



51 Inman Street, Second Floor, Cambridge, MA 02139 | Telephone: (617) 349-3355 | Email: lgbtq@cambridgema.gov | TTY: (617) 492-0235

Carolina Almonte

Executive Director

LGBTQ+ Meeting Minutes – March Meeting

Present: Chairs Bill Barnert and Zachary Dresser, Commissioners Linden Huhmann, Bob Bordone, Caitlin Egleson, Finley Foster, Vincent Monrreal, Emmy Howe, Frank Arce, Gregory MacDonough, Evan Mackay, Sukia Akiba, Cindy Telingator, Noelani Kamelamela

Staff: Executive Director Carolina Almonte, Director of Operations Sarah Binney, LGBTQ+ Program Leader Phoebe Hallahan, Mayor E. Denise Simmons, Chief of Staff Neal Alpert

Members of the Public: Seb Kryspin, Saskia Vann James, Augusta Brian

Absent: Commissioner Mary Gardner, LGBTQ+ Research Associate Amelia Joselow

1. Call to order

- Chair Barnert called this meeting to order at 6:07pm.

2. Review and approval of agenda

- No Commissioners had any additions to the agenda.

3. Review and approval of February 2025 minutes

- Chair Barnert moved to approve the February 2025 meeting minutes. Commissioner MacDonough seconded. All Commissioners voted to approve the minutes.

4. Discussion of Pride 2025 with Mayor Simmons

- Mayor Simmons discussed the history the Cambridge Pride event. She shared the importance of honoring LGBTQ+ activism and history in Cambridge and remembering that Queer residents have always been part of the fabric of the city. COS Alpert shared that the Mayor's office is open to moving away from a formal seated event.
- ED Almonte shared back some of the previous Pride discussion that had happened in Commission meetings. The Commission discussed having the event on a different weekend in June rather than having it before Boston Pride and having the event be longer. ED Almonte shared the interest in using outdoor space such as the lawn and the

potential to block off streets. The Commission wants the event to be fun and festive, priority inclusivity and accessibility, provide resources and support, have activities for children and older adults, and have a safety plan. Some suggested features include crafts, facepainting, ice cream truck, swag + giveaways, and performances.

Commissioner Egleson supported the idea of keeping some speeches and blending the types of Pride events that have happened the past 2 years. Mayor Simmons stated the importance of avoiding overlap with other local Pride events. Chair Barnert mentioned reaching out to Starlight Square Performers and reaching out to local music schools such as Berklee and Longy to ask for interested performers. Mayor Simmons suggested asking the library to bring an LGBTQ+ book display.

- Commissioners discussed theme options. Mayor Simmons suggested a theme that affirms that LGBTQ+ people have always been part of our city, and the struggle and sacrifices that allowed us to celebrate today. Affirming that we are not going anywhere. Commissioner Monreal suggested celebrating pride around the world and honoring different cultures. Commissioner Egleson suggested promoting the ongoing struggle and activism in the community. Commissioner Bordone suggested a theme relating to solidarity with other groups, that the event be intersectional and multilingual. Seb Kryspin suggested a theme that an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us. Commissioner Foster shared that the theme should not just be reactionary to the current moment, but can be in defiance of that. The theme should be for us and by us, both joyous and defiant. Commissioner Mackay suggested a theme of “an injury to one is an injury to all.” Commissioner Kamelamela suggested having the theme in a language other than English. Seb Kryspin suggested theme and activities relating to past present and future. Commissioner Howe wants the future to be emphasized.
- Pride should have a historical element. Commissioner Howe suggested a separate working group to develop the historical element. Mayor Simmons suggested having profiles of individuals from Cambridge’s past and present, and a way of having participant’s stories captured at the event. Seb Kryspin suggested creating a story catalogue with the stories collected. Commissioner Bordone suggested having short videos sent in with stories from community members.
- Commissioners asked about Youth Pride. ED Almonte shared that Commission staff has reached out to CPSD about Youth Pride and will meet to discuss what the Commission’s role will be in this event. The Youth Working Group also discussed the possibility of having youth on the Commission’s Pride Event Planning Group.
- DOO Binney will send out a poll about dates for a Pride Planning Working Group to meet. Chair Barnert, Commissioners Kamelamela, Akiba, Egleson, and Howe, and Seb Kryspin and Saskia Vann James expressed interest in joining the planning team.

5. Staff Reports

- ED Almonte
 - City hall will be lit up with the colors of the trans flag for Trans Day of Visibility (TDoV).
 - The Commission is moving offices to 689 Mass Ave.
 - Governor Healey signed the petition for Cambridge Fair Housing Ordinance amendments. This means that the new protected classes—Relationship Status and Family Structure—have been approved and are ready to be ordained by the Council.
- DOO Binney

- Commission staff met with CHA Sexual and Reproductive Health Division staff to discuss hosting another STI testing clinic and workshop. The clinic will be in the summer and will be at the Central Square Library. More details to come.
- PL Hallahan
 - The Commission cohosted the Trans Read Aloud and Activist Button Sharing events with the Central Square Library. Both events were great successes! Thank you to all Commissioners who contributed.
 - The Name Change Clinic in Somerville was moved to be fully virtual.
 - PL Hallahan will create a social media plan for TDoV.
 - The next SAGE Intergenerational Dinner will be on May 8 at the Central Square Library.
 - The movie series at the Senior Center will feature *The Imitation Game* and *Everything Everywhere All at Once* next in the series.

6. Working Group Reports

- Seniors Working Group- The Seniors Working Group is working on a reading group of *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* in partnership with the Central Square Library, the YWCA, and the Senior Center. The library will provide the books. Commissioner Mackay will facilitate the book discussion. The Seniors Working Group also discussed creating programming in Senior Housing Rec Rooms in different locations in Cambridge.

7. New Business

- Commissioner Howe shared that Boston Youth Pride will be on Saturday, May 17 at City Hall Plaza. The Commission will share a table with CampOUT. Commissioner volunteers will be needed to table.

8. Public Comment

- Seb Kryspin suggested using Cambridge Rec Pools to host a summer pool party for trans and nonbinary community members.
- Saskia Vann James joined to express interest in Commission focus on addressing economic inequity and houselessness within the LGBTQ+ Community.

9. Adjournment – Chair Barnet moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:29pm. Commissioner Foster Seconded.

APPENDIX A: Event Planning Guidance Chart for LGBTQ Commissioners

We have multiple Working Groups, staff, & others that may want to organize an event. This is a new document that Carolina wrote to help standardize the process of creating & hosting events.

Event Planning Guidance Chart for LGBTQ+ Commissioners and Staff

This chart is designed to provide clarity and structure to LGBTQ+ Commissioners and staff for planning and executing community programming.

1. Event Planning Framework

Step 1 - Idea Creation

When a Working Group meets, use the questions below to begin planning:

1. Define Objectives:
 - o What is the purpose of the event?
 - o What outcomes do we hope to achieve (e.g., education, community building, advocacy)?
2. Identify Target Audience:
 - o Who is the event for (e.g., youth, LGBTQ older adults, allies)?
3. Establish Budget and Resources:
 - o Determine funding request and staff support capacity.
 - o Identify potential partnerships.
4. Check Existing Practices:
 - o Review previous events for guidance and lessons learned.

Step 2 – Bring ideas to the full Commission

When a Working Group wants to plan an event, it must first be brought to the full Commission for **discussion and a vote**. However, please note that not all events can be possible due to budget constraints and staff capacity, but we will try to implement as many events for the community as we can.

In terms of which events are possible, they must be aligned with the Ordinance: “To design and implement programs that promote and sustain equality for all LGBTQ+ individuals residing or working in the City.” This is very broad as we have a lot of freedom to create events that educate the community and bring the community together/create social resiliency.

If an event is voted in the affirmative, continue with steps below.

2. Coordination and Logistics (Staff can support)

Select Date and Location:

- Consider accessibility of the venue, if in-person.
- Avoid conflicts with other major community events.

Develop a Timeline:

- When should planning be finalized?

3. Plan Outreach and Promotion:

- Use the Newsletter (add event to the shared send schedule).
- Leverage LGBTQ+ Commission social media account, City Communications Office (both internal and external), and partner organizations.
- Create a streamlined outreach plan.

Summary of typical outreach practices (these depend greatly on the scale/ nature of the event!)

- Create a flyer (include registration link with QR)
- Add calendar event to City website, link to flyer
- Submit to Communications office for posting in City daily update email
- Send to Phoebe for Instagram submission
- Submit to internal employee newsletter
- Add to LGBTQ+ Newsletter on Constant Contact (sometimes send out dedicated constant contact)
- Submit to other City departments to advertise- DHSP, CDD, library, etc.
- Print onto sandwich board signs to put in front of our office, city hall, library, etc.
- Submit to public newsletters (pleasure pie, etc.)
- Create Find it Cambridge page

4. Event Execution (Staff primarily handles this)**Finalize Details:**

- Confirm logistics, vendors, and speakers, if any.
- Prepare materials, if any.
- Bring brochure to distribute.
- Confirm Commissioner volunteers for set up, clean up, tabling.

Day-of Coordination**Set Up:**

- Arrive early to organize the space.
- Technology test (e.g., microphones, projectors).

Welcome and Facilitate:

- Greet attendees.
- Ensure moderators or facilitators are prepared.