



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

## MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER

### VOLUME 5, MAY-JUNE

#### Dear Friends:

Welcome to the early summer edition of my community newsletter. The summer months typically see a slow-down in governmental affairs: residents and legislators alike tend to be more focused on school vacations and watching the Red Sox, and the City Council moves to its summer schedule. We have all certainly earned the warm weather, but rest assured that the people's business continues to be my office's top priority. My staff and I will be here throughout the summer months, meeting with residents to address your concerns as they arise, and serving as a general support to the City. We shall also continue to look for ways in which the Cambridge experience can be improved for residents, businesses, and visitors.

As always, I encourage you to contact my office if you have questions or concerns about issues such as housing and employment. We will continue working on community outreach projects and various City celebrations as well. As we enter June and July, I wish you and your families a safe and happy summer season!

**April 18—Bangladeshi Association of New England Annual Gala:** Community participation and working to make sure people feel connected to each other are pillars of my political career. That is why I make a point of accepting invitations to speak to as many different constituencies as I can. In April, I was privileged to speak at the Bangladeshi Association of New England's cultural event at the Kennedy-Longfellow School. I reminded the Bangladeshi community that the U.S. is a nation of immigrants, and I applauded the community's efforts in raising funds for the victims of the tsunami. I also urged the community to remain engaged in the life of the city.

**April 20—Patriots Day Festivities in Cambridge:** I spoke during festivities in honor of Patriots Day. During my speech, I noted that our city and the Commonwealth both played important roles during the United States' struggle for independence. While patriotism has been used in the recent past as a wedge to divide citizens of our nation, I challenged residents to consider a more expansive view of patriotism. Under this expansive view, Prince Hall — the founder of free black masons, the soldier who bravely fought to help achieve this nation's independence, and the man who would become a prominent educator — would be elevated to the pantheon of a "founding father" and patriot.

**May 2—Mayor's Volunteer Corps Participates In Clean-Up of Cambridge:** The Mayor's Volunteer Corps, a group of volunteers mobilized by my office, participated in a city-wide clean-up effort today. The Mayor's Volunteer Corp's efforts were focused in East Cambridge, where volunteers cleaned Gold Star Mother's Park, Hurley Park, Ahern Field, Costa Lopez Taylor Park, Charles Street Park, Front Park, Centanni Way and several other neighboring parks. I would like to thank members of the Volunteer Corps for their participation. Please visit my website to become a member, or to find out more information about the Mayor's Volunteer Corps.

**May 3—Clean-up Effort in Central Square:** Recently, Central Sq. has been the focus of much negative attention, with residents complaining about littering, public drinking, and vagrancy. In response to this, my office helped sponsor a community clean-up effort in this area. My granddaughter and I removed a substantial amount of the litter and cigarette butts that had marred the benches of Carl Barron Plaza. During the course of the clean-up exercise, it became clear to me that more attention needs to be paid to Central Square, to prevent further littering and to create an atmosphere that will quicken the pace of revitalization in the area. This experience led me to draft immediate policy orders calling for greater police presence in the Square, and for businesses with outdoor seating to make ashtrays available for their patrons so that cigarette filters don't end up on our sidewalks.



**Cambridge Mayor E. Denise Simmons**  
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**May 4—Visits to local schools:** Today, I visited several public schools in Cambridge. During my visits, I made it a point to spend time with some 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls in each school that I visited, whom I asked for some advice about things to say during my graduation speeches. One of the special pleasures of my job is to witness the hard work of our students and the dedication of our staff. It was also a joy to see the City Sprouts gardens in our school beginning to blossom! Once again, the diversity of our student population emerged as one of the distinctive features of Cambridge Public Schools. My sincere thanks to all our staff for a very warm reception at each and every one of our schools.

**May 6—20<sup>th</sup> Holocaust Commemoration:** Today I spoke at the 20<sup>th</sup> City of Cambridge Holocaust Commemoration event at Temple Beth Shalom. Started some 20 years ago by Rep. Alice Wolfe, Marty Federman and others, the Holocaust Commemoration is a day of remembrance, prayer, music and name calling. Speaking at the event, I noted that "we will never forget the six million Jewish victims, as well as the many Roma people, the gay and lesbian people, the disabled people, and the political dissenters who fell victim to the brutal Nazi regime...we reflect upon the senseless loss of life, loss of family, loss of home, loss of connection, and loss of culture, and we know that nothing can ever replace what was lost." Although the international community has failed to live-up to the promise of "Never Again" made after the Jewish Holocaust, in Cambridge we are going to keep doing our part to remind the international community of the obligation to stop genocide everywhere.

**May 8—City Employees honored:** Today, the city of Cambridge held its annual Award ceremony in the Sullivan Chamber to honor outstanding City employees. Janet Cudmore-Boswell, Vilma David, Jeana Franconi, Eric Helberg, James Wilcox, Mina Reddy, Dennis Richard, Jeffrey Roberts and Daniel Wagner were recognized for their superior performance, positive attitude, hard work and dedication to public service. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to these outstanding city employees and thank them for their service on behalf of the residents of Cambridge.

**May 11—Lesley Re-Zoning Petition discussed in City Council:** On April 7, the Planning Board enthusiastically approved Lesley University's zoning petition to extend the boundaries of the Business C zoning district in Porter Square and create a new Lesley Porter Overlay District. Lesley's re-zoning petition stems from the University's desire to move the Art Institute of Boston, which it acquired in 1998, to Porter Square. Lesley's plans call for erecting a 100,000 sq. ft AIB complex with studios, galleries, a glass atrium and a library open to the public at the site currently occupied by the North Prospect Church at 1803 Mass Ave, which Lesley acquired last year. Lesley

plans to move the church elsewhere on the lot. The Porter Square Neighborhood Association has thus far supported the re-zoning petition. In the city council today, Councilor Maher introduced a policy order requesting the Solicitor to provide a legal opinion as to whether Lesley's proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance would constitute proper spot zoning, especially with regards to the properties located between 1797 to 1808 Mass Ave, which encompasses the church.

**May 13—Senior picnic at MIT:** I hosted 1,000 Cambridge senior citizens at a picnic in MIT's Johnson Athletic Center. The picnic, which was held under the theme "Green for Life in Cambridge," was the third of its kind to be held in my mayoralty. The picnic featured some great food, lively music, and some giveaways, including a recyclable bag with power-saving and healthy-living tips printed on it. While bringing seniors together for a terrific City tradition, we managed to produce the event while generating **zero waste**. With the active participation of seniors and support from DPW, I am happy to announce that we were able to recycle or compost 95% of all the day's waste. I would like to thank our volunteers from CRLS, Randi Mail from DPW, and our custodian, Kate, for all the hard work.

**May 17—Commemorating Same-Sex Marriages in Cambridge:** I joined dozens of people at City Hall to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the granting of marriage licenses to same-sex couples in Cambridge. The event was an opportunity for couples to tie the knot, renew their vows, or simply celebrate this milestone. In support of marriage equality, School Committee member Nancy Tauber and her husband Tony, renewed their vows. While marriage equality has gained momentum in some states, it is being rolled back in other states. As long as this blatant discrimination exists against same sex couples, we will continue to challenge it at every turn.

**May 18—Scholarship Recipients honored:** Today, students who received scholarships from the city were honored in the Sullivan Chamber. It always gives me great joy to see these young faces filled with hope and limitless possibilities receiving a helping hand from the city, as they embark on another leg of their academic journey. I am most comforted by the awareness that our public schools have adequately prepared these students for the rigors and challenges of college.

**May 19—Welcoming new President of Cambridge College:** Today, I met with Dr. Tito Guerrero, the new President of Cambridge College, and Judy Groleau the new Vice President for Development, to congratulate them on their new positions, welcome them to Cambridge, and extend a hand of cooperation. When Dr. Guerrero was first appointed President of Cambridge College last year, I sent him a letter of congratulation in which I stated that "*in the current economic climate...the mission of Cambridge College, which is to provide education to motivated working adults, is sacrosanct.*" I look forward to assisting the new administration in any way possible as they work to live up to this mission.

**Prince Hall Update:** In September 2005, the City Council approved a policy order, which I submitted, asking the city manager to assemble a committee and find an appropriate site for a monument in honor of Prince Hall. Prince Hall was an educator, civil rights activist, founder of the freed black masons, and patriot. I am happy to announce that Cambridge-based sculptor, Ted Clausen, submitted the winning proposal for the monument. The official unveiling of the Prince Hall monument in Cambridge Commons has been tentatively set for September 12, 2009. Cambridge is the first community in the United States to bestow this long-overdue honor on the great Prince Hall.

**Mayor 20—Department of Public Works Awards Cookout:** I was honored to be invited to speak at the Department of Public Work’s Award Cookout, when the Department honors its outstanding employees. Speaking during the event, I noted that the DPW was the work horse of all City departments. Frank Alfano, Rick Gnerre, Kenneth “Boonie” Moore and Jeya Niranjana received awards for their outstanding work. DPW was one of five sites to receive a Mayor’s Wellness Grant. Over a period of 7 weeks, 76 DPW employees competed in teams of 4 to walk the most steps, keeping track of distance covered using pedometers bought with the Wellness Grant. As a group, these individuals walked 27 million steps, or 12,800 miles, a distance worth covering for wellness. I would like to congratulate DPW staff who received awards as well as those who participated in the wellness initiative.

**May 20—Haitian Flag Day:** The Haitian community in Cambridge is one of the most dynamic groups of new immigrants to call our city “home.” The presence of a strong Haitian community in Cambridge contributes to our city’s proud reputation as a diverse community. Today, I joined the local Haitian community in celebration of Haitian Flag Day at City Hall. This was the second Haitian Flag Day celebration sponsored by my office since I became Mayor. The event featured a speech by the Haitian Consul General in Boston, H.E Ms. Emmanuelle Dupiton, and several music and dance performances by students of the Haitian Club at CRLS. During my speech, I noted that although Haiti was the first country of African descendants to gain independence, Haiti had not always lived up to the promise of this pioneering role. I noted that while some of Haiti’s problems were domestic, many of these problems have been exacerbated by foreign meddling in Haiti’s affairs. I concluded by expressing the hope that with the appointment of former President Clinton as US Envoy to Haiti, Haiti’s problems will get the international attention that is long overdue.

**May 21—Town Hall Forum on Race and Class in Cambridge:** The election of President Barack Obama marked a milestone in race relations in the US, but contrary to what many political commentators have opined, the US is not a post racial society yet. Titled “Race and Class: The Trouble I’ve Seen,” the forum was inspired by my wish to engage the community in a conversation about the racial tension surrounding the superintendent search, my desire to build on the work of the first panel on race and class in Cambridge, which I helped to organize in 1998, and my own desire as an elected official who came of age in an era of great racial tension, to make sense out of this seemingly intractable problem. Professor Charles Ogletree of Harvard Law School gave the keynote address, after which participants broke up into small groups to discuss about race and class.

**May 25: Memorial Day Parade in Cambridge Commons:** Today, I joined hundreds of veterans and residents of Cambridge to celebrate Memorial Day. In my speech, I stated that it was special to observe Memorial Day in Cambridge because of our City’s unique place in history; many of the freedoms and the concepts that make our country so special were first discussed and debated in colonial-era Cambridge. In my remarks, I also thanked our men and women in uniform serving in Iraq and Afghanistan for all the sacrifices that they have made, and continue to make, on our behalf. I called upon residents of the City to lift these heroes in their prayers and to be mindful of their sacrifices. My thanks to the staff of the Veterans Commission for organizing a remarkable Memorial Day parade.

**May 26—Forum on Women Elected Leaders:** Even though women outnumbered men by a small percentage according to the 2000 census, more men hold elected office than women. Until the signing into law of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act by President Obama, men earned more than women for performing the same jobs. Thanks to women like Ambassador Swanee Hunt (who hosted several women Mayors at a panel discussion in her house aimed at encouraging more women to seek elected office) this gender deficit in electoral politics will soon change. I was happy to be on the same panel as Mayor Kim Driscoll of Salem, Mayor Claire Higgins of Northampton, Mayor Lisa Wong of Fitchburg, Mayor Konstantina Lukes of Worcester, and Mayor Carolyn Kirk of Gloucester. These women, who are the first women to be elected Mayor in their communities, overcame significant odds to win tough mayoral elections. Before Hillary Clinton took a forceful 18 million cracks at the glass ceiling, it already contained major cracks from blows delivered by these inspiring women. I hope many more women will follow their lead.

**May 26—15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Science Club for Girls:** Today, I was honored to speak during the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the Science Club for Girls. The science club for girls, which began in 1994, has inspired hundreds of girls to pursue career in the sciences. Contrary to the ignorant and small-minded attitudes that persisted for generations about girls’ inherent math and scientific abilities, the people behind the Science Club for girls understand that girls are just as good at (if not better) in math and science than boys are. This club helps spread that “can-do” spirit.

**May 26—Clergy Breakfast:** During the latest clergy meeting in City Hall, we heard from Assistant City Manager Ellen Semonoff and two of her deputies on programs available for Cambridge youth during summer months. As you all know, there have been several shooting incidents in Cambridge over the past couple of weeks. It is important for parents to know that the City of Cambridge does offer plenty of programs that can keep our kids engaged, making new friends, and out of trouble’s path over the summer months.

**May 26—Cambridge Police Department’s 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards ceremony:** It was an honor to speak at the Cambridge Police Department’s 7<sup>th</sup> annual Awards Dinner, honoring the men and women of the department who excelled in 2008. The Ruth and Carl Barron Award, Officer and Detective of the Year award, as well as ribbons, medals and letters of recommendation were handed out to Cambridge’s finest. I would like to congratulate the many Police Officers who were recognized for their outstanding service to our City.

**May 27—Municipal Art Event at State House:** I was honored to receive the Municipal Leadership Award at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Massachusetts Arts Education Collaborative Champions of Arts Education Awards, held at the State House. The awards ceremony was preceded by a panel discussion in which three urban school principals discussed the impact of arts in their schools, students, and learning. Serving on the panel was Joellen Scannell, Principle of the Peabody school. Wendy Silverberg, a music teacher at the Peabody school, presented her class plan to the group. It always gives me great pleasure to see our students, teachers, and schools acknowledged for their excellence.

**May 27—Seniors Recognition Awards:** Today, I spoke at the Seniors Recognition Awards held at the Senior Center on Mass Ave. During my speech, I noted that the idea of a Volunteer Clearing House for Seniors originated in the good thinking of Bob Hurlbut. I noted that whereas Mr. Hurlbut’s initial intention was to link Cambridge seniors to volunteering opportunities, the program became so successful that the Clearinghouse now connects Cambridge residents between the ages of 14 to 99 to local volunteering opportunities. I noted that the Volunteer Clearing House filled an important void as many social service organizations are now relying on volunteers to be fully staffed. I would like to thank all the members of the Volunteers Clearing House for their service. and encourage others to sign-up with the program.

**June 4—Attending Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Graduation:** In my dual role as Mayor of Cambridge and Chair of the Cambridge School Committee, it is always a great joy to attend graduation ceremonies. I love attending graduations because seeing our kids in their graduation gowns, with broad smiles on their faces, is a validation of all the hard work and dedication these kids and their teachers put in over the years. In my speech, I reminded the students that their graduation was a milestone in a long and sometimes bumpy journey, and that they have every right to be proud for having made it to this day. “The more time and energy that you put into establishing yourself now, the greater the financial, emotional, and spiritual rewards will be down the road,” I advised. I also urged graduates to become invested in the life of their community, sacrifice time and effort in support of those that are less fortunate, and never to shy away from investing time and effort in causes that transcend their narrowly defined self interests.

**June 10—Culminating Event of Girls Leadership Group:** The Mayor’s Girls Leadership Group is one of the initiatives that I developed on becoming Mayor, to nurture leadership skills in 8th Grade girls across Cambridge Public Schools, and instill in them the sense that they can accomplish anything they set their minds to, a can-do attitude that was not encouraged in young women of earlier generations. After holding monthly meetings with the 32 girls of the Girls Leadership Group, during which the girls learned social etiquette, and heard from influential women in the field of government, academia and business, the leadership group held its culminating event at City Hall today. The 32 participating eighth grade girls from all Cambridge Public Schools were invited along with their families for a celebration of the year’s events. During the event, I lauded the important leadership skills the girls have developed, and reiterated my belief that these were ready to accomplish anything they set their minds to.

**Upcoming Events: June Graduations**

- June 11 at 1:00 P.M—Peabody School
- 3:00 P.M—Fletcher-Maynard Academy
- June 12 at 9:30 AM—High School Extension
- 1:00 P.M—King Open School
- 3:00 P.M—Amigos School
- June 15 at 1:00 P.M—Baldwin School
- 3:00 P.M—Cambridgeport School
- June 16 at 1:00 P.M—Tobin School
- 3:00 P.M—Graham and Parks School
- June 17 at 1:00 P.M—Kennedy/Longfellow
- 3:00 P.M—King School
- 5:00 P.M—Morse School

June 18 at 7:30 P.M—Community Learning Center

**Other Events:**

- June 13, 10:00 A.M: Gay Pride Brunch, City Hall
- June 13, 12:00 P.M—6:00 P.M on Memorial Drive—Cambridge River Festival
- June 14, 4:00 P.M—Ethiopian Community Outreach event at Vineyard Christian Fellowship Church, 15 Notre Dame Ave.
- June 18, 5:30 P.M—8:00 PM: Taste of Cambridge at the Charles Hotel in Harvard Square.
- June 19—26: Delegation from the municipality of Oeiras, Portugal, visits Cambridge.
- June 22, 4:30—5:30 P.M: Reception for social workers from Yerevan, Armenia.
- July 29, 11:00 A.M—2:00 P.M— Harvard Senior Picnic, Harvard Yard.

**To send me your thoughts, please detach below the bold line, insert in an envelop, and mail to MAYOR’S OFFICE, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, 02139. I hold walk-in office hours most Fridays from 8:30 A.M to 9:30 A.M. Please call 617-349-4321 to find out when the next walk-in office hours will take place.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comment** \_\_\_\_\_

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