



Shameka Gregory
Executive Director

Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission

Minutes

June 25, 2026

Location: Hybrid-689 Mass. Ave. & Zoom

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: Bill Barnert

Attendance

Present: Finley Foster, Gregory MacDonough, Bill Barnert, Vincent Daveed (Vinny) Monrreal, Zachary Dresser, Linden Huhmann

Virtual: Emmy Howe, Caitlin Egleson

Absent: Bob Bordone Frank Arce, Noelani Kamelamela, Evan MacKay

Staff: Shameka Gregory, Zhiren Ye

Guests: Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, Chief Deidre Travis-Brown

1. Call to Order

Co-chair Bill Barnert called this meeting of the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission to order at 6:04 PM.

2. Welcome

3. Approve / Modify Agenda

Approved.

4. Approve / Modify Previous Minutes 5/28/2026

- ⌘ Chair Barnert requested to modify previous meeting minutes to update the language of Fair Housing Ordinance change in definition of sexual orientation and update on company reaching out about recordings of Commission meetings. ED Gregory will update the minutes before posting.
- ⌘ The commission voted to approve the minutes with these modifications.

5. Introductions: Welcome Zhiren! Ice-breaker: What was your joyous Pride memory?

6. Working Group Reports

- Outreach & Visibility WG (Commissioner MacDonough)
 - Outreach Projects: Possibly Youth LGBTQ+ Ball with Somerville and Arlington. Commissioner MacDonough plans to organize meetings in the coming months to exchange on similar programs and initiatives. Also notes that the commission can potentially invite them to join the meeting. ED Gregory will reach out to the correct person in Arlington to continue the conversation.
 - Chair Barnert talked with someone from The Peace Commission and learned about their retreat plan. He is in contact with them and may propose the retreat idea next year.
- Policy & Advocacy (Commissioner Monrreal)
 - ⌘ The working group has not met yet. Commissioner Monrreal is going through archive and in contact with organizations, they will present to the group in the next meeting.
- Pride recap and Pride feedback
 - ⌘ ED Gregory gave a general update on Pride event: 15 paid vendors in total, \$15,734.12 dollars spent. There were swags from Equity and Inclusion Department, Chair Dresser brought additional pride decorations and Mayor Siddiqui provided swag from her office as well. ED Gregory explained that trucks were used to block the streets for safety reasons. Children's area on Dottie Doyle Way also a decision made for safety reason.
 - ⌘ PM Ye shared a Pride Evaluation Report based on collected survey feedback, notes and observation. The general feedback from the survey was positive. Document included as "Item 1" below.
 - ⌘ The venue set-up received mixed feelings. Some commissioners preferred this year's set-up while others preferred last year's with stage positioned closer to Mass. Ave.
 - ⌘ Commissioner Foster mentioned that the bike lanes were blocked by the trucks and would like to avoid that in the future. Suggested considering moving the stage closer to Mass Ave.
 - ⌘ Commissioner Monrreal suggested signages for all different stages and activities for clearer guidance. Chair Barnert mentioned that there were signages and event schedule flyers but they were on papers and too small, he suggested to have big signages with maps (A-Frames).

Commissioner Huhmann also agreed on the importance of very visible signage.

- ⌘ Commissioner Howe suggested having more tables and chairs at the venue to strengthen accessibility for those who want to sit and don't want to sit on grass.
- ⌘ Mayor Siddiqui praised the team for the good job and complimented how people loved the partnering organizations, food and activities such as face painting, bounce house and swags. She suggested having a podium to enhance the speech section and experience. She also suggested directing people before the event starts and make the stamp sheet activity clearer for the audience. Mayor Siddiqui also encouraged reflection on what appeared to be a lower turn out and beginning outreach sooner. Discussed desire to have critical mass of audience for the remarks and awards and provide audience a more dance party vibe. Mayor Siddiqui expressed excitement to partner again for next year's Pride.
- ⌘ PM Ye chimed in and shared an idea of hosting the Pride at a park to increase visibility and engagement. A few commissioners also liked the idea.
- ⌘ The commission discussed the possibility of not paying for the food and allowing food trucks to sell food directly to the audience, which will save almost half of the Pride budget. ED Gregory said she will discuss with the legal team to see if that is a viable option.
- ⌘ The commission also reflected on the effectiveness of using the food tickets to count the number of participants.
- ⌘ Chief Travis-Brown also emphasized importance of having wayfinding signage and encouraged discussion with the legal team on food vendors. She shared that she had a good time at the Pride and suggested partnerships with other city partners such as library, art council to assist with budget concerns.
- ⌘ ED Gregory asked if the commission wants to continue hosting Pride at this scale considering how much of their budget it requires. Commissioners expressed their consensus to continue a Pride celebration at the same or similar scale, but will discuss further once the question around food budget is clarified.
- ⌘ Chair Dresser requests that the Pride Committee continue to meet with any additional Commissioners that would like to join to plan for next year. ED Gregory will reconvene committee and invite other Commissioners to participate.
- Public Health & Safety WG (Commissioner Monrreal)
 - ⌘ Same as the Policy and Advocacy WG update.
- Trans Sanctuary WG (Commissioner Foster)
 - Meeting with Boston MOLA: Kimberly Rhoten from MOLA joined the WG meeting and shared safety concerns and best practices in Boston.

Commissioner will follow up with Kimberly on the opportunities of meeting to join collaborative with other cities.

- Commissioner Foster will also follow up with the housing group to ask about the reason on collecting relationship status for housing eligibility. The rationale for this is unclear.
- Pool Party: PM Ye has contacted city recreation staff on the pool party. The commission confirm date preference of Monday, August 17 from 6:30PM to 8:30 PM, with August 18 as backup for rain day.
- Gender Inclusion Ordinance: ED Gregory met with Sean McKendry from law department. Has requested an update. Awaiting response. Continuing to reach out for updates.

7. Old Business

- Zine Updates
 - ED Gregory has requested updated draft from artist. Awaiting response
 1. Has received updated draft since agenda was published. Shared with review team. Scheduling time to collect feedback. Chair Barnert noted concern about no one driving this initiative. ED Gregory clarified that she has been keeping the project on track by communicating with artist and pulling review team together for feedback.
- Re: Working Group mission, goals, & purpose.
 - This topic was covered in above discussion.
- Re: Inconsistencies in housing recommendations compared to current housing applications.
 - This topic was covered in above discussion.
- Status update of Fair Housing Ordinance change in definition of sexual orientation
 - Human Rights Commission favorably voted on the definition below. Currently with Law Department
 - “Sexual orientation means an actual or perceived enduring emotional, romantic, or physical attraction, or lack of attraction, to others based on sex or gender. For example, sexual orientations may include, but are not limited to, heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, omnisexual, pansexual, queer, or asexual.”

8. New Business

- FY 27 Budget Approach (reserve for Pride or downscale Pride)
 - The commission will review the previous spending to discuss this further. ED Gregory will share with the commission the spending of previous three years.
- Commission Application Update (Request for applications to remain open through August 1st)

- Three applications have been received so far. PM Ye will promote the application on the city social media and newsletter. ED Gregory requests Commissioners continue to spread the word about applications.
- Bios
 - Agreed that we will create bio book
 - Chair Barnert suggested using the commission newsletter to spotlight commissioners. Commission voted approval of the idea. All members will write bios and those that wish to participate, will be spotlighted in newsletter.
 - ED Gregory will share questions to help guide bios
- “Cured” film opportunity
 - The commission voted approval of the “Cured” screening. Commissioners request that staff organize this event. Staff agree.
- Movie list for Senior Center Screening
 - PM Ye has curated a film list and shared with the senior center. They will share the film list with the commission via email.
 - Commissioner Howe also suggested films Ma Vie En Rose, PM Ye will check if this is on Kanopy and within 2 hrs to be considered for the list.
- Perinatal Leave: ED Gregory worked with the public health department to put forth policy for city employees for 20 hours perinatal leave. It will be beneficial for LGBTQ folks and beyond as policy also includes using the leave for in vitro appointments. Will have meeting with HR in July.
- Commission Social Event in August: Commission will not have meeting in August. ED Gregory suggested a social event at the CPL for T-shirt printing. Staff will reach out to the CPL to confirm the possibility.
- Congrats to Bill on SpeakOUT award!! It will be held on June 29th Monday in Club Cafe.

€ **Public Comments / Announcements**

- Upcoming films in the LGBTQ+ Film Series at the Cambridge Senior Center (First Tuesdays, 10am):
 - July 7: **The Watermelon Woman (1hr 30mi, 1996)**
 - The first feature film directed by a Black lesbian, it stars Dunye as Cheryl, a young Black lesbian working a day job in a video store while trying to make a film about Fae Richards, a Black actress from the 1930s known for playing the stereotypical "[mammy](#)" roles relegated to Black actresses during the period.

€ **Next Commission Meeting:** Thursday, July 23, 6-7:30pm, Hybrid*

9. Adjournment Co-chair Bill Barnert adjourned the meeting at 7:30

* Hybrid meeting info

GUESTS: Please let us know if you will be coming, and whether you will be joining us in person or via Zoom by emailing LGBTQ@CambridgeMA.gov.

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.

To join via Zoom, join Zoom Meeting:

<https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/89723365868>

Meeting ID: 897 2336 5868

One tap mobile +19294362866,,89723365868# US (New York)

Item 1

Pride Evaluation Report

Event Overview

Cambridge Pride 2026 was held on Saturday, June 20, from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM in front of Cambridge City Hall. The event offered participants free food, live performances, speeches, and family-friendly activities.

Event set up

Cambridge Pride 2026 included:

- A designated entrance area with a welcome table and a Mayor's table
- One central stage for speeches and performances
- Three food trucks and two dessert stands providing complimentary food
- A kids and family area featuring a bounce house, face painting, and balloon art
- Twelve tables for partner organizations

Total Attendance

An estimated 500 or more people attended Cambridge Pride 2026. ¹

Post-Event Survey Result

A total of 11 participants completed the post-event survey. Overall feedback was positive:

- **Overall experience:** 40% satisfied, 60% very satisfied
- **Event date and time:** 20% somewhat satisfied, 30% very satisfied, 50% extremely satisfied
- **Location:** 30% somewhat satisfied, 20% very satisfied, 50% extremely satisfied
- **Stage performances and film screenings:** 30% somewhat satisfied, 40% very satisfied, 30% extremely satisfied
- **Food:** 44% very satisfied, 56% extremely satisfied
- **Accessibility:** 10% dissatisfied, 30% somewhat satisfied, 30% very satisfied, 30% extremely satisfied
- **Likelihood of attending future Pride:** participants indicated high likelihood of attending future Cambridge Pride (average score of 8.6/10)
- **Likelihood of recommending the Cambridge Pride:** participants indicated high likelihood of recommending future Cambridge Pride to the others (average score of 8/10)

What Went Well

- The kids and family area was highly popular and attracted many families
- The mayor's swag stamp-collection activity was engaging and well-received
- The event date and time worked well for attendees
- Staff and commissioners demonstrated strong enthusiasm throughout the event
- Food trucks and the ice cream truck were especially appreciated
- The volunteer pre-event debrief helped set clear expectations
- Emcees brought strong energy to the event
- The live band and DJ received positive feedback
- Additional chairs placed along the sidewalk improved accessibility

Areas for Improvement

Marketing and Communications

- Increase advance promotion (ideally starting at least one month in advance) across all communication channels to expand audience reach

Venue Setup and Accessibility

- Consider hosting the event at a different venue with clearer visibility.

- Explore alternative layout options or locations to ensure that the kids/family area and dessert stations remain easy to find, and that partner tables do not obstruct sidewalks
- Request additional tables and chairs from DPW to support last-minute needs or layout changes
- Position all partner organization tables on the street rather than on sidewalks to improve accessibility; one wheelchair user experienced difficulty navigating a congested sidewalk

Vendors

- Family-focused activity providers and dessert vendors were well received
- Food trucks left early once food ran out; consider allowing trucks to sell food directly instead of pre-paying, which may help maintain food availability while reducing event costs
- One stage performer arrived later than anticipated and was difficult to reach beforehand
- One décor vendor had limited staffing available and required additional on-site support from DPW colleagues
- Consider inviting additional vendors, especially queer-owned or women-owned businesses and artists, to table at the event

Stage and Film Screening

- A larger stage would improve comfort and allow space for chairs or a podium
- Only the first film screening drew strong attendance; consider reducing the number of screenings or replacing some with alternative activities

Volunteer and Staff Coordination

Ideally, the event should have three designated leads:

1. A vendor and general operations lead
2. A volunteer lead supported by volunteer captains (one per activity area)
3. A stage lead overseeing all stage-related activities