



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA • MAY 18, 20²⁰

Regular Meeting

Sullivan Chamber

5:30 PM

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

I. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

1. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$150,000 from Free Cash to the General Fund Human Service Programs Other Ordinary Maintenance account to support the continued operation of Food for Free services during the COVID-19 crisis.

CMA 2020 #99

This communication announces the appropriation of \$150,000 to fund an additional truck rental and additional staffing costs at Food For Free, plus an allocation of \$100,000 to purchase grocery store gift cards to residents and move them off of the home delivery list and provide a more flexible way to shop for groceries if they are able. During these past several weeks, Food For Free has truly stepped up to support some of our most vulnerable residents, providing food delivery services to over 2,000 Cambridge households, and working with the City and the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Commission to support residents in applying for SNAP and other benefits they may be entitled to, as well as reimagining how to reopen food pantries. To learn more about the invaluable work Food For Free is doing, [click here](#). Although I could not be more appreciative of this appropriation, I voted “present” to avoid a potential conflict of interest, as I serve as the K-12 Strategic Lead at Food For Free.

This item was adopted.

2. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$500,000 from the Massachusetts. Department of Environmental Protection to the Grant Fund Public Works Department Extraordinary Expenditures Account which will be supplemented with \$379,000 in City funds to purchase three plug-in hybrid rubbish packers that will replace three diesel powered rubbish packers.

CMA 2020 #100

This item was adopted.

3. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, requesting the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$6,500,000 to provide funds for the design and construction of various water pollution abatement projects, including but not limited to Sewer Capital Repairs Program and climate change preparedness efforts.

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CMA 2020 #101

City Manager's Agenda Items #3-8 all relate to the Fiscal Year 2021 budget hearings that the City Council will begin holding next week. These appropriations authorize the use of loans, so the City Council must pass them to a second reading, before adopting them. As these items were passed to a second reading, they can be adopted on June 4th, 2020, the anticipated adoption date of the FY21 budget. Tune into our June 2nd budget hearing to hear these items be discussed.

This item was passed to a second reading.

4. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, requesting the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$5,000,000 to provide funds for the reconstruction of various City streets and sidewalks.

CMA 2020 #102

See City Manager's Agenda Item #3 for discussion.

This item was passed to a second reading.

5. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, requesting the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$16,000,000 to provide funds for the Municipal Facilities Improvement Plan which will support improvements at the Department of Public works Complex including the Ryan Garage, Lafayette Square Firehouse structural repair, and other municipal buildings.

CMA 2020 #103

See City Manager's Agenda Item #3 for discussion.

This item was passed to a second reading.

6. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, requesting the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$9,000,000 to provide funds for the construction of improvements of the Lexington Avenue and River Street Firehouses.

CMA 2020 #104

See City Manager's Agenda Item #3 for discussion.

This item was passed to a second reading.

7. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, requesting the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$237,000,000 to provide funds for the design and construction of the Tobin Montessori and Vassal Lane Upper School.

CMA 2020 #105

See City Manager's Agenda Item #3 for discussion.

This item was passed to a second reading.

8. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, requesting the appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,800,000 to provide funds for various Schools for repairs to electrical service, roof replacement, chiller replacement, floor replacement and replacement of bi-directional amplifier and antenna in various school buildings.

CMA 2020 #106

See City Manager's Agenda Item #3 for discussion.

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This item was passed to a second reading.

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

CMA 2020 #107

City staff provided a COVID-19 update.

Reopening Strategy Update: With Governor Baker's recent release of [a reopening plan](#), City staff is hard at work to ensure Cambridge is ready for it. Deputy City Manager Lisa Peterson is leading efforts for the reopening of municipal government, while Assistant City Manager David Kale is overseeing the broader external Cambridge reopening. For municipal buildings, the City is considering how to safely grant residents access to buildings, while keeping visitors and employees safe. As we begin to move towards a new normal, it is critical we give employees who can remotely perform their duties flexibility to work from home. In addition to protecting older or immuno-compromised workers, there is currently no statewide plan for the reopening of schools, summer camps, or childcare facilities, which would significantly impact the ability of caregivers to physically report to work.

Open Space Update: After the City Council asked the City Manager to close Memorial Drive and [other certain streets to non-essential vehicular traffic](#) weeks ago, a two week pilot program of closing Memorial Drive and opening River Bend Park was announced. The Cambridge Police Department has been coordinating with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation as well as the State Police on safety guidelines for this pilot, and, if successful, this program could be extended and expanded. As we look towards opening up more streets, the City should look towards partnering with organizations like [Neighborways](#), an expert in shared streets that has helped other local municipalities, including Arlington, open their streets.

Small Business Relief Program Update: [Applications](#) for the recently announced [Small Business Relief Program](#) opened last week, and there has already been an outpouring of interest from our local small business community. In just a few short days, 83 applications have been received, highlighting the high-need of small businesses, and just how necessary this relief program is. 55 of those applications were submitted by minority or women owned businesses, and City staff have answered 56 inquiries from local small businesses. As applications are open until June 12th, we expect these numbers to grow. Mayor Siddiqui and I worked with City staff and the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority on this relief program for weeks, so I am hopeful that it will help us better uplift our small businesses.

Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund Update: Applications for the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund, which has raised over \$3.8 million to support Cambridge residents, families, and small businesses, have been paused. As of today, May 19th, roughly \$2.2 million has been distributed to around 1,000 Cambridge families and individuals so far.

Police Update: The Police Department is relying on voluntary compliance, mask distribution, and education to enforce [the City's emergency order](#) requiring the use of masks or other face coverings in public. No warnings or fines have been issued to date. Police Commissioner Bard also shared that operations are running relatively smoothly at [the temporary emergency homeless shelter](#) located at the

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War Memorial Recreation Center. Only a few incidents have required police intervention, which is not uncommon for a homeless shelter, and no neighborhood complaints have been received. However, he did note there has been a concerning increase in incidents with homeless residents in business squares throughout the City. The Police Department will continue to work to respond to these incidents as they arise, and work with our human services providers to ensure homeless residents have the resources they need to stay safe.

Public Works Update: During the past several weeks, our Department of Public Works (DPW) has been supporting first responders and the broader Cambridge community. Trash and recycling collection, powerwashing and litter collection in public areas, custodial services in municipal buildings, and more have continued to support public health, and are being executed in such a way that allows for greater physical distancing among employees. In addition, DPW has been working to create safety measures in municipal buildings, such as installing plexiglass barriers, as well as producing educational signage to help keep residents informed. The hard work and dedication of DPW have played a pivotal role in keeping residents safe during this public health crisis, and I cannot thank them enough for their vigilance and responsiveness to residents' concerns.

Seniors Update: To ensure seniors stay safe and have the resources they need, a Senior Outreach Team has been making calls to check in on older residents. Every household with a senior over the age of 70 has already received a call, so this Team is lowering the age requirement to 65 to encompass a broader group. In addition, 90% of senior center programming has moved online, ranging from fitness and art classes, to health and wellness seminars and bereavement support groups. [Click here](#) for more COVID-19 resources for seniors.

Human Services Update: The Department of Human Service Programs has been working to adapt its programs to an online format. The Office of Workforce Development is helping residents apply for unemployment benefits, while the Community Learning Centers and Youth Centers are offering students individual and group programming, advising services, and more. Pre-recorded videos are connecting preschool students to their teachers, and Baby University and the Center for Families are offering virtual home visits, dad support groups, and more. Plans for the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program and summer camps are still in the works, but they will likely be held virtually, with potentially some summer camp programming in large open spaces to allow for outdoor time, while maintaining physical distancing.

Public Health Update: In Cambridge, there have been [895 positive cases](#) of COVID-19, resulting in 104 hospitalizations and 79 fatalities to date. The loss of life has had a devastating impact on our community, and the Public Health Department is working to mitigate further effects. [A new neighborhood map](#) is helping document where cases are most prevalent, and where our resources should be targeted. Indicators suggest there is a relationship between race and income with COVID-19 susceptibility, so it is especially critical we target our response to the hardest-hit areas.

Thanks to pre-screening and the Public Health Department's ongoing guidance and sanitization efforts, the War Memorial shelter remains COVID-19 free. Should a need arise, Healthcare for the Homeless operates a daily medical clinic there to help stop any possible transmission.

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To ensure residents are getting the care they need, and to expand our contact tracing efforts, the City and the Cambridge Health Alliance are increasing COVID-19 testing efforts. Our first [universal testing site](#) opened in East Cambridge not long ago, and anyone over the age of eight is eligible for free testing, regardless of insurance, immigration, or symptomatic status. Additionally, [mobile testing](#) began in the Port neighborhood today, May 19th, and will begin in Cambridge Housing Authority senior buildings tomorrow. Comprehensive universal testing is critical to keeping our community healthy, so I am grateful for the partnership of MIT, the Broad Institute, Pro EMS, and the Cambridge Fire Department in helping make this a reality. [Click here](#) to learn more about mobile testing.

This item was placed on file.

10. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$1 million from the Community Benefits Stabilization Fund to the Grant Fund Human Services Other Ordinary Maintenance for the purpose of entering into grant agreements or contracts with nonprofit organizations in order for them to provide services to our most vulnerable residents during the COVID-19 emergency and recovery.

CMA 2020 #108

Mayor Siddiqui and I have been working with leaders from our local nonprofits community on the unique needs of the local non-profit community for weeks, so I was grateful to see this \$1,000,000 allocation in identified funding to provide grant assistance or to contract for services with local nonprofits. The COVID-19 has hit our nonprofit community hard, putting them under acute financial stress, while the residents need their services now more than ever. By infusing this funding into our local nonprofits, we're safeguarding the vitality of these organizations, and ensuring they can continue offering vulnerable residents the resources they need. The City hopes to hold a Community Benefits Advisory Committee meeting in early June to discuss possible eligibility criteria and a call for applications, so we can be ready to solicit applications in July. The City staff will be working with the Cambridge Non Profit Coalition on next steps and the process.

This item was adopted.

II. CALENDAR

CHARTER RIGHT

1. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with the Police Department to provide information to the City Council about social media protocols and what disciplinary action has been taken as result of the Department's social media use incident.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN
COUNCIL MAY 11, 2020**

POR 2020 #107

At last week's City Council meeting, Councillor Simmons exercised her charter right (no vote was taken, and it appears on the agenda for the next City Council meeting) on this order. Filed by Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Zondervan, and Councillor Carlone, the order originally asked for a report on what disciplinary action had been taken after a police officer uploaded an offensive, unprofessional post on the official Cambridge Police Department twitter account. However, after the City Solicitor opined that the City Council cannot inquire about disciplinary actions as personnel files are confidential information, and the City Council does not oversee appointments to or removals from the Police Department, the order was amended by substitution. The new language has the City Council go on record as being disappointed that such an incident occurred, and supports disciplinary action being taken for this breach of trust. It also asks the City Manager to provide an update on how social media protocols for Cambridge Police Department accounts and employees' personal accounts have changed. Although I agree with the spirit of ensuring no future incidents occur, I am concerned that possible restrictions on employees' personal social media accounts could have harmful implications on freedom of speech.

This order 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.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4. 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

1. That the City Council go on record in support of House Bill 5036/Senate Bill 2659

Councillor Toomey, Mayor Siddiqui

POR 2020 #110

This order, submitted by Councillor Toomey and Mayor Siddiqui, has the City Council go on record in support of the complimentary state bills [HD5036](#), An Act to provide equal stimulus checks to immigrant taxpayers, and [S2659](#), An Act to provide equal stimulus checks to immigrant taxpayers. Although they face an equal burden from the COVID-19 pandemic, immigrant taxpayers without social security numbers are ineligible to receive federal stimulus checks. These bills would provide them the estimated 57,000 excluded residents with state-funded stimulus money, so I am grateful for the work Councillor Toomey and Mayor Siddiqui are doing to support our vulnerable community members, and ensure immigration status does not limit their ability to weather this pandemic.

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

2. Creating an Arts Recovery Advisory Committee

Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Nolan, Councillor McGovern

POR 2020 #111

I filed this policy order with Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Nolan, and Councillor McGovern to ask the City Manager to convene an Arts Recovery Advisory Committee. The Arts Community has been hit hard by this pandemic, with the Massachusetts Cultural Council reporting that \$264 million in revenue has been lost, and 15,000 jobs have been affected. And as the Arts play a unique role in our lives, not only serving as a vital driving force in our local economy, but also bringing us together, enriching our lives, and helping relieve stress in difficult times like these, we must do everything we can to ensure they recover from this public health crisis. By creating a group comprised of City staff from the Cambridge Arts Council and the Economic Development Division of the Community Development Department, local arts organizations, and individual artists from different creative disciplines, we can gain valuable insight on what support the Arts community needs, provide guidance, and develop a gradual sector reopening plan. The Arts are the lifeblood of our community and no reopening strategy would be complete without them, so we must give them a seat at the table, and the tools they need to thrive.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

3. That the City Council go on record in strong support of Bill HD. 5054 relative to restaurant delivery commissions during the COVID-19 state of emergency

Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor McGovern

POR 2020 #112

Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor McGovern and I submitted this policy order to reaffirm the City Council's support of capping third-party food delivery service commissions. We previously adopted [a policy order](#) asking the City Manager to explore the possibility of capping these commission fees at 10%, but nothing definitive has been done so far. With this new policy order, the City Council goes on record in support of the state bill [HD5054](#), An Act relative to restaurant delivery commissions during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Restaurants operate at infamously slim profit margins, and as they can no longer offer dine-in service, the predatory practices and exorbitant fees of third-party food delivery services are threatening their ability to survive this public health crisis. This order also asks the

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City Manager to provide an update on how the City is working to cap these fees at our next City Council meeting, so we can ensure any action can be taken quickly. As the Chair of the Economic Development and University Relations Committee, I am grateful for this effort to support local restaurants in need, and I will continue to work with our local small business community to develop a comprehensive recovery strategy. The Small Business Advisory Committee is scheduled to take up this issue at an upcoming meeting for discussion.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

4. That the City Manager is requested to provide an immediate update to the Council on the digital equity research initiative and advisory board, and on efforts to ensure reliable access to the internet citywide
Councillor Nolan, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Zondervan
POR 2020 #113

Councillor Nolan, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Zondervan, and I sponsored this order to ask for an update from the City Manager on digital equity efforts, and on what steps are being taken to conduct a municipal broadband feasibility study. Addressing connectivity issues has to be a priority to ensure low-income residents aren't left behind by the digital divide, and this is critical, now more than ever, as work, school, and social interactions move to primarily online platforms. In particular, our students are bearing the brunt of connectivity issues as we shift to remote learning, expanding the already substantial opportunity and learning gap that our low-income students face. While short-term measures, such as loaning internet hotspots to students in need, are certainly helpful, we need to move forward with a municipal broadband feasibility study to tackle this digital equity issue in a long-term, meaningful way. The order was amended to include contextual information on the digital equity research initiative, and to request an update specifically on the digital equity research initiative, rather than digital equity more generally.

This order was adopted as amended.

5. That the City Manager is requested to confer with the Election Commission and Board of Election Commissioners to determine the feasibility of universal vote-by-mail for the City of Cambridge
Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Carlone
POR 2020 #114

This policy order, submitted by Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Carlone, and I, asks the City Manager to explore the possibility of having universal vote-by-mail in Cambridge. Nationwide, voting has already been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, voting in-person could pose a risk to residents, especially seniors and immuno-compromised individuals. With the fall election season quickly approaching, it is vital that every resident has the opportunity to safely cast their ballot. This order was amended to specifically support two complementary state bills, [HD5075](#), An Act Ensuring Safe and Participatory 2020 State Elections in Response to COVID-19, and [S.2912](#), An Act Establishing Vote by Mail in 2020. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler was also added as a co-sponsor.

This order was adopted as amended.

6. That the City Manager is requested to amend the Cambridge emergency advisory on face coverings/masks to require face coverings be worn inside common areas of multi-unit buildings with the exception of 2-and 3- family buildings and in all workplaces where more than one person is present at all times.
Councillor Nolan, Councillor McGovern

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POR 2020 #115

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

7. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to develop and present to the City Council a comprehensive strategy for how we are going to reopen the city

Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

POR 2020 #116

This order was adopted.

8. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with DPW to begin distributing Gator Bags

Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Carlone

POR 2020 #117

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

9. That Chapter 2.108 be amended by inserting a new section 2.108.140

Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

POR 2020 #118

If adopted, this order would amend the emergency management section of our municipal ordinance to direct the City Manager to carry out certain actions in the event of a public health crisis. The emergency management section of the municipal ordinance was originally written to establish guidelines for wartime, but does not currently prescribe procedures for health pandemics. While I agree with the spirit of this policy order, as it is crucial we prepare for a potential second wave of COVID-19 and any other potential public health emergencies, amending the municipal ordinance now feels premature. We are still weathering this pandemic, and to truly know where the City met the needs of our community, and where it should have done more, we will need to have a postmortem report generated. By having such a report from an outside agency, we will gain valuable insight on what emergency planning we need to do in the future, and what an emergency management procedure for pandemics should look like. For that reason, the City Council voted to refer this order to the Public Safety Committee, rather than the Ordinance Committee, to allow for further discussion.

This order was referred to the Public Safety Committee.

10. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the appropriate City staff to light City Hall up gold on Monday, May 25, 2020, to paying tribute to those who have died for our nation, and remembering their service and devotion to this country.

Mayor Siddiqui

POR 2020 #119

This late policy order from Mayor Siddiqui asks the City Manager to light City Hall up gold on Memorial Day to honor the service and sacrifice of our fallen servicepeople. This order complements [a resolution](#) filed by Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor McGovern, and myself encouraging residents to observe Memorial Day. We owe our freedom to the bravery of those who serve, so I am hopeful we can have a fitting tribute to them, even during these difficult times.

This order was adopted.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

1. A communication was received from Mayor Siddiqui, communicating information from the School Committee's Special Meetings held on May 7, 2020.

COF 2020 #30

This communication from Mayor Siddiqui explains the work she and the entire School Committee have been doing to both support students during this period of remote learning, and to prepare the Cambridge Public Schools Budget. At the School Committee meeting being held tonight, May 19th, 2020, they will vote on their FY2021 budget, which, if approved, will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration. The City Council does not have the authority to approve line items, so the budget will either be adopted in its entirety, or will be rejected. Although highly unlikely, if the Schools budget is rejected, the City Manager has the authority to control schools spending thereafter. To learn more about the work Mayor Siddiqui and the School Committee is doing, [click here](#).

This communication was placed on file.