centered around Queer Youth and parents of Queer Youth to Middletown.

MOTION: Commissioner Jarda made a motion to recommend approval to award Q+ with another grant as proposed. Commissioner Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:11 p.m., with Vice Chair Billingsley abstaining from the vote.

5. Old Business.

- A. Review of Pride Identity Flag Tie Dye Events on July 22 and August 19 (Russell Library).** AGC Forte updated the Commission that this was a well-attended and impactful event.
- B. Review of Trivia Night at Middletown Recreation Center on August 23 from 6 pm – 8 pm (Brianna Skowera).** Brianna Skowera stated that this event was attended by approximately 20 people and was an enjoyable event for all.
- C. Review of Gayme Night at Back Again Board Games on September 18 from 6 pm – 9 pm (Commissioners Santacroce and Haddad).** Brianna Skowera stated that this event was well attended and fun for those in attendance.

***At 6:53 p.m. Commissioner Santacroce signed off and quorum for the meeting was lost.
No further business was conducted.***

- D. Review of Middletown Pride 2023 (Commissioners and Members of Public).**
No update.
- E. New Ideas for Middletown Pride 2024 (AGC Forte).** No update.
- F. Update on LGBTQIA+ Commission Initiatives and Events.** No update.

I. LGBTQIA+ Commission Monthly Community Event Updates:

- a. September 2023-- Karaoke Night at Oh Mama on September 23 from 6 pm – 9 pm (Commissioner Shapiro).**
- b. October 2023**
- c. November 2023—Gayme Night, Back Again Board Games, 6-9 pm (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce)**
- d. November 2023—Transgender Day of Remembrance Event (Commissioner Timmons)**
- e. November 2023—Middletown Pride Friendsgiving Dinner (Commissioner Timmons)**
- f. December 2023**
- g. January 2024—Gayme Night, Back Again Board Games, 6-9 pm (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce)**
- h. February 2024**

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.

- i. March 2024—Gayme Night, Back Again Board Games, 6-9 pm (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce)**
- j. April 2024**
- k. May 2024—Gayme Night, Back Again Board Games, 6-9 pm (Commissioners Haddad and Santacroce)**
- l. June 2024 (Connecticut Trail Days Event, June 2, 2024 Update (Commissioner’s Shapiro and Haddad)).**

II. Safety for LGBTQIA+ Community in Middletown (Commissioner Timmons and Mangiafico). No update.

III. Middlesex Health and Middletown Pride (Commissioner Jarda). No update.

6. Adjournment.

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.