



Seattle LGBTQ Commission Annual Retreat Minutes

Saturday, January 10, 2026, 10am – 4pm
L280 City Hall – 600 4th Ave, Seattle WA

10:00 – 10:20 | Welcome, Introductions, and Icebreaker

- Overview of the day's purpose: strategic alignment and commitment to advancing LGBTQ rights in Seattle
- Ashley, Robert, Brett, Jason, Barry, Chris, Kody, Jessa, Dominic, Jeremy, Andrew, Addie, Carl
- Meeting open at 10:02

10:20 – 10:40 | Setting the Stage: Commission Vision & Guiding Principles (2026)

- Revisit the Commission's mandate
- Objectives today are to set a 2-year plan with attainable goals
- Guide question: "What does success look like for Seattle's LGBTQ community in 2030?"
- Jessa: community visibility, awareness in the community of how we can help and provide resources.
- Chris: Community knowledge and awareness of our scope and what the Commission can and can't do, and Commission awareness of resources that exist in the community that can meet those needs.
- Kody: Visibility and decision-making power for the community as a whole on the city-level; need to give the community a larger voice to support the creation of an LGBTQ Affairs office; giving community access to be their own voice.

January 10, 2026
Retreat Minutes
Seattle LGBTQ Commission

- Ashley: with new Mayoral administration and presence on City Council, leverage those opportunities to advance the needs and objectives of our community, especially in regard to adequately serving our community and having accountability.
- Barry: Recognizing the need that City entities and officials can be approached and engaged with because of the work we do to establish a platform rather than by relying on us doing that connection for them directly.
- Jason: 4 years seems like a long time away, but it's also a relatively short time to accomplish all the work we'd like to see.
- Brett: Contributing to the material needs of people, working with other commissions to accomplish these goals to reduce disparities in provision of services and access to resources.
- Addie: Recognizing that relying on a volunteer Commission requires a certain level of privilege to even be in the room: stipends or pay for Commissioners.
- Robert: We need to build some cohesion within the broader 2SLGBTQIA+ community to ensure mutual aid and support, providing the community with knowledge and resources to thrive.
- Carl: Agrees with Robert on cohesion within community.
- Dominic: Building sense of community, cooperation across various communities to have a presence and get people involved. Awareness of Commission's scope and capabilities.
- Andrew: Based on a meeting that Ashley and Jessa had with Andrew recently, it's urgent and necessary to establish an office to address our community's needs specifically. We need to stop being reactive in protecting our community. The dynamics of our community are often overlooked in terms of how many people in our community are immigrants or refugees but don't get included in information targeted toward those groups in a culturally competent manner to suit the specific situation of 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Increase our financial budget as a Commission.
- Jeremy: Importance of having systems and processes in place, especially connections to the Mayor's Office, City Council, and other City entities so that we can effectively direct community energy to the right places to get results.
- Kristina: We need to restore the Commission's connection to SOCR and City Council, especially in terms of participation in Commission meetings and committee meetings. Mayor Wilson wants community input, and the Commission needs to take advantage of that opportunity to speak up and be more active as a voice for the community. We need to integrate better with the King County commissions.

10:40 – 11:45 | Review of 2025 Work Plan & Outcomes

- Accomplishments, gaps, and challenges
- Discussion: What continues, what changes, and new opportunities
- Three pillars were socioeconomic empowerment, health equity, and commission sustainability. Some of these priorities are chronic in terms of housing, which will be an ever-present need.
- Accomplishments:
- Chris: Work with City Council and the Mayor's Office to pass the Shield Law - an example of the kinds of work we can accomplish.
- Jason: Getting the Commission numbers increased.
- Kody: Community Advisory Board to create a dedicated space for community leaders and community members to lead initiatives from our workplan.
 - Jessa: Previous two examples are great illustrations of how we've managed to adapt and grow as a commission to respond to the needs of the moment. Excited about future possibilities based on that momentum.
 - Ashley: Rapid response methods and the ability to operate effectively as a Commission. Great success as a space where queer joy can grow and thrive. Respect and ability to work together as a Commission is a huge strength of our ability to be effective and have a positive impact in community.
 - Robert: Increased visibility, presence at community events demonstrates our strength.
 - Chris: Social media presence of the Commission exists as a template for other commissions, and our recruitment has seen positive effects as a result of that work. Yay, Kody!
 - Jessa: Know Your Rights posts on social media provided fantastic feedback and community input. Kody provided a summary of the posts and objective of the series, impact, etc.
 - Ashley: Jeremy's work to bring community partners to City Councilmembers helped to build relationship between CMs and the Commission in a way that did not previously exist. Kody adds that as we continue to grow our relationships it will have a benefit for building relationships for other commissions.
 - Andrew: Great to see the expansion of the Commission, our growth in numbers and quality of commissioners.
 - Gaps and Challenges:
 - Barry: What's the cause of the challenges we've had? Did we set unattainable goals?
 - Ashley: The federal administration is a problem.
 - Addie: Attendance issues and hitting quorum delays our progress.

- Jessa: Acknowledging that it's a position of privilege to have the capacity to be in this room and participate, the challenge in setting goals or expanding our work is that we don't have commissioners who attend meetings or participate in committees enough to meet expectations.
- Chris: We need to have targeted recruitment to ensure that representation and skillsets are brought to the table in a way that enables us to accomplish our workplan goals.
- Jessa: We should prioritize community members joining our committees as volunteers to have an impact, including recruitment and development of future commissioners. Kody adds that we should make a post on social media to raise awareness in the community about the need for active volunteers.
- Andrew: *makes fabulous entrance into the room, to great applause*
- Kody: reads off form responses from commissioners
- Andrew: We need a bigger budget, and commissioners need some form of compensation.
- Ashley: The Commission doesn't have any real authority. Andrew adds that this is the reason why we need a dedicated office and the Commission needs more staff support.
- Brett: City Council was not as supportive of our funding requests in the past, and we need to be very focused on budget concerns over the course of the year (and potentially spanning multiple years). Notes that we don't have the capacity or focus to attain that right now.
- Ashley: Notes that big policy objectives and projects often don't include Commission until too late in the process. Brett notes that our workplan might include a focus on policy engagement.
- Chris: Freeing up the budget we have, like the Pride flag raising, will help us be more effective.
- What are we carrying forward?
- Kristina: Behavioral health needs to be called out specifically.
- Kody: Homelessness is an issue that needs to be highlighted, and our community members are consistently bringing those concerns to us. Kristina adds how the broader community are not seen and validated as "real" families in how services and resources are provided in response to needs.
- Jessa: Noted lack of funding and reduction of donations; reflected on meeting with AG to note that we must engage with policy at the city level as a key area of our focus. Andrew adds that we must stop being reactive, we must move forward as a body to use our power: for example, hold press conferences. Officials are heteronormative in their perspective and their policy approach.

- Ashley: Seattle has one of the largest queer communities in the country, but we lack infrastructure and representation to address our basic needs. We aren't in the room or included often enough - the Commission is basically all we have. Jessa adds that recent events like in Minneapolis illustrate that queer families aren't seen as real families.
- Chris: We need to be cross-disciplinary and intersectional in our outreach as a means to ensure proactivity in our actions.
- Ashley: Prioritizing RJI is an important aspect of how we can address Chris' point - not as an add-on in our documents but as a central focus.
- Jason: Sustainability is important to carry forward; in terms of being proactive, engaging with county institutions and commissions to ensure that we can achieve our objectives in the face of potential resistance at the city level.
- Chris: We need to address the aversion to spending money: how can we do things for free or very low budget to meet the moment with the resources that we have? Kody adds that we need to do community forums like the other commissions do.

11:45 – 12:00 | Public Comment

- Kristina: We need to engage with the county and state commissions, as well as other city commissions, to unify how we engage as a commission across the state.

12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch (Optional Table Topics) - break for lunch at 11:50

1:00 – 2:00 | Breakout Sessions: Key Focus Areas for 2026+ (based on survey results)

- Returned at 1:00 - Kody and group leads kept notes on group discussions
- Where We Struggled to Deliver
- Barriers that shaped outcomes, and emerging opportunities and issues
- Lived experience and accountability

2:00 – 2:20 | Share-Out & Convergence

- Summary discussion:
 - Chris: Community Advocacy Meetings represent a change in approach and adaptability to community issues that was a success.
 - Dominic: Difficulties on communication and outreach limited follow-through and pro-activeness.
 - Ashley: New commissioners have challenges with onboarding and understanding how they can integrate into our work - there's a risk of leaving people out in the pursuit of getting work done efficiently.
 - Chris: Many of us aren't from Seattle and we don't have the depth of relationships and history in the city to understand context, along with gaps in institutional knowledge that would help commissioners navigate situations more effectively.
 - Brett: We have concrete things in the workplan, but then we have to respond to emerging issues - we have a lack of capacity to do everything, but we need some structure to manage how we balance priorities. "Wiggly-waggly" is a word that was used.
 - Andrew: Some items on the workplan goals were too broad to attain in any concrete way. Kody added that we met our commission sustainability goals because they were SMART goals as opposed to broad ideals.
 - Chris: Specify what things the Commission do and not do as a means to determine scope and create SMART goals for our workplan.
 - Jessa: We need to delineate between advocacy and action. If advocacy is our goal, then we need to measure advocacy's efficacy outside of actions that are beyond our control.
 - Kristina: We used to have a mentoring process for new commissioners.
 - Dominic: The lack of connection to community work and availability for feedback makes it difficult to achieve our goals.
 - Addie: Community Connections panel or forum (possible collab with other commissions), where we have an open panel where people tell their story with a Q&A afterwards.
 - Andrew: Follow the trend - we need to be proactive on issues happening on the national stage, because things like a trans sports ban is now on the ballot this year.
 - Ashley: Culturally competent resources for people moving here are badly needed. Jessa agrees that this issue needs to be a focus of our work right away.

- Carl: We need an orientation meeting for new commissioners. Mentoring is needed.
- Andrew: Can the Commission engage with a 501(c)(4)s and PACs without getting into legal trouble? Jessa notes that if we can be in that space it would shield 501(c)(3)s from moving into political work that they should be avoiding.
- Chris: We carry our own lived experience into each interaction we partake in as commissioners.
- Kody: We need effective burnout prevention.
- Ashley: We need to center care, love, and joy as a part of our work. Also, noting that work hours may be a barrier for people to join in our efforts or participate in meetings.
- Jessa: Meeting RSVPs should be kept up to date by individual commissioners so that we can meet quorum while balancing work-life commitments.
- Robert: There's work that doesn't need to be done in committee or other meetings that can be delegated and tracked by those who can't be present during a specific time.
- Kristina: Reiterates the serious need for an orientation and mentorship process for new commissioners.
- Robert: We need clear expectations for commissioners.
- Addie: Quantifying the costs of participation in the Commission would be a valuable way to begin advocating for reducing barriers to joining our work.
- Kristina: Creating a YouTube video that serves as an orientation video covering the roles of commissioners, volunteers, and an overview of our workplan.
- Chris: Maybe new commissioners should meet with co-chairs to discuss their onboarding experience. Jessa notes that orientation, mentoring, and feedback should be handled by the operations committee.

2:20 – 2:35 | Break

2:35 – 3:00 | Structural Alignment: Bylaws, Mentorship Program & Committee Framework

- Bylaws need to have edits finalized, submitted for legal review, and then returned to the full Commission for a vote. We should create a memo of what has been changed to summarize the new bylaws.

- Mentorship program requires formalization and a timeline to ensure we can track progress. The Women's Commission reviews portions of their handbook and bylaws in each meeting to keep things fresh and provide opportunities for discussion.
- Ashley recommends keeping mentorship under the Operations Committee.
- Andrew proposes a Membership Committee separate from the Operations Committee. He will be a co-chair, with emphasis on "co-".
- Task assignment, awareness of committee work, and co-chair updates to share what's going on, priority tasks, and what everyone has been delegated is an item to implement, including a section of our meeting agenda to assign tasks.
- Minutes need to be sent out more regularly.
- Jessa needs to talk with Operations about cybersecurity, managing access to our Drive, etc.

3:00 – 3:45 | Drafting the 2026–2027 Strategic Work Plan

- Prioritize actions and assign tentative leads
- What are our pillars?
- Intersectional Advocacy & Community Engagement
- Community Resources & Mutual Aid
- Suggestion to regroup:
- Intersectional Advocacy
- LGBTQ Affairs Office - Andrew
- Relationship management, being present at City Council meetings
- Federal response
- RJI Basic Rights - RJI Committee
- Updating the SMC language - Chris
- Proclamation on Queer Public Spaces - Chris
- Community Empowerment
- Community Navigator Program - Jessa
- Community forums and storytelling panels
- RJI Basic Rights - RJI Committee
- Commission Sustainability
- Membership Committee with an onboarding and mentorship program
- Fixing our Google Drive access - Jessa
- Stipends
- Care and accountability

January 10, 2026
Retreat Minutes
Seattle LGBTQ Commission

- Task management system

3:45 – 4:00 | Closing

- adjourned at 3:57