



Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2024
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Present:

Lee Blinder, Chair
Nicholas Augustine
Joan Bryan
Josie Caballero
August Clayton
Mickey Dhir
Kurt Doan
Debb Dunn
Anthony Fox

Nicole Hollywood
Tina Jones
Asher Kennedy
Stephen Martin
Paula Neira
Wendy Novak
M Pease
Mark Ridderhoff
Sarah Stern
Joe Toolan

Commissioners Absent:

Jabari Lyles
Kijana West, Vice Chair

GOCI Staff Present:

Jeremy Browning, Director, Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs
Taylor Harer, Special Assistant, Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs
Keith Colston, Director, Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs

I. Call to Order:

- A. Meeting was called to Order by Chair Blinder at 6:03 PM. Housekeeping and Meeting Guidelines were read and acknowledged. Additionally, meeting attendees were reminded to add their pronouns to their Zoom names and instructions were provided.
- B. Roll Call: Roll call was conducted by the Chair Blinder and provided a review of the new voting procedures using the Zoom reaction functions to indicate vote (green "check" to indicate "yea" and the red "X" to indicate "nay" and no action to abstain).

- II. Agenda Approval: Chair Blinder called for a vote to approve the agenda and the agenda was approved with an abstention from Commissioner Ridderhoff.
- III. Remarks: Director Colston gave an introduction and shared details about the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs. He covered the Commission's history, its functions, and the different governing bodies within tribal communities. Following his presentation, commissioners had the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.
- IV. Chair Report: The Committee Chair gave a brief update on the recent Strategic Planning Retreat, which was noted as both successful and engaging. They stated that the Retreat concentrated on shaping the Commission's mission, vision, and values - key elements for its future development. Despite facing ongoing challenges and negative attention toward the LGBTQIA+ community, the Commission continues to cultivate a supportive environment. Chair Blinder thanked participants for their commitment and emphasized the value of collaboration. Recognizing the intense and emotional nature of the upcoming work, they encouraged members to seek support if needed. The report concluded with gratitude for the members' service.
- V. Director's Report:
 - A. Commissioner Transitions: Commissioners August Clayton, Jabari Lyles, and Nicholas Augustine are transitioning out. Nicholas Augustine and Jabari Lyles will complete their terms by September 30th, while August Clayton resigned earlier. Their valuable contributions were recognized and thanked.
 - B. Symposium Update: The upcoming symposium has 30 in-person registrants and 12 virtual ones, with a total of 80 seats available. Many of the 21 secretaries have confirmed their attendance, with many planning to be present in person.
 - C. Annual Report: Attention will soon shift to the 2024 annual report. The Commissioners were invited to contribute ideas and get involved.
 - D. November Meeting: Chair and Vice Chair elections will be held. Interested candidates should prepare a 2-minute speech. The meeting will also cover the adoption of the 2025 policy priorities.
- VI. Approval of July 8, 2024 meeting Minutes: Chair Blinder called a vote to approve the minutes from the previous meeting they were approved with an abstention from Commissioner Ridderhoff.
- VII. Approval : Procedure for Bill Amendments: Policy Chair Caballero provided an overview of the proposed procedure. Commissioner Caballero made a motion to approve the Procedure for Bill Amendments and was seconded by Commissioner Pease. The motion was approved with an abstention from Commissioner Ridderhoff.
- VIII. Discussion: Special Meeting for Strategic Planning - Director Browning proposed a special meeting in early December and that a poll would be sent out to determine the date. Commissioner Toolan made a motion to hold a special meeting to finalize strategic planning in early December and was seconded by Commissioner Doan. The motion was approved with an abstention from Commissioner Ridderhoff.
- IX. Discussion: 2025 Meeting Schedule: Director Browning presented the proposed meeting schedule for 2025, which would follow the same pattern as the previous years, with meetings held every other month. Discussion ensued and commissioners suggested adding an extra meeting in February to address legislative session needs and removing the meeting in July, reallocating that time for strategic planning

instead. Commissioner Caballero made a motion to adopt the proposed meeting schedule (listed below) and was seconded by Commissioner Kennedy. The motion passed unanimously.

- A. January 13, 2025
 - B. February 10, 2025
 - C. March 10, 2025
 - D. May 12, 2025
 - E. Strategic Planning Retreat - TBD (Saturday 19 or 26 July 2025; 2 or 9 August 2025)
 - F. September 8, 2025
 - G. November 10, 2025
- X. Discussion: 2025 Policy Priorities, Recommendations, and Best Practices
- A. Director Browning provided an update on the 2024 policy document revision. He requested that comments be sent directly to him or added to the document, acknowledging that the initial draft may appear disorganized. The goal is to consolidate and reformat the document to improve readability and uniformity across sections. Feedback is requested by October 1st, after which the Commission's staff will reformat the document for the Policy Committee's review. The updated document will be presented to the full Commission by October 15th for review before the November 4th meeting.
 - B. A Commissioner emphasized the importance of reviewing and providing input on the document, as it will represent the Commission's voice during the legislative session. She highlighted that the reformatting aims to make the document modular and user-friendly, allowing sections to be easily recalled for specific issues. Commissioners were encouraged to submit their feedback promptly to facilitate necessary changes.
 - C. The Director will resend the document to all commissioners in a standalone email, as requested. The Committee's Chair thanked the Commissioner's and the Director for their efforts and for maintaining a collaborative process, ensuring that all feedback is incorporated and that everyone is aware of the deadlines.
- XI. Closing Remarks: The Commission's Chair expressed heartfelt appreciation and support for the group, acknowledging the challenging and distressing situations discussed. They emphasized the importance of community care, especially in light of issues related to anti-blackness, misogyny, and other systemic challenges. The Chair encouraged open communication, mutual support, and the continuation of the strong sense of connection observed during the Retreat. They underscored the resilience of the LGBTQIA+ community and highlighted the significance of ongoing efforts and historical contributions. The Chair concluded by offering support, urging everyone to reach out if needed, and encouraging self-care.
- XII. Adjournment: Chair Blinder adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Special Assistant, Taylor Harer