

**TOWN OF CROMWELL**

**LBGTQ COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**November 17th, 2021**

**07:00 P.M.**

**Minutes**

**In attendance:**

- Thomas Foran, Laura Stull, Lana Dupont, Molly Sayles, Matthew Brown, Maia Pavlick, Kathy Bremer, Sarah Backe, James Demetriades, Shannon Brown, Felix Umba-Neuwinger
- 7:10 pm: Meeting was called to order by Matt
  - Introductions
- 7:16 pm: Thomas approved the minutes
- Matthew:
  - Work with Town Manager in order to make budget requests
    - Most budgets come from other committees/divisions at the Town Hall
    - New fiscal year: July of 2022
- Lana:
  - Idea to reach out with Matt Lussier to help the committee with rainbow sidewalks for Pride month or for a flag to be hung
    - Lana will email him tomorrow
  - Matt: He's a great ally in general; Matt's child is running for governor at school and the platform will be inclusivity & Matt was helpful with this
  - Lana is very happy that Thomas is available
- Matt:
  - Deferred to Kathy/Molly/Maia with regard to the school report
    - Molly spoke with a member of the Public Works Department in Northampton, MA
      - The Pride crosswalk in their area was approved by their mayor
        - It's a municipality by municipality type of case scenario
          - Safety regulations come into play
        - In this town, the arts committee took over with regard to leading this initiative

- A “luck of the draw” scenario if it’ll get passed
  - Molly didn’t obtain a framework though she tried
  - Matt: Jacey met with Cromwell’s Town Manager
    - Jacey presented to the Town Council in June about this
    - He brought in the chief of police; the crosswalk idea was not well-received
    - If we did it in a school area, that’s more of the administration’s domain; more flexibility in a non-crosswalk area
      - Molly: we could contact the arts council about that
        - Lana- deferred to James due to his role with this (CCD)
- Matt asked Molly/Kathy/Maia for the school report
  - Maia: Equity Committee (for the faculty) has formed along with the Unity Club for students
    - Goal: to raise awareness, reduce bias/discrimination, etc.
  - Felix: Spoke about his participation with the GSA at the high school (has taken on a leadership role)
    - Kathy suggested a partnership between the middle and high school regarding a GSA
      - Felix will get us contact information/be a communication bridge
    - Kathy suggested that we find alternative ways to promote our committee
      - In public spaces, on social media, etc.
- Matt: Thanked everyone that provided feedback; we have so many great ideas, but we should pick a few-- focus on landmark events for 2022
  - Suggestions:
    - Hosting the Laramie Project
      - James has offered to run the play (springtime as a possibility)
        - Try to engage with the Cromwell community theatre; speaking with Mr. Sinclair at the high school (April/May= potential time frame); looked into gaining the “rights” & costs of scripts (waiting to hear back from the community theatre)
          - James: can be as large or small as we’d like
            - Open it up to the middle/high school drama club, in addition to the senior center’s program
            - Has experience directing this, but is open if someone else wants to do it

- Form a committee if we progress with this
    - Not a complicated show; a lot of ways to do this successfully
  - Rainbow library book drive
    - Donate those books to the schools/public library
    - Books for all ages
  - “Chalk the Walk” fundraiser (library, Pierson Park, etc.-- some potential ideas)
    - Creative district might be interested in helping
  - Training session
    - Matt spoke to Kate (carried out the middle school PD last year)
      - Idea of extending this idea to a parent workshop/training for the community
      - Shannon, Matt’s wife, joined the call-- She spoke with Tony F
        - He is well-versed in educating others on such topics, specific to that community
  - Pride crosswalk
  - Unity pole
  - Thomas: still interested in doing my performance art piece
    - Anecdotal
    - “Names I have been called” (based on Thomas’ life)
    - End result: where does labeling become bullying?
      - Could be 15-20 min with Q & A
      - Better for an adult audience
    - Maia asked Thomas if he’d be willing to present at an upcoming PD at the middle school
      - Thomas said he’d love to
  - Laura inquired as to whether the Diversity & Inclusion Committee is what our group is
    - Matt explained that it’s a separate group (broader scope)
  - Molly added “LGBTQ mural” in the chat feature
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- Felix asked if there’s anything else that he can bring up at his next GSA meeting
    - Matt mentioned recruiting members as an option
    - 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7 pm

- Felix- their GSA pres/VP said they'd try to come
- James: I would really like us to try to do something visible for Pride month
  - This committee should march in the Middletown parade
    - Kathy discussed her participation at the Middletown parade and how amazing it is
    - Lana mentioned what NYC does and how spectacular it is
      - Police/fire dept etc= all involved; all-day event
      - Also added that it'd be great if small businesses in town put up some small signage to signify that the space is safe (has a lot to do with pride, as well)
- Sarah: Created a "Mission Statement" sample
  - Based on her attendance at the first meeting
  - Some of the buzz words are provided; see below:
    - *Awareness, acceptance, visibility...*
    - *Creating safe spaces*
    - *Community sponsored events*
    - *Partner with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee*
      - James: Add "To" prior to the goals
      - Also add "advocate for policies..."
- James brought up making a Facebook page
  - Many agreed with the idea
  - Motion to approve- first by Thomas; seconded by Laura
    - Laura and Shannon will help with the social media page
- Matt- the committee requires a lot of work
  - Having more than one chair is important/useful
    - Having possibly structural changes
      - Chair and vice chair?
      - Secretary?
      - Social media point person
  - Lana brought up that it's important to have a member of the LGBTQ committee in a leadership role
    - They understand the strife
- Matt: Elections in January, possibly
- Lana/Thomas: discussion of getting our name out there; need to publicize the committee more

- Kathy brought up the idea of distributing "Safe Space" stickers to business owners; small ways to promote inclusion
- Thomas is on an executive council where he resides and will give updates to them regarding the work we're doing
- Matt- will distribute tonight's minutes in the forthcoming days
  - Asked if anyone was interested in further organizing and dividing
- Shannon brought up how important it is to make sure that businesses that take stickers are in fact actual "safe spaces" that truly support members of the LGBTQ community
  - We don't want the purpose/intent to be counterproductive (paraphrased)
- 8:24: Motion to adjourn by Maia; seconded by Laura