

City of Cambridge
Human Services Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2024
5:30-7:00 PM
344 Broadway, 2nd Floor
Conference Room
and online:



<https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/82149601424>

Commissioners present: Julie Asher, Duane Brown, Fred Cabral, Christopher Fischer, Collin Fedor, Bran Shim

Regrets: Khari Milner

Presenter(s): Jessica Cantin, Food For Free CEO; Tim Cavaretta, Food For Free Director of Operations

Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) staff present: Janice Alger, Mike Payack (recorder), Ellen Semonoff

Guest(s): Denise Brown

- I. Welcome and Introduction
 - Ellen Semonoff welcomed Commission members and guests; began a round of introductions
 - Ellen announced that DHSP's Cambridge Program for Individuals with Special Needs will be performing their annual play on Saturday, December 21 and Sunday, December 22; more info available on DHSP's website
 - Ellen introduced Jessica Cantin and Tim Cavaretta of Food For Free
- II. Discussion of the work of Food For Free (FFF)
 - Jessica Cantin, CEO
 - Tim Cavaretta, Director of Operations
 - Mission: FFF improves access to healthy food through establishing innovative programming and partnerships to overcome barriers and strengthen the community food system
 - Stats:

- 1 in 3 adults in Massachusetts are food insecure, with higher rates among students, communities of color, families, and LGBTQ+
 - 30-40% of food is wasted in the US, mostly at the retail and consumer levels
- FFF envisions a future where everyone in our community—regardless of age, income, or ability—has consistent access to fresh, healthy, delicious food
- The Food Rescue program, FFF's longest running program, provides food to 20 recipient partners in Cambridge
- The Transportation Partnership, delivering food from the Greater Boston Food Bank to Cambridge Food Pantry Network sites for distribution, serves 5 partner food programs in Cambridge
- FFF has two school-based programs:
 - The Carrot Program provides pre-loaded 'carrot cards' to Cambridge students, which can be spent on food at grocery stores
 - The School-Based Markets Program sets up free shopping-style pantries at public schools in Cambridge at dismissal time; efficient access point for families in need; 198,266 pounds of food distributed per month
- Just Eats Program provides bulk food and pre-packed grocery boxes to food programs and Cambridge Housing Authority sites; 35,270 pounds of bulk food per month; 1,253 grocery boxes distributed monthly
- Healthy Eats Home Delivery program is winding down and ending on December 31, 2024; FFF is moving toward delivering bulk food to partner agencies (who will in turn distribute the food to individuals) rather than delivering pre-packed boxes
- In Cambridge:
 - FFF has 48 food distribution partners
 - 63,000 residents receive food
 - 1,502,200 pounds of rescued food distributed
 - 2,604,000 pounds of food distributed

III. Upcoming Schedule

- Mike Payack announced that the next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for January 9, 2025

IV. Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Payack, DHSP/Planning & Development

