



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA • APRIL 6, 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. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a request for the City Council to adopt a statutory small business exemption for personal property accounts equal to or less than \$10,000.00 in assessed value, and if approved as a special act by the Legislature and Governor of the Commonwealth, for personal property accounts equal to or less than \$20,000.00 in assessed value.

***CMA 2020 #78***

This communication proposes that the City adopts a small business exemption for personal property accounts less than \$10,000 in assessed value, which municipalities across the Commonwealth already have the right to do. It also proposes sending a Home Rule Petition to the State Legislature which, if passed, would allow us to raise that cap to \$20,000. At Fiscal Year 2020 tax rates, these exemptions would save a small business \$126.80 for a \$10,000 exemption, and \$253.60 for a \$20,000 exemption. As the Chair of the Economic Development and University Relations Committee, eliminating fees and alleviating the financial burden placed on small businesses was a priority of mine before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and even more so now. Small relief measures like these add up, and are crucial to ensuring we come out of this public health crisis with a recognizable Main Street and a strong local, small business community. [Click here](#) to learn more about how the City is supporting our small businesses during these challenging times.

This item was adopted.

2. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the transfer of \$25,000 from the General Fund Electrical Department Salary & Wages Account to the Electrical Travel and Training account (Judgments and Damages) to cover medical services and/or prescription reimbursement costs for personnel injured in performance of their duties.

***CMA 2020 #79***

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

3. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$16,620.00 from Free Cash to the General Fund Human Service Programs Other Ordinary Maintenance account for the support of the daytime operation of the First Church in Cambridge Shelter for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis.

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF APRIL 6, 2020

### ***CMA 2020 #80***

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

4. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to an update on COVID-19.

### ***CMA 2020 #81***

City Manager Louis A. DePasquale, Police Commissioner Branville Bard, and Chief Public Health Officer Claude Jacob gave their weekly COVID-19 update. After announcing the creation of an emergency homeless shelter at the War Memorial Recreation Center last week, the City Staff reported that the sections for homeless residents who have Coronavirus or who have symptoms will be open later this week. The main section for non-symptomatic individuals will be opening next week. [Click here](#) to read more about the Emergency Homeless Shelter. They also announced that Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have generously donated \$250,000 to go towards the costs of running the shelter. The City has been partnering with the Universities to support our local community during these difficult times, with Harvard dorms being available for healthcare workers who need to self-isolate, and MIT offering similar quarantine space for first responders. In terms of infection, we are also seeing that women are testing positive for Coronavirus [at a disproportionately higher rate](#) than men here in Cambridge. Moving forward, the City's Public Health Department should investigate this health disparity and look at other factors, such as race, to ensure that our COVID-19 response is equitable, and works for all residents.

This item was placed on file.

## II. CALENDAR

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### CHARTER RIGHT

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.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN  
IN COUNCIL MARCH 30, 2020  
APP 2020 #19**

At our last City Council meeting, Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right on this application (meaning no action was taken on this item during the previous meeting, and it appeared on this week's agenda for further consideration) because of concerns he heard from abutters. As the neighbors have since resolved their differences with the petitioner, the City Council has moved forward and approved this application.

This application was approved.

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.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN  
COUNCIL MARCH 30, 2020  
POR 2020 #67**

These orders, Calendar Items #2 and #3, both ask the City Manager to explore closing certain City streets to non-essential vehicular traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the statewide closure of non-essential businesses and the Stay at Home Advisory extended until May 4th, our usually car-filled streets are empty. Meanwhile, our residents are unable to responsibly and safely practice social distancing on our narrow sidewalks. This poses a risk to countless residents, whether it be runners or cyclists out getting exercise to promote physical and mental wellbeing, essential employees on their daily commute to work, or someone running errands for their older or immuno-compromised neighbors. Closing these streets to non-essential traffic will give our residents more space to socially distance, helping them stay safe and healthy. These orders were tabled to allow an Expert Advisory Panel to consider them, and report back.

This order was tabled.

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.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF APRIL 6, 2020**

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN  
COUNCIL MARCH 30, 2020  
POR 2020 #68**

This order was tabled. See Calendar Item #2 for discussion.

**ON THE TABLE**

4. 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 was taken.

5. 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 was taken.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

6. 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 was taken.

### III. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

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1. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the relevant City departments to give the Council a financial impact summary on how the local Covid-19 response will be impacting the City's free cash and ability to budget looking into July 1, 2021, and to report back to the City Council in a timely manner.

**Councillor Simmons, Councillor Carlone**

***POR 2020 #74***

The City Council has a rule that no policy order can be considered if it is substantially similar to one previously considered by the City Council during the same legislative term (a two year period). There is confusion as to whether [the above policy order](#) is substantially similar to a [previous order](#) that was adopted at our March 30, 2020 meeting. Accordingly, Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right so a determination could be made on whether these orders are substantially similar, and if the above policy order can be considered.

Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right.

2. That the Mayor's Office be and hereby is urged to convene discussions with representatives of MIT and Harvard University to make determinations as to whether this year's annual senior luncheon gatherings shall be delayed or cancelled, to determine whether alternative celebrations can be planned in their wake, and to report back to the City Council in a timely manner

**Councillor Simmons, Councillor Toomey**

***POR 2020 #75***

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

3. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with the relevant City departments to report back to the Council on what efforts have been made to work with other municipalities on this issue and to work with Cambridge's State Delegation and the Governor's office for a comprehensive regional housing plan to be put in place to house the homeless during the COVID-19 emergency.

**Councillor Toomey, Councillor Simmons, Councillor McGovern**

***POR 2020 #76***

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

4. That the City Manager expand tax-filing and stimulus benefit assistance to low-income and unhoused residents

**Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Zondervan**

***POR 2020 #77***

This order was adopted.