

Human Relations Commission (HRC) Meeting
January 10, 2019

TO: Human Relations Commission

FROM: Commissioners Kralik, Lee, and Stinger

DATE: January 4, 2019

SUBJECT: Agenda Item # 2: Supporting an Inclusive Community, Status Report of Ad Hoc Committee, Being LGBTQ+ in Palo Alto,

Executive Summary:

This report transmits to the Human Relations Commission (HRC) the status of work being done by the Ad Hoc Committee to assess strengths and vulnerabilities of the LGBTQ+ population in Palo Alto. Recommendations for programming through leveraging and aligning with existing service providers follow from the findings. Policy recommendations, which will complement the programming recommendations, are being considered and will be brought to the Commission in a subsequent, separate report.

Action at this meeting:

The full Commission will receive the Ad Hoc Committee Report. The Commission's additional perspectives and insights into the proposed action plan will be sought.

Background:

A Council Resolution Reaffirming Palo Alto's Commitment to a Diverse, Supportive, Inclusive and Protective Community was adopted on December 12, 2016. A supportive statement was also incorporated into the Healthy Cities Initiative.

The resolution commits Palo Alto to a diverse, supportive, inclusive and protective community and, with regard to gender, calls out:

- Rejection of bigotry- homophobia
- Value of all members of community-regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity
- Zero tolerance for discrimination, hate crimes, harassment or assault
- Opposition to any attempts to undermine safety, security, and rights of members of our community;
- Leading by example in city operations.

The HRC's role in supporting a community as so envisioned is set out in the Palo Alto Municipal Code. The jurisdiction of the HRC extends to factors of concern, including 'sex, sexual preference, gender identity'. (Palo Alto Municipal Code, Section 2.22.050 Jurisdiction) Further the HRC has the authority to make studies, 'to foster public awareness and understanding', and 'to coordinate programs of the commission with similar programs of private and public agencies and organizations'. (Palo Alto Municipal Code, Section 2.22.060 Authority)

Subsequently the HRC established as a priority for the 2018 Work Plan an assessment of the needs and assets of the LGBTQ+ community, including youth and seniors. That initial work was completed. The Ad Hoc Committee (Lee, O'Nan, Stinger in 2018) held a Community Listening Forum with the Santa Clara County Office of LGBTQ Affairs, conducted a paper and on-line survey, collected published statistical data and conducted interviews.

At its June, 2018 retreat, the HRC proposed Supporting an Inclusive Community as a strategic priority for the 2018/2019 year. That priority encompassed addressing the needs of the LGBTQ+

population in Palo Alto. The project goals, which were previously communicated to the Commission, are to

- Enhance community awareness of LGBTQ+ population segments
- Increase scope of programming for LGBTQ+ youth and adults, their families and the community

The desired outcomes are to:

- Give more visibility to the LGBTQ+ community
- Increase community understanding.

Discussion:

Even in Palo Alto, the LGBTQ+ population is vulnerable. From survey work, we know that “Most people in Palo Alto are accepting of LGBTQ+ community, but some still make hurtful mistakes in their interactions with LGBTQ+ individuals”. From the Community Listening Forum, we know that progressive attitudes are a strength of the community. Nonetheless, progressive talk is not matched by reality.

The needs may be summed up by a quote, “It feels invisible, but not hostile.” That leads to a goal of future work, to enhance community awareness and education.

The approach, which is being pursued is to:

- Build structure
 - Establish an advisory board
 - Leverage the expertise and involvement of existing service providers
- Focus on programming, visibility and space
- Educational and social programming is sought
 - Targeting both youth and adults
 - Inclusive of families, allies, programming staff, and the general public
- Increase visibility through better messaging and events

The first step is to convene an LGBTQ+ Summit of Palo Alto service providers. The intention is to have a conversation specific to Palo Alto and identify achievable priorities.

Additional insights and perspectives are sought from the full Commission by the Ad Hoc Committee.