



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2026-117
IN CITY COUNCIL
April 27, 2026

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I am writing to **recommend the following individuals for appointment** to the Cambridge Peace Commission for upcoming vacancies for three-year terms, effective April 27, 2026.

- Paul Knott
- Heather Rivera
- Katherine E. Stevenson
- Pamela Howard
- Muna Kangsen
- Karim L. Razzaz
- Julie Ayaz

The Cambridge Peace Commission also recommends the **reappointment of six (6) current members**. They have made valuable contributions and would appreciate the opportunity to continue serving:

- Larry Kim
- Elka Kuhlman
- Annie Brown
- Bonnie Talbert
- Sarah DeMott
- Kazimiera Fraley

The Cambridge Peace Commission promotes peace and social justice within Cambridge and beyond. It works to reduce violence and advocates ideas and programs that affirm diversity and build community within our city. The Commission serves as a vital link between peace organizations, social justice initiatives, anti-violence efforts, and municipal government, with a focus on addressing violence affecting youth.

One central way the Commission builds community is by organizing forums that bring residents together to engage on issues impacting the community. It also supports Cambridge's sister-city relationships, including partnerships with cities such as Yerevan, Armenia, fostering global connections grounded in shared values of peace, cultural exchange, and mutual learning.



The Commission consists of up to twenty (20) volunteer members who must be Cambridge residents at the time of appointment and who bring a range of lived experiences and professional expertise to the Commission's work. Through collaboration, education, and advocacy, the Commission contributes meaningfully to the City's broader efforts to promote anti-racism, diversity, equity, inclusion, and public well-being. One recommended candidate currently works in Cambridge but does not reside in the city. This has been noted for consideration as part of the appointment process.

Under new leadership, there is an opportunity to build on this strong foundation and further expand the Commission's impact. Priorities include strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations, deepening engagement with youth and historically underrepresented communities, and advancing community-led approaches to violence prevention. The Commission is well positioned to continue serving as a trusted convener by supporting dialogue, elevating community voices, and strengthening connections across Cambridge.

The City Manager's Office posted a request for applications for the Peace Commission on the City website and via a news release on February 24, 2026, with a closing date of March 23, 2026. Additionally, Commissioners also conducted outreach through their networks. The call was further shared through the City's daily email updates and website postings. There were 10 applicants, 7 of whom were interviewed. Following this process, the interview panel, consisting of City staff, recommends the appointment of all 7 candidates.

New Appointments

Paul Knott

Mr. Knott brings over two decades of international experience as a British diplomat, with postings in regions including Eastern Europe and the Middle East. His career has focused on peacebuilding, international cooperation, and human rights, giving him a deep understanding of conflict resolution and cross-cultural engagement. As a writer and analyst on global peace and security issues, he offers a thoughtful and informed perspective that will strengthen the Commission's work on both local and global dimensions of peace.

Heather Rivera

Ms. Rivera is a Cambridge resident and parent with a strong commitment to community involvement and service. Through her professional experience in property management and her personal investment in the local public-school community, she brings an organized, collaborative, and people-centered approach. Her enthusiasm for serving others and engaging with diverse community members will contribute positively to the Commission's work.

Katherine E. Stevenson

Ms. Stevenson is a former juvenile public defender whose work has focused on supporting young people

in Cambridge Juvenile Court, including youth from Cambridge and across Middlesex County. Her legal background and firsthand experience with the limitations of punitive systems provide a strong foundation for advancing restorative and community-based approaches to violence prevention. Her involvement in local faith and community networks further positions her to strengthen partnerships and expand outreach, particularly in engaging youth and families.

Pamela Howard

Ms. Howard is a longtime Cambridge resident with extensive experience in public service, community education, and civic engagement. Her work with the City of Cambridge and federal agencies has focused on connecting residents to resources and communicating effectively across diverse populations. With strong ties to the senior community and a deep understanding of Cambridge neighborhoods, she brings a valuable intergenerational perspective to the Commission's efforts to build community and promote peace.

Muna Kangsen

Mr. Kangsen brings significant experience within Cambridge city government, including prior roles with the Peace Commission and the Police Review and Advisory Board. His background in constituent services, communications, and program management, along with his leadership roles in the Mayor's Office, gives him a comprehensive understanding of municipal operations and community needs. His prior direct experience with peace-related programming makes him especially well-positioned to contribute effectively from day one.

Karim L. Razzaz

Mr. Razzaz is a multilingual professional and longtime community advocate with a strong record of advancing equity and inclusion. Through his work with the City of Somerville and his prior leadership in community programming, he has connected thousands of residents to essential services and resources. His experience as a current Commissioner on the Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship demonstrates his commitment to public service, while his focus on community engagement, language access, and social justice will bring valuable insight to the Peace Commission.

Julie Ayaz

Ms. Ayaz is a longtime Cambridge resident and dedicated community volunteer with a strong commitment to fostering dialogue, inclusion, and cross-cultural understanding. Through extensive volunteer work and community engagement, often incorporating the arts, she has supported initiatives that promote awareness and connection across diverse populations. Her lived experience in a multicultural family and her emphasis on empathy and diplomacy will bring a thoughtful and community-centered perspective to the Commission.

Reappointments

Kazimiera I.H. Fraley

Ms. Fraley has served as the minister of the Cambridge Church of the Nazarene since 2009, where she

leads a multicultural congregation with a focus on compassion and community building. She also works as a Hospice Chaplain for All Care Hospice/VNA and has contributed her time to Cambridge's Participatory Budgeting Committee. A member of the Peace Commission since 2017, she brings deep experience in pastoral care, cross-cultural engagement, and community support. She resides in East Cambridge.

Larry Kim

Mr. Kim has served on the Peace Commission since 2011 and has been co-chair since 2014. A longtime Cambridge resident, he is the pastor of Central Square Church and a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Harvard University. He also serves as a chaplain to the Cambridge Police Department and brings a sustained commitment to mentoring at-risk young men. His 16 years of living, studying, and working in Cambridge have grounded his leadership in strong community relationships. He resides in North Cambridge near Danehy Park.

Elka Kuhlman

Ms. Kuhlman has served on the Peace Commission since 2017 and has been co-chair since 2018. A retired math curriculum coach and Title I Math Specialist for the Newton Public Schools, her career centered on equity, access, and collaborative problem-solving. She remains deeply engaged in civic life through her work on the Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee and Cambridge Mothers Out Front, as well as volunteering with local food pantries and community music groups such as the School of Honk. Her broad community involvement and commitment to sustainability enrich the Commission's work. She resides in the Brickyards area of Neighborhood Nine.

Annie Brown

Ms. Brown is a History Instructional Coach with Boston Public Schools and formerly served as Program Director for the WPS College Transition Program, supporting first-generation students in navigating their transition to college. A graduate of King Open and CRLS, she later returned as a CRLS teacher and has worked and volunteered at several Cambridge organizations, including the Cambridge Community Center, the Cambridge Women's Center, and the Friday Café. She is a trained SEED facilitator, AVID educator, and restorative justice circle facilitator. Her deep roots in Cambridge and her commitment to educational equity and youth development continue to strengthen the Commission. She resides in Cambridgeport.

Sarah DeMott

Sarah DeMott is a research librarian and public historian, currently working at the Widener Library at Harvard University supporting collections in Judaica and the Middle East. With a passion for collaboration and community building, she established Harvard's "Anti-Black Racism Book and Film Series" in partnership with community activists, hosting social-justice community discussions focused on ways that Martin Luther King Jr. vision of a "beloved community" can address the contemporary moment that are virtual, open access and welcome to all. She resides in North Cambridge.

Bonnie Talbert

Bonnie Talbert has lived and worked in Cambridge since 2009. She is currently the Associate Director of Studies for first- and second-year undergraduates and is a Lecturer on Social Studies at Harvard. She recently completed an 18-month certification process in Restorative Justice Facilitation and Leadership through the University of San Diego. Ms. Talbert serves on Harvard's Committee on Public Service, where she ran a collective art-making project for first year students to help them feel connected to the community. She resides in the Avon Hill

I appreciate the willingness of these community members to serve on the Peace Commission and, with your approval, look forward to their appointment.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Yi-An Huang".

Yi-An Huang
City Manager