

Park City, Utah LGBTQIA+ Taskforce

A subsidiary group of the city hall's social equity Initiative

The following brief is an introduction to Park City's newly formed LGBTQIA+ Taskforce as well as the regional queer landscape informing it.

While Park City is considered a liberal town, the taskforce is forming in a region (the Wasatch Back) which has historically seen little to no queer activity, programs, or organizations. Many reasons could be given for why this absence has existed: a lack of perceived need in a liberal center, the conservative nature of more-rural surrounding towns, the absence of dedicated safe spaces, not having a critical mass of visible LGBTQ+ residents, and the vast differences in needs between members of the queer community itself, to name a few. Events in and around the region have demonstrated, however, that there is a very real need to create stronger localized support structures for this vulnerable group:

- Trailside Elementary was sued over its adoption of the generic anti-bullying program "welcoming schools" because it was founded by the queer centered Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
- South Summit High School students were initially denied the right to form a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), with the principal citing: "this is cowboy country. We don't do that here"
- Teen suicide rates have tripled since 2007, disproportionately effecting queer youth
- Heber City banned the hanging of pride street banners
- Park City received a 37 out of 100 on HRC's Municipal Equality Index (MEI).

In response to these events, Park City Municipal formed an internal taskforce to review bias in its legal code, facilities, hiring practices, etc; followed by this external taskforce to support community-wide issues. The city began by recruiting community members who had attempted to start various queer initiatives (most of which faced sustainability challenges and fizzled out). The ensuing conversations led to requests for an expansion of this group's mission, including a more regional focus to address the dispersed nature of the above events. City Hall's support of this expansion has allowed the taskforce to become an entity through which local LGBTQ+ people are sustainably finding one another for the first time; creating a critical mass of visible leaders; developing their own voices, thoughts, and feelings; while taking ownership over their own agendas and objectives.

In many ways, we feel we're incubating the birth of a true queer community, potentially even a freestanding non-profit or government commission, which is an incredibly exciting and daunting place to be. It's exciting because we have an opportunity to start from scratch, to learn from those who have worked before us and build a community around the best practices possible. It's daunting because some of our members have never worked together nor participated in committee style work at all. Some speak very little, while others introduce a scatter shot of exciting action items before a clear strategic plan or vision can orient those actions against the real needs. What we need most is to clearly define the purpose of the group.

To that end, we are searching for a facilitator who can help us coalesce our activities around collaborative strategic thinking, environmental analysis, and high-level priority development, while also establishing shared values and deepening relationships between members. This help may involve educational components, like how to: participate in board-level dialogue, disagree productively, define roles, collect and synthesize information, identify needs, agree on a clear vision / mission, develop action items, etc. It may also involve working through some of the issues with us. Regardless of how it is done, we believe that building a strong process will give this taskforce the tools it needs to maintain its own productivity, and that a facilitator can provide the impartial leadership needed to help us quickly navigate towards those objectives. Perhaps we hold a retreat? Maybe we organize a series of shorter meetings over a period of time? Maybe you see a different strategy entirely? From here, we want to hear about your experience, answer your questions, ask a few of our own, and learn about which methodologies you would propose to tackle our needs.

As you consider how your skills align with this request, we also want to be cognizant of the potentially vast scope of work here. We'd like you to break your proposal into distinct phases. Our idea is to start with an initial team building, community analysis, and priority development phase; followed by a formal strategic planning effort; then a transition into a governance model. Enacting the latter two phases will depend on a myriad of considerations, but we'd like to at least understand what the full scope of work might look like and cost (we understand that prices and factors may change in the future). In the near term, our priority is on the first phase of development and analysis, so please spend the majority of your time there. If you think another structure is appropriate, please don't hesitate to propose that instead.

Selection Timeline:

July 20 th – August 4 th	Members of the taskforce's selection subcommittee will be available for pre-application discussions, helping candidates further understand our group's dynamics while exploring the potential scope of work.
August 5 th	First draft proposals are due by midnight, MST.
August 9 th	Members of the selection subcommittee will announce the candidates chosen for a formal interview and review of their entry.
August 11 th – 12 th	Interviews will be conducted with all selected candidates.
August 13 th	A minimum of three finalists will be announced by the selection subcommittee. This announcement will include feedback on each proposal, giving the candidates an opportunity to revise their entries.
August 20 th	Second draft proposals are due by midnight, MST.
August 23 rd	The finalists' proposals will be shared with all taskforce members, for their review in advance of the August meeting.
August 30 th	The full taskforce will meet to debate the merits each finalist, then submit their feedback to the selection subcommittee for consideration in the final decision.
September 1 st	The selection subcommittee will provide candidates with a 2 nd round of feedback, giving them a final opportunity to revise their entries.
September 8 th	Final proposals are due by midnight, MST.
September 10 th	The selection subcommittee will announce the winning facilitator, then begin working with them to assign benchmark dates for their deliverables.
September 24 th	The winning facilitator will be formally introduced at the taskforce's September meeting. Time will be set aside for them to walk through any new details in their proposal, its timeline, and generally help members understand what to expect from the upcoming facilitation process.

Initial Contact

Contact information for the selection subcommittee members can be found below. To begin pre-application discussions, please contact the member who solicited your interest. They will take point in answering your questions, while cc'ing other members for their awareness. If in doubt about who to reach out to, please contact Leah Langan.

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Funding

While we have received approval of funds for a facilitator, we would like to work with you to first evaluate an appropriate scope of work. As this is a new group whose needs are not clearly known, we feel a more flushed-out scope of work will better inform the value we're willing to set aside for our facilitation needs. The selection subcommittee will attempt to provide an official budget with the first round of feedback on August 13th, but commits to providing it no later than the 2nd round of feedback on September 1st.

Thank you again for your time. We look forward to talking further and exploring the potential to work together.