

# Annual Report

Cambridgeport  
Neighborhood  
Association

2023

# Who We Are

The Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association (CNA) was founded in November 2004 and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. We are located in Cambridge, MA with borders on River St, Mass Ave, the Grand Junction train tracks, and the Charles River.

We strengthen community, facilitate advocacy, and care for our neighborhood. Together in our diversity, we create cohesion, joy, and empowerment with all those who live, work, or attend school in Cambridgeport.

With no formal membership, our community members include all residents of Cambridgeport, families of children who attend Cambridgeport schools, and people who work in Cambridgeport.

The CNA is represented by a board which is elected annually by community members.

## 2023 Board Members:

Rebecca Bowie, President  
Brittany Butler, Clerk  
Tien-Tien Chan, Clerk  
Cathie Zusy, Treasurer  
Valerie Bonds, DEI Committee Chair  
Jimena Bermejo  
Tonia Hicks



# Our 2023 Goals

## 1

### Strengthen community

through a series of block parties hosted around the neighborhood.

## 2

### Facilitate advocacy

through informative community meetings.

## 3

### Care for our neighborhood

through clean ups and textile and book drives.

## 4

### Build the strength and effectiveness

of the CNA organization and board.

# Community Meetings

- Our **February** community meeting included elections for three CNA board seats (won by Jimena Bermejo, Tonia Hicks, Cathie Zusy), History Cambridge introducing their “Year of Cambridgeport”, the Charter Review Committee updating us on its work, and a discussion about preserving the “Crosswinds” mural on the Middle East building.
- In **February**, we also held two community gatherings in response to the fatal police shooting of Sayed Faisal. These were informal listening sessions and connection spaces. One gathering was in-person and the other was virtual.
- Our **March** community meeting focused on how to turn your house into affordable housing, featuring Just-A-Start and a local couple who has bequeathed their home. We also met Greatland Realty Partners and learned about their plans for the corner of Erie and Sidney.
- Our **May** community meeting was the first major public meeting about Cambridge’s Universal Preschool Program, and included an explanation of the program and a detailed Q&A. We also heard updates on programming at Magazine Beach by Mass Audubon.
- Our **September** community meeting featured staff from Cambridge’s Community Development Department. The focus was their Central Square Lots Study, and neighbors provided feedback and asked questions.
- Our **October** community meeting was our biannual Candidate Night, where we heard introductions from almost all candidates for City Council and all candidates for School Committee.
- Our **December** community meeting included two speakers. The first was Manuel Fernandez, Chief Equity Officer from the Cambridge Public Schools, detailing the initiatives of the office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. The second was Sgt. Christopher Ponte presenting on common scams and how to avoid them.

Overviews of past meetings are available at [cambridgeport.org/cna-meeting-minutes](https://cambridgeport.org/cna-meeting-minutes).

# Additional Community Events

## April

We hosted our annual Community Clean Up, starting in Dana Park. We again partnered with Cambridge City Growers and included a seedling swap.



## May

We hosted another textile and book drive, collecting 3,185 pounds of textiles and earning more than \$400 for future CNA events. We also donated a truck full of books to More Than Words.



# June

We held a bike meetup and showcase, including information sharing on how to bike in the city with kids and plenty of fun.



# November

We held our fourth drive, again for textiles and books. We collected 2,380 pounds of textiles for Helpsy and with an extra donation from Helpsy earned \$476 for the CNA. More Than Words also took another truckload of books.



# Year of the Block Party

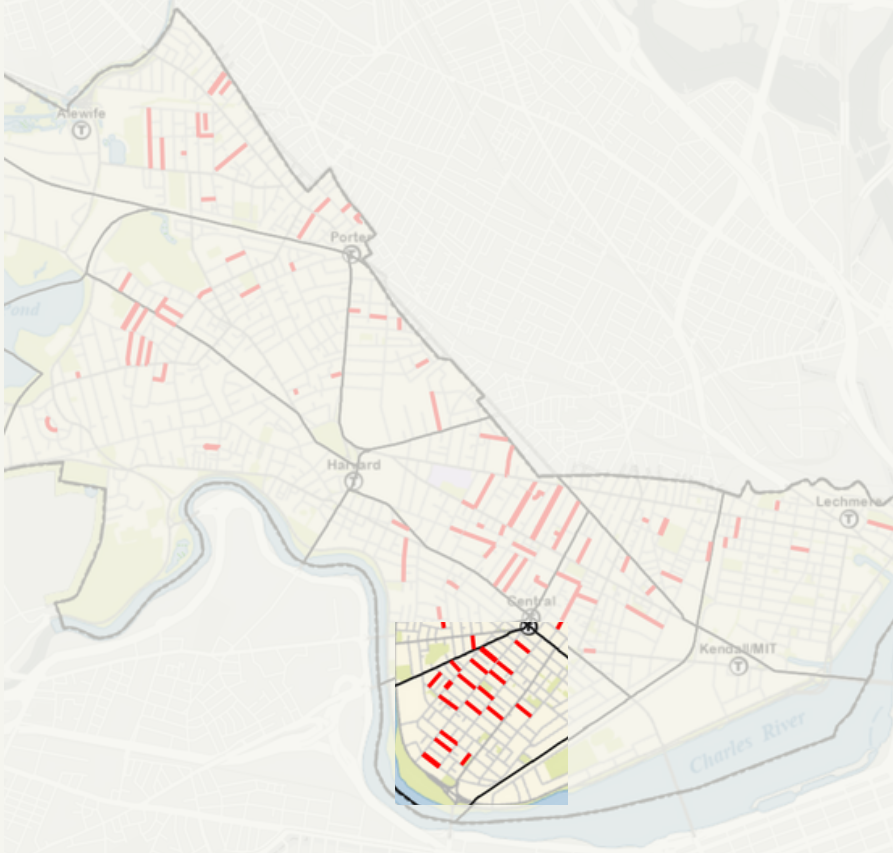


Our major initiative in 2023 was “The Year of the Block Party”, in parallel with the City of Cambridge’s efforts to promote block parties. We supported these community-building efforts through:

- \$200 grants (separate from/in addition to the City’s grants) for each of 7 Cambridgeport block parties
- A resource website and crowdsourced checklist
- Volunteer support, with both getting started and executing events
- Discounts from local businesses and a lending library of supplies
- Advertising on our listserv and social media
- Connections with other local partners and block party activities

# Year of the Block Party

## CAMBRIDGE BLOCK PARTIES



As of September 2023

# \$1400

spent to support block parties in Cambridgeport

# 18

Cambridgeport streets hosted block parties

### CHESTNUT STREET BLOCK PARTY - UPDATE

Newton Street neighbors welcome  
1-6 PM SAT. 7.8.23 Rain date Sun 7/9

**PARTY DETAILS**

**Activities:** Kids: face painting, art making, sidewalk chalk, safe bike & scooter riding, games. Popovers, free children's book table. Kids use popovers. **SPECIAL:** an assortment of children's games & active playthings supplied by City. 1-4 pm

**Grassroots:** Free exchange table.

**Food:** Grilling hamburgers, hot dogs & veggie burgers 4-6 PM. Popovers.

**Music:** Banjo music by neighbor Greg List 3-4:45.

**Want to volunteer, donate or need more info?** Party contacts: Sara Gaffney - [mimgaffney@gmail.com](mailto:mimgaffney@gmail.com), Food: Anna - [annagaffney@gmail.com](mailto:annagaffney@gmail.com), Decorations: Liz Davis - [Durango17@icloud.com](mailto:Durango17@icloud.com), Kids activities & games: Will - [willgaffney@gmail.com](mailto:willgaffney@gmail.com)

### Pleasant Street

between Prince & Fairmont • street open to abutters during event

# BLOCK PARTY

## at Hastings Sq Block Party

**SUNDAY, SEPT 10 3-7PM**  
Rain Date Sept 17

**Save the date!**  
Food, music, kid activities, and more!

6 pm LIVE SNAKES! of New England & the World

Join Vernal Pond Team  
[VernalPondTeam.org](http://VernalPondTeam.org)

music to enjoy  
food to share  
neighbors to meet  
bubbles to play  
games to play  
fun to have

**BEST COSTUMES!**

**BLOCK PARTY SCHEDULE:**  
3 PM - 5:30 PM - ACTIVITIES

### Neighbor to Neighbor Block Party

Wednesday Sept. 20th 5:30-7:30

## Auburn Court

Join your neighbors for a night of food, fun, and more.

### JOIN US FOR A TUFTS STREET HALLOWEEN BLOCK PARTY

Saturday, October 28th 3PM - 9PM

Raindate October 29th

**ACTIVITIES:** FACE PAINTING, PUMPKIN ART, VIDEO GAME TOURNAMENT, SCAVENGER HUNT, DONUT RACE, POPCORN, MOVING PICTURE SHOW, CAMBRIDGE PLAY STREETS & MORE

**BLOCK PARTY SCHEDULE:**  
3 PM - 5:30 PM - ACTIVITIES

### Wednesday, May 31

1pm Street painting (all afternoon)

### Thursday, June 1

5pm Water play for kids  
7:30pm Handwork circle (bring mending, knitting, sketching)

### Friday, June 2

8pm Blender drinks and street games for adults

### Saturday, June 3

3pm Snakes of the World show  
5pm Potluck, History of Cottage St., music, and games

### Sunday, June 4

10:30am Family yoga (bring a mat)

Come meet neighbors, old and new.

Invision a safer and more delightful future with this 5-day combination block party and alternative street-use experiment.

Cottage Street will remain open to abutters throughout the event.  
Questions? Call or text Roy at 617 230 3088.  
Party is on, rain or shine.

**DETAILS**

party.

Come to our Party!!!!

People in (others will)

Pleasant st.

Party



# Our Reach

While these numbers do not include the impact of neighbor-to-neighbor conversations, events, and flyers, here is a snapshot of our online reach:

| PLATFORM                                    | 2023 UPDATE    | CHANGE FROM 2022            |
|---|----------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Website</b><br>cambridgeport.org         | 1,817 views    | <b>23% more views</b>       |
| <b>Conversation Listserv</b>                | 63 new members | <b>50% more new members</b> |
| <b>Updates-Only Listserv</b>                | 18 new members | <b>80% more new members</b> |
| <b>Twitter</b><br>@cportneighbors           | 309 followers  | <b>11% more followers</b>   |
| <b>Instagram</b><br>@cambridgeportneighbors | 882 followers  | <b>38% more followers</b>   |
| <b>Facebook</b><br>@cambridgeportneighbors  | 61 followers   | <b>new this year</b>        |



# Other Activities

- The Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee completed its third year of monthly meetings, led by Board Member Valerie A. Bonds and former Board Member Brian Aull. Our DEI core group and participants provide Cambridgeport with the opportunity to discuss issues centered on working against racism in our community, creating an understanding through shared readings and encouraging a joint effort towards equitable outcomes for all. The DEI Committee hosts informational meetings and works toward bringing together members of our community to address inequities and amplify marginalized voices in Cambridge and beyond.
- We served our final year as fiscal sponsor for Black History in Action for Cambridgeport, a nonprofit working for community-based reparations and racial healing at St. Augustine's Church by creating an inclusive Black-led neighborhood space for arts, documentation, organizing, and joy. They no longer need fiscal sponsorship and they will continue to lead on the final stages of restoring St. Augustine's Church.
- In October, our board president joined a team of HRI staff and residents at the 2023 NeighborWorks America Community Leadership Institute. Participants learned about comprehensive approaches to community development and strategies for resident outreach and leadership development. The CNA and HRI will work together on a civic engagement leadership development program, to be announced in 2024.



# Thank you!

Thank you to all who participated and helped to strengthen our community, and welcome to all of the new faces who have joined us. We look forward to what we can accomplish together in 2024!



**Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association, Inc.**  
cambridgeport.org  
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