

Meeting Minutes January 14, 2026

Present: Kristine Pereira-View, Jean Connor, Mara Murray-Horwitz, Caitlin Dube, Pauline Wells, Sweta Joshi

Staff: Shameka Gregory, Diana Milkey

Absent: Natalie Le, Robin McCree, Vicky Mahfoud, Caroline Palavicino-Maggio

1. **Call to order**
 - ED Gregory called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM
2. **Icebreaker Connection**
3. **Review and approval of agenda for today**
4. **Review and approval of September minutes**
 - An amendment is made to the third bullet point – “Harvard School of Design” should be written instead of Worcester Polytechnical Institute
 - Commissioner Connor made a motion to approve the minutes from September 2025. The motion is seconded and passed.
5. **Review and approval of December 10th minutes**
 - Commissioner Pereira-View made a motion to approve the minutes from December 2025. The motion is seconded and passed
6. **Event Updates**
 - ***The Making of Revolutionary Feminism in El Salvador***
 - ED Gregory discussed the event on Sunday, December 14th, including a discussion on the keynote speaker Diana Sierra Beccera and the contents of her book *The Making of Revolutionary Feminism in El Salvador*.
 - **Girls in Sports Night**
 - ED Gregory told the commission about the upcoming Girls in Sports Night event on Tuesday, January 20th at 5:00 PM. Contact was made with sports providers, DHSP, and Cambridge schools.
 - Approximately 50 people are signed up at the time of this meeting.
 - Flyers detailing cost, accessibility, and descriptions of the sport will be available at the event and sent to participants digitally.
 - ED Gregory asked which Commissioners would be available to attend and help volunteer. Commissioner Connor and Wells volunteer.

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- Commissioner Wells asks if police officers should be present at the event and asks the Commission if it would be appropriate. The Commission approves.
- **Book Club focused on Combahee River Collective**
 - ED Gregory updates the Commission on the status of the Library and LGBTQ+ Commission's upcoming Book Club partnering with the Women's Commission reading a book about the Combahee River Collective.
 - No start date has been set and ED Gregory asked the Commission to help "shape" the event – when, how, and in what capacity.
 - Commissioner Dube suggests that a meeting be created with a working group of the Commissioners with members of the LGBTQ+ Commission and Library working group. ED Gregory asks who would like to be involved – Commissioner Pereira-View volunteers.
- **Women and Words**
 - Commissioner Dube asks about the status of Women and Words events. ED Gregory says the next one on the calendar has been cancelled as it was scheduled for the night after Girls in Sports Night.
 - Commissioner Connor suggests bringing back the woman who spoke at the last Women and Words event re: Menopause and Women's Health History (Padma). The Commission agrees, asking if it should be a second part or a repeat presentation. Commissioner Connor suggests a truncated "recap" version of the original presentation with an additional expansion on the talk and further Q&A.
 - Commissioner Murray-Horowitz suggests a longer event and offers to reach out to Padma to coordinate the next event.
 - Commissioner Connor suggests February as timing for the next event. Commissioner Pereira-View suggests looking at previous documents to identify if any concrete bookings or plans have been made.
 - Commissioner Dube raises a concern that the work of the commission is interrupted by the layoffs, since the Women and Words event is not happening.
 - ED Gregory explains that while a date was locked in, it was not feasible to hold two events back to back and that no planning or bookings had been done for the January Women and Words.
 - Commissioner Connor supports this, believing that the Commission may have planned on skipping the January event due to lack of planning and Girls in Sports Night. Commissioner Pereira-View pulls up a SharePoint document that corroborates this.
 - Commissioner Pereira-View offers to contact the Dean of Harvard School of Design (Sarah Whiting) for a future Women and Words event.
 - ED Gregory says she will reach out and start finding a space for the event.
- **Sex Trafficking Stakeholder Groups**
 - Commissioner Dube asks the status of the stakeholder groups.
 - ED Gregory states that she met with the City Manager last week. CM offered recommendations on how to narrow down the scope of recommendations to the City around sex trafficking that had been prepared.

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- ED Gregory states that her action items involve reaching out to a number of people to support the work to prevent/disrupt Sex Trafficking and connect with Stakeholders.
- Commissioner Dube stresses the time frame being particularly narrow, so the trainings are not interrupted. ED Gregory will reach out to them tomorrow (1/15) to identify next steps in the process.

7. Commission Chair Overview/Discussion

- ED Gregory explains the role of Chair to the Commission (listed under “Item 1” at bottom of notes)
- Commissioner Connor asks which Commissions have Chairs. ED Gregory gives Peace, American Freedmen Commission, LGBTQ+, and Human Rights Commission as examples.
- Commissioner Dube says that she believes there is no chair because the women who incorporated the CCSW did not believe in a “hierarchical” position, and that the creation of monthly agendas and annual reports are “a lot of work” for a City Commissioner who is not a member of staff
- ED Gregory brings up the bylaws of the Women’s Commission, which state that the elected officers will be the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Clerk, and Treasurer.
- Several members of the commission express confusion about why these roles were not elected prior to now and suggest contacting prior Executive Directors to clarify.
 - Commissioner Murray-Horowitz brings up a concern that this feels like asking Commissioners to do work that City Staff is meant to be doing.
 - ED Gregory clarifies that this is more about empowering members of the Women’s Commission to shape the work of the Commission.
 - Commissioners continue to express that this is not something that they would like to do and have concerns that it is an attempt to force them to compensate for the removal of City Staff.
 - ED Gregory clarifies that this is not necessary, and that they would be able to review these bylaws if they are not working.
- Commissioner Connor suggests a motion to create a subcommittee working group to review and edit the bylaws and ordinance to create a more modern version of the rules for the women’s commission.
- Multiple Commissioners ask for a printed copy of the bylaws. Staff Diana printed and copied and handed them out. ED Gregory will send them out via email as well.
- A subcommittee is formed to review the bylaws made up of Commissioners Connor, Wells, and Dube

8. Commission Member Recruitment/Member Status

- ED Gregory says that we have received applications and that she would like to extend the deadline in order to give Commissioners time to consider whether or not they would like to serve another term.
- Commissioner Joshi suggests that the website be updated to reflect the accurate listing of Commissioners.
- Commissioner Dube points out that the bylaws say that no commissioner should serve more than two consecutive three-year terms.

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9. Public Meeting Law Discussion

- ED Gregory apologizes to the Commission saying that the previous session should not have gone into Executive Session in accordance with further details of Public Meeting Law and shares the passage highlighting this.

10. Department Restructuring Discussion

- ED Gregory tells the Commission that Chief of Equity and Inclusion Deidre Travis Brown and City Manager Yi-An Huang have offered to come to one of the Commission Meetings for a mediated conversation regarding the Department restructuring.
- Commissioner Connor expresses that there is not a benefit to this meeting.
- Commissioner Dube suggests that they have this meeting to get a reason as to why the layoffs happened and how to “repair the harm” done by these layoffs. She also expresses that the continuing impact of the layoffs are hindering the work of the Commission and that this meeting would be a good first step. She asks ED Gregory who will be mediating this and what is the agreement of ongoing conversations.
 - ED Gregory says that the offer is the only clear information she has at this time and that any future meetings will have to be negotiated at the upcoming meeting.
- Commissioner Joshi asks for clarity as to who will be attending the meeting. ED Gregory says that it would involve the entire Commission, Chief of Equity and Inclusion Deidre Travis Brown, and the City Manager Yi-An Huang.
- Commissioner Wells asks the Commission what they would expect from this type of meeting and expresses confusion as to what the group is looking for from this interaction.
- Commissioner Connor suggests instead of this meeting, the Commission takes the time to review the bylaws and the Ordinance
- Commissioner Dube brings up the list of demands and the letter written to the City from the Commission.
 - ED Gregory points out that the Commission meeting to create this letter was a violation of Public Meeting Law.
 - ED Gregory asks if the body was in agreement with this letter as it’s important that the Commission is in agreement with things that come out bearing the name of the Women’s Commission.
 - Commissioner Murray-Horowitz notes that the letter is signed by “Members of the Women’s Commission” with the names of those who chose to have their name attached to the statement.
 - ED Gregory highlights that this information was removed and now states that it is from the Women’s Commission.
- ED Gregory in the interest of time asks whether or not the Commission would like to move forward with a mediated meeting with Chief Brown and City Manager Huang
 - Commissioner Pereira-View votes yes, on the condition that they review their restructuring work themselves, waiting to meet before then. Commissioner Connor agrees.

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- Commissioner Murray-Horowitz and Dube believe that the meeting needs to happen sooner rather than later (next meeting) to hold City management accountable.
- ED Gregory suggests a subcommittee meet if they would like to prepare for the meeting but advises that any unauthorized group meeting is a violation of Open Meeting Law.
- Commissioner Murray-Horowitz asks to establish who is mediating and what the Commission hopes to get out of the meeting, including preparing questions.
 - Commissioner Pereira-View suggests not sending prepared questions ahead of time. Commissioner Dube suggests sending the questions ahead of time with a request of who is mediating.
- ED Gregory clarifies that the Commission would like to have a meeting with Chief Brown and City Manager at the February meeting and that they are requesting the name of the neutral mediator and the purpose of the meeting ahead of time.
 - The Commission agrees with this statement.
 - ED Gregory will convey this message to Chief Brown and City Manager and follow up

11. 50th Anniversary Brainstorming/Planning

- Commissioner Connor asks if there are new ideas for the planning of the 50th anniversary. ED Gregory clarifies that there are no new ideas past the ones submitted at previous meetings.
- Commissioner Pereira-View asks about the budget and funding.
 - ED Gregory says she would move forward with asking about further funding.
 - Commissioner Pereira-View suggests putting this item at the top of the next meeting's agenda so that things do not get missed.

12. Adjournment

- Commissioner Pereira-View motions to adjourn the meeting.
 - Seconded
- Executive Director Shameka Gregory adjourned the meeting at 8:07 PM.

Item 1: Potential Temporary Role of Chair/Co-Chair

The Commission is led by a chair or co-chairs who are selected from among the serving commissioners, plus the Executive Director (E.D.). The Commission chair(s) lead the monthly meetings of the Commission, and they or the E.D. represent the Commission as needed with other Cambridge leadership or organizations. Some of the month-to-month obligations of the leaders are:

- Draft monthly meeting agenda and share with E.D. in a timely fashion (at least 4 days before the meeting) to publish in accordance with open meeting law
- Ensure minutes are prepared and shared with E.D. in a timely fashion (within 2 weeks following the meeting) to publish in accordance with open meeting law

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- Stay up to date with current happenings around the City that may connect to or impact the Commission
- Create an annual report on Commission activities
- Meet regularly amongst themselves to keep the business of the Commission moving.

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