LGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee

Agenda

Monday, July 28, 2025

6:30 p.m., Virtual Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Samantha Perez, Kimberly Baldini, Sam Barnes, Laura Tinter, Samer Hassan, Kellen MacBeth, Rachel Bedell, Kaitlyn Goyal, Jennifer Weber, Sam Jane, Victoria Dale, Charles McCullough, Candice Lopez, Suzan Charlton, James Fisher, Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Kishori, Sam Barnes, SC Nealy.

I. Welcome

II. Approval of Minutes from May 15, 2025, Meeting
   a. Kaitlyn Goyal moved to approve the minutes; Sam Barnes seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Public Comment
   a. Kellen MacBeth spoke regarding the Pride 2025 celebrations, admiring the light display, the block party, and the mural. Kellen spoke about wanting to expand the work next year.
      Kellen expressed support for APS to continue to affirm the rights and needs of Trans and Non-Binary students in response to the Department of Education's Title IX violation finding.
      Kellen spoke to policies affirming LGBTQIA+ policies for youth in the foster care and juvenile courts systems.
      Kellen appreciated and encouraged additional fair housing investments that the County is making.
      With regards to legislative priorities, Kellen recommended being pro-active, anticipating a pro-equality majority in state government.
   b. Samer Hassan recently moved to Arlington and expressed appreciation for a group like the LGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee. Samer encouraged the Committee to support the queer community holistically. Samer shared his experience as a queer Palestinian, noting that Israel does not offer equal rights to queer Palestinians, and support for the queer community should involve standing against the Israeli government.
   c. Charles McCullough offered his thoughts on legislative priorities, supporting a marriage amendment to the Virginia Constitution, access to trans healthcare, and nondiscrimination protections across the Commonwealth.

IV. Pride Month Debrief
   a. Cynthia Liccese-Torres, Race and Equity Programs Manager, gave an overview of the activities organized by the County related to Pride Month (attached).
   b. Jennifer Weber noted that DPR's 55+ Program celebrated Pride Month with several activities, including a dance party, Pride bracelets, and drag queen bingo. She added that they are beginning to offer year-round Pride programming for the 55+ community.

c. James Fisher expressed appreciation for the County's work in celebrating Pride.
d. SC Nealy expressed appreciation for the County's work as well and encouraged the County to continue its success by managing Pride festivities in future years.
e. Samantha Perez noted that the location near the Metro for the block party made it feel very inclusive and that the stickers for businesses were effective.

V. Subcommittee Reports

a. Culture and Community Development
    i. Kimberly Baldini shared that the Culture and Community Development group will meet in the near future. Their meeting will include a discussion of planning for Pride Month 2026.
    ii. Samantha Perez suggested growing the idea of the block party, perhaps hosting near Freddie's.
    iii. Kaitlyn Goyal proposed offering indoor programming, particularly in an open and inviting indoor environment.
    iv. Cynthia noted that both artists associated with this year's displays would be happy to work with the County again.
    v. Sam Barnes suggested incorporating Pride on Arlington Transit, such as the All in Arlington Pride stickers on buses.
    vi. Candice Lopez shared that stickers should be paired with education for the businesses.
    vii. Kishori asked if Freddie's was the only LGBTQ space in Arlington. Samantha Perez noted that it was the only LGBTQ space in Northern Virginia. SC noted that we should encourage more businesses to come into this space, giving the example of lesbian bars.
b. Policy and Equity
    i. Kaitlyn Goyal reported out on this group's mission and vision: The purpose of this committee is to ensure that both the Arlington County Board and State are creating and passing inclusive and equitable policy and legislation. If inequitable legislation is passed, we will act quickly. We want to encourage the County Board to use the voices of marginalized communities when policy drafting is taking place.
    ii. Kaitlyn also noted that they are looking for additional members and are planning for the upcoming legislative session.
c. Health, Safety, and Wellness
    i. Candice Lopez noted that the Health, Safety, and Wellness group will be meeting shortly and invited others to join.

VI. Legislative Priorities

a. Samantha Perez shared the opportunity from the County to develop legislative priorities.
b. Kellen MacBeth encouraged the Committee to recommend changing the 45% rule, requiring businesses to sell at least 45% food if they serve alcohol. He feels this is a barrier for queer-serving small businesses.
c. Samantha Perez noted the support for equal rights, a marriage amendment, support for gender-affirming care, support for youth in foster care, and housing – issues mentioned in public comment.

d. Kaitlyn Goyal noted that the Policy and Equity subcommittee will be watching local elections to support vocally pro-equality candidates across the Commonwealth.
e. Samantha encouraged the Policy and Equity subcommittee to get something by mid-September.

VII. New Business

a. Samantha noted that Arlington County is working on an update to the Comprehensive Plan. A set of focus groups occurred in the spring, but there was not a focus group for the LGBTQIA+ community. Samantha entered a motion to recommend that the Comprehensive Plan consults an LGBTQIA+ focus group, and that the Advisory Committee would assist in forming that focus group. James Fisher moved in support of that motion; Kaitlyn Goyal seconded. It was unanimously approved.
b. Samantha Perez asked if the website could be clearer on whether the meeting would be in person or virtual.

VIII. Meeting Wrap-Up

a. Laura Tinter moved to close, seconded by Jennifer Weber, and it was approved unanimously.

Pride Month Presentation – Cynthia Liccese-Torres

Arlington County Celebrates PRIDE 2025

Programming Recap

- County Board Resolution
- Bozman Light Projection
- Bozman Pop-up Space Murals
- Meet the Artist Event
- OUTstanding's Pride Proclamation Event
- PRIDE Spotlight Posters
- AED Marketing Efforts

County Board Resolution

- Adopted unanimously May 13
- Reaffirms the County's support of WorldPride 2025 and the LGBTQIA+ community in Arlington

Bozman Light Projection

- Held during evenings of May 16 and May 17
- Designed by artist Robin Bell of Bell Visuals
- Hosted "Show Your Pride" Block Party on second evening

Photo courtesy of Arlington County

Bozman Light Projection

Photos courtesy of Sora Yamihara, Bellvisuals.com

Bozman Pop-Up Space Murals

- Painted throughout May and June by County staff volunteers
- Designed by artist Lisa Marie Thalhammer of Lisa Marie Studio
- Two original murals:
  - Chevron rainbow
  - "The Eye in Pride"

Photo courtesy of Arlington County

Murals in Progress

Photos courtesy of Arlington County

Chevron Rainbow Mural

Photos courtesy of Lisa Marie Thalhammer

The Eye in Pride Mural

Photos courtesy of Lisa Marie Thalhammer

Photo courtesy of Arlington County

Meet the Artist Event: June 3

OUTstanding's Pride Proclamation Event: June 3

Photos courtesy of Emma Martin, OUTstanding

PRIDE Spotlight Posters

Photos courtesy of Arlington County

- Window clings
- StayArlington website
- Social media campaign
- T-shirts

AED Marketing Efforts

Let's start planning for 2026!

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