



MAY 2026 MEETING AGENDA

Danielle Jones-McLaughlin
Acting Chair

The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) is holding a meeting online via Zoom on May 14, 2026 from 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Nieta Greene
Cecelia Cobb
Asherah Davis
Emma Pan
Erum Sattar
Zach Solomons
Jim Wilcox

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO JOIN BY 5:30 PM

Please keep your microphone muted when you are not speaking

Rachel Tanenhaus
*Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator*

Kate Thurman
*Deputy Director/
Assistant ADA Coordinator*

Maya Friedrich
Administrative Assistant

- 1. Introductions** (3 min)
- 2. Announcements** (2 min) – CCPD Staff/Board
- 3. Board Leadership Elections** (8 min) – CCPD Board
CCPD will vote to elect a Board Chair and Secretary. The newly elected Chair will run future CCPD meetings until our next election cycle. See [position descriptions on page 5](#).
- 4. Approval of April Minutes** (2 min) – CCPD Board
See [pages 9-23](#) of this packet
- 5. Working Groups Planning and Formation** (25 min) – CCPD Board
Board members will wrap up discussions on working group ideas and vote to formalize projects. See [pages 6-7](#) for the Board's current working group ideas.
- 6. Heat Justice Liaison Program Overview & Survey** (25 min) – Rachel Tanenhaus
Rachel will discuss the City's Heat Justice Liason program and invite Board members to complete a survey about heat resilience. See flyer on [page 8](#) of this packet.
- 7. Chair's Report** (5 min) – Danielle Jones-McLaughlin
- 8. Public Works Update** (8 min) – Jim Wilcox, *Assistant Commissioner of Engineering, Department of Public Works*
- 9. Staff Report** (8 min) – Rachel Tanenhaus
- 10. Public Input** (4 min) – General Public
See [page 4 of this agenda packet for instructions on providing public comment](#)

CART/closed captioning will be provided for this meeting

Captions can be turned on within the Zoom platform or streamed in a separate URL at <https://bit.ly/CCPDcaptioning>.

(captions will not appear until the meeting has started)

The City of Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, does not discriminate, including on the basis of disability. The Commission for Persons with Disabilities will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request.

**The next CCPD meeting will be held on
Thursday, June 11, 2026 from 5:30-7:00 PM.**

Members of the public: [See instructions on pages 3 & 4 on how to watch the CCPD meeting and provide public comment](#) via Zoom

Approved 6/11/2026

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Minutes for Thursday, May 14, 2026 CCPD Meeting

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m.

Present:

Members: Asherah Davis, Cecelia Cobb, Nieta Greene, Danielle Jones-McLaughlin, Zachary Solomons, Emma Pan

Absent: Erum Sattar, Jim Wilcox

Staff: Rachel Tanenhaus, Kate Thurman, Maya Friedrich

Other: Deputy Superintendent (DS) Buckowe Yam

Announcements:

- Rachel announced that CCPD will be sponsoring an adaptive water event on Sunday May 17th from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the War Memorial Pool.
 - The event is geared towards children and families of children who have ADHD, autism or other disabilities that might interfere with attending a standard water safety class.
 - It will teach kids how to get in and out of the pool and stay safe around water. Many kids with disabilities have a much higher chance of drowning, so this information can save lives.
 - It is open to children/youth ages 4-18.
 - An organization called Swim Angelfish will be facilitating the event.
 - Board members who are interested in bringing their families can reach out to Rachel for additional information or to sign up.
 - Danielle expressed interest in bringing her child to the event and asked if this is the first time the City has supported an adaptive water safety event.
 - Rachel said that this is a first-time event. She learned about Swim Angelfish's water safety events at a meeting she attended and asked if they would hold an event on in Cambridge.
 - Rachel worked with the City's Recreation Department to organize logistics.
- Rachel congratulated Maya on finishing graduate school this week and winning several awards from her school.
- Kate thanked Board members for attending the Boards and Commissions celebration event last month.
 - We had high turnout from our Board members: Nieta, Danielle, Cecelia, Zach, and Erum attended.
 - Cecelia said she believes we were one of the boards/commissions with the highest turnout rates.
- Nieta asked whether announcements can be related to matters not associated with the City of Cambridge, and CCPD staff clarified that we usually make announcements just about matters concerning the City.
- CCPD staff mentioned that the Board should vote on whether to take July or August off for their summer recess.
 - Board members decided to make this decision at the June Board meeting since the summer recess vote is not listed on this month's agenda.

Board Leadership Elections:

- The Board voted on Chair and Secretary positions.
 - Nominations included Nieta Greene for Secretary and Danielle Jones-McLaughlin for Chair.
 - Nieta was unanimously elected Secretary.
 - Danielle was unanimously elected Chair.
- Maya asked whether Danielle's Chair term starts now or began when she stepped in as Acting Chair in the fall.

- Rachel said Danielle’s term begins now as she was not previously serving in an elected role.

Approval of April 2026 Minutes:

- The April 2026 CCPD meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Working Groups Planning and Formation:

The CCPD Board discussed current working group ideas and next steps to formally initiate their projects (see 2026 Working Group Ideas sheet for additional information about each group):

- Nieta asked if working groups will have Chair roles and how they will be structured.
 - Rachel replied that previous working groups have not had formal Chairs, but the Board should have conversations and develop expectations about working group structure and attendance expectations.
 - Asherah said the timing and commitment of working group may depend on the working group itself. For example, the Participatory Budget group may not meet year-round.
- Asherah suggested the Board vote to formalize the list of projects now and then establish norms and group composition.
- Danielle agreed that we need to establish norms for working groups following their formalization. She also suggested that if just one person wishes to take on a project, they can do the project solo and provide updates, as Cecelia had offered to do for the disability parking advisory project Rachel had suggested.
- Cecelia asked how open meeting laws apply to working group meetings.
 - Rachel clarified that a working group cannot have a quorum of the current Board makeup because that would violate open meeting laws if the meetings were not public.
- **Resource Materials Group:**
 - Asherah made a motion to rename the Resource Materials group to the Outreach and Engagement group with the creation of resource materials as a task; a Board member seconded the motion.
 - The Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.
 - **Outreach and Engagement Group is initiated.**
- **Participatory Budget Working Group** (already approved):
 - Asherah suggested combining the Participatory Budget (PB) group with the proposed Civic Engagement group but asked for Nieta’s perspective since Nieta has participated in the Participatory Budget process as a delegate.
 - Nieta said she feels combining the PB group with another group would be unreasonable because the Participatory Budget process is long and complex and will offer enough work on its own.
 - Kate told Nieta she does not believe serving in the working group will require the same intensity and commitment as being a PB delegate but understands why Nieta and other members may prefer to have a group just dedicated to that project.
 - Danielle expressed support for Asherah’s suggestion to combine the PB and Civic Engagement groups.
 - Nieta disagreed because she feels unsure about participating in the Civic Engagement Group but feels committed to the PB project.
 - Asherah clarified she does not feel strongly about how to proceed since she will not be working on the PB or Civic Engagement groups.
 - Asherah noted she suggested the idea because PB is a seasonal project and the group may not require participation year-round.
 - Rachel said the Board is welcome to create temporary or seasonal working groups; groups do not have to be permanent projects.
 - No motions were made therefore the **Participatory Budget Working Group remains approved as-is.**
- **Board Member Orientation Working Group** (already approved):
 - Nieta highlighted the necessity of CCPD having a formalized orientation process.
 - She believes the Board should proceed with the approved working group or invite staff to create orientation materials with Board input.

- Asherah asked whether the CCPD staff has the bandwidth and prerogative to create Board orientation materials.
 - Maya said she would be willing to contribute to this project if Rachel and Kate could offer support.
 - Kate and Rachel affirmed the need for a formal Board orientation process and recognized CCPD staff's responsibility to ensure this is created.
- Nieta suggested that one or two Board members could work with staff on the orientation materials rather than the Board creating a formal working group.
 - Asherah said they would be willing to work with the staff on this project.
 - CCPD clarified they would ensure Board feedback was included when creating orientation materials.
- Asherah made a motion to abandon the Board Member Orientation Packet group with the understanding that staff will work with Board representatives to develop these materials instead:
 - Motion seconded and unanimously passed.
- **Board Member Orientation Working Group is abandoned.**
- **Civic Engagement Group:**
 - Nieta expressed support for creating this group to ensure the CCPD Board can participate in matters affecting the disability community, such as the recent Massachusetts Executive Order on autism support.
 - Asherah reminded the Board and staff that Cecelia had volunteered to provide feedback around DPW's placement of disability parking spots.
 - Nieta made a motion to form the Civic Engagement group.
 - Motion seconded and unanimously passed.
 - **Civic Engagement Group is initiated.**
- Board and staff agreed not to discuss creating an independent weather and climate-related group because Erum is absent and other Board members did not express interest in this topic.

Heat Justice Liaison Presentation:

Rachel Tanenhaus discussed Cambridge's Heat Justice Liaison project and asked Board members to fill out a survey about extreme heat:

- The City's [Heat Justice project](#) is a working group from the Office of Sustainability whose mission is to understand how people across Cambridge experience extreme heat and to make meaningful changes to what the City is doing to make our community more heat-resilient.
 - The core team is made up of six community liaisons from diverse backgrounds and five city staff who serve communities most affected by heat, such as people with disabilities and people who are unhoused.
 - The process is facilitated by the Consensus Building Institute, an organization that helps facilitate collaborative community processes, especially around environmental issues.
- This process was inspired by the City's climate change assessment, which identified extreme heat as a top threat as summers become hotter and last longer.
- The City developed the [Resilient Cambridge plan](#) to look at how Cambridge can mitigate climate change-related challenges. Some of the interventions suggested by the plan are:
 - More shade structures around the City
 - Urban forests across Cambridge, not just in high-income neighborhoods
 - Leveraging libraries as cooling centers
 - If someone does not have access to air conditioning they can go to their nearest library to stay cool and safe.
- Cecelia mentioned that [an organization called Green Cambridge has a program called Canopy Crew](#). If you have a back yard, they can plant a tree in it for free and pay high school students a fair wage to do it.

- The Heat Justice Liaisons are hosting more than 10 events across Cambridge in May and June to talk to residents about extreme heat. They want feedback from community members on:
 - How extreme heat affects their lives
 - What they do to cope
 - What support the City should provide
- The City defines extreme heat by the following criteria:
 - Several hot days in a row, or one day where temperatures spikes very quickly (to 85 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
 - During these periods, temperatures remain high during the nights.
- It is important to consider that people experience extreme heat in different ways.
 - Factors such as where you live, the building you live in, your job, and your health may influence how heat affects your body. For example, some disabilities make it harder for people to regulate their body temperatures.
 - The City wants you to share your experience based on these factors.
- The City wants to hear everyone’s feedback on this topic but is making an intentional effort to reach residents most vulnerable to extreme heat, including people with disabilities.
 - Rachel reported that, so far, the working group has reached many community voices who have surfaced new issues beyond the “low-hanging fruit” that City staff are already familiar with.
- The Heat Justice group co-created a survey for residents to share their experiences with extreme heat, which was shared in CCPD’s recent newsletter.
 - The working group will interpret the results of the survey and help shape the City’s response to extreme heat.
 - The group received funding for a seed project, which will be determined by the results of the community survey. The project must be feasible with their \$50,000 budget.
- The attached extreme heat survey flyer includes a QR code you can scan to complete the online survey ([survey also linked here](#)).
 - You can anonymously share your experience with extreme heat and tell the City what support would be most helpful.
 - At the end of the survey, you can opt in to a raffle to win a \$50 gift card, but you will need to provide contact information.
 - The survey is available in multiple languages.
 - You can direct questions to Kendra White, Cambridge’s Climate Resilience Manager. Her email is kwhite@cambridgema.gov.
- Rachel asked Board members to fill the survey out this week if they are comfortable doing so.
 - Ask your community members to fill out the survey as well.
 - If English is not their primary language, they can access translated versions of the survey and fill it out in the language they are most comfortable writing in.
 - The City is especially seeking information about the experiences of people with disabilities.
- Nieta asked whether the survey is accessible to people with reading or vision-related disabilities. She also asked how Rachel would characterize the length of the survey and noted she would consider a “short” survey to be five questions or fewer.
 - Rachel said it is a medium-length survey and that Kendra is happy to help anyone who needs support filling it out.
 - The online version is screen-reader accessible, and people may request paper versions if they prefer.
- Asherah asked whether the Heat Justice group was considering the impact of drastic temperature fluctuations when discussing extreme heat.
 - Asherah noted that even when temperatures do not reach extreme highs, changes from colder to warmer temperatures in short periods of time can cause difficulty for some people.

- Rachel asked Asherah to fill out the survey and provide these comments, noting this is not something that has been discussed in the Heat Justice group.
- Nieta said that the City should also consider that some people have are sensitive to air conditioning and not just to heat itself.
 - Rachel agreed that people with disabilities must balance their sensory and health needs while also not overheating.

Chair's Report:

Danielle Jones-McLaughlin reported:

- Danielle re-affirmed that the Civic Leadership/Boards and Commissions event was great , and she feels proud that our Board was well represented.
 - Danielle said she enjoyed the event's programming and live music.
 - Kate agreed the event was a great concept, but said the acoustics posed challenges for many attendees who could not hear well and felt overwhelmed.
 - Nieta said accessing the building with a walker was challenging because of a lip on the floor. She also agreed that the acoustics created processing and auditory difficulties.
 - Kate said that she told the event planner about both issues and validated Nieta's concerns.
 - Kate also noted there is a shortage of accessible meeting and event spaces in the City, which is an issue that needs to be addressed.
 - Kate told Nieta and others to continue to provide their feedback on accessibility issues at City events, because feedback directly from the community can be more effective than feedback just from City staff.

Staff Report

CCPD Staff reported:

- We are extending the CCPD Board application deadline, so people interested in joining our Board can still apply.
 - We do not have a new deadline yet, but it will be after May 18 (the current deadline).
 - If you know someone who is a Cambridge resident and may be a good fit for our Board, please encourage them to apply ([Board application linked here](#)).
- Kate announced that the City's employee reasonable accommodation policy will be released in late May.
 - The City will also release an updated public notice of its Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II obligations, which specifies state and local governments' responsibility to provide accessible services to constituents with disabilities. This notice should also go live later this month.
- Rachel thanked Asherah for volunteering to represent CCPD during the candle lighting ceremony at the City's Holocaust Commemoration on Wednesday, May 20 at the Tremont Street Shul.
 - Rachel also thanked Nieta for volunteering, though we could only provide one representative. Board members and community members are welcome to attend as audience members.
 - Our Commission's participation is important because people with disabilities were one of the most targeted groups during the Holocaust.
- Kate and Rachel attended the annual virtual ADA symposium earlier this month.
 - Kate and Rachel have taken many ADA classes already, so many of the workshops they attended provided a refresh on information they are familiar with.
 - Rachel said the most helpful sessions were those providing updates on the current state of the ADA and disability rights.
- Rachel thanked Board members for attending the recent office hours session with the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD).
 - The next session will take place May 20.

- Board members can visit MOD's website at mass.gov/mod to find more information about their office hours for members of disability commissions.
- The Cambridge Public Health Department is creating a Community Advisory Board, and they are seeking members who are people with disabilities.
 - The Board will be focused on health equity and community engagement and will help shape new health programs for the City based on community needs.
 - Members will be paid for attending meetings.
 - The Cambridge Public Health Department will provide training, so you do not have to have previous public health experience. If you care about health and have strong community ties in Cambridge, you may be a good candidate.
 - If you are interested in becoming a member or know someone who may be, reach out to Rachel and she can give you information on how to apply.
- The Harvard Museum of Science and Culture is offering sensory friendly programs and tours geared towards neurodiverse people. If you want additional information about these programs, reach out to Rachel.
- At an upcoming meeting when there is sufficient time on the agenda, Rachel will provide an update on variance requests with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB).
- In June, staff from the City's Housing Department will present and answer questions on accessible and affordable housing in Cambridge.

Public Comment:

A commentor introduced himself as a member of the Civic Outreach Squad with the City of Cambridge. He came to our meeting to learn about us and take notes on the disability-related concerns we discuss. The Civic Outreach squad is focused on strengthening relationships between City Council and Cambridge communities.

- Kate said she recently learned about the Civic Outreach Squad, and our staff would love to build stronger connections with their team.
- Kate suggested that if their team has materials for projects that CCPD can help promote or distribute to Board/community members, they should send them to ccpd@cambridgema.gov.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maya Friedrich

CCPD Chair & Secretary Job Descriptions

Chair

Responsibilities Include:

- Collaborating with staff to prepare meeting agendas and support clear communication
- Attending and facilitating board meetings
- Representing the Commission in an official capacity when appropriate

Secretary

Responsibilities Include:

- Collaborating with the Chair to set meeting agendas
- Timekeeping during meetings and interrupting as necessary to keep the agenda moving on time
- Checking in periodically with active working groups to facilitate accountability
- Facilitating CCPD Board meetings in the absence of the Chair

2026 Board Working Group Ideas

Working Group Idea	Current Status	Project Goals	Board Comments/Interest	Next steps
Outreach and Engagement/ Resource Materials	Resource Materials group approved in August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop directories of housing providers and other resources for new Cambridge residents with disabilities and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asherah expressed interest 	Decide whether to approve a new/modified Outreach/Engagement group, abandon the Resource Materials group, or move forward with the existing Resource Materials working group
Cambridge Participatory Budget (PB)	Approved in August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how to increase the Cambridge disability community’s participation in the PB process • Develop and/or advise on accessibility-related PB projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cecelia expressed interest • Nieta expressed interest—she served as a PB delegate in past years and noticed accessibility issues in the PB process. • Danielle 	Decide whether to abandon or move forward with group
New Board Member Orientation Packet	Approved in August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a welcome packet to orient new members of the CCPD board and formalize the onboarding process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nieta expressed interest • Erum and Danielle validated the need 	Decide whether to abandon or move forward with group

			for a streamlined board member orientation process even if it isn't developed through a working group	
Civic Engagement Group	Not voted on/new idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize CCPD board representation at public forums and policy-related engagement opportunities • Attend and report back on meetings/events on topics affecting the disability community • Could include advising DPW on placement of accessible parking spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danielle expressed interested-- including getting CCPD Board members engaged with Massachusetts Executive Order No. 656 (Autism Support Strategy) • Nieta expressed interest 	Decide whether to approve or abandon the group (and discuss any modifications)
Weather/Climate and Disability Issues	Not voted on/new idea—could be part of Outreach/Resources or Civic Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategize around supporting community members with disabilities during storms and extreme heat/cold • Could work on accessible parking/snow removal concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erum expressed interest around disability parking and snow-clearing and other climate-resilience related issues affecting people with disabilities 	Decide whether to incorporate into other group ideas, create/approve it as its own group, or abandon it



Summer Is Coming!

The City of Cambridge wants to know how you stay cool when it is very hot outside. To share your experience, scan the QR code below to take our survey. Your answers will help the City of Cambridge plan for extreme heat.

The survey is open until **May 25, 2026**. People who complete the survey and provide their email address will be entered to win a **\$50 Visa gift card**.

The survey is available in Arabic, Bangla, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, Spanish, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Portuguese.

www.surveymonkey.com/r/Extreme_Heat



For more information on how to stay cool during hot weather, visit www.cambridgema.gov/heat