



**CITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Peace
Commission

Meeting Minutes

Special Peace Commission Meeting: Meet Your Neighbor Month

Date: Monday, August 3, 2026

Time: 7 to 8 pm

Location: Via Zoom (virtual)

Present: Elka Kuhlman, Julie Ayaz, Pamela Howard, Karim Razzaz, Muna Kangsen, Paul Knott, Bonnie Talbert, Eliza Fay

Absent: Annie Brown, Sarah DeMott, Kaza Fraley, Larry Kim, Heather Rivera, Katie Stevenson

Members of the Public: Vera Watkins

City Staff: Executive Director Saffana Anwar, Program Manager Lizette Sta. Maria

Minute Taker: Lizette Sta. Maria

Agenda:

- Call to Order
 - Co-Chair Kuhlman calls the meeting to order at 7:02 PM
- Public Comment
 - No public comment
- Meet Your Neighbor Month 2026
 - Co-Chair Kuhlman summarizes the work of the Meet Your Neighbor subcommittee, which met two times in July 2026. The purpose of this special meeting is to share the progress of the subcommittee towards the Meet Your Neighbor Month initiative coming up in September.
 - Zines
 - Eliza Fay presents two zines. The first zine gives an overview of what Meet Your Neighbor Month is. The second zine includes logistical information as to how to host large events, including how to apply for a park permit, a block party permit, block party funding, and block party games and materials for all ages.

- ED Anwar adds:
 - The concept behind using zines is the portability component. These zines can be handed out during tabling opportunities in September.
 - The team has also gotten the second zine reviewed by the Cambridge Community Development Department and the Cambridge Department of Transportation.
 - The team is in conversation with the Community Development Department to host a gathering of previous and future block party hosts so that they can learn from each other regarding best practices and tips.
- Toolkit Assets
 - Lizette Sta. Maria presents the toolkit assets. The Meet Your Neighbor Month toolkit consists of activities and resources that will help to facilitate connection, especially for larger events like a block party. The toolkit includes name tags, bingo cards, ice breakers, coloring pages, and more. Some materials were pre-existing and housed within the Community Development Department, while some materials were created by Eliza Fay.
 - Co-Chair Kuhlman opens it up for comments and questions for both the zines and the toolkit assets.
 - Commissioner Razzaz: The toolkit is very comprehensive
 - Commissioner Kangsen: How else will the zines be distributed other than through tabling?
 - ED Anwar: There will be several Meet Your Neighbor Month events in September hosted in collaboration with other City Departments. The zines will also be handed out at those events.
 - Commissioner Kangsen: How will the toolkit be disseminated?
 - ED Anwar: The toolkit will first be sent to previous years' Meet Your Neighbor block party hosts.
 - Commissioner Kangsen: Will these resources be available in multiple languages?
 - ED Anwar: Not this year, but in the future. This year is about building the foundation for Meet Your Neighbor as a month-long initiative as opposed to a day or a week.

- Commissioner Razzaz: Is there a communications plan or outreach strategy for Meet Your Neighbor Month?
 - ED Anwar: There are three tiers to the outreach strategy:
 - 1) Targeted outreach to previous event hosts
 - 2) Targeted outreach to interfaith communities
 - 3) On a larger scale, information will be shared via social media and the city daily updates newsletter
 - ED Anwar welcomes Commissioner Razzaz to assist with the communications strategy if there are any other channels that would be good to use in the promotion.
 - Commissioner Howard likes the idea of explaining how to host a block party – would like to see it in a social media post or a Zoom webinar
- Overview of the approach:
 - Peace Commissioner-led Events
 - Peace Commissioners are encouraged to take full ownership of hosting some of these Meet Your Neighbor Month events.
 - City Departments
 - The team has invited City departments to host events that fall under the umbrella of Meet Your Neighbor
 - Heard back from about 10-12 departments
 - Not asking departments to do something new; these departments already have their core services and missions
 - Find ways that they can intersect with Meet Your Neighbor Month
 - Community-led Events
 - Call to the community to host their own block parties and events
- Community Engagement:
 - Passport Activity
 - The passport activity will highlight different Meet Your Neighbor Month events that will be happening, hosted by the Peace Commission or other City Departments
 - There will also be other activities that prompt people to go to events at their own pace (example: visit a public park)

- By completing the passport activity, participants will be entered to win a prize that will be drawn at a block party event hosted by the Peace Commission at the end of September
- Block Party/Events Map on the Meet Your Neighbor Month Webpage
 - The event submission form will be revamped and Meet Your Neighbor Month events will be compiled into this map
- Social Media/Tagging
 - A new social media account is being created for the Department of Equity & Inclusion
 - This channel can be used to promote Meet Your Neighbor Month events
 - For those who are not comfortable promoting their events, there will be the option to post pictures from the event after it happens and use a hashtag like #MeetYourNeighbor (exact hashtag still to be determined)
- Commissioners Engagement
 - The team is creating a live link to a calendar of Meet Your Neighbor Month events. It will continue to be updated as events get confirmed.
 - Peace Commissioners are encouraged to attend these events when it fits in their schedules. There is a lot of flexibility – a whole month worth of events.
 - There will be a Peace Commission Block Party happening on September 25th. All Peace Commissioners are highly encouraged to be present.
 - Other opportunities for engagement:
 - September 12th – tabling event at Cambridge Open Archives
 - September 27th – School of Honk event spearheaded by Co-Chair Kuhlman
 - Commissioner Howard: Will there be a scheduling signup for manning the table?
 - ED Anwar: Yes
 - Commissioner Ayaz proposes for invites Commissioner Howard to work with her on an event/engagement idea with the Cambridge Senior Center
 - Commissioner Kangsen likes the idea of encouraging departments to incorporate what they're already doing

- ED Anwar: Departmental partners will also be encouraged to tag their events as a “Meet Your Neighbor” event on the city’s calendar
 - Commissioner Kangsen: Can Find It Cambridge help?
 - ED Anwar: The team is in conversations with Find It Cambridge as well
 - Commissioner Howard mentions a park in Inman Square that could be a good area to use for a Meet Your Neighbor event
 - ED Anwar explains that there are ideas to point residents to the City’s green spaces and to do scavenger hunt activities
- Meeting Minutes Approval
 - Meet Your Neighbor Month Subcommittee Meeting Minutes from July 6th
 - Commissioner Ayaz makes a motion to accept these minutes. Commissioner Knott seconds. All are in favor. The meeting minutes for the Meet Your Neighbor Subcommittee Meeting #1 are approved.
 - Meet Your Neighbor Subcommittee Meeting Minutes from July 13th
 - Commissioner Knott makes the motion to accept these minutes. Commissioner Kangsen seconds. All are in favor. The meeting minutes for the Meet Your Neighbor Subcommittee Meeting #2 are approved.
- Next Steps
 - ED Anwar recognizes the work of Eliza Fay, who volunteered for the Peace Commission this summer and helped a lot with the Meet Your Neighbor Month initiative.
 - Commissioners are encouraged to think about how they each will engage with Meet Your Neighbor Month and to check the calendar for events to attend.
 - Next Peace Commission Meeting: Wednesday, September 16th
- Adjournment
 - Commissioner Ayaz makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Kangsen seconds. All are in favor. The meeting is adjourned at 8:00 PM.