

MINUTES OF EASTERN REGIONAL HOMOPHILE CONFERENCE---APRIL 27-28, 1968

The spring 1968 meeting of the Eastern Regional Homophile Conference was held on April 27 and 28, 1968, at the Corduroy Club, 240 West 38th Street, New York City.

Prior to the opening of the meeting, the Executive Committee met to consider accrediting Homophile Youth Movement in Neighborhoods on the basis of newly-available information. The organization was accredited.

The meeting opened on Saturday morning April 27 with Chairman Franklin Kameny presiding and Barbara Gittings acting as recorder.

The minutes of the last regional conference were accepted as presented in published form by the Conference Secretary, Stephen Donaldson.

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on April 13, 1968 were read for the information of the conference.

The Chairman read the agenda proposed by the Secretary, and the agenda was adopted with some changes of priorities.

1. Fourth of July picketing demonstration.

Franklin Kameny gave a brief history of the now-traditional July Fourth demonstration at Independence Hall, which was initiated in 1965 by MSW and which was co-sponsored and supported that year and the next 2 years by other organizations. MSW proposed that ERHC formally sponsor this year's demonstration, in order to make it a regional enterprise and give it more weight, and have MSW bear the primary responsibility for arrangements and administration. DOB urged acceptance of MSW's proposal and offered the use of its Philadelphia Chapter office in connection with this year's picket.

MOTION: That ERHC formally sponsor the Fourth of July demonstration this year and have MSW bear the primary responsibility for arrangements and administration. PASSED.

There followed a discussion of rules of dress and behavior for picketers.

MOTION: That MSW's picketing rules be adopted for this year's Fourth of July demonstration. PASSED. (Roll Call # 1)

MOTION: That ERHC send an invitation to both other regional conferences to provide formal support for and/or participation in the Fourth of July demonstration. PASSED.

2. Treasurer's report.

The Conference Treasurer, Ken Warren, amended his published report to show a balance on hand of \$68.51. The report was accepted as amended.

3. Budget.

A. Political mailings (questionnaires to political candidates to find out what their policies would be on matters affecting homosexual citizens).

MOTION: That the proposed budget item for political mailings be amended to \$20. PASSED.

B. Expenses for conference officers and for Credentials Committee.

MOTION: That the budget allocation of \$10 for the office of treasurer be raised to \$18. PASSED.

MOTION: That the budget allocation of \$40 for the operations of the Credentials Committee be raised to \$60. DEFEATED. (Roll call # 2)

MOTION: That the remaining three items on the budget--expenses of Chairman and Secretary, expenses of Treasurer, expenses of Credentials Committee--be accepted as amended. PASSED.

C. Fourth of July demonstration.

MOTION: That ERHC allocate the sum of \$100 for the expenses of the Fourth of July demonstration this year. PASSED.

The budget for the fiscal period April 1968 through April 1969, as finally adopted, is: Political mailings, \$20; expenses of Chairman and Secretary, \$65; expenses of Treasurer, \$18; expenses of Credentials Committee, \$40; July Fourth demonstration, \$100. Total \$243. Discussion of assessments to cover the budget was deferred to the Sunday session.

4. Reimbursement for past Credentials operations.

Foster Gunnison requested reimbursement of a small sum, approximately \$3 - \$5, expended in the past year for credentials operation. A MOTION was PASSED authorizing this reimbursement from cash in the treasury.

5. Fund-raising.

MOTION: That a fund-raising committee be established. PASSED.

An attempt to staff the fund-raising committee by nominations and elections had to be abandoned, since all the persons nominated either declined or were not present to accept nomination. The Chairman therefore asked who would consent to be on the committee. Jack R. (HYMN), Craig R. (HYMN), and Eugene N. (TEL) agreed to serve. The Chairman asked that the committee turn in a report of its suggestions for fund-raising to the Executive Committee in three months.

6. Report of National Credentials Committee Chairman.

Foster Gunnison gave a brief account of the committee's work this past year and said that a formal detailed report of the committee's work and decisions at its meeting in Chicago in April 1968 would soon be sent to all organizations.

7. Vice-Chairmanship of ERHC.

The Chairman explained the problem presented by the fact that the elected Vice-Chairman, Shirley Willer, is now travelling and cannot easily keep in touch. Miss Willer had told the Chairman that she is willing to defer to the wishes of the conference in the matter of replacement. After some discussion of alternative ways of dealing with the situation, it was generally agreed that the Vice-Chairman is considered by her own deference to have resigned.

MOTION: That ERHC declare the office of Vice-Chairman vacant. PASSED.

Barbara Simpson was nominated to fill the vacancy and was elected by acclamation.

8. Report by committee on bibliography on homosexuality.

Barbara Gittings reported for the committee that work on the selective annotated bibliography would begin soon and there would be a progress report at the next conference.

9. Election of legal representative from ERHC to serve on National Voting Board of the National Legal Defense Fund.

After brief discussion it was agreed by general consent to table further discussion of this matter until we have clarification of NLDL's exact status in relation to the national conference.

10. Discrimination against homosexuals by major private employers.

Edna W. proposed an investigation into the validity of business corporations' claims that they do not discriminate in any way in hiring as long as the applicant meets the job qualifications.

MOTION: That ERHC ask the Philadelphia Chapter of DOB to undertake, in the name of the ERHC, a survey of employment policies. PASSED.

11. Venereal disease project.

Sandy Penn told the conference that three persons who are officers of homosexual organizations but who are acting as individuals, have initiated discussions

with a member of the U. S. Public Health Service in New York City who is eager to work with and learn from the homophile movement in a campaign to cut down on venereal disease. She reported that he has been made aware of problems involving homosexuals and their handling by public health services and that he is willing to amend his service's program in order to eliminate these problems. The immediate goal of these discussions is to prepare a leaflet and to work out a method of anonymous contact. Miss Penn and the other two persons involved have also in mind long-range goals which would benefit the movement: they hope the discussions will eventually lead to education of other health-service personnel about homosexuality, and to access to public officials in other departments.

Miss Penn asked for a straw poll on whether conference delegates thought their organizations would support this effort. Formally stated: Whether those present feel, as individuals and as representatives of organizations, that it would be worthwhile for the 3 individuals already involved to pursue this project with the possible aim of eventually involving the regional conference and/or the national conference. There was a general expression of sentiment in favor.

The meeting re-convened on Sunday morning April 28, 1968.

12. Proposed ERHC newsletter.

The main questions raised about a regional newsletter were: What would be included? Who would do the work? How often would it be issues? To whom would it be sent? Since Stephen Donaldson, who made the proposal, was not present to answer questions and explain the merits of such a newsletter, it was decided to table the proposal.

13. Proposed ERHC speakers' bureau.

There was lengthy debate about this proposal.

MOTION: That it is the sense of this conference that the establishment of a regional speakers' bureau is premature at this time. PASSED. (Roll call # 4)

14. Proposal for a coordinating council of New York City organizations.

There was agreement that it is desirable to have some means of furthering communication and cooperation among the six organizations based in New York City, but there was considerable debate about the exact character and structure of such a council or committee.

MOTION: Resolved: that ERHC establish a committee to be composed of delegates from New York organizations and which shall provide a channel for communication and cooperation among the New York organizations. PASSED. (Roll call # 5)

Two amendments were discussed: to add "standing" before "committee", and to add "member" before the first "New York organizations".

MOTION: Resolved: that ERHC establish a standing committee to be composed of delegates from member New York organizations and which shall provide a channel for communication and cooperation among the New York organizations. PASSED. (Roll call # 6)

MOTION: That the standing committee established by the previous motion be called the New York Cooperation Committee. PASSED.

The Chairman appointed Barbara Simpson chairman pro tem of the New York Cooperation Committee with the understanding that her appointment will terminate when the committee elects a chairman.

15. Wade-Skaggs resolution.

The Chairman told about this resolution passed by the national conference in August 1967, which was to the effect that certain endeavors of national

scope be put into the hands of the organizations in specific cities---e. g., that matters concerning the Federal Government be referred to Washington, matters concerning police practices be referred to Chicago, and matters concerning state legislative reforms be referred to New York City. The resolution as passed by NACHO did not include any provisions for implementation, and the particular question for ERHC was what to do about the intent to have legislative reform efforts coordinated in New York City.

MOTION: That ERHC supports the concept of a centralized approach to legislative reform on the part of NACHO, but believes that this work should be done by a committee of the national conference. PASSED. (Roll call # 7)

MOTION: To change "centralized" in the previous motion to "centrally coordinated". PASSED. (Roll call # 8)

MOTION: To add to the previous motion: "and proposes that the Wade-Skaggs resolution be modified accordingly." PASSED.

16. Clearing House Committee.

It was decided not to engage in debate on or take action on the suggestions for changes in Clearing House operations made by ERHC's representative on the Clearing House Committee, Stephen Donaldson. It was agreed that the organizations individually should discuss and respond to his proposals. (So far only CEH and ISE have done so.)

17. Implementation of political questionnaire.

It was decided that the Executive Committee should carry out this task.

18. Proposed distribution of church periodicals on topic of homosexuality.

A suggestion was made that ERHC might undertake to distribute copies of SOCIAL ACTION (Dec. 1967; United Church of Christ) and SOCIAL PROGRESS (Nov.-Dec. 1967; Presbyterian) which are devoted to material on homosexuality. It was decided not to do anything about this as ERHC.

19. Expression of thanks for hospitality for conference.

The Chairman directed that the Acting Secretary or Secretary write a letter thanking the Host Group of West Side Discussion Group and those associated with them for their hospitality for this meeting.

20. Proposal for public relations committee.

There was some discussion of the need for a public relations committee for ERHC, prompted by the fact that two New York radio stations are currently preparing series of broadcasts on homosexuality and homosexuals. No action taken.

21. Raising money to meet budget adopted.

MOTION: That each organization be assessed \$30, to be paid within two months after billing by the Treasurer. PASSED.

22. Next ERHC meeting.

It was decided to hold the next regional conference in Washington, D. C., on October 26-27, 1968.

23. Adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Gittings