



Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2024
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Present:

Lee Blinder, Chair
Kijana West, Vice Chair
Ali K.C. Bell
Joan Bryan
Josie Caballero
Mickey Dhir
Kurt Doan
Debb Dunn
Anthony Fox

Nicole Hollywood
Tina Jones
Asher Kennedy
Paula Neira
Wendy Novak
M Pease
Brandon Russell
Sarah Stern
Joe Toolan

Commissioners Absent:

Stephen Martin
Ly Xīnzhèn Zhǎngsūn (they/them), (Lydia X. Z. Brown)

Staff Present:

Jeremy Browning, Director, Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs
Taylor Harer, Special Assistant, Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs
Krystal Quinlan, Assistant Attorney General

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to Order by Chair Blinder at 6:01 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.
- II. Roll Call: Roll call was conducted by Chair Blinder and members were asked to share their name, pronouns, county, affiliated organizations, one thing that brings you joy. Following the completion of the role call, Director Browning expressed gratitude and appreciation for the contributions of the commissioners whose terms recently ended to Nicolas Augustine, August Clayton, Jabari Lyles, and Mark Ridderhoff. Chair Blinder echoed this sentiment, acknowledging their service and dedication.

- III. Agenda Approval: Chair Blinder presented the meeting agenda, noting a revision from the version previously distributed. Commissioner Fox moved to approve the agenda, and Commissioner Kurt Doan seconded the motion. The agenda was approved, with Commissioner Hollywood abstaining from the vote.
- IV. Chair Report: Chair Blinder began by expressing gratitude and extending a warm welcome to the new members of the Commission. Chair Blinder acknowledged the anxieties surrounding the upcoming elections and expressed hope that the meeting would provide some comfort and support. They highlighted the importance of staying connected and checking in with one another during challenging times. They also thanked the Commission members for their dedicated service and the time they had contributed over the past year.
- V. Vice Chair Report: Vice Chair West welcomed the new commissioners and expressed appreciation for their participation in the meeting. Vice Chair West reflected on the past year which she described as a joy and learning experience. Additionally, she stressed the importance of our diverse communities coming together to continue the work. Vice Chair West ended with a message of hope for the next year.
- VI. Approval of the 2025 Policy Priorities: Commissioner and Policy Chair Caballero provided an overview of the 2025 Policy Priority document. The floor was opened for discussion on the 2025 policy priorities and no questions or comments were brought up. Commissioner Caballero made a motion to approve the 2025 Policy Priorities document and was seconded by commissioner Bryan. The motion carried and the 2025 Policy Priorities were unanimously adopted.
- VII. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Commissioner Fox moved to approve the minutes from the meetings held on September 7, 2024, and September 9, 2024 and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Bryan. The floor was opened for discussion, and the motion passed with Commissioners Russell and Jones abstaining.
- VIII. Election - Chair and Vice Chair Annual Elections: Director Browning moderated the election process and introduced the candidates.
 - A. Candidate Lee Blinder gave remarks outlining the reasons for seeking reelection as Chair. A vote was held, and Lee Blinder was unanimously elected as Commission Chair.
 - B. Candidate M Pease provided remarks explaining their reasons for seeking the position of Vice Chair. A vote was held, and M Pease was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.
- IX. Directors Report: Director Browning provided highlights from the LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Symposium. Commissioner Bryan offered remarks of praise for those involved. Commissioners were reminded of the special meeting on December 2, 2024 from 6:00pm - 8:00pm to finalize the Commission's strategic planning.
- X. Discussion: 2025 Strategic Planning: Director Browning went over the work that has been done by the Commission to date for the new commissioners. He encouraged the new members to review the notes from the Strategic Planning Retreat and to relay any comments or questions. The floor was opened for discussion with no new input from the Commission.
- XI. Open Forum for General Remarks or Comments
 - A. Community member Jacob Kott, from the Maryland Department of the Environment, shared that he is working to establish an employee resource group within his department. He is seeking resources to help him get started

and is also interested in increasing involvement in Pride events and year-round programs.

1. Director Browning offered his email address to arrange a meeting with Jacob to discuss his efforts further.
 2. Commissioners Kennedy, Jones, Russell, and Toolan also shared their email addresses and the organizations they are involved with, offering support to assist Mr. Kott in his initiatives.
- B. Commissioner Jones provided details on the upcoming Transgender Care and Experience Symposium, as well as the Freestate Justice Jazz Brunch.
- XII. Closing Remarks: Chair Blinder expressed a message of unity, sharing their gratitude for the positive energy the meeting brought to the Commission during a challenging time. They also extended thanks to the commissioners who have concluded their service and offered appreciation to everyone for their time and attention.
- XIII. Adjournment: Chair Blinder adjourned the meeting at 7:14pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Special Assistant, Taylor Harer