



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA NOVEMBER 2020

Regular Meeting

Sullivan Chamber

5:30PM

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

I. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

1. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a Covid-19 update.
CMA 2020 #266
City staff gave a COVID update.

Thanksgiving Update: With Thanksgiving almost here, the Public Health Department has released public health guidance on safely celebrating the holiday. Residents should avoid travel, especially if they're sick, older, or have pre-existing conditions, and if they have to travel, they should get tested for COVID beforehand. Indoor gatherings are much riskier than outdoor gatherings, and residents should get a flu shot ahead of time. For more information, and for ideas on creatively, safely celebrating this year, [click here](#).

Small Business Update: Since [the Governor announced business curfews earlier this month](#), the Inspectional Services Department and the Cambridge Police Department have been visiting local businesses to educate workers about the rules, and report there has been almost 100% compliance. The City is continuing to promote its ["Pick It Up, Cambridge" campaign](#), is offering restaurants financial support as they winterize their outdoor dining spaces with [the Patio Heater Reimbursement Pilot](#), and is working with [the Small Business Advisory Committee](#) to develop supports for our local small businesses. Don't forget to support your favorite local businesses on Small Business Saturday later this week, and to shop local all throughout the holiday season! [Click here](#) to find out what businesses are open, and how you can support them.

Homeless Services Update: The City has expanded its [Homeless Meals Program](#) to include [the Warming Center](#). Under this program, more than 90,000 meals have been served to residents experiencing homelessness, and \$700,000 has been infused into our local restaurant community. The City's [temporary emergency homeless shelter](#) is in the process of relocating to Spaulding Hospital, from its current site at the War Memorial Recreation Center. The new site is expected to open on December 16th, and all guests will receive a continuum of care from Bay Cove Human Services. The State, in conjunction with local non-profit Solutions At Work, will also be opening and operating a 58-bed homeless shelter on Green Street at the New England School of English starting on December 1st, replacing some of the shelter beds lost due to physical distancing guidelines, and helping ensure our most vulnerable residents stay warm this winter.

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Flu Update: More than 2,700 free flu vaccines were provided to residents at the City's community flu clinics, more than 2.5 times the number given in previous years. If you haven't gotten your flu shot yet, [click here](#) for more information, and plan to get yours by visiting a healthcare provider or a pharmacy, which typically administer flu shots free of charge with insurance.

Testing Update: Since March 2nd, 312,540 tests have been administered to Cambridge residents, including 50,947 tests given in the first two weeks of November. The City is offering free testing [seven days a week](#) to everyone who works or lives in Cambridge, regardless of health insurance, symptoms, or immigration status. [Click here](#) to learn more about getting tested, or [click here](#) to make your appointment. The City's free testing sites have administered 30,276 tests since April, including more than 2,000 tests on November 21st and 22nd alone as we prepare for the upcoming holidays. As we enter into a new case surge, and as the holiday season will likely mean an uptick in cases, I hope we can develop a comprehensive testing strategy for staff and residents in our local nursing homes that goes farther than state guidance.

CPS staff are offered free, onsite testing twice a week, and since October 15th, 5,038 tests have been administered to 978 staff members. The average staff member has been tested five times since October 15th, and 80.1% of staff members have gotten tested at least once. 52 students who developed symptoms during the school day have also been given tests.

Public Health Update: Cambridge's [COVID case count](#) stands at 2,047 cases, including a devastating 100 deaths. This includes more than 1,225 residents who have recovered, but our public health officials warn that we're seeing a doubling effect, with cases numbers increasing exponentially, and risk increasing rapidly. Cambridge has been recategorized as a "yellow," moderate-risk community by the State. The average daily incident rate of confirmed cases was 17.3 last week, a noticeable uptick from just a few short weeks ago.

In effort to increase community education about testing, the [Cambridge Community Corps](#) will be going door-to-door in North Cambridge, East Cambridge, the Port, and Cambridgeport speaking directly to residents and leaving information in multiple languages. The Port and Cambridgeport are being targeted due to higher rates of transmission. As these neighborhoods have larger communities of color, it's critical that we get data on the racial breakdown of who is and who isn't getting tested. The Public Health Department is stressing that tests are quick, painless, and should be done before going to any holiday gathering, and has been spreading this message through social media, press releases, and a code red announcement. Data from the City's [Wastewater Surveillance Program](#) should be available on the City's website within two weeks, and will serve as an early-warning system and inform policy-making.

This item was placed on file.

2. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$9,277,190 from Free Cash to the General Fund School Department Salaries and Wages account (\$7,446,360), General Fund School Department Other Ordinary Maintenance account (\$1,781,455), and General Fund School Department Travel and Training account (\$49,375), to fund additional costs associated with the reopening of schools with health and safety mitigations related to COVID-19.
CMA 2020 #267

This communication asks for an appropriation to pay for costs associated with reopening schools, including more staff, technology supports, and the School Lunch Program. In total, we have 1573 CPS students learning in-person currently, and the Superintendent is still planning for an eventual return of grades 4-12, and doesn't anticipate making a further appropriation request soon. I'm glad to see this investment in our scholars, but looking at classroom data across different schools, I'm concerned to see

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that remote classrooms have substantially more students than in-person classrooms, in some cases four times as many. The achievement gap in education was a significant problem before this pandemic hit, and now, as more families of color feel unsafe sending their eligible students to in-person classes and opt to keep them at home, this disparity in staffing could be expanding that gap, rather than closing it. If we strive to be an anti-racist school district, we have to find and address the quiet yet devastating ways bias permeates into our schools and impacts the education of students of color.

This item was adopted.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a request to move to Executive Session to discuss the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.

CMA 2020 #268

During our meeting, the City Council went into executive session, meaning that the meeting was closed to the public. The City Council did so in this case because discussing the matter publicly would harm the City's negotiation position.

This item was placed on file.

II. CALENDAR

CHARTER RIGHT

1. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a request for acceptance of G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23D to allow members of adjudicatory boards and commissions to vote on a matter before the adjudicatory body of which they are a member if the board member has missed one of the sessions regarding the matter at issue.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN IN
COUNCIL NOVEMBER 16, 2020**

CMA 2020 #260

This communication from the City Manager asks the City Council to adopt the “Mullin Rule.” Under the Mullin Rule, members of municipal boards or commissions who are absent from a hearing on a certain matter can later vote on that matter if they review a transcript or recording of the hearing. In the past, some hearings have been postponed on short notice when a member could not be there due to unanticipated circumstances, so adopting the Mullin Rule would avoid that inconvenience in the future. Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right (discussion ends, no vote is taken, and it appears on the next agenda) on this item at last week’s City Council meeting. This week, he proposed referring this communication to the Ordinance Committee to explore limiting how the Mullin Rule would apply, but that motion failed, and the Mullin Rule was adopted as is.

This item was adopted.

2. That the City Manager be and is hereby requested to work with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to explore the feasibility of keeping Riverbend Park open beyond November 29.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR TOOMEY IN
COUNCIL NOVEMBER 16, 2020**

POR 2020 #267

This policy order, filed by Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, and Councillor Zondervan, was originally introduced at last week’s meeting. It asks the City Manager to work with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to keep Riverbend Park open past its set closure date of November 29th, and to collect data on residents’ use of the space to inform future policy decisions. The order was amended to ask the City Manager to confer with DCR and advocate for extending Riverbend Park the length of Memorial Drive. Councillor Toomey exercised his charter-right due to concerns he had on that amendment during last week’s meeting. Having this extra space for residents to safely get outside this winter is so critical, and I was proud to support this order. Cambridge has an inequitable distribution of open space throughout the City, with more open spaces in wealthier neighborhoods like West Cambridge, so extending Riverbend Park would ensure more residents have better access to the space they need to safely travel, exercise, and enjoy the outdoors this winter.

This item was adopted as amended.

3. That the City Manager confer with the Metro Mayor’s Association to close indoor dining, gyms, casinos and other non-essential indoor activities as soon as possible and That the City Manager, Community Development Department, the Economic Development Division, the Assessing

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Department and other relevant City Departments organize a small business and restaurant relief program that will assist during this second shutdown and our efforts to stop community spread of COVID-19 and keep schools open.

CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR TOOMEY IN COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

POR 2020 #270

Last week, Mayor Siddiqui and I filed a late policy order asking the City Manager to confer with the Metro Mayor's Association on the possibility of temporarily restricting high-risk indoor activities, and to create a comprehensive financial relief package for impacted businesses, in the hopes of avoiding school closures for in-person learners. Councillor Toomey exercised his charter-right on the order at the last meeting, and this week, Mayor Siddiqui and I introduced substitute language that more clearly articulates the reasoning behind our request, and what exactly we're asking the City Manager to do. The order doesn't seek to have any business close completely, nor does it recommend restricting low-risk activities like shopping. Instead, it asks the City Manager to coordinate a regional approach to addressing the surge in cases we've been seeing in the City and across the State. As cases begin to escalate, epidemiologists have been warning that without further restrictions of high transmission activities, we may continue to see cases climb, hospitals overburdened, and death counts rising. By temporarily restricting certain high-risk activities, we could prevent having to go into a second shutdown that will harm our business community, and keep our cases low enough to keep schools open, especially for the anticipated uptick in cases after Thanksgiving.

This was not a policy order to pit families against small business owners, and small business owners against the City. Our goal--as it has always been--is to keep our community safe, and our economy resilient. There has been no community more committed to supporting small businesses than the City of Cambridge. Since March, we have worked tirelessly to support small businesses and restaurants as we endured a full shutdown of our economy. The City has provided small business grants/loans, patio heater reimbursement, decreased patio and alcohol license fees, and provided free testing for all employees. This policy order builds on those efforts and emphasizes the need for a small business financial relief package from the City.

As we make hard choices, we must make informed choices. Both at the regular City Council meeting, and at [the Special Meeting earlier](#) yesterday, we heard from experts that indoor, unmasked activities pose a major public health risk. We also know that extended school closures have devastating consequences on children both mentally and physically, especially for the youngest and most vulnerable kids who are currently attending school in-person. I'm grateful we got to hear that expertise, and vote this order forward, with an amendment from Councillor McGovern asking the City Manager to meet with small businesses and the COVID-19 Expert Advisory Panel to discuss interventions that would make indoor activities safer.

This item was adopted as amended.

ON THE TABLE

4. Green Energy Analysis Zoning Amendment.

PASSED TO A SECOND READING ON NOVEMBER 2, 2020.

TO BE ORDAINED ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 23, 2020

POR 2020 #147

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Earlier this year, Councillor Carlone proposed an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that would require certain large developers to conduct and submit an analysis comparing the costs of using fossil fuel and renewable energy sources for their projects, in the hope it would encourage developers to opt for the greener option. His proposal received a favorable recommendation from the Planning Board, and he has since worked with the Community Development Department (CDD) to develop new language that fits more cohesively into the Zoning Ordinance while keeping the original spirit of the ordinance. This language was passed to a second reading during our City Council meeting on November 2nd. Councillor Carlone made a small amendment stating that this policy won't go into effect until February 23rd, 2021, giving projects already in process time to adjust to the rule change, before this item was ordained.

This item was ordained as amended.

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

No action was taken.

CMA 2018 #286

6. The City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the City of Cambridge Law Department to review the above changes to the language of the Domestic Partnerships Ordinance and report back to the Council.

PASSED TO A SECOND READING IN COUNCIL JULY 27, 2020.

TO BE ORDAINED ON OR AFTER SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

POR 2020 #180

No action was taken.

7. That the enclosed amendments to the Tree Protection Ordinance be adopted to extend the temporary prohibition on tree cutting permits until February 28, 2021.

PASSED TO A SECOND READING IN COUNCIL NOVEMBER 16, 2020 TO BE ORDAINED ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 30, 2020

POR 2020 #264

No action was taken.

III. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

1. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to explore the feasibility of hiring a consultant to perform an Equity Audit on the Cambridge Arts Council, and to report back to the City Council by January 4th, 2021.

Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Simmons

POR 2020 #272

One of the final recommendations of [the Mayor's Arts Task Force](#) I chaired asked that an equity audit be performed on the Cambridge Arts Council to find where bias exists in structural processes, address that bias, and create more equitable access to funding and engagement opportunities. Structural, racial bias has long permeated the Arts, and other municipalities, including Boston, have performed equity audits to identify bias and create pathways to rectify the historical and current exclusion of artists of color. The recent selection process for [the 19th Amendment Centennial Public Art project](#) was [impacted by institutional, racial bias](#), so this policy order asks that an equity audit be performed on the Cambridge Arts Council to ensure that future selection processes embody our goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that Cambridge is a welcoming place for all artists.

This order was adopted.

2. That the City Council formally go on record in asking the City Manager to work with the appropriate City Staff in formulating an RFP for a public arts project that will acknowledge the unfinished work of the 19th Amendment, the importance of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and how the two pieces of legislation ultimately complemented one another in helping to shape a more perfect union, and that the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council on this matter in a timely manner

Councillor Simmons, Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui

POR 2020 #273

The City is in the process of commissioning a piece of public art celebrating the ratification of the 19th Amendment, and this policy order asks that a complementary piece of art celebrating the instrumental role women of color played in the suffrage movement, and acknowledging the further work they had to do to get the right to vote. Councillor Nolan, who will be added as a co-sponsor to this policy order, has minor amendments to more fully encompass other legislation on suffrage, so she exercised her charter-right.

Councillor Nolan exercised her charter-right.

3. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with the Community Development Department and other pertinent City staff to establish a Black and Brown-Owned Business Taskforce, to be focused upon strengthening the City's outreach efforts, information-sharing, assistance mechanisms, and overall relationship with local Black and Brown-owned businesses, and to establish a rolling set of recommendations designed to ensure the City spares no effort in assisting these businesses

Councillor Simmons, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Toomey, Vice Mayor Mallon

POR 2020 #274

Councillors Simmons, McGovern, Toomey, and I filed this order to ask the City Manager to establish a Black and Brown-Owned Business Task Force to develop better relationships, outreach strategies, and support systems for our local black and brown-owned businesses. Our Main Street economy was

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struggling even before this pandemic hit, and the situation is dire, now more than ever. While the City has stepped up in a lot of ways to support our local small businesses, there have been some concerns that black and brown-owned businesses haven't been reached as well as they should be, so forming this task force with amplify black and brown voices, and ensure these members of our small business community are well-supported.

This order was adopted.

4. Policy Order to strengthen community bonds and ensure equitable access to neighborhood organizations
Councillor McGovern, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Nolan
POR 2020 #275

Cambridge is home to several community and neighborhood groups play a crucial role in policy-making. These volunteer organizations advocate for change, inform City planning processes, provide valuable insight into neighborhood-specific issues, and so much more, but their memberships struggle to represent the diverse demographics of their neighborhood, often lacking people of color and renters especially. As we heard during public comment, many residents have also felt unwelcome in their respective neighborhood group when they've expressed an opinion that the group's leadership doesn't share. Recently, a board member of the East Cambridge Planning Team publicly made homophobic and sexually harassing comments to a resident they disagreed with, and in a place where we value diversity, equity, and inclusion, these sort of hateful comments have no place in our community organizations. That's why Councillors McGovern, Simmons, Nolan, and I filed this policy order to encourage neighborhood groups to enact internal policies preventing and sanctioning this kind of abusive behavior. The policy order also calls for a Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committee hearing to ensure that neighborhood organizations offer everyone equitable participation and access, and to learn more about how the City can support that. As she had potential amendments to the policy order language, Councillor Nolan exercised her charter-right.

Councillor Nolan exercised her charter-right.

5. That the City Manager be and is hereby requested to appropriate the funds necessary to procure the work of the Collins Center as outlined in their submitted proposal
Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Vice Mayor Mallon
POR 2020 #276

This order, filed by Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, and I, asks the City Manager to fund next steps to move forward and learn more about options for undergoing charter review with the Collins Center for Public Management. Cambridge hasn't had a formal charter review since 1940 when we adopted our current charter, a document that outlines our government structure and powers. During a [Special City Council meeting held on September 23rd, 2020](#), we heard from the Collins Center about what other municipalities are doing to review their charters. By funding this work, we'll get a better picture of what charter review could look like in Cambridge.

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

6. Policy Order to find a suitable location for a dedicated corner for Fred O'Connor
Councillor McGovern
POR 2020 #277

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

1. A communication was received from Mayor Siddiqui, Communicating information from the School Committee

COF 2020 #73

This communication outlines the work Mayor Siddiqui and the School Committee are doing to address the impacts COVID-19 is having on our scholars, especially students of color. [Click here](#) to read her full letter.

This item was placed on file.