



FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, May 21, 2026 (5:15 p.m.-7:15 p.m.)
Main Library, Curious George Room
449 Broadway, Cambridge MA

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Family Policy Council Business
 - Adoptions of March 26, 2026 Minutes
 - Public Comment
 - Announcements & Updates
- Presentation and Discussion - Cambridge Youth Council and Youth Wellness Interns
- UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative Update

Summary of Conversation Topics

- Cambridge Youth Council 2025-26
- Youth Wellness Interns 2025-26
- UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Updates

Chair Sumbul Siddiqui

Members: Tina Alu, Shakia Afrose, ~~Johanny Castillo~~, ~~Joseph Corazzini~~, ~~Caitlin Dube~~, Lida Griffins, ~~Michelle Godfrey~~, ~~Tabitha Howard~~, Kieu Anh Huynh, ~~Michelle Lower~~, Kam Maali, ~~Jasper Mallon~~, Maria McCauley, Larisa Mendez-Penate, Dave Murphy, Matt Nelson, Geeta Pradhan, Bridget Rodriguez, Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler, Liz Stapleton, Tracy Rose Tynes, Tagesech Wabeto, ~~David Weinstein~~, Yoyo Yau

Executive Director: Nancy Tauber

Notetaker: Andrew Liedtka (Find it Manager)

CYC Coordinator: Izzy Schpeiser

CYC Members: Maia Shen, Kabir Varanasi, Audrey Vautier, Avi Dupee, Befkir Ashebir, Fatime Najri, Reyyan Elfiky, Shakia Afrose

Guests: Pauline Wells, Connor Epsteinkraus, Jordan Harvey, Fred Fantini, Sarah Lincoln, Nikoi Coley, Norah Ismail, YemiKibret,-Maddie Regal, Atheed Mohamed, Minjee Lee, Madison Sullender, Teakia Brown

5:30 Welcome and Introductions

- Family Policy Council Business
 - Approval of March 26, 2026 Minutes
 - PASSES: Unanimously
- Public Comment
 - N/A
- Announcements
 - The Family Policy Council is the Advisory Council for The Center for Families, the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grantee.
 - Juneteenth Celebration is coming up, Parade, music, tabling, learning about history, theme: roots, culture, and community. Youth paid to volunteer. Lida will send Nancy a flyer/info to send out.
 - 7 watch parties around the city, working with different business associations for the games that will be at Foxboro. Afro Caribbean night will be a part of it.

Presentations and Discussion

Cambridge Youth Council - Slides 8-20 📄 CYC Accomplishments 5-21-26

Questions

- What would you hope to do next year:
 - Have more events, get more peers involved
 - CYC continues to stay strong and grow their influence
 - Making a block party a regular occurrence
 - More collaboration with other youth groups, collaborating also exposes people to new view points, can better leverage youth skills to share the work.
 - Strong group of seniors this year, hope for the new seniors to use them as an example and keep expectations high.
- Is tobacco use prevalent at the high school?
 - Anecdotaly it seems like the most commonly used substance by high schoolers. Mostly vaping.
 - Removing the doors is not widely supported by youth and doesn't appear to be any notable difference in usage.
 - People go into stalls to smoke instead of the middle of the room, so now there are long lines at the bathroom.

- Accessibility issues because gender neutral/accessible bathrooms are singles and still have doors, so people go into those to smoke.
- **What was most concerning to other youth (from other cities):**
 - Drug use and mental health issues were often brought up
 - One of the focal points is handling things in one place, strengthening community connections, bringing people together to support one another.
- **Are there things you would be interested in taking on?**
 - We did the work they wanted to, but would've wanted to do more of it.
 - Wanted to improve the Block Party, wanted to have more activities, more orgs involved, more engagement.

CPHD Youth Engagement Interns - Slides 21-28 CYC Accomplishments 5-21-26

Small Groups - Do you have any suggestions for what CYC and the Youth Wellness Interns can advocate for next year that will benefit youth in Cambridge?

Ideas

- Workshops for middle school students.
 - Why middle school? The jump from Elementary to High School in just a few years is a big leap. They were told about stress management tools and then went straight to suicide and mental health issues.
 - Topic ideas
 - Stress management
 - Food - nutrition advice, lack of food, healthy relationships with food
- Lack of resources (like lack of food) for teens.
- Healthy relationship with food/nutrition education.
- Youth City Council
- Role models for kids who get in trouble.
- CYC could be more of a 2-way street, designing projects and 3rd spaces, getting more ideas and engagement from other youth. Figuring out together what the city could do.
- Teen 3rd spaces
- Sharing tasks with other groups could make doing the work easier.
- Mental health work, exposing teens to other social environments to be able to deliver information about resources.
- More community events and community engagement.
- Parent education
- Workshops for youth

- Connecting adults to youth in positive ways to facilitate the idea of having a caring adult in their lives.
- Youth headspace and mental health, connecting it to the problem of vaping.
- More collaboration between staff and students would make changes more effective.
- Cell phone policies
- Having regular meetings with the principals
- Connecting with younger audiences
- Transit issues
- Safety and the MBTA, how commuting can be safer and more effective.
- Regular meeting switch the principal other leaders
- Better coordination with teen health center
- Substance use issues
- Green spaces
- Youth center usage
- Absenteeism
- Survey students to find out what they currently do and why

UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Update - Slides 30-43  **CYC Accomplishments 5-21-26**

Next steps

- Nancy will reach out to all the members to schedule 1:1 meetings over the summer. It will be an opportunity to reflect on the year and plan for next year.

Adjourn 7:15