



Cambridge Peace Commission

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes of the Peace Commission Meeting • September 18, 2024

Commission Members Present: Co-Chair Larry Kim, Co-Chair Elka Kuhlman, Kaleb Abebe, Annie Brown, Sarah DeMott, Yasmine Hung, Kaza Fraley, David Seeman, Bonnie Talbert

City Staff Present: Executive Director Brian Corr, Administrative and Project Coordinator Ryan Welsh

Call to Order: Co-Chair Kuhlman called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: On a motion from Commission Member Seeman, seconded by Commission Member Talbert, the minutes of the October 18, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously.

Checking In

- People shared brief personal and professional updates from the last month.

Member Spotlight – Yasmine Hung

Yasmine shared a bit about her professional life working in Chelsea as a Youth Substance Use Prevention Coordinator for the Drug-Free Communities Program.

- The work she is doing is informed by two studies on the impact of childhood on adulthood.
 - The ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experience Survey) informs her work by drawing relationships between adverse experiences in childhood and adult outcomes but also notes that these are not definitive guarantees. Some children experience 4 or more ACEs but do not exhibit the same negative outcomes.
 - At Tufts, there was a study conducted by Robert Sege which showed that there were ways to counteract ACEs. The Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) Framework has informed how adults can interact with youth to promote adult health outcomes.
- The Cambridge Youth Council's (CYC) work also informs their current campaign focused on youth growth, growth mindsets, and a focus on assets, not deficits.

Executive Director's Report

Exec. Dir. Corr shared updates on several topics of interest to the board.

- Donnelly Field Community Meetings
 - The board had been updated on the first meeting about the Donnelly Field shootings but had not heard an update on the second meeting.
 - There was a shooting incident at Donnelly Field, behind King Open School. It was the result of a conflict among Cambridge Residents. The young teen who had been shot attended the second meeting at Donnelly Field.
 - The second meeting was facilitated through small breakout groups to discuss the promotion of community safety. There were many people from the community who attended, which resulted in new resource networks and more people thinking about outreach and engagement.

- Interfaith Peace Gathering
 - The Cambridge Community Foundation is considering a small grant to support the work of the Interfaith Dialogue Group.
- Community Dialogues
 - ED Corr reported on the progress towards a signed and completed contract with Essential Partners. The first meeting is intended to be a proof-of-concept and steering training.
 - At the point of Phase 2, all Peace Commission folks will be invited to the full day training session with the goal of supporting, planning, and facilitating the dialogue process to have better and healthier discussions.
- Other Updates
 - ED Corr and others on the commission attended the Parent Circle Breakfast event. They reported that it was a wonderful and challenging event.
 - Co-chair Kuhlman explained that she had tried to engage the Parent Circle, but that the city was not able to provide the kind of support the group was seeking.
 - ED Corr asked all the members to give thought about their continuation on the commission because all terms expire on January 10, 2025. Those wishing to be reappointed will need to express their interest in doing so. Appointment to the commission lasts for a term of 3 years.

Meet Your Neighbor Day Report

Administrative and Project Coordinator Welsh gave a brief presentation about the first weekend of Meet Your Neighbor Day 2024 turnout, alongside insight into the publicity of the event, communications with hosts, future ideas and opportunities, and connection with the Block Party folks. (See “MYND 2024.pptx”)

- Commission members shared input and brainstormed some additional ideas for the Day like an organized bike ride around multiple events, like the Boston Bike Party.
- Co-Chair Kuhlman suggested the idea of a “Meet Your Neighbor Month” to relieve the burden of a specific weekend and potentially involve more people. She also shared that she enjoyed Meet Your Neighbor Day the most when she used it to promote composting and thought that encouraging a specific activity would drive turn out.
- APC Welsh brought up the idea of curating kits for Meet Your Neighbor Day and the Commission had many suggestions around what a kit could include: name tags, a script for soliciting donations from local businesses, conversation cards and get-to-know-you questionnaires, and Good Neighbor certificates.
- Co-chair Kuhlman suggested that we revisit this conversation in February to start getting prepared for the event. There was also discussion about shifting the September meeting to fall before the Neighbor Day event so that commission members could participate.

Next Steps

- The last agenda item, Peace Commissions Efforts in 2025: Reflections, was tabled for the following meeting.
- The following meeting was shifted later by one week to accommodate staff’s participation in the NACOLE Conference, 2024.
- Commission Member Brown was identified as the next Member Spotlight and she proposed a topic of “Creating a Culture of Belonging in a Climate of Dignity.”

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM on a motion from Member Fraley, seconded by Co-chair Kim, approved by unanimous vote.

The next meeting of the Peace Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at 51 Inman St., 2nd Floor.