



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA • APRIL 27, 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

1. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of the Children's Trust Fund grant for the Center for Families program in the amount of \$36,750 to the Department of Human Service Programs Salary and Wages account (\$31,053.00) and to the Other Ordinary Maintenance account (\$5,697.00) which will be used by the Center for Families to support family programs targeting parents of children up to eight years, which include a variety of family support and parent education programs and resources.

**CMA 2020 #86**

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

2. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the additional appropriation of the Low Income Heating Assistance Program Grant in the amount of \$309,676, funded by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services and administered in Massachusetts by the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development, to the Grant Fund Human Service Programs Salary and Wages account (\$15,425), Other Ordinary Maintenance account (\$293,551), and the Travel and Training account (\$700) to allow the operation of the Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) serving Cambridge and Somerville.

**CMA 2020 #87**

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

3. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$114,359 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 from April 16 through May 31.

**CMA 2020 #88**

This communication announces that the City will fund continued operations for the Y2Y Youth Shelter through the end of May. The Y2Y Youth Shelter is typically run by volunteer students from Harvard University, but local college closures put the Shelter at risk of closing. I am grateful for the City's efforts in funding professional staff and programming needs for the Shelter, allowing it to stay open past its usual seasonal closure date of April 15th. Without the Y2Y Youth Shelter, these homeless residents would be put at a higher risk of COVID-19 infection, and possibly have to undergo a stressful move to a larger homeless shelter with a more diverse age group and unfamiliar surroundings. It is especially crucial that we take every step possible to support our homeless residents during this public health crisis,

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and I am hopeful that the City will continue to work with the Y2Y Youth Shelter to fund its operation through the entire duration of this pandemic.

This item was adopted.

4. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$500,000 from Free Cash to the General Fund Public Works Other Ordinary Maintenance account which will be used for snowstorm related expenses associated with snow plowing and snow removal contracts, salt, and other materials.

***CMA 2020 #89***

This item was adopted.

5. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a supplemental appropriation of \$230,000 from Free Cash to the Public Investment Fund Public Works Extraordinary Expenditures account to fund the procurement of equipment for use in snow and ice operations.

***CMA 2020 #90***

This item was adopted.

6. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a supplemental appropriation of \$400,000 from Free Cash to the Public Works Public Investment Fund Extraordinary Expenditures account to fund snowstorm related street repairs.

***CMA 2020 #91***

This item was adopted.

7. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$500,000 donated to the City by Harvard University (\$250,000) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (\$250,000), to the Grant Fund Public Works Extraordinary Expenditures Account for the construction and operation of the War Memorial Temporary Emergency Shelter at 1640 Cambridge Street.

***CMA 2020 #92***

This communication states that Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have donated a combined \$500,000 to fund the War Memorial temporary emergency homeless shelter, [which opened on April 17th](#). As the Chair of the Economic Development and University Relations Committee, I am thankful for this support from our local universities, and will continue to explore how they can be key partners in our COVID-19 response and recovery plan.

This item was adopted.

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

***CMA 2020 #93***

In this part of the meeting, senior City staff gave a COVID-19 update. City Manager Louis A. DePasquale began by announcing two emergency orders he issued earlier that day, one [requiring residents to use masks or other face coverings when in public](#), and another [allowing restaurants to sell groceries](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both of these emergency orders are crucial efforts to help support the health and vitality of our community in these challenging times. Wearing masks when outside the home is one of the most crucial ways we can prevent further spread of COVID-19, and this emergency order compliments [a policy order](#) Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Simmons, Councillor

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McGovern, and I previously filed requiring employees and patrons alike wear face coverings when in essential businesses, therefore protecting the health of our frontline essential employees. As both the Chair of the Economic Development and University Relations Committee, and someone who is deeply passionate about expanding access to healthy and nutritious food, I am also grateful for this effort to support our struggling small businesses by allowing restaurants to sell groceries. The City Manager also noted that speed and volume issues with [our sound trucks](#) (which play important COVID-19 messages on mask wearing, physical distancing, and more) have been resolved, and that he and Mayor Siddiqui hope to hold another ‘Ask the Mayor and City Manager’ show to answer residents’ questions sometime this week. [Click here](#) to watch the first ‘Ask the Mayor and City Manager’ episode, which aired last Friday.

Police Commissioner Branville Bard gave an update on the status of crime in the City, noting that while we saw a slightly higher crime rate in the beginning of 2020, incidents have decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also emphasized the critical work the Police Department is doing to support domestic violence victims and survivors, and their collaboration with community partners like the Transition House to provide follow-up services. [Click here](#) to view an updated list of domestic violence resources, or [click here](#) to learn more about safety planning during COVID-19.

The City’s Director of Communications, Lee Gianetti, provided an update on the crucial work he and his team are doing to ensure our elderly residents have information readily available to them. He shared that the Senior Outreach Team, which makes calls to residents over 70 to provide wellbeing checks and provide resources, has already made 1500 calls, and is hoping to expand their reach in the coming weeks. A mailer was also sent to households with elderly residents listing resources for seniors during this pandemic in multiple languages. [Click here](#) for a list of resources available to seniors.

Assistant City Manager Ellen Semenovoff gave an update on the Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund, as well as other human services the City is providing during this pandemic. So far, \$3.6 million has been raised for the Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund, and around half a million dollars will have been distributed to Cambridge residents and families in need with the next round of checks written. [Click here](#) to apply for financial assistance through [the Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund](#), or [click here](#) to donate. She also shared information about the success of the City’s efforts to combat food insecurity by establishing the [Community Food Line](#), and the [City’s partnership with local restaurants](#) to provide meals to homeless shelters and meals programs. Additionally, 150 laptops have been loaned to Cambridge Public Schools students who usually lack access to a computer at home, allowing them to participate in remote learning, while the Center for Families and Baby U are offering online programming and family support.

Claude Jacob, the City’s Chief Public Health Officer, and Dr. Lou Ann Bruno-Murtha, Division Chief of Infectious Diseases and Medical Director of Infection Prevention at the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) provided a public health update. They shared that the Cambridge case count has risen to 722 positive cases, and 45 deaths. Residents who tested positive for COVID-19 in Cambridge have a current total recovery rate of 12%, which mirrors the national average. Additionally, the number of positive cases appears to have plateaued, suggesting Cambridge will not have problems with supplying ventilators to patients who need it. Our hospitals’ medical-surgery capacity is at pre-pandemic levels,

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more intensive care beds have been added, and tele-health services mean patients with chronic health conditions are continuing to get the care they need. There are also plans to open a COVID-19 testing site in Cambridge sometime this week. I am hopeful that the City will continue to partner with our bio-tech community to continue expanding access to Coronavirus testing, and to work on other projects that can help keep our residents safe. Claude also noted that he is working on getting the racial/ethnic COVID-19 case data I requested from the Public Health Department, and that his team is being proactive in filling in gaps in incomplete patient profiles. The data we already have shows that black residents are three times more likely to contract Coronavirus, illuminating health disparities in our community that mirror those across the country. This data demonstrates that the City needs to be doing more to protect our communities of color against COVID-19, and must take additional steps to ensure this pattern does not continue.

Nancy Mahan from Bay Cove Human Services and Mark McGovern from Healthcare for the Homeless shared an update on the temporary emergency homeless shelter. 54 homeless residents are currently living at this shelter, and ten more residents are expected to join them once they recover from COVID-19. Testing homeless residents for COVID-19 has, so far, been a part of the pre-screening process for the shelter, but they are considering how to balance the barrier to entry that the tests' turn-around time poses with the need to protect the health of residents already at the shelter. An on-site Nurse Practitioner and a support staff member from Healthcare for the Homeless provides direct care to shelter guests, and COVID-19 positive homeless residents [who have moved to hotel rooms](#) are routinely checked up on. Lastly, as Nancy noted during discussion, "Homelessness is a national disgrace. Shelters are not a permanent solution. The solution is safe, affordable housing." We, as a City, need to do more to support our homeless residents. While homeless shelters serve as an invaluable resource to our most vulnerable residents, they do not address the systemic factors that cause people to become homeless, and are no equivalent to stable, long-term, affordable housing. While immediately addressing COVID-19 will continue to be a priority for my colleagues and I on the City Council for the next several weeks, I hope we will be able to properly revisit the issue of affordable housing once we've overcome this public health crisis, and give proper thought to how we can give our homeless residents and anyone struggling to find affordable housing the support they truly deserve.

This item was placed on file.

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**II. CALENDAR**

**CHARTER RIGHT**

1. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to repurpose the War Memorial facility into only a COVID-19 testing and temporary quarantine site for unhoused individuals awaiting their test results.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN IN COUNCIL APRIL 13, 2020.**

**POR 2020 #85**

This order originally appeared on last week's agenda, and asks the City Manager to explore housing homeless residents in vacant hotel and dorm rooms during the COVID-19 pandemic, and instead use the War Memorial emergency homeless shelter as a testing and temporary quarantine site only. After Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right at our last meeting (no vote was taken last week, and it appeared on this week's agenda) to allow for further discussion, new amendments were added. Notably, this order now asks for additional safety measures to be added to the emergency homeless shelter, including my request to place partitions in between beds, as well as personal protective equipment distributions, biweekly re-testing for Coronavirus, and more. I appreciate the collaboration Councillor Zondervan has offered on these amendments to safeguard the health of our most vulnerable residents, and would also like to thank Councillor McGovern for leading the City's efforts to support our homeless residents over these past several weeks. This order was also amended to include a wording change from Councillor Toomey to specifically include homeless families as eligible to receive access to vacant hotel or dorm rooms if such a program is created, as homeless families do not typically take part in the traditional homeless shelter system.

This item was adopted as amended.

**ON THE TABLE**

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. That the City Manager is requested to confer with the Director of Traffic, Parking, and

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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**

This policy order, which Councillor Nolan, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, and I sponsored, asks the City Manager to explore closing certain streets to non-essential vehicular traffic. As this order had been tabled, we've been able to see other municipalities successfully move in this direction during these past few weeks. Just yesterday, New York City [announced plans to open up 100 miles of street space](#) for residents' use, despite being much harder hit by COVID-19 than Cambridge. By closing some streets to non-essential vehicular traffic, pedestrians, runners, and cyclists would be able to safely practice physical distancing, something our narrow sidewalks wouldn't usually allow. Moving forward with this policy order puts the request in the hands of our COVID-19 Expert Advisory Panel, so they can advise when is the right time to open up our streets once we've overcome our Coronavirus case surge, and help us plan for the future.

This item was adopted.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

5. 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.

## V. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

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1. That the City Manager is requested to work with relevant departments to restrict third party delivery services fees to restaurants and disclose to customers how delivery charges are allocated.

**Councillor Nolan, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui**  
***POR 2020 #88***

This policy order, submitted by Councillor Nolan, Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui, and myself, asks the City Manager to limit the commission fees that third-party food delivery services charge restaurants to a maximum fee of 10%. These third-party food delivery services could also be required to disclose how the cost of orders is being allocated. Third-party food delivery services have a long history of charging restaurants exorbitant fees for their delivery services, often around a striking 30% of the order cost. Since restaurants already have [notoriously low profit margins](#), and the Stay at Home Advisory means more residents are opting for food delivery, rather than eating-in, the effects of these commission fees are devastating for our small, local restaurants. I'm hopeful that, with a commission cap, we can join [a growing list of municipalities](#) that are alleviating the impacts that these predatory practices have on our local restaurant community during their time of need. [Click here](#) to see what Cambridge businesses are open and offering takeout or delivery service, and please consider supporting them in these challenging times.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

2. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to issue an emergency order to make wearing a cloth face covering in public mandatory for all persons in the City of Cambridge, and that such a covering must be worn outdoors, inside essential businesses, and when entering and exiting residential buildings

**Councillor McGovern, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Toomey**  
***POR 2020 #89***

This order, sponsored by Councillor McGovern, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Toomey, and myself would have asked the City Manager to issue an emergency order mandating the use of masks or other face covering when residents are in public if it had been adopted. Shortly before our City Council meeting, however, the City Manager did just that, [issuing an emergency order](#) requiring every resident above the age of five wear a face covering when outside of their home. I am thankful for this swift action by the City because wearing masks is one of the critical ways we can prevent further COVID-19 transmission. Masks protect both the wearer and those around them and are a crucial part of keeping our community members safe during this pandemic, whether it be one of the frontline workers keeping our essential businesses open, or someone running errands for an elderly neighbor. I am hopeful that, by wearing masks and practicing physical distancing, our residents, especially our most vulnerable, at-risk residents, will be better protected from COVID-19. This emergency order goes into effect on April 29, 2020, and please contact my office if you need help finding a cloth mask to wear. [Click here](#) to read the City's press release on this emergency order. This order was placed on file, rather than withdrawn, so a record of it could be kept.

This order was placed on file.

3. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to establish what specific steps will be made to ensure the safety of the workforce upon the re-opening of City offices, and what specific options will be made

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available to those City workers who are more susceptible to severe covid-19 infections and may require the ability to work remotely until such time as this crisis passes

**Councillor Simmons**

***POR 2020 #90***

This order was adopted.

### 4. Mental Health Awareness Month - May 2020

**Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Simmons**

***POR 2020 #91***

This policy order, sponsored by Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Simmons, and myself, has the City Council recognize May as Mental Health Awareness Month. Maintaining mental health and ensuring those affected by mental illness have comprehensive support systems needs to be a priority now more than ever. To ensure our residents have the mental health resources they need to get through these stressful times, the City will be hosting weekly “Mental Health Mondays” throughout the month of May, in addition to other related programming. City Hall will be lit up in green to honor Mental Health Awareness Month as well. [Click here](#) to learn more about ways you can support your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. This order was amended to correct a grammatical error.

This order was adopted as amended.

### 5. That the City Manager is requested to work with the Information Technology Department to utilize videoconferencing technology for City Council committee meetings

**Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler**

***POR 2020 #92***

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

### 6. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to review the recommendations listed above with the appropriate City personnel with a view toward establishing clear guidelines that will allow for the re-opening of construction projects across the City, and to report back to the City Council on this matter in a timely manner.

**Councillor Simmons**

***POR 2020 #93***

This late policy order filed by Councillor Simmons asks the City Manager to explore instituting a set of recommendations on re-opening construction projects, when it is safe to do so. As this order was a late submission, Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right to give us more time to review the order.

Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.



## VI. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

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1. A communication was received from Mayor Siddiqui, transmitting a communication regarding information from the School Committee's Public Hearing on the FY21 Budget & Budget Workshop, Curriculum & Achievement Subcommittee Meeting, and Special Education & Student Supports Subcommittee Meeting.

***COF 2020 #27***

This communication from Mayor Siddiqui serves as an update on our public schools. While [our schools are closed for the remainder of the school year](#), I am grateful for the hard work Mayor Siddiqui and the School Committee are doing to ensure that our students can continue to receive a high-quality education through remote learning, and that the City Council and broader Cambridge community remain engaged in the school budgeting process. [Click here](#) to read Mayor Siddiqui's entire public schools update.

This item was placed on file.