



Monthly Women's Commission Meeting

January 12, 2022

Minutes

Attendees: Marjorie, Phyllis, Sandy, Barbara, Pauline, Rhonda, Hiwot

Staff: Kimberly, Emily

Committee Structure

In December, a group of commissioners – Sandy, Emily N, Rhonda, Marjorie - met to discuss how Commission members could be most supportive in their work. Namely, should there be topic-specific committees, led by Commissioners, or project-based participation. In January, the commission met to discuss their findings.

The group used the *Cambridge Community Foundation Equity and Innovation Cities Study* as a framework for their discussion and recommendations. The introductory paragraphs of the report as well as the three paragraphs highlighted below are, in part, the catalyst for the shift which the group recommends be accepted and incorporated by the CCSW:

Powered by the city's famous universities and the talent they attract, in addition to massive private investment, the positive changes in Cambridge have been striking. But not everyone has shared the prosperity and opportunities this new paradigm has generated.

Cambridge is a story of juxtapositions — an intertwining of success and shortfall, wealth and poverty, dynamism and dispossession. The higher education world that drove the local economy has been surpassed by its offspring, innovation; there are now more jobs in technology companies than in the academic institutions that have shaped the city for generations. New populations have moved in, attracted by and contributing to the city's explosive innovation economy, while long-standing populations that contributed so much to the city's creative diversity are in decline. Cambridge offers prosperity for some, but poverty and strain for many others.

In many ways, Cambridge is a deeply progressive city, where government-led efforts range from participatory budgeting and affordable housing development to comprehensive support for single mothers and training in anti-racism and racial equity in the public schools. For a city so proud of its perspective on virtually every social and political topic, the numbers in this report reveal some shocking truths. Inequalities remain, and they have been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, which is making the losses greater and more widespread, the pain more acute and uneven, the recovery further from our grasp, and the future more uncertain.

Additionally, CCSW programming should align its priorities with the lived experiences of all girls and women in Cambridge. Commissioner participation should lean into the interests and connections of existing Commissioners. The outputs proposed are:

- **Cambridge Recreation Department: Department of Human Services** Promoting Women's Physical & Mental Health and Wellness.
- Increase awareness of Pancreatic Cancer while honoring recently deceased CRLS basketball legend, Medina Dixon who succumbed to the disease.
- Support the Girls' Pride Basketball program.
- Continuation of our Bicycle program for women in need
- Identity project in relation to Sport (Sharing Our Stories).
- With the CLC, provide out-of-class learning experiences and mentoring through CCSW Commissioner mentoring and shadowing at CPL FREE HIVE Workshops at the Cambridge Main Library.
- **Commissioner led theater outings** Accompany CLC students to Company One Theater Productions as well as other productions where complimentary tickets could be secured.
- **Commissioner led Walking Tours with CLC students** Provide guided tours that inform students of a Cambridge they may be unfamiliar with.

Commission Strategic Plan

In December, a group of commissioners – Golnaz, Barbara, Phyllis- met to begin developing a blueprint to guide the Commission's work for the next three years. In January, the commission met to discuss their findings.

Key Takeaways:

- Once commissioners have withdrawn from active participation from the commission, form an advisory group where they can stay connected. Advisory group is optional once people leave the commission.
- New commissioners, limited terms. New people = new energy.
- Re-start Women in Cambridge meetup group
- Have more committee films
- Come up with a guide for Commissioners to understand what type of services the City offers
- How do BIPOC women participate in the workplace?
- How do we put mothers at the center of housing? Who's most impacted by housing crisis?

Conclusions and Next Steps

Review what other Women's Commissions are doing. Research their mission statements, their committee structure, their role in the government.

Commissioners shared ONE WORD to take with them from this meeting into the next meeting:

- Renewal
- Actionable
- Movement
- Health (Mental and Physical)
- Energy
- Productive
- Collaboration
- Committed