

Shameka Gregory  
Executive Director

## Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission

**Minutes:** Sept. 24, 2026

**Location:** Hybrid\*: 689 Mass. Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor & Zoom

**Neighborhood:** City Wide

### Contact

- Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission <[LGBTQ@CambridgeMA.gov](mailto:LGBTQ@CambridgeMA.gov)>
- 617-349-3355

Co-Chairs: Bill Barnert and Zachary Dresser  
Tonight's meeting chaired by: Zachary Dresser

**Present:** Finley Foster, Bob Bordone, Gregory MacDonough, Vincent Daveed (Vinny) Monrreal, Linden Huhmann, Bill Barnert, Emmy Howe

**Absent:** Evan MacKay, Noelani Kamelamela, Frank Arce, Caitlin Egleson,

**Virtual:** Zachary Dresser,

**Staff:** Shameka Gregory, Zhiren Ye

**Public attendee:**

⌘ **Call to Order**

- a. Chair Dresser called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

⌘ **Welcome**

⌘ **Approve / Modify Agenda**

- a. Agenda reviewed and approved; the order of the agenda items has been rearranged to ensure voting quorum.

⌘ **Approve Previous Minutes:** July 23, 2026

- a. Commissioner Foster motioned to approve, commissioner MacDonough seconded, all in favor.

⌘ **Introductions-** What's a useless or a useful skill that you have?

€ **Project Updates** (current actions & plans, including reports from Shameka)

- ◆ *(Monthly until resolved)*: Status update on Fair Housing Ordinance change in definition of sexualities. The proposal was supposed to go before the council in the fall. This has been paused as the city is reviewing all Commission ordinances. Fair Housing Ordinance will be updated with this process. 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.”

- a. ED Gregory reported all City ordinances are under review; updates (including this definition change) will be incorporated into that broader process.
- b. Target completion: end of calendar year.

€ **Working Group Reports:**

- ◆ Outreach & Visibility WG (Commissioner MacDonough)
  - We propose hosting (with other potential commissions/groups) an info session on 530A Accounts. See New Business & attached proposal. Our next meeting is Wed. Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, 6-7pm over Zoom, and we would invite other groups to join us in planning (Meeting on Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>)?
    - a. The goal is to provide information for people who don't know about the accounts, especially LGBTQ families. The event will gather experts to share information about eligibility, how the money is invested, etc. It will be open to all.
    - b. ED Gregory noted October is not feasible for hosting the info session; conflict of interest considerations were discussed and clarified due to Commissioner Arce's employer. Commissioner Arce will not be compensated for this event.
    - c. Commissioner Howe suggested mapping potential partner organizations.
    - d. WG will meet next week and keep staff informed.
  - Queer Comedy Show
    - a. Queer Comedy Show planned for next year.
  - We are considering ways to do more & better outreach to the LGBTQ+ BIPOC (Black, Indigenous & People of Color) community. Suggestions are welcome.
    - a. Commissioner Barnert noted current outreach does not sufficiently reach BIPOC communities, suggested connecting with the Bayard awardees.

- b. PM Ye referenced prior conversations with queer asylum support organizations as part of the outreach efforts.

- ◆ Policy & Advocacy (Commissioner Monrreal)

- a. No specific update mentioned

- ◆ Pride (ED Gregory)

- a. ED SG updated that the Pride event cannot be held at Donnelly Field due to athletic season. We wouldn't be able to access the park early enough to set up.
- b. Suggestion to organize Pride either at Cambridge Common or Joan Lorentz Park.
  - i. Vote for Cambridge Common: Commissioner Monrreal
  - ii. Vote for Joan Lorentz Park: Commissioners Bordone, Howe, MacDonough, Huhmann, Dresser
  - iii. Commissioner Barnert abstained
- c. ED Gregory will work with Communications team to promote Bayard awardees, and will add the awardees to the LGBTQ+ website

- ◆ Public Health & Safety WG (Commissioner Monrreal)

- ☐ Film Screening "Cured" with panel and information for mental health professionals. Took place on 9/10 with panel. Wonderful event. Project 10 will host a screening as well with a shortened version.

- ◆ Seniors WG (Commissioner MacKay)

- ☐ Multi-Generational Dinner was a success

- ◆ Trans Sanctuary WG (Commissioner Foster)

- ☐ Gender Inclusion Ordinance and guiding statement
  - a. Tabled until next meeting
- ☐ Pool Party
  - a. Took place in August. Not discussed
- ☐ Joined collaborative of municipal LGBTQ+ advocacy. First meeting is on 10/13.
- ☐ Commissioner Foster will also follow up with the housing group to ask about the reason on collecting relationship status for housing eligibility.: haven't heard back yet. The rationale for this is unclear.
  - a. Tabled until next meeting
- ☐ Commissioner Foster will consult the group to ask if a statement will be needed.
  - a. Tabled until next meeting
- ☐ Group/Dinner for family members/friends of Trans people proposal

- a. Commissioner Foster proposed hosting an exploratory trans-focused dinner/group in January (likely at the Cambridge Public Library). Suggested by community member who joined Trans Sanctuary Working Group meeting to share the idea.
- b. Motion to approve planning: Commissioner Foster; Second: Commissioner Barnert; Vote: all in favor
- c. Commissioners may help facilitate discussion at the first dinner and hope the group will organize themselves in the future

□ Gender Inclusive Policy Discussion

- a. Commissioner Foster and Commissioner Huhmann highlighted the long-term stability of an ordinance, emphasizing that ordinance is backed by law and can remain effective regardless of who is in the role of City Manager
- b. ED Gregory mentioned the preference from City Manager and Law Department about having it as a policy order instead of an ordinance because it aligns better with the city practices, and the City Manager is happy to support this effort and moving forward with the implementation. She emphasized relational strategy with City Manager, and the importance of consistent communication across Commission and staff so there aren't surprises from either side.
- c. Commissioner Bordone asked for reasons why City Manager preferred policy order and not ordinance. ED Gregory explained that policy order is more about city internal processes, and ordinance will be more long-term external facing. PM Ye added that from practical perspective the timeline of having policy order will be shorter and can probably have the implementation done by mid-next year.
- d. Commissioner Huhmann highlighted that individual commissioners may advocate independently for an ordinance even if the Commission votes to proceed differently. Important for them to name that they are doing this in an individual capacity especially if it's something the Commission is working on as well.
- e. Commissioner Monrreal suggested inviting City Manager to the Commission meeting to exchange views and thoughts on the topic.
- f. Commissioner Barnert asked to examine the presumption that policy order is less reliable for achieving the goal; Commissioner Bordone asked to evaluate if pushing for the ordinance is worth the effort and relational costs, but added that an ordinance could help increase the visibility of the commission.
- g. Commissioners voted on how to proceed:
  - Vote to pursue ordinance: Commissioners MacDonough, Huhmann
  - Vote not to pursue ordinance: Commissioner Foster

- Vote to invite City Manager to Commission meeting:  
Commissioners Monreal, Bordone, Barnert, Howe, Dresser
- ED Gregory will send an email to City Manager inviting him to next meeting and cc Commissioners

- ◆ Youth WG (Commissioners Howe & Barnert)
  - Pride Prom planning begins in Dec.

#### ⌘ **Updates on Previous Action Items**

- **Re: Pride Food Trucks** -- ED Gregory will follow up to ask about the possibility of food vendors paying for having spots. We **cannot** ask vendors to pay to participate. We can have community members purchase food and other items.
- Perinatal Leave-Meeting moved to 9/21
  - a. Perinatal leave very likely to move forward! Being considered in review of all employee policies and handbook.
- Commission Social Event took place 8/27. Made BEAUTIFUL shirts!
- Partnership with CDD and business community—Survey sent out. 90 responses so far. Closes at the end of this month. Pride themed window cling has been created and will be printed in time for small business month (Nov). Commission staff will follow up with businesses that completed the survey according to their responses with goal of creating consistent calendar of events and eventually, a Queer Market.

#### ⌘ **Old Business**

- ◆ **Brainstorm FY 27 events/goals?**
- ◆ **Commission Application Update:** We selected Bridget (Bridge) Kiley, Christine Moad, Dana Gauthier, Jo Quest Neubert, and Joshua (Josh) Samuels. They have all said yes to our invitation to join the Commission. We did not select three applicants and ED Gregory followed up with each via phone. ED Gregory has sent the recommendations to City Manager and it is scheduled to go before the Council on 9/28. Other commissioners whose terms expired will also be reappointed as they all expressed that they would like to remain on the Commission.
- ◆ **Retreat-3 hour gathering for Commission members to deepen relationships, explain how things work as well as reviewing ordinance, bylaws, and handbook. Vote taken approving retreat with goal of building relationships. Additional items for retreat still under review.**

- Tabled until next meeting
- ◆ 'Zine should be complete. Artist gave date of 9/18 to finish
  - Printed copy shared with Commissioners with excellent response.
- ◆ Upcoming films in the LGBTQ+ Film Series at the Cambridge Senior Center (First Tuesdays, 10am):

|            |                                 |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tue, Oct 6 | <i>Lan Yu</i>                   | (1h 36m, 2001) | Set in Beijing in the late 1980s and 1990s, it chronicles the turbulent, on-and-off romance between Chen Handong, a wealthy, closeted businessman, and Lan Yu, a financially struggling architecture student.                                                                          |
| Tue, Nov 3 | <i>Kiki</i>                     | (1h 34m, 2016) | A vibrant portrait of queer and trans youth of color in New York City's ballroom scene. It highlights chosen family, artistic expression, and activism, offering an affirming and culturally snapshot of modern LGBTQ life.                                                            |
| Tue, Dec 8 | <i>The Birdcage</i>             | (1h 57m, 1996) | A hilarious and heartwarming comedy about a gay cabaret owner (Robin Williams) and his drag queen partner (Nathan Lane) who must conceal their identities when meeting their son's ultra conservative fiancée's parents. A perfect blend of farce, family dynamics, and LGBTQ+ themes. |
| Tue, Jan 5 | <i>The Times of Harvey Milk</i> | (1h 30m, 1984) | A documentary of the successful life, career and assassination of San Francisco's first elected openly gay city supervisor.                                                                                                                                                            |
| Tue, Feb 2 | <i>Moonlight</i>                | (1h 51m, 2016) | The life of a young Black man unfolds across childhood, adolescence, and adulthood as he grapples with identity, masculinity, and a deep emotional connection with a childhood friend.                                                                                                 |
| Tue, Mar 2 | <i>The Way He Looks</i>         | (1h 36m, 2014) | A blind teenager seeks independence and finds love in this gentle Brazilian romance about trust, self-discovery, and first love.                                                                                                                                                       |
| Tue, Apr 6 | <i>Rafiki</i>                   | (1h 22m, 2018) | A Kenyan coming-of-age romance about two young women falling in love in a society that criminalizes same sex relationships. The film is colorful, tender, and grounded in the realities of hope and risk.                                                                              |

#### € **New Business**

- **Proposed:** That the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission host a community-wide information session in October 2026 on Section 530A accounts (see APPENDIX A). And what other groups should we invite to co-host? -
  - a. Suggestion from staff not to host such a session in October due to timeline considerations.
  - b. Commissioner Barnert motioned to approve, Commissioner MacDonough seconded. All in favor.
  - c. ED Gregory suggested outreach to schools and immigrant groups.
- Recommendations for LGBTQ+ Inclusive hiring and workplace practices. Feedback from Commission appreciated (APPENDIX D)

- a. Commissioner Huhmann shared a draft of comments, see Annex E
- b. Commissioner Huhmann motioned to vote to approve staff proceeding with the recommendations, with possible addition of benefits for domestic partners. ED Gregory will explore policies about benefits for domestic partners and update document accordingly. Commissioner MacDonough seconded, Commissioner Dresser abstained, rest of the present commissioners voted in favor
- Proposal from American Red Cross to host a community blood drive recognizing complex history with LGBTQ+ community because of previous exclusion.
  - a. Tabled until next meeting
- Proposal from Leslie Coles at SpeakHer Collective to have Yutian Li as speaker for future event.
  - a. Tabled until next meeting
- Ordinance Review including drafted ordinance (current ordinance is APPENDIX B, draft APPENDIX C)
  - a. ED Gregory explained about the changes in the draft.
  - b. PM Ye suggested to rephrase section 2.125.070 line c, change “To coordinate activities” to “To assist, monitor or coordinate activities”.
  - c. Commissioner Huhmann shared a draft of comments, see Annex E
  - d. Commissioner Barnert emphasized consistency in language such as referring to bylaws instead of other terms.
  - e. Commissioner Howe and Huhmann suggested returning to original language of Commissioners having input in hiring of ED
  - f. ED Gregory named that she will share this feedback but this will not be the final version. Must go through team reviewing ordinances, City Manager, Law Department, and the Council for final version. Will keep Commissioners updated about process.
  - g. Motion to extend meeting by 10 minutes: Commissioner Barnert; Second: Commissioner Dresser; Vote: all in favor
- **Report from Rainbows Across Communities**
  - ♦ Rainbows Across Communities would like to host a multi-community Pot-Luck LGBTQ+ Community outdoor lunch on Sunday Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>. Proposal to host it at Joan Lorentz Park (in front of the main library) with the library’s Community Room as a backup if inclement weather. Vote needed to approve.
    - a. Commissioner Barnert motioned to request commission to co-host the potluck. Commissioner Huhmann seconded. All in favor.
    - b. ED Gregory will support in booking the venue.

€ **Next Commission Meeting: Thursday, October 22, 2026 (hybrid)**

€ **Adjournment**

- a. Motion: Commissioner Barnert  
Second: Commissioner MacDonough  
Adjourned at 7:40 PM.

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**\* 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](mailto: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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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)

Dial by your location +1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

Find your local number: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/kcYg8JwbK>

## **APPENDIX A: Proposed Cambridge Community Information Session on Section 530A Accounts**

**To:** Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission

**From:** Outreach & Visibility Working Group

**Re:** Proposed Cambridge Community Information Session on Section 530A Accounts

**Proposed Timing:** October 2026

### **Recommendation**

The Outreach & Visibility Working Group would like to recommend that the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission host a community-wide information session in October 2026 on Section 530A accounts, commonly known as “Trump Accounts.”

Although the name may be controversial for some members of our community, we should acknowledge that directly. At the same time, we should not allow the politics or branding around the policy to prevent Cambridge families from learning about a real asset-building opportunity available to their children.

This is ultimately an access and information issue.

New research from the Urban Institute found that while approximately 60 percent of American adults are aware of Section 530A accounts, awareness is lowest among many of the families who could stand to gain the most from an early wealth-building opportunity. Awareness is lower among households with lower incomes and fewer savings, as well as among Black and Hispanic adults. The research raises an important question for us locally: Who in Cambridge knows about this opportunity, and who does not?

### **Why the LGBTQ+ Commission?**

We believe there is an opportunity for the Commission to anchor this conversation in LGBTQ+ families while opening the program to all Cambridge residents.

Our role does not need to be to advocate for a political administration or even the policy itself. Our role can simply be to make sure families have access to accurate information and be able to make their own decisions.

That feels particularly aligned with the Commission’s work around outreach, visibility, equity, and the well-being of LGBTQ+ people and families in Cambridge.

We also do not think this should be an LGBTQ+ Commission-only event. This could be a strong opportunity for joint programming across Cambridge and for us to reach families who may not otherwise encounter this information.

### **Proposed Event**

We recommend hosting a Cambridge-wide 530A Accounts Information Session in October 2026, with the LGBTQ+ Commission serving as a convener alongside other City partners and community organizations.

The session could be practical and accessible, covering:

- What a Section 530A account actually is
- Who is eligible
- Which children qualify for the federal \$1,000 contribution
- How families can open and contribute to an account
- What families should understand before participating
- How these accounts fit within a larger conversation about asset building and financial wellness
- Where families can go for trusted follow-up information and assistance

The goal would not be to tell families what financial decisions to make. The goal is to make sure they know the opportunity exists and understand how to access it.

## Potential Partners

We recommend exploring a partnership with the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC), particularly given its existing work in financial education, coaching, public benefits, and economic stability. CEOC is Cambridge's designated anti-poverty Community Action Agency and would be a natural partner for reaching families who may benefit from this information.

Other potential partners could include the Cambridge Family Policy Council, Cambridge Public Schools, Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women, Cambridge City Council, and other community-based organizations serving children and families. The Family Policy Council, in particular, already brings together City leaders, families, nonprofits, educators, youth, and community organizations around the well-being of Cambridge children and youth.

## Cultivar Communities

Commissioner Frank Arce is part of the [Cultivar Communities](#) team, which is doing advocacy, education, and community engagement around Section 530A accounts across the country.

Cultivar's work is centered on a fairly simple idea: creating a policy or an account does not automatically create participation. Families also need trusted people, accessible information, and support that helps them move from knowing an opportunity exists to actually using it.

## Resources

- Urban Institute: [Awareness of Trump Accounts Is Lowest Among Families Who Stand to Gain Most](#) This analysis provides important context for why community-based outreach matters and documents disparities in awareness of these accounts.
- Chicago Tribune: [Trump Accounts are here](#). Now families need more than a deposit slip. An opinion piece co-authored by Arellana Barela Levenson and Frank Arce makes the case that creating an account is only the beginning. Families also need the knowledge, trusted messengers, and support to use these new asset-building opportunities.
- Federal/IRS Resources: Official federal resources can provide families with information regarding eligibility, account structure, contributions, and other requirements for Section 530A accounts.

## Summary

At the heart of this is something pretty simple: an opportunity only matters if people know it exists and believe it is for them. We have an opportunity to help close that gap here in Cambridge.

## **APPENDIX B: Current Ordinance**

### **Chapter 2.125 CAMBRIDGE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER, PLUS (LGBTQ+) COMMISSION**

#### **2.125.010 Established.**

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Commission was created as a result of a City Council Order that was adopted on February 22, 2004 and became operational with regularly scheduled meetings in 2005. The name of the Ordinance is hereby changed to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus Commission and shall also be known as the "LGBTQ+" Commission.

( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.020 Function and Purpose.**

It shall be the function of the Commission to:

- A. Advocate for a culture of respect and monitor progress toward equality of all persons with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
- B. Promote policies and practices that have a positive effect on the health, welfare, and safety of all persons who live, visit or work in the City with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.030 Membership—Appointment—Term.**

- A. The Commission shall consist of not less than ten (10) nor more than twenty (20) members, each of whom shall be appointed by the City Manager.
- B. The term for each Commissioner shall be three (3) years. Commissioners may be reappointed for additional three-year terms.
- C. Upon the enactment of this ordinance the currently serving Commissioners shall have the length of their remaining respective terms determined as set forth below:
  - 1. one-third of the Commissioners shall have one (1) year remaining on their term;
  - 2. one-third of the Commissioners shall have two (2) years remaining on their term;
  - 3. one-third of the Commissioners terms shall expire.
- D. If any Commissioner is absent without excuse from three (3) meetings of the Commission during a calendar year, the City Manager shall have authority to declare that position vacant and appoint a replacement.

- E. After the initial appointments, subsequent members of the Commission shall be appointed by the City Manager, recruited by way of any and all means available to the City Manager, including recommendations provided by the Commission. The Commission shall consult with recognized groups working for the equal status and protection of the rights and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals to obtain names of qualified candidates. Best efforts shall be made to fill vacancies on the Commission not later than sixty (60) days after the vacancy occurs, and to make appointments if a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of the member's term for the remainder of the term.
  - F. The Commission, to the extent practicable, shall be representative of all socio-economic, age, racial, ability and gender-identifying segments of the City as well as different neighborhoods.
  - G. A quorum is a majority of the number of members serving on the Commission.
- ( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; Ord. 1346, 2/13/2012; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.040 Membership—Qualifications.**

- A. All prospective Commissioners shall be knowledgeable about the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.
  - B. Commissioners shall be either residents or individuals whose place of work is in the City at the time of appointment. If a Commissioner ceases to be a resident of the City or ceases to work in the City during his or her term, the Commissioner may remain on the Commission until the City Manager appoints a suitable candidate to fill the position.
  - C. Elected officials in Municipal, State, or Federal government shall not be eligible to be Commissioners.
- ( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.050 Executive Director—Appointment—Term.**

- A. There shall be an Executive Director of the LGBTQ+ Commission whose selection and conditions of employment shall be determined by the City Manager with advice of the Commission, subject to appropriation. The Executive Director shall be responsible for the daily administration of the Commission.
  - B. The prospective Executive Director of the Commission shall have demonstrated administrative expertise, a background of direct participation in the advancement of LGBTQ+ interests as well as the promotion of issues of social justice, and the ability to work with LGBTQ+ individuals of various socioeconomic backgrounds, races, national origins, gender identities, ages and abilities.
  - C. The Executive Director shall have adequate and appropriate staff assistance, subject to appropriation.
  - D. The Executive Director shall attend Commission meetings. The Executive Director shall not serve as a voting member of the Commission's regularly scheduled meetings.
- ( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.060 Election of Chairperson(s)—Adoption of By-laws.**

The Commission shall elect two (2) Co-Chairpersons from among its members. Elected Co-Chairpersons shall each serve for a term of one (1) year. The Commission may adopt operational rules of procedure for the Commission, which shall be reviewed and approved by the City Solicitor prior to adoption.

(1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.070 Powers and Duties.**

The Powers and duties of the Commission shall include the following:

- A. To hold at least six (6) regular meetings throughout the calendar year and to conduct additional meetings as necessary;

- B. To cooperate with City departments, divisions and agencies to obtain necessary information to carry out the functions, purposes, programs and activities of the Commission;
- C. To ensure the equal status and protection of the rights and well-being of all LGBTQ+ individuals residing or working in the City;
- D. To design and implement programs that promote and sustain equality for all LGBTQ+ individuals residing or working in the City;
- E. To assist in public awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and concerns through participation in public and media events including City-sponsored recreational, education and development activities;
- F. To develop policy recommendations to the City Manager and the City Council to promote and ensure the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals;
- G. To initiate, coordinate and monitor legislation which promotes the equal status and protection of rights and well-being of all LGBTQ+ individuals and make recommendations to the City Manager and the City Council regarding the implementation and enforcement of any such legislation if enacted;
- H. Such other tasks that may be agreed upon by the City Manager and the Commission.

( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

## **APPENDIX C: Draft Ordinance**

### **Chapter 2.125 CAMBRIDGE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER, PLUS (LGBTQ+) COMMISSION**

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( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.020 Function and Purpose.**

It shall be the function of the Commission to:

- A. Build a culture of inclusion and respect and advocate for progress toward equality of all persons with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
- B. Promote policies and practices that have a positive effect on the health, welfare, and safety of all persons who live, visit or work in the City with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.030 Membership—Appointment—Term.**

- a. A. The Commission shall consist of not less than ten (10) nor more than twenty (20) members, each of whom shall be appointed by the City Manager and approved by the Council with advice from commission staff and members.

- B. The term for each Commissioner shall be three (3) years. Commissioners may be reappointed for additional three-year terms at the discretion of the staff and City Manager.
  - C. If any Commissioner is absent without excuse from three (3) meetings of the Commission during a calendar year, the City Manager shall have authority to declare that position vacant and appoint a replacement. More information regarding the attendance policy of the Commission is detailed in the bylaws.
  - D. After the initial appointments, subsequent members of the Commission shall be appointed by the City Manager and approved by the Council, recruited by way of any and all means available to the City Manager, including recommendations provided by the Commission and staff. The Commission shall consult with recognized groups working for the equal status and protection of the rights and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals to obtain names of qualified candidates. Best efforts shall be made to fill vacancies on the Commission not later than sixty (60) days after the vacancy occurs, and to make appointments if a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of the member's term for the remainder of the term.
  - E.. The Commission, to the extent practicable, shall be representative of all socio-economic, age, racial, ability and gender-identifying segments of the City as well as different neighborhoods.
  - F. A quorum is a majority of the number of members serving on the Commission.
  - G. Members must complete onboarding process which includes training on conflict of interest & open meeting law as well as an orientation session to the Commission
  - H. Members can be removed from the Commission and/or their position within the Commission due to continued absences and other behaviors of concern which are detailed in the bylaws.
- ( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; Ord. 1346, 2/13/2012; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

#### **2.125.040 Membership—Qualifications.**

- A. All prospective Commissioners shall be knowledgeable about the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.
  - B. Commissioners shall be either residents or individuals whose place of work is in the City at the time of appointment. If a Commissioner ceases to be a resident of the City or ceases to work in the City during their term, the Commissioner may remain on the Commission until the City Manager appoints a suitable candidate to fill the position.
  - C. Elected officials in Municipal, State, or Federal government shall not be eligible to be Commissioners.
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  - B. The prospective Executive Director of the Commission shall have demonstrated administrative expertise, a background of direct participation in the advancement of LGBTQ+ interests as well as the promotion of issues of social justice, and the ability to work with LGBTQ+ individuals of various socioeconomic backgrounds, races, national origins, gender identities, ages and abilities.
  - C. The Executive Director shall have adequate and appropriate staff assistance.
  - D. The Executive Director shall attend Commission meetings. The Executive Director shall not serve as a voting member of the Commission's regularly scheduled meetings.
- ( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

## **2.125.060 Election of Chairperson(s)—Adoption of By-laws.**

The Commission may elect two (2) Co-Chairpersons from among its members. Elected Co-Chairpersons shall each serve for a term of one (1) year. Co-Chairs may be re-elected to the role. The role of the Co-Chairs is further outlined in the bylaws. The Commission may adopt operational rules of procedure for the Commission, which shall be reviewed and approved by the City Solicitor prior to adoption.

(1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

## **2.125.070 Powers and Duties.**

The Powers and duties of the Commission shall include the following:

- A. To ensure the equal status and protection of the rights and well-being of all LGBTQ+ individuals in educational, economic, political, health, legal and social spheres.
- B. To design and implement programs that promote and sustain equality for all LGBTQ+ individuals.
- C. To coordinate activities of all City departments and divisions on issues affecting LGBTQ+ people.
- D. To assist in public awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and concerns through participation in public events including City-sponsored recreational, education and development activities; Note that any contact with the media must come in the form of a voted upon joint statement from the Commission.
- E. To develop policy recommendations to the City Manager and the City Council to promote and ensure the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals;
- F. To initiate, coordinate and monitor the enactment of legislation which promotes the equal status and protection of rights and well-being of all LGBTQ+ individuals on the City, State, and federal levels, and to assure that the appropriate regulations are adopted and enforced in Cambridge pursuant to such legislation.
- G. Such other tasks that may be agreed upon by the City Manager and the Commission.
- H. Any disagreement as to the interpretation of this ordinance and/or the Commission bylaws will be decided by the City Solicitor's office.
- I. All actions of the Commission must be decided upon through a majority vote with quorum of members present.

( Ord. 1388 , 2/13/2017; 1309, Added, 10/29/2007)

## **APPENDIX D: Recommendations for Hiring Practices that Attract and Retain LGBTQ+ Talent**

### **Introduction**

The Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission recognizes and appreciates the continuous efforts of Human Resources (HR) in fostering an equitable and inclusive workplace. To support and

enhance these efforts, the Commission offers the following recommendations to strengthen the City's inclusive practices overall and better position Cambridge as an employer of choice for LGBTQ+ talent.

As you know, organizations that invest in inclusive practices benefit from stronger employee engagement, higher retention, and improved performance. [\*Inclusion Isn't Just Nice. It's Necessary \(2023\)\*](#), a Study done by Boston Consulting Group, showed that signaling a more inclusive culture have tremendous benefits when it comes to attracting and retaining employee talent.

In addition, public surveys conducted by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation ([\*Corporate Equality Index 2026\*](#)) consistently demonstrate that LGBTQ+ candidates prioritize employers with transparent policies, equitable benefits, and visible commitments to inclusion. These factors influence not only whether individuals choose to join an organization, but also whether they stay long-term.

Given the tangible return on investment and the increasingly selective talent pool across all demographics, establishing clear and intentional hiring practices centered on LGBTQ+ inclusion is a strategic decision, a core element of talent management, and a way to exemplify the City's values of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## Recommendations by Hiring Stage

### 1. Advertising and Outreach

#### 1.1. Make benefits and employment policies accessible to candidates

Including information about and/or links to employee benefits and workplace policies directly in job postings helps attract LGBTQ+ applicants. Building on the [City's existing and detailed benefits website](#), it is recommended to include a link to this site in job descriptions. It is also recommended to highlight benefits that are relevant for LGBTQ+ communities on the site, such as equal benefits for same-gender partners and transgender-affirming healthcare coverage.

Similarly, it is equally important to have policies such as our "[Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Retaliation](#)" policy as well as our, "[Employee Reasonable Accommodation](#)" policy visible and available to applicants. These policies communicate that we are a workplace that cares about employee rights, wellbeing, and safety both physically and psychologically.

**Note:** *This approach can also be applied to additional equity topics such as disability, immigration status, gender, etc.*

#### 1.2. Adopt inclusive language

Use gender-neutral language (e.g. they/them/their) in job descriptions and avoid binary language (e.g. he/she).. Inclusive language signals safety and belonging from the first point of contact.

### **1.3. Expand recruitment channels**

Partner with LGBTQ+ professional associations, or job boards focusing on underrepresented talent (e.g., Out in Tech, LGBT Job Board, etc.). This increases the visibility of our job postings within the LGBTQ+ community and demonstrates authentic commitment to inclusion.

### **1.4. Offer voluntary self-disclosure identification fields with clear privacy protections**

Enable voluntary, transparent self-disclosure identification fields for chosen name & gender, this supports demographic tracking and helps people feel that they could belong as an employee even in the hiring process. Combining these questions with a clear data privacy policy helps candidates engage with a sense of safety and build trust with the City as an employer.

***Note:** This approach can also be applied to additional equity topics such as disability, immigration status, gender, etc.*

## **2. Screening and Interviewing**

### **2.1. Provide training and standardized practices to mitigate bias**

Introducing an anti-bias training in conjunction with the Taleo training for anyone who will oversee a hiring process would be beneficial. Implicit bias training equips hiring managers to recognize and reduce bias during screening. Standardized rubrics, consistent interview questions, and structured processes help ensure candidates are evaluated equitably.

***Note:** This approach can also be applied to additional equity topics such as disability, immigration status, gender, etc.*

### **2.2. Ensure interview panels reflect diversity**

Seeing identity-diverse interview panelists, including LGBTQ+ employees, can greatly influence candidate perceptions of belonging.

***Note:** This approach can also be applied to additional equity topics such as disability, immigration status, gender, etc.*

### **2.3. Train hiring manager on inclusive communication**

Hiring managers should understand respectful practices such as:

- Introducing themselves including their name, title, and pronouns
- Using applicants named pronouns correctly
- Using applicants chosen name

- Avoiding assumptions about candidates' background including their sexual identity, family, and background

This helps create a supportive environment from the first interaction and avoids painful and awkward missteps that may be off-putting to candidates.

### 3. Offer and Onboarding

#### 3.1. Highlight benefits and employment policies again

Ensure that potential employees are able to review the benefits website as well as protective employment policies to help them identify whether or not the compensation package and work environment will meet their needs. **3.2. Create inclusive onboarding experiences**

Provide an onboarding environment that normalizes pronoun sharing and inclusive communication. This signals psychological safety early in the employees tenure with the City.

### 4. During Employment

**4.1 Continue to avoid making assumptions about employee's personal life and identity.**

**4.2 Continue to include pronouns in introductions.**

This creates space for an employee who may change their pronouns to share in an unpressured way.

**4.3 Hold employee events that celebrate LGBTQ+ identities and share information that highlights LGBTQ+ employees as well as historic figures.**

**4.4 Make gender inclusive information accessible in employee benefits packages**

Make sure employees have easy access to information such as the City's employee name change policy and gender affirming care.

**4.5 Ensure that there are measures in place to hold employees accountable if they are not respectful of the names, pronouns, and identities of their colleagues.**

### Conclusion

Inclusive practices directly strengthen the City's ability to attract and retain top talent. By enhancing policy transparency, building inclusive recruitment processes, and supporting

LGBTQ+ employees from the job posting through their employment tenure, the City fosters a workplace where individuals can thrive.

These recommendations draw from external research, in-house knowledge, and evidence-based practices to improve acquisition, retention, performance, and workforce engagement. Many of these approaches also apply to additional equity areas including disability, race and ethnicity, and immigration status, offering a scalable path toward broader inclusion across the City.

## **Annex E: Discussion Notes from Commissioner Huhmann for Sep 24, 2026**

### **Hiring practices document**

I'd like to propose some processes for future such documents:

1. It would be helpful if proposals coming from the staff are labeled on the draft proposal document itself and the meeting agenda to indicate this, for example, "Staff recommendations for Commission review".
  - a. This is similar to how proposals from a specific working group are labeled as proposals from the working group (such as the 530A info session proposal).
  - b. This provides clarity for Commissioners and any members of the public reviewing the agenda packet.
2. The Commission should vote on documents that state that they represent the position or recommendations of the LGBTQ+ Commission.
  - a. The hiring practices document reads "the Commission offers the following recommendations," but my understanding is that there isn't a plan for the Commission to vote on it.
  - b. As a Commissioner, if a document states it represents the position or recommendations of the Commission, I feel that a reasonable person would hold me accountable for the contents of that document.
  - c. The draft LGBTQ+ Commission ordinance reads "All actions of the Commission must be decided upon through a majority vote with quorum of members present." which also suggests that going forward we will need to vote on such things.
3. If there are longer policy proposals that staff or Commissioners are working on over more than just the weeks immediately prior to a meeting, I'd also find it helpful if they share updates about the contents/substance in prior Commission meetings, rather than only immediately before the meeting where they are seeking a vote.

Regarding the contents:

- "It is also recommended to highlight benefits that are relevant for LGBTQ+ communities on the site, such as equal benefits for same-gender partners and transgender-affirming healthcare coverage." made me wonder how city benefits work if an employee has multiple domestic partners. This information similarly seems worth highlighting.

### **Blood drive**

I've shared with Shameka for display during the meeting a screenshot of how gender shows up on the Red Cross's form vs how gender shows up on MGH's forms. If we want to host a local blood drive for the LGBTQ+ community, I'd recommend partnering with MGH to be inclusive of our gender diverse community members (or if the local Red Cross folks are able to provide gender-inclusive forms then a partnership with them could work, but I'd want us to review the forms in advance to confirm that they are gender inclusive).

### **LGBTQ+ Commission Ordinance**

Changes I would like to propose:

- Where the phrase “sexual orientation and gender identity and expression” is used, replace it with “sexual and romantic orientation, gender identity and expression, family structure, and relationship status”
  - The current phrase dates back to a time when the LGBTQ+ umbrella was less inclusive.
  - Now that asexuality, aromanticism, and polyamory are often seen as part of the LGBTQ+ umbrella and are part of the work of the LGBTQ+ Commission (domestic partnership ordinance overhaul, zoning change, housing inclusivity recommendations, zine, etc.) this should be reflected in our ordinance.
  - As a reminder, “family structure” as defined by Cambridge includes nonmonogamy and multi-partner families and “relationship status” includes involvement of two or more adults in an intimate relationship. We partnered with the HRC in getting these added to the city’s protected classes and in raising awareness of these new protected classes.
- The newly-added "Note that any contact with the media must come in the form of a voted upon joint statement from the Commission." seems so broad as to be confusing and potentially unenforceable.
  - For example, members of the media can attend our meetings, members of the media may have questions for Commissioners or staff about simple logistical things (e.g. "What time is Pride scheduled for?"), and of course Commissioners and staff have the right to express opinions to the media in a personal capacity.
  - I'd suggest: "Statements to the media representing the Commission must be approved by a majority vote of the Commission. Individuals speaking to the media in a personal capacity shall explicitly clarify that they are not speaking on behalf of or representing the Commission."
- Someone familiar with the Historical Commission suggested that we add holdover language similar to theirs (they mention holdover language like this is common in Cambridge and in MA for boards and commissions). Their ordinance reads: “The members and alternate members shall serve for terms of three years **and until their successors are appointed and qualified.**”

Topics I'd like to highlight to the Commission as potentially worth discussion:

- My reading is that the current ordinance says the LGBTQ+ Commission advises on the selection of the ED, while the proposed ordinance only says the LGBTQ+ Commission advises on the job description of the ED.
  - City’s proposed change: “There shall be an Executive Director of the LGBTQ+ Commission whose selection and conditions of employment shall be determined by the City Manager with advice of the Commission, subject to appropriation .”
  - I believe the Human Rights Commission did their ordinance revision last year and their ordinance retains the ability to advise on ED selection: “The City with the advice of the Commission shall employ an Executive Director who shall be the executive officer of the Commission and shall be responsible for carrying out the policies and decisions of the Commission.”

- My understanding is that many Commissioners were unhappy last year when the city restructured its Commission staff without informing the Commissioners.
    - If the city had included the Commission in the selection of the ED, it seems likely that the Commission would have known about the restructuring sooner.
    - Removing the expectation that the Commission advise on ED selection seems to make it easier for something similar to happen in the future.
- The current ordinance has media events as part of the role of the Commission ("To assist in public awareness of LGBTQ+ issues and concerns through participation in public and media events"), while the proposed ordinance says Commissioners should not talk to the media (as discussed above).
  - Additional context: When Carolina was ED and the Harvard Crimson reached out to her about the zoning amendment we were working on, Carolina asked me to update the Crimson, so I was actively encouraged to update the media on what was happening with the Commission.