



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA • MARCH 30, 2020

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Regular Meeting

Sullivan Chamber

5:30 PM

Cambridge City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

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## I. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

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1. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$52,890.00 from Free Cash to the General Fund Human Service Programs Other Ordinary Maintenance account for the support of the continued operation of the Y2Y Youth Shelter for the next few weeks.

***CMA 2020 #74***

This appropriation will fund the operational costs of the Y2Y Youth Shelter, which is located in the basement of the First Church Universal Unitarian Church at 1 Church St. In Harvard Square for the next few weeks. The shelter is typically run by Harvard University students, was negatively affected by the closure of Harvard University to control the spread of COVID-19, Y2Y has transitioned to a professional staff, with laundry service and purchased meals rather than students and volunteers. By covering the cost of professional staff and these additional expenses, this appropriation will keep the Y2Y Youth Shelter open until April 15, it's seasonal closing date. However, as the homeless youth aged 18-24 that Y2Y serves may not be comfortable moving to the emergency homeless shelter being created at the War Memorial and the CRLS Field House, and as the City has a vested interest in ensuring our homeless residents stay healthy and sheltered during this public health crisis, I am grateful that the City Manager has expressed a willingness to fund the Y2Y Shelter for an extended period of time past April 15 if the church that houses it is satisfied with the new shelter transition to a fully professional staff.

This item was adopted.

2. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the recommended reappointment of Christopher Bator as a member of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority for a term of 5-years.

***CMA 2020 #75***

This item was referred to the Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee for further discussion.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 20-3, regarding the feasibility of purchasing sensory bags for Police vehicles as a pilot program.

***CMA 2020 #76***

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This report comes from a policy order I filed alongside Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Simmons, and Councillor McGovern earlier this year, where we asked the City Manager to explore purchasing sensory bags for the Police Department. Sensory bags can be used during Police interactions with individuals on the Autism Spectrum, helping establish a sense of trust, and reducing stress. This communication announces that the Police Department is purchasing fifty sensory bags to be used in all marked patrol cars, and that the use of these bags will be incorporated in future Police trainings. I am hopeful that, with these sensory bags, we can help ensure our Police Department meets the needs of all members of our community.

This item was placed on file on the consent agenda (no discussion).

4. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the use of the War Memorial Recreation Center and Field House on Cambridge Street, which is adjacent to and part of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School campus, for an emergency shelter for the homeless due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

### ***CMA 2020 #77***

This communication announces that the War Memorial Recreation Center and Field House will be used as an emergency homeless shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic. The location is already a certified emergency shelter location, and was chosen by an Emergency Task Force as the City's only viable option for an emergency homeless shelter. Due to the layout of the building, there will be three distinct sections for residents: one that will house our homeless residents (50-100 beds), one for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 as they self-isolate (25-50 beds), and lastly a section allowing those with symptoms to quarantine (22 beds) until they can be tested and receive their test results. Day programming will be provided by Baycove Human Services for individuals not showing symptoms, while a team of medical professionals will be available for each section. Private security will be employed within the building, and the Cambridge Police Department will ensure there is no disruption to the surrounding neighborhood. It is crucial that our most vulnerable residents are taken care of during these challenging times, and their health is critical to flattening the curve of transmission for the entire community, so it is heartening to see that City leadership is so dedicated to serving our homeless residents. As [this report](#) shows, it is especially important that our homeless population is sheltered, as these residents are often older, have underlying health conditions, have a high rate of susceptibility, and lack proper access to hygienic materials. Accordingly, homeless residents are more likely than their housed counterparts to be hospitalized, need critical care, and to pass away as a result of contracting Coronavirus, and providing access to housing plays a key role in lowering this likelihood. With an already overwhelmed healthcare system, we must reduce further strain, and keep our homeless residents safe from preventable deaths.

This item was placed on file.

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**II. CALENDAR**

**ON THE TABLE**

1. That the City Manager is requested to direct the City Solicitor, Community Development, Public Works, Inspectional Services and any other related departments to review the proposed amendments regarding the prohibition of Natural Gas Infrastructure in New Buildings.

**TABLED ON JANUARY 27, 2020**

**POR 2019 #339**

No action taken.

2. That the “2020 Cycling Safety Ordinance” be forwarded to the Ordinance Committee for discussion and recommendation.

**TABLED ON MARCH 23, 2020**

**POR 2020 #50**

No action taken.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 18-108, regarding a report on offering early voting in City Council and School Committee Elections.

**PENDING RESPONSE FROM LEGISLATURE**

**CMA 2018 #286**

No action taken.

### III. APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS

1. An application was received from Sam Kachmar, requesting permission for a curb cut at the premises numbered 207 Lakeview Avenue; said petition has received approval from Inspectional Services, Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Historical Commission and Public Works. No response has been received from the neighborhood association.

***APP 2020 #19***

As some abutters have expressed concerns over this application, and as there is confusion as to whether a zoning variance is needed for this curb cut, Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right (no action was taken during this meeting, and it will appear on next week's City Council agenda).

## IV. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

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1. That the City Manager be and is hereby requested to work with the Cambridge Housing Authority and other appropriate personnel to enforce compliance with this order in publicly owned housing, publicly subsidized housing, and federally assisted housing.

**Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler**  
**POR 2020 #66**

This policy order, sponsored by Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and myself, requests landlords and property owners comply with a series of housing relief measures. Such measures would include forgoing rent increases for sixty days, forgoing the evictions of tenants with demonstrated, substantial loss of income for sixty days, and enacting a 120 day grace period for tenants hit hard financially to may up rent payments. While the City does not have the power to place a mandatory moratorium on rent payments (such action would have to be taken at the state or federal level), it is crucial that the City does everything it can to alleviate the burden of rent for our residents, especially since April 1st is quickly approaching. This order was amended to strike out two previous sections requesting compliance from the Cambridge Housing Authority (as there are concerns over sending mixed messages to tenants in federally-subsidized housing) and one that asked the City Manager to explore providing relief to unpaid landlords and property managers (as this needed further consideration, if the City would be responsible for rent payments). The order was also amended to ask the City Manager to encourage compliance with the order. Click [here](#) for a list of COVID-19 housing resources.

This order was adopted as amended.

2. That the City Manager is requested to confer with the Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation on streets in each neighborhood that could be closed to all non-essential traffic for the duration of the Health Emergency and report back to the council as soon as possible.

**Councillor Nolan, Councillor Carlone, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler**  
**POR 2020 #67**

Policy Orders #2 and #3 ask for certain streets to be closed to non-essential vehicular traffic during this public health crisis. It is crucial for both physical and mental wellbeing that residents are able to get outside during these difficult times, whether it be jogging to get exercise, or taking their kids on a bike ride to expend some energy. Many of our streets are near-empty, as vehicular traffic has substantially decreased as non-essential businesses and schools have closed physical locations. Yet, pedestrians and cyclists are required to remain on the sidewalks, meaning they cannot safely and responsibly practice social distancing. Closing certain streets will help our residents maintain their health while staying safe during these troubling times. As she wanted to allow for further deliberation and consideration on these policy orders, Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right on Policy Orders #2 and #3.

Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right.

3. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with DCR to explore closing Memorial Drive for the duration of the Stay at Home order to give people in Cambridge a safe space to exercise and be outside without violating social distancing practices

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**Councillor Zondervan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Nolan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler**  
**POR 2020 #68**

See Policy Order and Resolution List Item #2 for discussion.

Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right.

4. That the City Manager explore short-term solutions to expand essential internet access to Cambridge residents who lack it during the pandemic until such time that a municipal broadband network can be implemented

**Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Nolan, Councillor McGovern**  
**POR 2020 #69**

This order was adopted.

5. Moratorium on rent payments, mortgage payments, evictions and foreclosures

**Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Carlone**  
**RES 2020 #87**

This resolution encourages the state and federal government to impose a moratorium on rent payments, mortgage payments, evictions, and foreclosures to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 health emergency.

This order was adopted.

6. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the relevant City departments to give the Council a financial impact summary from April 1 to June 30, 2020 and how it may impact this current year's/next year's budget and free cash.

**Councillor Toomey**  
**POR 2020 #70**

This order was amended to add Councillor Simmons and Councillor Nolan as co-sponsors.

This order was adopted as amended.

7. That the City Council go on record stating its opposition to the Interior Secretary's disestablishment of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's reservation, and its solidarity with the members of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

**Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Zondervan**  
**POR 2020 #71**

This order was adopted.

8. That the City Council go on record in support of SD.2888: An Act Concerning Business Interruption Insurance

**Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor McGovern**  
**POR 2020 #72**

I filed this policy order with Mayor Siddiqui and Councillor McGovern to support a bill currently being considered in the Massachusetts State Legislature, SD.2888: An Act Concerning Business Interruption Insurance. Our small businesses have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with the recently mandated closure of all non-essential businesses. At a time when businesses should be relying

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on business interruption claims to make up for lost revenue, their claims are being widely denied due to virus clauses in their policies, and a lack of physical damage to their locations. SD.28888 focuses on uplifting small businesses during their time of need by mandating insurance companies pay these claims to businesses with under 150 employees. As the City has created [a resources list for businesses](#), and as Mayor Siddiqui and I have hosted a [Small Business Virtual Town Hall](#), the City Council's documented support for this bill is just one of the many ways we are supporting our local business community. This order was amended to add Councillor Toomey as a co-sponsor.

This order was adopted as amended.