

Meeting Date: June 2, 2026

Attendance:

- Akiba, Sukia
- Bastola, Kashish
- Brown, Thabiti
- Collins, Melissa
- Dance, Kwame
- Davis, Jeff
- Greenidge, George

- Johnson, Xenia
- Lubintus,
Gassendina
- Mason, Natassa
- Wyzard Jones,
Cheyenne

City AFC Staff

- Brown, Deidre
- Diana Milkey

** Arrived after the meeting
was called to order*

Action Items will be highlighted in yellow

Moment to Remember - ["This Day in Justice" Calendar](#)

Anchor in the Ordinance - *The Cambridge American Freedmen Commission shall work with the City Manager and/or their assistants, including the Chief of Equity and Inclusion, and other Departments to implement Transitional Justice for Cambridge Resident American Freedmen. The Commission will investigate and report on the historical, systemic and ongoing harms done to American Freedmen by the State (Federal, Massachusetts and Cambridge governments), and identify adequate, effective and prompt reparations.*

Roll Call for Quorum

Call to Order

Chair Jeff Davis called the meeting to order at 6:43 PM.

Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes

- a. Approval of Minutes – May 28, 2026 - Working Session
 - i. Commissioner XENIA BHEMBE says to add how many pamphlets were discussed to be distributed
 - ii. Commissioner GEORGE GREENIDGE asks to add the specific names for "Subcommittee A" and "Subcommittee B"
 - iii. Motion to approve
 - 1. Seconded
 - 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 - 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 - 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 - 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - A
 - 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 - 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y

8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE - Y
- b. Approval of Minutes – May 06, 2026 - Governance Subcommittee Meeting
- i. Commissioner George Greenidge requests to note that staff member Diana Milkey erroneously said the Commission did not have to publicly approve subcommittee minutes. He also requested that it be formatted similarly to the other meetings' minutes.
 - ii. Motion to approve
 1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - A
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS - Y
- c. Movement to add approval of May 19th, 2026 Regular Session Meeting Minutes
- i. Seconded
 - ii. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 - iii. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 - iv. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 - v. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - A
 - vi. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 - vii. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
- d. Approval of Minutes – May 19, 2026 - Governance Subcommittee Meeting
- i. DM reads out loud meeting minute amendments suggested in an email from COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE per his request, copy and pasted here (For the following sub-points 1-7, "I" specifically refers to George Greenidge)
 1. It was my resignation letter as chair. (put in parentheses) George Greenidge's resignation as chair, as I noted I was going to do at the April 28th meeting, with notice. I gave notice.)
 2. The consent agenda was voted on, not my letter of resignation.
 3. I recommended Mel Jackson, but she declined as Chair.

4. Also, I said the document should be viewed as "guiding principles" and suggested that it be non-binding.
5. I also stated in the CAFC ordinance - it had specific language which I read - "before adoption."
6. Review the meeting tapes regarding: Review of the City Solicitor with Deidre. I did not hear that.
7. I ended the meeting as Chair, not Jeff. My resignation was after the meeting, starting on 5/20.

ii. Approving these minutes will wait until next meeting so Diana can update them.

2. Moment to Remember: Reflect (stories & perspective) - 5 Mins

- a. Chair Jeff Davis addresses the Commission to recenter the mission and his commitment to respect as Chair.
- b. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS invites every Commissioner to participate in a personal storytelling moment at the beginning of each meeting, beginning with his own.
 - i. He shares personal photographs from exploring his family tree through visiting the plantation that his maternal grandmother was forced to sharecrop.

3. Moment to Connect: Community Voice and Understanding (Public Comment)

- a. Public member Antonia Edwards expresses excitement that the reparations movement has found its home in Cambridge and offers her services to help navigate the legal climate and research necessary. She asks for support for a petition to take the reparations movement statewide.
- b. Public member Yejide Najee-Ullah offers her help with defining American Freedmen within the context of the Ordinance as a research specialist. She expresses concern that the Commission's focus might be too narrow when talking about genealogy and only focusing on people who descend from victims of chattel slavery.

Prime Objective: Our Work for the Day - Vote on next 30 Days Actions

4. SubComm Insights: What have we learned and where we might act

- a. Community Engagement SubComm Recommendations
 - i. Commissioner Melissa Jackson-Collins notes that she was not at the previous meeting and defers to Commissioner Xenia Bhembe to speak up on what the items are
 - ii. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE suggests reviewing the

recommendations for vote.

1. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS suggests switching with the research subcommittee and finish this discussion later in the meeting. The notes will be picked up from here.
- iii. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE motions to vote on adding community engagement section to the City of Cambridge website – a calendar, ordinance and definitions, submissions from the public
 1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
- iv. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE motions to set aside money to print pamphlets from the FY26 budget.
 1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – A
- v. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE motions to set aside funds for 2000 copies of the edited brochure for future use for Community Engagement.
 1. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS asks to amend this to be 5000 copies.
 - a. Seconded
 - b. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – A
 - c. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 - d. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 - e. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - A
 - f. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y

- g. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 - h. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 - i. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 - j. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – A
- vi. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE motions to set up outreach teams from the Commission to join and support community events starting with June 13th events.
- 1. She rescinds this motion on hearing COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS’s objection to aligning the Commission first before engaging with the Community through other peoples’ events.
- vii. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE motions that at the next full meeting, the Community Engagement Subcommittee puts forth a definition of American Freedmen.
- 1. Seconded
 - 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 - 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 - 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 - 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - A
 - 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 - 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 - 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 - 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 - 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
- viii. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS motions that money from FY26 be spent on generic American Freedman Commission swag
- 1. Seconded
 - 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 - 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 - 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – A
 - 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 - 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 - 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – N
 - 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 - 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 - 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – N
- ix. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS motions that the commission revamp the website and set up a webform for communications.
- 1. Seconded
 - 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – A

3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - A
6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - A
7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – A

b. Research Subcommittee Recommendations

- i. Commissioner Thabiti Brown suggests that there is no process in place for vetting and picking vendors for research services and advises against moving too fast to avoid perpetuating more harm
- ii. Commissioner Cheyenne Wyzard-Jones reminds the Commission of the following ideas:
 1. Reparations Study Hall with the Library
 2. Engaging people for internal trainings
 3. Website
- iii. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES notes that she is still in favor of hiring Saskia or Chandra for the internal trainings, noting that the work has been done
 1. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS brings up that this needs to be finished and purchased by tomorrow in order for it to work for fiscal year 2026
 2. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE asks why it would be pushed off. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN answers and says there are a lot of potential providers that have done a lot of work and it seems like a conflict of interest to decide who to hire for the work based on involvement in the Commission or knowing people on the Commission.
 3. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS asks COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES what her idea for trainings would look like. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES brings up her proposal for a 6-8 session workshop discussing and learning about transitional justice. She expresses concern about not identifying a shared language and expresses that using these sessions as a facilitated way to figure out policy basics and language for transitional justice learning would be helpful.
- iv. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS asks what purchases the research

committee could make for the FY26 that could be completed within the next 24 hours.

1. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES says a vote should be taken tonight on where to spend funds.
2. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE says he suggests \$9,999 each for Saskia, Chandra, and a book vendor. He also suggests the same amount Dave Matthews as a videographer as someone he knows, allotting roughly \$40,000 of the budget to his proposals.
3. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS asks about DNA kits and concern from the body that vendors for these and clears up a misunderstanding that they do not accurately display ethnicity.
 - a. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES says that this is something that's on the table for FY27, but there needs to be a full commission conversation about best practices for use and that they should wait.

4. Full Body Vote

- a. Research Subcommittee Votes
 - i. Thabiti Brown makes a motion on the creation of a website or blog for research purposes.
 1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
 - ii. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN motions to dedicate funds from FY26 for the website
 1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – N

9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
- iii. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN motions to partner with the Cambridge Public Library to create a “Reparations Study Hall” for both community and Commission learning
1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
- iv. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN motions to allocate funds for FY26.
1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
- v. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN motions to engage Chandra Banks/Saskia van James to present research and conduct trainings.
1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – A
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
- vi. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS motions for this action to take place during FY26.

1. Seconded
 2. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – N
 3. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 4. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – A
 5. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - Y
 6. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - A
 7. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – N
 8. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 9. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 10. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
- b. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS motions to extend the meeting for 30 minutes.
- i. Seconded
 - ii. COMMISSIONER THABITI BROWN – Y
 - iii. COMMISSIONER NATASSA MASON – Y
 - iv. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS – Y
 - v. COMMISSIONER GEORGE GREENIDGE - A
 - vi. COMMISSIONER GASSENDINA LUBINTUS - Y
 - vii. COMMISSIONER XENIA BHEMBE – Y
 - viii. COMMISSIONER KWAME DANCE – Y
 - ix. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS – Y
 - x. COMMISSIONER CHEYENNE WYZZARD-JONES – Y
- c. See item number 4 to see the notes on the Community Engagement Subcommittee

5. Opportunities and Insights Across the City

- a. Events
- b. Opportunities to Engage
- c. Continuing Education on Transitional Justice

6. Chair Meeting Summary & Next Steps

- a. CHIEF OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION DEIDRE TRAVIS BROWN discusses the steps ahead for people for continuing tenure on the Commission. These people will be presented before the City Council before the end of the month. Five new members will be added toward 15 Commissioners total.
- b. CHIEF OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION DEIDRE TRAVIS BROWN updates the Commission on the governance model and confirms that the governance model does not need to be approved by the City Solicitor, but she was able to share it with her anyway and the Solicitor confirmed that she did not see anything of concern as though treating it like bylaws.
 - i. COMMISSIONER MELISSA JACKSON-COLLINS asks if there needs to be officially written bylaws. CHIEF OF EQUITY AND

INCLUSION DEIDRE TRAVIS BROWN suggests doing so.

- c. COMMISSIONER JEFF DAVIS says that although they have voted against joining as a Commission body, individuals should show up to the Juneteenth celebration

Next meeting: June 16, 2026

Meeting Adjourned

Chair Jeff Davis adjourned this meeting at 8:46 PM.