



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

September 11, 2023

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see below a communication from Maura Pensak, Housing Liaison, regarding an update on and appointments to the LGBTQ+ Friendly Housing Task Force.

On behalf of the LGBTQ+ Task Force Co-Chairs; Carolina Almonte, Phoebe West, and myself, I am writing to inform you of activity to date to recruit Task Force members, establish a scope of work, and engage a consultant to implement the City Manager's June 27, 2022, response to Policy Order 2021 #189.

The following members are being appointed to serve as members of the LGBTQ+ Task Force:

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| • Elinor Brelis | Linden Huhmann | Michael Smith |
| • Sarah Boyer | Iris Lewis | Longjun Tan |
| • Thaddeus Brown | Deborah Morse | Thomas Worth |
| • Taylor Devane | Tej Nuthulaganti | Jesse Edsell Vetter |

These members will enable us to commence the important work intended by and outlined in the policy order as well as the scope of work and timeline that is included below. The Task Force anticipates beginning to meet on September 19, 2023.

Mission and Scope of Work

Mission: The primary mission of the 2023 LGBTQ+ Task Force is to develop recommendations to the City Manager in an advisory capacity for the establishment of policies, procedures and practices that result in LGBTQ+ friendly housing and LGBTQ+ friendly spaces in the City of Cambridge.

Scope of Work: The LGBTQ+ Task Force will consider all aspects and opportunities for new or revised policies and procedures that improve access to, and inclusion in, existing housing. Equally, the LGBTQ+ Task Force will evaluate opportunities to create or develop new LGBTQ+ friendly housing and/or spaces.

Besides sexual orientation and gender identity, the LGBTQ+ Task Force will also consider the intersectionality of other protected classes, such as age, sex, race, color, national origin, family status, source of income, military status, disability, and religious creed as part of all considerations, processes, and recommendations.



Tasks will include but not be limited to:

- Review previous City of Cambridge reports related to LGBTQ+ Friendly Housing,
- Research and compare other communities' LGBTQ+ housing practices both locally and nationally, particularly lessons learned through developmental and operational best practices,
- Obtain information and feedback directly from LGBTQ+ community members and organizations about current experiences and desired changes to make housing more welcoming,
- Review funding needs and sources for both market rate and subsidized housing opportunities, and
- Consider any research needed (e.g., survey, study) to inform next steps.

Expected Results

The LGBTQ+ Task Force will issue a comprehensive report that includes both a summary of all research findings as well as recommendations and action plans for ensuring LGBTQ+ access, safety, and inclusivity in housing and in other spaces in Cambridge.

Categories of recommendations should include:

- Strategies for outreach and education including but not limited to strategies for: (1) existing housing, designed to make that housing more LGBTQ+-friendly; (2) potential funding and development partners, regarding the importance of LGBTQ+-friendly housing and opportunities for its creation; and (3) measuring success of outreach and education.
- Pilot programming that could be implemented in existing housing and/or geared toward housing providers to increase LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- Ideas for the potential development of new and/or additional LGBTQ+-friendly housing, including funding/finance options that may include public-private partnerships, legal considerations, and recommended next steps.

Schedule and Timeline

The LGBTQ+ Task Force will meet for approximately 12 months. Members will serve as both full working Task Force members and participate in smaller task-oriented meetings. Meetings will commence in September 2023. It is anticipated that a draft of relevant work and recommendations will be completed and submitted to the Co-Chairs by the Consultant by June 2024. A final report will be written and issued in the fall of 2024.

Task Force Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment of members began in January 2023 and continued through May 2023. Notification and outreach included city website and social media postings, direct outreach to affordable housing providers, agency partners, and LGBTQ+ specific organizations and persons.

All interested parties were interviewed by the Co-Chairs and are recommended to serve as Task Force Members, due to their valuable and diverse experiences and perspectives. We will also continue to outreach to interested persons and parties and seek participation through various stakeholder and community meetings.

Please find member list attached with brief biographies.

Consultant Information

A Request for Quote was opened through the Purchasing Department in May 2023 and due to lack of responses it was re-opened in July 2023. One quote was submitted to the purchasing office in July 2023. This quote was reviewed by the Co-Chairs and Purchasing Department and was found to meet all criteria and expectations outlined in the request and project scope of work. In addition, the proposed fee structure met the approved allocation in the Office of the Housing Liaison's FY'24 budget.

As such we have engaged Ora Grodsky, of Just Works Consulting, to facilitate the processes and to produce a written report of the results and recommendations of the Task Force to the City Manager.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yi-An Huang". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Yi-An Huang
City Manager

Attachment(s)

LGBTQ+ Friendly Housing Task Force Membership
2023-2024

Deborah Morse; Cambridge, MA 02140

Deborah is the Vice President of Real Estate for Hebrew Senior Life and has been deeply involved in the planning and implementation of new affordable housing communities in Dorchester, Randolph, Brookline, and Stoughton. Deborah is also the parent to a CPS student.

Elinor Brelis; Cambridge MA 02139

Elinor (Ellie) is a storyteller who grew up in Cambridge and now works in the City. Elinor has been working for her real estate license while producing her own one woman show. Elinor brings skills in marketing and knowledge of real estate to the Task Force.

Iris Lewis; Cambridge MA 02138

Iris is currently an employee of the Cambridge Public Health Department through the Agenda for Children. Iris also served as the staff director of Y2Y during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Iris has passion for housing justice- especially for young LGBTQ+ people and will combine that with experience navigating Cambridge housing systems.

Linden Huhmann; Cambridge MA 02139

Linden is Commissioner for the LGBTQ+ Commission where they lead the Housing Working group and led the Domestic Partnership Ordinance Working Group. The Housing Working group is working on investigating Cambridge's policy prohibiting more than three unrelated people from living together in most circumstances on how that impacts Cambridge LGBTQ+ residents. Linden will be representing the LGBTQ+ Commission on this Task Force.

Longjun Tan; Cambridge, MA 02141

Longjun works in Cambridge and owns a home here. Longjun has a strong commitment to social justice and is excited to bring her lived experiences and perspectives to the Task Force.

Michael Smith; Cambridge MA 02141

Michael is the Associate Director of Human Resources for Human Resources Information Systems at Harvard Business School. Michael holds a Ph.D. in the Philosophy in Education with a concentration in Career and Technical Education. Michael brings volunteer experience as well as his experience growing up in the South to the Task Force.

Sarah Boyer; Cambridge MA 02139

Sarah has been a resident of Cambridge since 1980 and lived in subsidized housing for 18 years. Sarah has experience working with the Cambridge Historical Commission. Sarah worked and advocated for the beginning of the LGBTQ+ friendly housing in Hyde Park. Good and affordable housing for everyone is Sarah's passion.

Taylor Devane; Cambridge MA 02141

Taylor is a senior living in subsidized senior housing and brings experience as a former consultant. Taylor has knowledge of LGBTQ+ life and housing all over the country and is passionate about using research to inform this process.

Tej Nuthulaganti; Cambridge MA 02139

Tej is a Senior Director for The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Tej is also on the board of Pride, the LGBTQ+ friendly housing development in Boston, and has hands on experience around how something like the Pride could come to Cambridge. Tej is excited to think about how friendly housing is more than just a built space.

Thaddeus Brown; Cambridge MA 02138

Thaddeus holds a master's degree in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School and is experienced in education, state, and local government research and implementation. Thaddeus closely engaged with the San Francisco Neighborhood Court and believes that housing needs to be deeply intertwined with community empowerment.

Thomas Worth; Cambridge MA 02139

Thomas has worked in housing development for twelve years and has a Master of Science in Real Estate Development. Thomas brings an understanding of the challenges and barriers of housing which will be a very helpful perspective for the Task Force. Thomas hopes to bring his knowledge to have a positive impact on the Cambridge community.

Jesse Edsell Vetter

Jesse is currently the Director of Residential Services at Homeowners Rehab (HRI) in Cambridge. Prior to joining HRI Jesse worked at Metro Housing|Boston where he developed a hoarding intervention program. Jesse has twenty years of experience working in Affordable Housing arenas.