



**CITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

Peace  
Commission

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Peace Commission Monthly Meeting**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 16, 2026

**Time:** 6:30 to 8 pm

**Location:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 689 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

**Present:** Elka Kuhlman (Co-Chair), Larry Kim (Co-Chair), Katherine Stevenson, Julie Ayaz, Pamela Howard, Sarah Demott, Karim Razzaz, Kazimiera Fraley, Annie Brown, Sarah Demott, Heather Rivera, Paul Knott, Bonnie Talbert

**Absent:** Muna Kangsen

**Members of the Public:** Two students named Olivia and Nora

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

**Minute Taker:** Lizette Sta. Maria

#### **Meeting Minutes:**

- Call to Order
  - Co-Chair Kuhlman calls the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.
- Public Comment
  - No public comment
- Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
  - Commissioner Fraley makes a motion to approve the August 2026 Special Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Razzaz seconds. All are in favor. The minutes are approved.
- Meet Your Neighbor Month:
  - Updates
    - ED Anwar gives context as to how Meet Your Neighbor Week got extended to Meet Your Neighbor Month (MYNM) to increase participation

- Commissioners are invited to peruse the MYNM printed assets in the folders provided to them
  - A flyer that gives an overview of events happening this month
  - A flyer for the signature Peace Commission Community Gathering
  - A zine explaining what Meet Your Neighbor Month is
  - A zine explaining how to plan large events in the community
  - Other printed assets developed by the Community Development Department (CDD), including bingo boards and colorful name tags
- ED Anwar showcases the map activity, in which participants are invited to pin their neighborhood on a large map of Cambridge. This activity serves as an interactive element and data collection to see which neighborhoods are being reached in the MYNM campaign.
- ED Anwar explains that we're also partnering with other departments on more internally-focused or invitation only events, like an appreciation dinner for previous block party hosts or a series of dinners for students at the Community Learning Center.
- Reflections and Early Feedback
  - At this point, the team has conducted two events:
    - 1) Tabling at Cambridge Open Archives in partnership with the Cambridge Historical Commission – This is the first time ever that the Peace Commission has held a community table at an event.
    - 2) A Community Supper in collaboration with the Cambridge Public Library Central Square branch
  - Commissioner Razzaz asks about outreach and communications strategy for Meet Your Neighbor Month
    - ED Anwar announces that the Equity and Inclusion Department, under which the Peace Commission is housed, has now launched an Instagram account @ cambridge\_eid
    - Four large signs were placed throughout the city:
      - Near Alewife
      - Harvard Square underpass
      - In front of City Hall, showcasing multiple MYNM events
      - In front of City Hall (other side), promoting the Peace Commission Community Gathering

- City Daily Updates email
- Sharing with City partners
- Mayor Siddiqui is providing a mayoral resolution to formally recognize Meet Your Neighbor Month
- Co-Chair Kuhlman shares about the Meet Your Neighbor School of HONK event on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup> from 3-5 PM, where participants will be taught dances. There will also be a band and an ice cream truck.
- ED Anwar explains the Meet Your Neighbor Month passport activity, which incentivizes participants to attend events and complete side quests throughout the city.
  - Lizette Sta. Maria explains passport instructions, whereby if a participant collects 4 stamps for coming to events and completes 2 side quests, they will be entered to win a raffle at the end of the month.
  - Peace Commissioners will pick winners at the October Peace Commission meeting. They will also be able to suggest prizes from local business.
    - Commissioner Demott suggests Taza chocolate
    - Commissioner Fraley: What is the budget?
      - ED Anwar: under \$50
    - Commissioner Brown would like to support POC/women-owned businesses
    - Co-Chair Kim suggests Coast Cafe
  - Co-Chair Kim asks if the passport participants thus far have been kids or adults
    - ED Anwar: adults with kids
- Commissioner Ayaz and Commissioner Howard are working on a bingo/coffee hour at the North Cambridge Senior Center
  - Cannot take place during month of September but would like it to be recognized as part of MYNM spirit
  - Date is Friday, October 2nd
  - Want to do it in partnership with Russell Apartments
  - Promotion:
    - Newsletter
    - MYNM web page
    - Senior Center website

- Since 15 is the capacity of the room, ED Anwar advises to do outreach accordingly and suggests doing a drop-in model
  - Commissioners Ayaz and Howard will email the asks about support they need from the team
- Co-Chair Kuhlman asks what events are happening this month that are hosted by community members?
  - ED Anwar: We're working with the Cambridge Geographic Information System (GIS) team to create a form and dashboard that showcases different community events happening around the city
- Commissioner Engagement
  - The team discusses shifts for tabling at Danehy Park Family Day on September 19th
    - Lizette Sta. Maria will arrive at 9:00 AM to set up and stay until 2:00 PM
    - Commissioner Kuhlman will help with set-up
    - Commissioner Howard will take the first shift of 10:45 AM to 12:30 PM
    - Commissioner Ayaz will take the second shift of 12:30 to 2:00 PM
    - Commissioner Brown will arrive in between shifts and has offered to transport materials
  - Peace Commission Community Gathering on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>
    - Commissioners encouraged to arrive at 3:00 PM
- Upcoming Programs:
  - Partnership with Human Rights Commission (Tentative)
    - Co-chair Kuhlman explains Essential Partners, a nonprofit organization that aims to build relationships across differences through training and facilitated dialogue.
    - Co-Chair Kuhlman, Co-Chair Kim, and a small subset of commissioners from different City of Cambridge commissions and other municipalities had participated in a training previously. The Peace Commission will now once again collaborate with the Human Rights Commission to work with Essential Partners.
    - Commissioner Ayaz asked what events prompted the need for a training like this.

- Commissioners respond that it had been a longstanding goal of the Peace Commission to be able to facilitate community dialogue. The thought came from divisive world events that occurred in the early half of the decade including the Black Lives Matter movement, conversations around Israel and Palestine, conversations around Ukraine and more.
  - As the team learns more about this partnership, it will be communicated to Commissioners.
- Upcoming Events for 2027
  - MLK Jr. Day Commemoration
  - Black History Month Event
  - Holocaust Commemoration
  - ED Anwar reflects that having a subcommittee for Meet Your Neighbor Month helped with planning and asks if the Commission wants to continue with the subcommittee model for the upcoming events
    - Commissioner Demott: How much are you looking to change these programs given that there was a significant change between Meet Your Neighbor Week to Meet Your Neighbor Month?
      - ED Anwar: The change was a direct reflection of what Commissioners had expressed interest in
    - Commissioner Razzaz: A subcommittee is a good idea to keep the conversation active
    - Commissioner Ayaz likes the subcommittee model, as long as it does not prevent other Commissioners who are not formally part of a given subcommittee from putting forth their ideas
    - It is clarified that any Commissioner can serve on one, multiple, or all subcommittees
- Meeting Planning:
  - Meeting Dates for the Remainder of 2026
    - ED Anwar will send calendar invites for October 21<sup>st</sup>, November 18<sup>th</sup>, and December 16<sup>th</sup>
  - Process for Commissioner Agenda Items
    - The group begins to discuss a process for putting out a call to Commissioners to submit their agenda items within a given time frame. There is no guarantee that it will end up in the next meeting.

- Commissioner Brown: Can there be subcommittees for topics that are not particularly tied to events like Sister City relationships or violence in the community?
  - ED Anwar: That could potentially be a good agenda item for a future meeting.
  - The topic is tabled for later.
- Co-Chair Kuhlman: Is it possible to have subcommittees meet during the larger Peace Commission meetings
  - ED Anwar: It would be difficult logistically, especially because the meeting is public.
- Commissioner Brown: Is it possible to carve out time in the beginning of each full Commission meeting to check in about each other's personal projects?
  - ED Anwar advises to be cognizant that if decisions are being made, they must be open to the public.
  - Commissioners are in favor of building in time for informal conversation.
  - Co-Chair Kuhlman suggests having an informal pre-meeting.
- Updates:
  - Commissioners
    - No updates
  - Staff
    - The British Consulate General is located in Kendall Square. ED Anwar attended a networking event there over the summer.
- Adjournment
  - Co-Chair Kim motions to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Demott seconds. All are in favor. The meeting is adjourned at 7:58 PM.

\* Anyone wishing to address the Commission during the Public Comment section of the agenda may indicate that by "raising their hand" virtually or in person and will be recognized by the Chair. Speakers are asked to identify themselves and provide an address, and each speaker is limited to not more than three (3) minutes. Public comments should address one or more items on the agenda for that particular meeting. If time permits, the Chair may allow a speaker to comment on matters that may not directly address an agenda item but do concern the Commission.