

Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women

Meeting Minutes – July 8, 2026

Present: Diana Dumit, Bomy Lee Chung, Meg Bond, Frehiwot Tesfaye, Sweta Joshi, Ukpong Etteh, Caroline Berz, Joanna Elder, Peter Hsu

Virtual: Zaida Pingitore, MacKenzie Rawcliffe, Cheryl Hamlin

Staff: Shameka Gregory, Zhiren Ye

Facilitators: Mel Pace, Dr. Hayley Haywood

Absent: Caitlin Dube, Vicky Mahfoud, Pauline Wells, Caroline Palavicino-Maggio

Members of the Public: Luke & Hazel

1. Call to Order

- a. Executive Director SG called this meeting of the Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women to order at 6:00 PM

2. Vote to accept meeting minutes 5/13/26

- a. Commission Bond motioned to vote accepting the minutes. The commission voted to accept the meeting minutes
- b. **Note: June meeting cancelled as we didn't have quorum**

3. Public comments

- a. No public comments were made from the public audience

4. Introduction

- a. Facilitators Pace and Dr. Haywood introduced themselves, commissioners and staff took turns to introduce themselves.

5. CCSW new member onboarding and team building

i. Discussion on community commitment (Annex I)

- a. Facilitator Pace introduced community commitment including:
 - a) Listen with resilience
 - b) Use "I" statements
 - c) Honor confidentiality
 - d) Room for multiple truths
 - e) Make space, take space

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- b. ED Gregory added “sitting in complexity”
- c. Commissioner Bond added “posture of curiosity”
- d. Commissioner Chung added “assume best intent”
- e. Commissioner Hsu raised question on the definition of “truths”
- f. Commissioner Elder added “remember who we serve”

ii. Explanation on concepts

- a. Commissioners reviewed and read CCSW’s mission and purpose
- b. Facilitators explained concepts of equity, diversity and intersectionality

iii. Exercise on vision

- a. In small groups, commissioners engaged in conversations on the vision of CCSW, discussing dreams and aspirations for women in the community, as well as resources, opportunities and support. The conversation results were captured on Post-its and flipchart (Annex II), the results include:
 - a) **Dreams and aspirations:** Safety at home, at work and in the community; reproductive rights; Not lack of resources but allocation of them
 - b) **Concerns:** Isolated elder women
 - c) **Resources, opportunities and support:** policy & advocacy development; skills-based series (e.g. changing tires, building, unclogging drains); centralized hub for resources, sharing systems to help people rely on neighbors; publicizing of existing resources; more frequent, reliable, free public transportation that is safe and accessible; access to healthcare and accessible quality birth centers where women are listened to; community engagement and outreach; programming and training; cross-class contact and solidarity; multi-generational exchange, learning and dialogue, recurring focused community-building events (e.g. monthly book clubs); knowledge about the commission; feminist lab (where women can go for a range of resources); legal services; material and physical resources; safety; reproductive justice; other new possibilities.
 - d) **Ideas that are both aspirations and resources:** public space; mental health, family support; mentorship; community; affordable and accessible childcare and supporting women's choice; education; protection of care work.
- b. Commissioners reviewed and read CCSW’s sphere of impact.

iv. Discussion on CCSW’s milestones (Annex III)

- a. Commissioner Berz mentioned using March (Women History Month) to find and bring communities together and showcase existing efforts.
- b. Commissioner Dumit emphasized on intersectionality and proposed joint celebration with Hispanic History Month and Black History Month.
- c. A “Feminist Lab” model was proposed where commissioners take turn in hosting “office hours” to connect with the community. Commissioner Etteh suggested collaborating with other partner organizations on resources such as providing legal services.
- d. Commissioner Bond suggested partnering with neighborhood groups and co-creating initiatives with different communities.
- e. Commissioner Chung provided an example of increasing/doubling CCSW’s contacts by next year as a concrete indicator for milestone.
- f. Commissioner Pingitore emphasized the importance of having reoccurring events in order to build community. Hard to build community with one-off events.
- g. Commissioner Joshi mentioned that budgeting is an important milestone to keep

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things running.

v. Discussion on what a successful commission would look like (Annex IV)

- a. Commissioner Berz mentioned the importance of having young people being part of the conversation. Commissioner Tesfaye added that it's also important to involve older women.
- b. Commissioner Bond talked about building on each other's ideas, having everyone contribute to the commission, and learning what has been done before.
- c. Commissioner Hsu shared importance of learning from work already done and not reinventing the wheel.
- d. ED Gregory shared that open dissent and disagreement are indicators of a healthy group dynamic where disagreement is welcomed and explored. Commissioner Chung added that feeling uncomfortable and challenged can also be a sign of growth and learning. Uncomfortable doesn't mean un-safe.
- e. Commissioner Dumit mentioned importance of laughter
- f. Commissioner Hamlin added that we have different sphere of knowledge and the willingness to learn from each other.
- g. PM Ye hoped that everyone feels empowered in the commission to take initiatives.
- h. Commissioner Joshi added creating good work with a new initiative.
- i. Commissioner Chung noted that everyone was participating which is ideal
- j. Importance of coming and being comfortable
- k. Commissioner Berz noted appreciation for blend of small group and large group discussions in the meeting and a desire to see that continue.

vi. Practices and expectations

- a. The group discussed the need for having a chair, co-chair and subcommittees for the commission.
- b. The group discussed the need for updating the bylaws
- c. ED Gregory emphasized and clarified the open meeting law and how the commission needs to conduct meetings and email communication.

vii. Discussion on how to address harm

- a. Commissioner Tesfaye mentioned importance of acknowledging harm first and take responsibility of the actions, be polite and appreciative.
- b. Commissioner Chung added feeling comfortable to speak out, point out, harm when it occurs instead of brushing over it.
- c. Commissioner Hsu said it's important to address it through conversation. It is ok to have uncomfortableness and disagreement. It's good to give the benefit of doubts and assume good intent. Focus on the bigger picture and joint values. Be professional and respectful. Focus on the ideas and not people.
- d. Commissioner Elder mentioned being open to listen and to distinguish the intent and impact. Not enough to say, "I didn't mean it that way".
- e. ED Gregory emphasized importance of focusing on why we are here and letting the person who was harmed lead/determine what happens next.

viii. Discussion on what questions remain to be answered

- a. Commissioner Pingitore asked about how to propose ideas for commission's discussion. ED Gregory suggested to inform ahead of time to be included in the agenda by sending to the staff via email.
- b. Commissioner Joshi suggested discussing and reviewing the bylaws.
- c. Commissioner Bond wanted to know more about the commission's history and

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the ground work.

- d. Commissioner Dumit wanted the commission to discuss and decide on the governance structure (chair, co-chair and subcommittees).
- e. ED Gregory shared more about previous Commission members decision not to have a Chair
- f. Commissioner Berz suggests rotating creating agenda and serving as Chair.

ix. Next steps

- a. ED Gregory will share with CCSW the current bylaws to review as well as meeting notes and current outlined plans for 50th anniversary

6. Vote to extend the next CCSW meeting on 9/9/2026

- a. Commissioner Berz motioned to extend the next CCSW meeting on 9/9/2026 to 2 hours (6-8 PM). The commission voted to approve the motion.

7. Adjournment

- a. ED Gregory adjourned this meeting of the Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women at 8:05 PM.

Community Commitments

Multiple Truths

- Sitting in the complexity

Asking Questions

Posture of Curiosity

Open to listening

Expected + Unexpected

Assume Best Intent

Define truth

Remember who we serve

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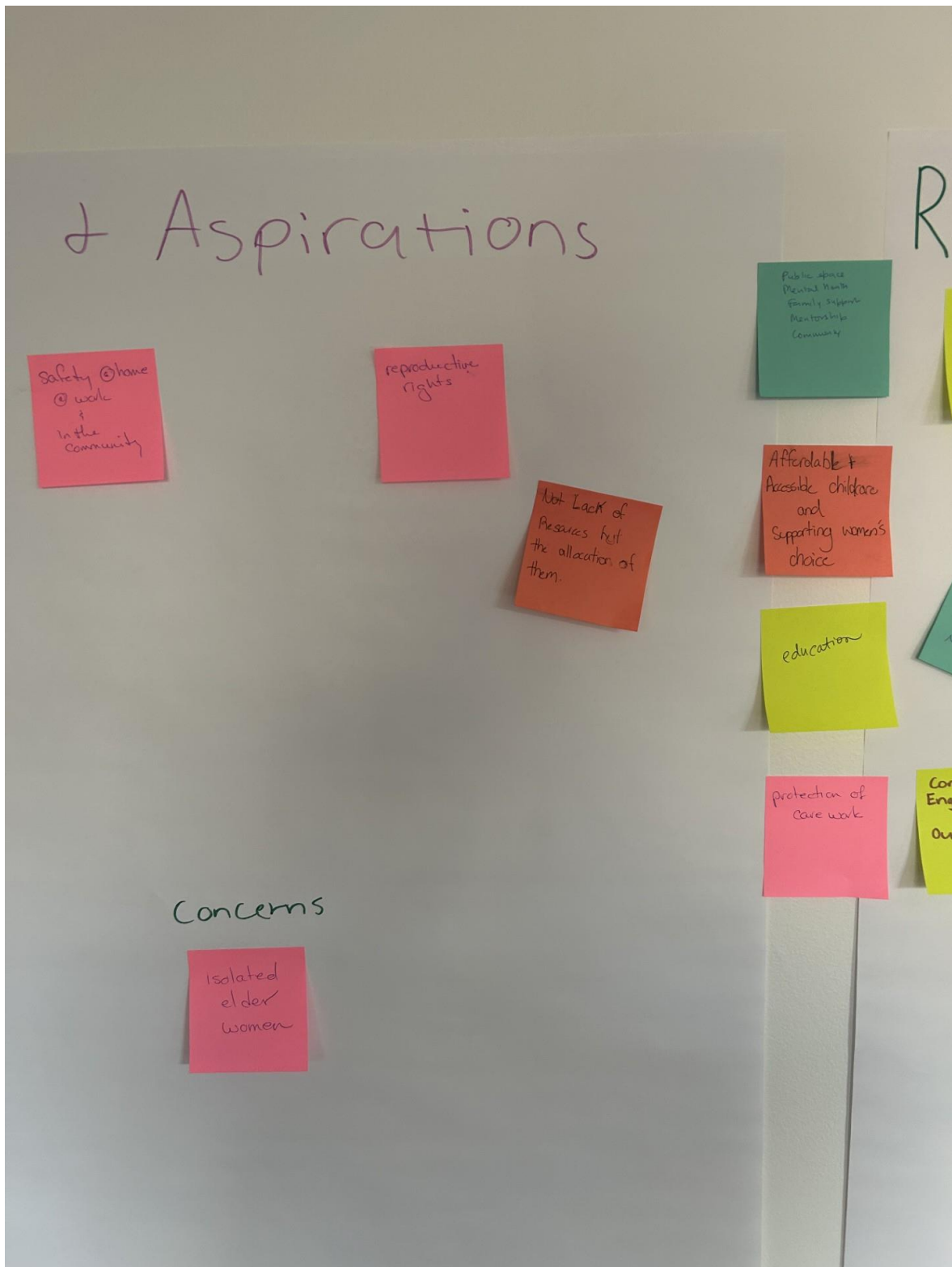
Remember who we serve

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Resources, Opportunities, Supports

Policy &
Advocacy
Development

Skills-based
series / workshops
(e.g., changing tires,
budgeting, budgeting,
unlugging drains)

Centralized hub
for resources, sharing
systems to help people
rely on neighbors

Knowledge about
the community
Feminist
Lab
Where women
can go for a range
of resources

Better
publicizing
of existing
resources

More frequent,
reliable, free public
transportation that
is also accessible

Legal
Services

Access to healthcare
to accessible quality
birth centers where
women are bonded to

Community
Engagement
&
Outreach

Programming
&
Training

Material
&
Physical
Resources

Cross-class
contact &
solidarity

Multi-organizational
exchange / learning /
dialogue

Recurring
focused comm-
building events
(e.g., monthly
book clubs)

Safety

Other /
New
Possibilities!

Repro Justice

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Milestones / Success

March — Finding Community

Events

Intersectionality

Hispanic Hist. Month

Black Hist. Month

Feminist Hub

- Office Hours

- Collab w/ other resources, co-creating

 - legal services

 - Neighborhood groups,

Tabling at Events

Increase membership/contacts

- Double?

Recurring Events

How do we budget?

Meeting & connecting w/ new people

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What does it look like, sound like, feel like?

Young people are part of it

Older people are part of it

Dissent, disagreement - level of safety

Creative building on each others ideas

Laughter!

Different ~~st~~ spheres of knowledge

Everyone is contributing

Come comfortable

take off your jewelry if it's hurting!

Combo of small discussions + large group discussion

Feel empowered to take initiative + make changes

Brainstorming new

Learning more about what's been done before + build

Feel uncomfortable sometimes

Always feel safe