

**COMMUNITY CONDEMNS DECISION TO HOST "PRIDE" EVENT IN GAYBORHOOD,  
DESPITE RECENT MURDER OF ERIC POPE**

**Philadelphia, PA - May 9, 2022** - Over 30 LGBTQIA+ community members and organizers gathered to discuss concerns with the PHL Pride Collective's (PPC) decision to proceed with their event in the Gayborhood, despite the recent murder of Eric Pope and the Gayborhood's long history of anti-Blackness and anti-transness/anti-queerness.

This virtual town hall was organized by the Philly Trans March (PTM) as per community request and was moderated by a nonpartisan community leader who is both a Black Trans woman and a lifelong Philadelphia resident. Because some participants are fearful of retaliation from PPC and elsewhere, names have been redacted. The PTM committee kept time and took notes.

The PHL Pride Collective began as a grassroots, community effort and is now a program of Galaei, an area LGBTQI nonprofit and 501(c)3. Original (and now former) PPC members present in the town hall noted that a group decision to avoid the Gayborhood was made during PPC's inception, specifically because of its history of race and gender-based violence. Later PPC would need access to a 501(c)3 status and a partnership with Galaei was formed as a result, with many original committee members noting they felt coerced or pressured into it.

In November 2021, more active members of PPC/Galaei developed a plan that not only utilized the Gayborhood but centered it. Committee members were given only 2 days notice to attend a presentation that contained a vote. With many unable to participate on such short notice, the vote was deemed unanimous.

On December 9, 2021, a general meeting was held by PPC/Galaei and was open to the public. Multiple Black and Brown trans/non-binary people expressed their concerns with safety in the Gayborhood and demanded the location be changed. The PPC/Galaei offered no alternative and no resolution was made.

On April 1, 2022, an individual with PPC/Galaei initiated a Zoom meeting with PTM's graphic/web designer, requesting assistance on their marketing subcommittee. A plan that both centered the Gayborhood and featured over \$30k in outside funding was presented with no guaranteed allocation for trans entertainers of color. A request for the budget was made repeatedly during the meeting and a follow-up meeting contingent upon its delivery was scheduled. With no budget provided, no meeting occurred.

On April 16, 2022, Eric Pope, a Black, gay cis man was punched to death by a bouncer in the Gayborhood.

On April 27, 2022, a vigil was held for Eric Pope at Kahn Park.

On May 5, 2022, the PHL Pride Collective published their Pride events in the Gayborhood for June 3-5, 2022. They made no acknowledgement of Eric Pope's murder or the decades long history of anti-Black and Brown violence in the Gayborhood specifically, much of which is targeted towards trans and non-binary people.

On May 9, 2022, a virtual town hall was held and several of the town hall participants were Black and/or Indigenous Trans people born and raised in Philadelphia. All of them noted a history of violence and abuse in the Gayborhood, specifically at the hands of bouncers/security staff. One such person present is still in legal proceedings from a personal experience 5+ years ago and continues to struggle with permanent disabilities including a traumatic brain injury. Another is a sex worker who noted she and other trans women/femmes were the ones most reliable for late night, community protection. Specific incidents of Philadelphia Police brutality were listed. A former bar employee of the Gayborhood noted the same issues were present over 10 years ago when he worked there and that conversations with his employer were met with apathy.

On May 11, 2022, a conversation around mediation with PPC/Galaei and town hall participants was initiated by a neutral but reputable community member. PTM has consented with a deadline of May 29, 2022. Mediation has not yet been scheduled at the time of this publication.

At this time, we recognize some may still have the desire to attend Pride and that moving the location on such short notice is logistically difficult. The ongoing need to support and protect Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color of the trans, non-binary, and/or gender-non-conforming experience(s) must still take precedence, however, and we are requesting community support at this time. For a list of trans/non-binary people of color you can support directly and for the most updated information, please visit: