



Cambridge Peace Commission

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes of the Peace Commission Meeting • November 21, 2018

Commission Members Present: Chair Larry Kim, Georges Atallah, April Crehan, Kaza Fraley, Elka Kuhlman, John Ratliff, and David Seeman.

City Staff Present: Executive Director Brian Corr

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Ratliff moved to approve the April minutes and Commission Member Kuhlman seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

- ED Corr briefly summarized the event in May which featured Norman Berman, the son of Holocaust survivors. Mr. Berman was born in a refugee camp established in Germany in the aftermath of World War II.
- Nancy Rihan-Porter, Coordinator of the Injury & Violence Prevention Program at the Cambridge Public Health Department discussed the Community Response Network and Mental Health First Aid with some members of the Peace Commission in May to explore providing training on responding to traumatic events.
- The third annual Gun Buy-Back led by Cambridge's interfaith-based organizations, City departments, nonprofit community and regional law enforcement partners, was hosted on Saturday, June 9 by Pentecostal Tabernacle. Grocery gift cards were exchanged for all guns turned in.
- ED Corr announced that the City will be posting a notice for new Commission members as well as exploring reappointments for current members, most likely in the new year. ED Corr also explained that the time has come to vote for a new chair. Historically, there has been a co-chair model. Commissioner Member Kuhlman expressed interest in co-chairing with Chair Kim.
- There were Peace Walks in the Port Neighborhood that were organized by the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) and Commission Members Kuhlman and Atallah participated in the events. They remarked that the second Peace Walk was warmer than the first because CPD made efforts to be more welcoming by building relationships with participants.
- ED Corr explained that CPD had several community meetings regarding security for the Caribbean Festival. There have been shootings in the past of violence that spilled into the festival. The planning involved a community-empowered approach to security to minimize the need for police involvement.
- The City of Cambridge held an implicit Bias Event by Dr. Mahzarin R. Banaji, the author of *Blindspot: The Hidden Biases of Good People*. The event was well attended and engaging.
- Mayor Marc McGovern and Councillor Siddiqui are hosting community conversations based on similar issues of equity and bias. The next event is called *Building Understanding on Differing Perspectives* located at Fletcher Maynard Academy from 5:30 – 8 pm on Wednesday, November 28t, 2018.

- ED Corr organized a vigil at Cambridge City Hall for the victims of the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh. Despite the cold weather, there were about 200 people in attendance for the hour-long event program.
- ED Corr is involved in a working group at CRLS of school staff, parents, and city staff addressing race & class microaggressions. The working group will be presenting at a roundtable with the school committee on what the school district can be doing to help.
- ED Corr is currently working on finding a speaker for MLK Day in January and looking for a survivor of the Holocaust who would be willing to speak at the Holocaust Commemoration in late April or early May.

Discussion on MLK Event

- The members of the Commission provided feedback on how the MLK event can attract new people in the future. Commissioner Member Ratliff suggested contacting the Peace Action group at Harvard and other student groups to support the event.
- It was also suggested to incorporate workshops after MLK day to have older residents engages with younger generations.
- Members brainstormed the idea of having up to three follow up events for each triplet discussed in the MLK speech.

Discussion of Meet Your Neighbor Day (MYND)

ED Corr described the different events that were organized across the city that day. The City Manager attended a few of the events. Commission members suggested that the event website indicate that residents can host an event on a different day than MYND but still indicate it as an event associated with MYND. It was also suggested that the events get highlighted with additional promotion. The Commission expressed interest in starting the planning in February or March to help residents know in advance. Using video and photos through social media were also suggested.

Working Groups

- Trauma and Resilience – Members of this working group met twice to help plan MYND and expressed interest in following up on suggestions for improving MLK Day with additional events. Members explained that there had also been ideas on a film and discussions group regarding gun violence and bullying.
- Connecting with Youth and Young Adults – The members of this working group stated that this working group has not been active and does not need to continue.
- Partnering with Communities of Faith – The members of this working group decided that this kind of work is already being done and that ED Corr's work on this is better placed to be effective since there are many programs already happening in this area.

Final Thoughts

- Suggestions for a follow up to the retreat for members of the Commission to work on core values and other goals.
- Suggestion for meetings to start with members of the Commission to share what things they are interested in or already working on.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Peace Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 19, 2018, at 51 Inman St. in the Second Floor Conference Room.