



# City of Seattle

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## Seattle LGBTQ Commission



### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 19, 2020 | 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**Commissioners Present:** Annabelle Bachman, Chris Brown, Latosha Correll, Michael Garrett, Kari Lerum, Victor Loo, Jessi Murray, Nate Higby, Wayne Rocque, John Rodriguez, Sabel Roizen, Byram Simpson, Deepa Sivarajan, and Manuel Venegas

**Commissioners Absent:** Wayne Rocque and Joseph Suttner

**SOCR Staff:** Janet Stafford

**Meeting Minutes recorded by:** Deepa Sivarajan

**Guests:** Deaunte Damper, Brett Pepowski

#### Welcome and Introductions

1. We are meeting virtually on Zoom because of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and guidelines around social distancing. We'll be recording our meetings to have available for the public.
2. Welcome to Annabelle Bachman, newly confirmed commissioner!

#### Public Open Comment

1. No public comment.

#### Approve February Minutes and March Agenda

1. Motion to approve March agenda with below edits. **Motion passes (100%)**
  - a. Add section on voting for a treasurer, to take place after committee reports.
  - b. Remove mention of City Council ordinance on paid sick time from agenda, since that legislation has been passed.
2. Motion to approve February minutes. **Motion passes (10 in favor, 3 abstentions)**
  - a. Revise section on minutes and agenda to say January minutes and November agenda.

### **Review of Bylaws: Leave of Absence**

1. Bylaws allow for up to a 4-month leave of absence in which the commissioner retains their seat; if a commissioner wishes to leave for longer, they must resign their seat and reapply
2. Joseph Suttner and Wayne Rocque have both requested to take a leave of absence

### **Seattle Office of Civil Rights (SOCR) Report**

1. SOCR has temporarily shut down because of the COVID-19 crisis; staff are still working remotely
  - a. Have asked the public to keep contacting SOCR but if they can't get through, let SOCR know
  - b. City's focus is all on this crisis – we are hoping to help with more funding
  - c. SOCR will be getting weekly reports and will share with Commission as available
2. Delay on commission appointments for mayoral seats – Janet expects to get updates in the next week
  - a. Anticipating that COVID-19 may lead to delays in all appointments, including Council and Commission seats
3. Now that Commission support is back under the Policy team at SOCR, reviewing and evaluating how to support commission needs for the four SOCR commissions
4. Discussion by commissioners:
  - a. Kari Lerum: How are other commissions navigating COVID-19?
    - Janet Stafford: Most are meeting through Zoom, some through Skype. SOCR purchased a Zoom account and we're all working to get a better handle on that, support the commissions much more.

### **Committee Reports**

1. POC Stakeholders Committee: Report from Latosha Correll and Victor Loo
  - a. Not able to meet in the past month, but still plan to meet on the first Monday of the month at this time
  - b. Victor Loo and Manuel Venegas attended workshop on 2020 workplan of Human Services Department (HSD) LGBTQ Working Group
    - i. Strong emphasis on equity
    - ii. Request from HSD that this Commission can help elevate some issues with Council – we need to understand clearly what those priorities are
    - iii. HSD wants to know what our response is to COVID-19 – both what our community is needing and our own actions
2. Community Outreach Committee: Report from Nate Higby
  - a. Emailed out a Google Doc with a list of community partners that commissioners would like to reach out to – please fill out!
  - b. Community Outreach Committee would also like to absorb the program to connect commissioners to elected officials unless others object
  - c. Talked about COVID-19 and identified some groups to reach out to, particularly Generations Aging with Pride to see what our elders need during this crisis
    - i. Byram Simpson and Kari Lerum attended a meeting with GenPride; they are gathering data from about 150 elders who usually attend their programming to see what they need
    - ii. Potential for us to reach out to them via outreach phone calls to stay connected

- iii. Inadequate response from federal government is triggering PTSD in people who lived through AIDS crisis, so we're working with GenPride to try and help, and to share stories of those impacted
  - d. Also reached out to Seattle-King County Coalition on Homelessness; Kari Lerum listened to a public call that they had and will share notes
- 3. Discussion from commissioners:
  - a. Manuel Venegas: If we're already engaging with our political and community assignments, how do you want us to share our updates?
    - i. Nate Higby: We have not yet discussed how we're working with those updates – more to come soon! What we want to see now is getting the ball rolling.
  - b. Annabelle Bachman: What was it that the committee decided to take on themselves?
    - i. Nate Higby: This was around political connection assignments – just coordinating.
- 4. Social Media & Communications: Report from Chris Brown
  - a. Podcasting: Chris did a recording with Sylvia O'Stayformore from Rainbow Bingo, hoping to turn into a podcast episode
  - b. Want to make sure we're uplifting and highlighting what we're doing as a commission and what committees are doing – please send what you're doing to us to share on social!
  - c. Need someone to take on Joseph Suttner's role temporarily to keep our accounts running
    - i. Chris Brown has volunteered to take that on – thank you, Chris!
  - d. Questions/comments from commissioners:
    - i. Deepa Sivarajan: Shoutout to the committee for the thread on our Facebook group sharing resources around COVID-19fa – I've found that very helpful when people have asked me what they can do either to help or how they can access help.
- 5. Commission Operations: Report from Manuel Venegas
  - a. Committee has not yet met so nothing to report, but will write in the chat when will be best to join – Manuel's availability is still only Thursday – Saturday

### **Treasurer Legislation**

- 1. Motion to create a position of Treasurer to be monitor our finances, to be elected by the Commission. **Motion passes (100%)**
- 2. Nomination for Annabelle Bachman to assume the role of Treasurer.
  - a. Annabelle Bachman: I like spreadsheets and know how to use a calculator!
- 3. Motion to elect Annabelle Bachman to the position of treasurer. **Motion passes (12 approves, 1 abstention)**

### **Coronavirus Response Policy & Legislation Stances**

- 4. Discussion from commissioners:
  - a. Byram: Concerned about vagueness of sweeps language – unclear how this is different from normal. This is concerning both because sweeps are generally inhumane, but also because shelters may be moving to a shelter-in-place model where they won't admit new shelter residents. That

- b. Victor: Behavioral health providers with City funding have been impacted as well – request that City to hold harmless behavioral health providers with City funding for a minimum of three months.
  - c. Latosha: Would like to include something on potential economic assistance relief for people with temporary or contractor positions, or people without the protection of a union.
  - d. Jessi: Concerned that the short-term moratorium on evictions is not enough – would like to push for a mortgage freeze or rent freeze.
  - e. Annabelle: Agreed on mortgage and rent freeze – these payments are social constructs that should be disregarded for few months.
  - f. Michael: Concerned about having providers not be held to any standards – it’s a professional and ethical issue to not have any standards to be available.
    - i. Victor Loo: Completely agree with you, and I’m not asking for that – this is a temporary measure to ask that funding not be cut or withheld.
    - ii. Byram Simpson: There are performance measures not related to funding, and what we’re asking is that funding not be denied based on those measures not being met because of focus instead being on coronavirus response.
    - iii. Michael Garrett: Sure, but just have to make sure that they’re still being held to professional and ethical standards, and that the words we’re using to state that are very careful to state that, such as maintaining standards around non-discrimination, etc.
    - iv. Byram Simpson: I hear you, and would encourage you to the extent that you have capacity to engage in the letter-writing process so that language meets what you’re referring to.
    - v. Annabelle: Lots of LGBTQ people who do not have family and are completely self-isolated.
    - vi. Deaunte Damper: Would be great if we could post something about HIV and COVID-19 on social media.
5. Motion to write a letter stating that LGBTQ people should be held top of mind during the COVID-19, understanding that our community is disproportionately impacted including but not limited to people who are elder, immunocompromised, or experiencing homelessness. **Motion passes (12 in favor, 1 abstention)**
- a. Jessi, Nate, Brett, and Deepa are interested in helping write the letter using Working Washington’s open letter as a template.
6. Advertising the letter beyond normal means:
- a. Could try boosting on social media; if they take it down, we wouldn’t get charged
  - b. Liaisons to each elected official could send personally to make bigger impact

### State Legislation Updates

- 1. Updates to be provided over email.

### Communication Tools for Rapid Response

- 1. Using Zoom to hold meetings – allows us to record meetings
  - a. Currently would be difficult for subcommittees to use SOCR’s Zoom account based on ownership, so encourage using our personal mechanisms for virtual meetings

- b. SOCR also has a conference line that committees can use, but need to give Janet Stafford a heads-up

**Announcements, Reminders, & Roll Call**

1. Coronavirus reminders: wash your hands! If you bind or cinch, take breaks! Be considerate of seniors!
2. Local supermarkets have designated Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7 – 9 a.m. as hours for seniors – please follow that guidance.

**(END 8:36)**