

Columbus LGBTQ+ Affairs Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: January 20, 2026

Time: 6:05 p.m. – 8:01 p.m.

Location: Columbus City Council Chambers
90 W. Broad Street, Second Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Call to Order

Chair Roberts-Crews called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

The Chair delivered brief opening remarks and recognized Council President Shannon Hardin.

Opening Remarks

Council President Hardin provided welcoming remarks to the Commission.

Oath of Office

Council President Hardin administered the oath of office to the Commissioners.

Commissioners formally signed their oaths.

Recess

The Chair declared a brief recess for photographs and refreshments.

Introductions

The meeting was reconvened at 6:30 p.m., and Commissioners introduced themselves.

Commission Orientation

- Robert Tobias, City Attorney's Office, provided an overview of Commission expectations, roles, and responsibilities, including:
 - Open Meetings requirements
 - Public Records obligations
- Commissioner Calhoun recommended establishing dedicated email accounts for Commission business.
Mr. Tobias concurred and advised the Commission to develop a mission statement.
- Commissioner Calhoun inquired about training opportunities, including Robert's Rules of Order.
Mr. Tobias indicated formal classes would not be offered but noted his availability to answer questions. He advised that Commission operations would primarily be governed by the bylaws, making extensive knowledge of Robert's Rules unnecessary.
- Commissioner Keilholz recommended the Commission focus on finalizing bylaws and strategy prior to engaging in community outreach.
Commissioner Savage concurred.
- Commissioner Vera encouraged the development of informational content.
Commissioner Leis emphasized the importance of accessibility in Commission communications.

Meeting Cadence

- The Chair opened discussion regarding the regular meeting schedule.
- Tuesday and Thursday evenings were identified as infeasible.
- City staff volunteered to circulate a Doodle poll to determine future meeting dates.

Initial Priorities and Focus Areas

The Chair facilitated discussion on initial Commission priorities. Key focus areas identified included:

- Healthcare
- Safe and affordable housing
- Workplace and school-based protections from discrimination

Additional considerations raised:

- Commissioner Boyd-Nelson noted recent losses of federal funding impacting the nonprofit sector.
- Commissioner Saito urged close monitoring of state and federal legislative threats.
- Emphasis on support for LGBTQ+ youth in schools and aging LGBTQ+ populations.
- Commissioner Calhoun highlighted engagement with LGBTQ+-affirming faith-based organizations.
- Support for new Americans who are also members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Commissioner Leis requested that inquiries submitted to the Commission's email account be shared with Commissioners to help guide the Commission's work.

Immediate Areas of Impact

The Chair opened discussion on near-term impact opportunities.

- Commissioner Crenshaw recommended assisting the public in understanding current events and relevant political developments.
- Commissioner Savage emphasized humanizing the Commission, including updating the Commission's website.
- Commissioner Lenzo highlighted the importance of fact-finding.
- Commissioner Keilholz suggested meeting with nonprofit organizations to understand priority areas and service gaps.

Public Comment

The Chair opened the floor for public comment.

- Mikayla Denise, Stonewall Columbus Patron of Pride 2023, recommended hosting community pop-up sessions.
- Rev. Ken Rose, Jr., David's United Church of Christ, Canal Winchester, Ohio, offered remarks.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Saito and seconded by Commissioner Leis. The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.