

Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission

MINUTES: Jan. 22, 2026, 6pm

Location: Hybrid: 689 Mass Ave, 2nd Floor Conference Room & Zoom (you'll receive a panelists link if you indicated that you will participate virtually)

Neighborhood: City Wide

Contact

- Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission <LGBTQ@CambridgeMA.gov>
- 617-349-3355

Agenda

Co-Chairs: Bill Barnert and Zachary Dresser

Tonight's meeting chaired by: Zachary Dresser

1. **Welcome**
2. **Approve / Modify Agenda**
3. **Approve Previous Minutes** (2025-12-11)
4. **Introductions**
5. **Updates on Previous Action Items**
 - **Domestic Partnership Zine** (October, tabled in December) —PL Hallahan requested final edits to the text before sending the draft to the artist. Chair Barnert and Commissioner Huhmann will provide edits. A draft version of the 'zine has been received from the artist & Bill & Linden should review for edits.
6. **Project Updates** (current actions and plans, including reports from Shameka)
 - (Monthly until resolved): Status update on Fair Housing Ordinance change in definition of sexualities. No updates as of now
 - Gender Inclusion Ordinance-Legal Department has the language and is reviewing. Shameka touching base periodically.
 - Update on Housing Task Force from Phoebe West. Recommendations included as **Item 1** below
 - Rebranding update
 - Working with the Cambridge Public Library:
 - Emmy & Bill met with Ruby Vail of the Central Square Library, and realized that there are a number of events that various Working Groups are working with the library on. Here is a list so cross-promotion can happen. (And so people in each WG understand that we may be overloading the library staff!)
 - NOTE: Some -- maybe all -- of these events may be co-sponsored by the library. But some they may just help us promote.

- We should review the level of staff support that is needed/desired for each of these.
 - i. The Youth WG plans to host three kinds of community events, spread out & probably recurring:
 - a. Banned Book Read-Aloud - Family Friendly
 - b. Banned Book Read-Around for Adults
 - c. LGBTQ+ Craft event
 - ii. The Youth WG is also planning a weekend day event, with a performance by drag queen Aurora Whorealis (Kalon Shepard) and other family-friendly entertainment on Sunday afternoon, March 15th. (Date to be confirmed with library.) We would welcome any assistance anyone would like to provide to make this event a success!
 - iii. The Trans Sanctuary WG is planning a Book Group reading of ***Cemetery Boys***, by Aiden Thomas. [NOTE: This has been put on the back burner for now.]
 - iv. The Seniors WG is planning a Book Group reading of ***How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective***.
 - v. The Outreach & Visibility WG is planning an informational panel event on April 9th on ***Queer Adoption & Fostering in Massachusetts***.

7. Working Group Reports

- Outreach & Visibility WG (Greg & Bill)
 - We will be hosting an evening on **Queer Fostering & Adoption in Massachusetts** at the CPL on Thursday, April 9th, from 6-8. Mark your calendars!
 - If you know someone who might make a good candidate to be on a panel that evening, let us know.
 - We will be using the spreadsheet at [Contacts for Queer Intentional Families Panel](#) to keep track of who is contacting whom.
 - We did something really cool. Since we were taking the minutes in real time in Sharepoint, and everyone could see them, at the end of the meeting, the minutes were ready. So we voted to approve them instead of waiting a month.
- Policy & Advocacy (Vinny)
- Public Health & Safety WG (Vinny)
- Seniors WG (Evan)
- Trans Sanctuary WG (Finley)
 - Planning an indoor TRANS + GENDER EXPANSIVE POOL PARTY similar to this summer's outdoor event, perhaps on or near Trans Day of Visibility (March 31st)

- Heath Umbreit recently gave a presentation to SpeakOUT about trans athletes, and we reviewed their slides.
- Next meeting: Tuesday, February 10 at 5:30pm
- Youth WG (Emmy)
 - We hope to coordinate with the library & the YWCA on a number of regular events (see i. above).
 - Sam Musher, Youth Advocacy Specialist at Cambridge Public Schools, attended the meeting & helped us plan how to interface with students in & out of CPS.
 - We are hoping to have an out-of-school movie & entertainment event at the Cambridge Public Library on a Sunday afternoon in February.
 - Next meeting: Tuesday, February 17th, 4-5pm

8. Old Business

SAGE Table (April & October), Pride 2026, Monthly films at the Senior Center & Newsletters:

- Shameka is taking the lead on these items. If you are interested in assisting in planning any of these things, please volunteer

9. New Business

- **Recruiting new Commissioners**

- There are currently 14 Commissioners. A "full house" would be 20.
- Everyone whose term ends this year has indicated they would like to stay on.
- Do we want to add more Commissioners?
- When?
- How? (Zack has offered to lead this if we do it.)
- BLU Foundation will be joining us at next meeting

10. Public Comments / Announcements

11. Next Commission Meeting: Thursday, February 26, 2026, 6pm, Hybrid

*Hybrid meeting info

GUESTS: Please register for the meeting using the link below.

https://cambridgema.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BWFK6SwRUG8pn_h76RECA

To join in person, come to 689 Mass. Ave, Cambridge. If the front door is locked, call us at 617-349-3355. Come up to the 2nd floor and follow the signs.

Item 1

Appendix A: Specific Measures to increase gender inclusivity and relationship diversity in all housing programs

Gender Inclusivity

- The City of Boston has an excellent set of guidelines related to the use of gender information in city programs, which are suggested reading for context for the recommendations in this section.
- Only collect gender information when necessary. If it is not necessary to collect, but there is a desire to collect it to improve city programs, make the provision of this information optional.
 - Collecting gender information can increase risks for vulnerable groups and create barriers to participation.
- On each form that requires or requests gender information, clearly describe what this information will be used for.
 - For example, “The gender identities of all household members must be provided to meet federal government requirements. The federal government uses this information [for some purpose].”
- Unless explicitly required by a law or regulation, don’t restrict a person’s self-identification to what is on government documents. Clearly specify whether and what type of documentation is required.
 - For example, “The gender identities of all household members must be provided to meet federal government requirements. Gender identity is self-identified and does not need to match a household member’s gender as specified on government IDs or other documents.”
- Do not restrict gender identity to binary male/female options and provide an option for individuals to self-specify a gender identity.
 - The City of Boston’s guidelines provide example language for collection of gender information that may be a good starting point.
- For housing programs with language that only references binary gender categories, change this language if possible, and otherwise clearly specify how the program works for people of other genders.
 - Replace “opposite gender” with, for example, “different gender” to acknowledge the existence of more than two genders and clarify how program rules apply to nonbinary applicants.

Inclusivity of Diverse Relationship Structures

- Use “head of household” terminology only when required.
 - If possible “head of household” should be replaced with terminology that more clearly specifies what is meant. For example, if “head of household” is intended to designate the City’s primary contact for the application, ask the applicant to designate someone to be the City’s primary point of contact for the application rather than to designate a “head of household”.
- If/when “head of household” terminology is required, explain in the application why this information is collected and what it is used for. Let households know what options they have when choosing to designate a household member as “head of household.”
 - For example, “The federal government requires us to collect information about the ‘head of household’ for each household applying for this program. You may choose any member of your household over the age of 18 to designate as ‘head of household.’ The federal government uses this information [for some purpose].
- When describing who is eligible for a housing program, state explicitly that household members do not need to be legally related.
- Ask for information about the relationships between household members only when required.
 - Like collecting gender information, collecting relationship information can increase risks for vulnerable groups and create barriers to participation.
- If/when information about the relationships between household members is required, state explicitly what the information will be used for.
 - For example, “Please indicate which, if any, members of your household are married to each other. The federal government requires people who are married to be allocated a single bedroom, while adults who are unmarried are allocated separate bedrooms.”
- Share information up-front about how partnerships with more than two people are handled.
 - For example, “Couples are expected to share a bedroom. For polyamorous partnerships with more than two people, the household residents in each partnership are expected to share a bedroom up to a maximum of two adults per room.