



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA • DECEMBER 7, 2020

Regular Meeting

Sullivan Chamber

5:30 PM

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 #273
City staff gave a COVID update.

Open Space Update: The [Shared Streets Pilot](#) ended on December 4th as the City prepares for the winter months ahead, and a modified version may be redeployed in the spring. Although Riverbend Park will remain open to pedestrians and cyclists from 10am-4pm on Saturdays and Sundays through December 27th, it didn't open this past weekend due to inclement weather. [The City will also continue lighting](#) St. Peter's Field, Hoyt Field, and Donnelly Field until 7:30pm each night through December 21st, giving residents more time to safely enjoy the outdoors as it gets darker earlier.

Homeless Services Update: Construction is underway at [the new temporary emergency homeless shelter at Spaulding Hospital](#), and should be completed for a December 16th opening. The elevator won't be completed until next year.

Schools Update: The Cambridge Public Schools will be shifting to all-remote learning after two of three public health thresholds were surpassed. Parents were notified about the shift on Sunday night, and in-person classes are continuing on Monday and Tuesday, while the schools will only be open for materials pick-up on Wednesday. To reopen schools, Cambridge would need to stay below the three metrics (less than 25 new cases per day per 100,000 people, a COVID positivity rate of less than 5%, and less than 100 copies of viral genomes/mL detected in our wastewater) for seven consecutive days. This is devastating news for our in-person scholars, who are the youngest or highest-need learners in our school district, and I hope City leadership can step up and work with neighboring municipalities to develop a comprehensive, regional intervention strategy to prevent further transmission in the absence of strong leadership from the state.

Universities Update: As the fall semester winds down, our local universities are starting to release plans for the spring semester. At Harvard, all classes will be taught remotely, while roughly 3,000 undergraduate students will be invited to live in the dorms. Resident staff and students will be tested every three days, and there will be a specific housing set for quarantine and isolation. MIT freshmen,

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sophomores, and juniors will be invited back to campus, and graduate students and research will continue as they did in the fall.

Vaccine Update: We expect CDC to send Massachusetts 300,000 doses by the end of December, including around 60,000 doses in the next week, and the full vaccine will include a two-dose regimen. The CDC's [COVID-19 Vaccination Playbook](#) outlines three phases for vaccine distribution, with the first vaccines being reserved for healthcare workers, and residents and staff in long-term care facilities.

Testing Update: Since March 2nd, 358,330 tests have been administered to Cambridge residents, including 47,036 tests from November 15th through November 28th. 40,353 of these tests were given through [the City's free daily testing program](#), available to all residents. The City added additional testing sites on November 23rd and November 30th to accommodate increased demand around the Thanksgiving holiday. The City will also be provided additional "hot spot" testing at the Rindge Towers, available for Towers residents only. Cambridge's positivity rate currently stands at .77%.

6,833 tests have been administered to 1,050 CPS staff since October 15th as part of a voluntary testing program. The average staff member was tested six times. Tests have also been given to 73 students who developed COVID symptoms during the school day.

After cases are identified, they are assigned to an agency for case investigation, with 20% assigned to the Public Health Department, 25% to Harvard and MIT, and 55% to the Massachusetts Community Tracing Collaborative. These agencies typically make contact with the COVID-positive resident within 45 minutes to three hours to ask questions and perform contact tracing. During quarantine, many COVID positive residents struggle to get groceries and other household items, and I'm working with our local service providers to develop a program to fill in these resource gaps and ensure our residents can safely quarantine to protect others and themselves.

Public Health Update: [Cambridge's COVID case count](#) stands at 2,436 cases, including a devastating 100 deaths, a number that has remained steady for months. 1,366 residents have recovered, while 585 cases, or roughly 25% of cases, are currently active due to a late fall surge. We're seeing an average of 26.9 cases per 100,000 residents per day, and Cambridge remains a "yellow," moderate risk community.

Moving forward, the Public Health Department is continuing to gather data for our wastewater surveillance testing program, and developing a plan for mass vaccine distribution. In the future, I hope our public health team and City leadership work more closely with our COVID-19 Expert Advisory Panel. These experts have volunteered their time since March in the hopes of making Cambridge a safer place for our residents, but a lot of their recommendations aren't being implemented into policy. Recently, they've suggested restricting indoor dining as it's a high-risk, unmasked, indoor activity, educating residents that a negative COVID test result doesn't mean it's safe to visit extended family over the holidays, and increasing communication with restaurants about safe public health practices, but none of these suggestions have been implemented. If we're a City that prides itself in a data-driven approach to policy-making, we have to truly listen to our epidemiologists and develop ways to incorporate their recommendations to ensure our residents are as safe as possible, especially as we enter into a new case surge.

[Click here](#) to find the Public Health Department's full presentation.

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2. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a Home Rule Petition seeking special legislation from the Legislature which would authorize the City of Cambridge to provide police, fire and other emergency services (“Emergency Services”) to portions of the Cambridge Crossing project that are partially located in the cities of Boston and Somerville, with one such property wholly located within Somerville.

CMA 2020 #274

[Cambridge Crossing](#) is a mix-use redevelopment project mainly situated in East Cambridge including residential units, labs, retail, and open space. Some small parts of Cambridge Crossing are partially located in Boston and Somerville, and this letter from the City Manager asks the City Council to approve a home rule petition that, if approved by the State Legislature, would allow Cambridge to provide emergency services to all of Cambridge Crossing, including the areas just over the Boston or Somerville border. Municipalities are typically only allowed to provide emergency services like police and fire within their borders, but the layout of Cambridge Crossing would make it difficult for first responders from Somerville or Boston to quickly access the areas partially located in their cities. Cambridge would be paid for offering these services. As he had some follow-up questions, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler exercised his charter-right (discussion ended, no vote was taken, and it will appear on the next agenda).

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler exercised his charter-right.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 20-12, regarding the feasibility of adding bike parking rings to parking meters.

CMA 2020 #275

This communication reports back on [a policy order](#) Councillor Nolan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, and Mayor Siddiqui filed in February asking the City Manager to explore the feasibility of adding bike parking rings to parking meters. This communication outlines that adding bike parking rings to all parking meters would not be feasible, as it may interfere with road traffic, as it may cause a car to park further away from the parking meter, and coin collection. It instead recommends adding bike parking rings to some “orphaned” parking meters where street parking has been removed to install bike lanes. As she expected the report to have a deeper level of analysis including a timeline and projected costs, Councillor Nolan exercised her charter-right.

Councillor Nolan exercised her charter-right.

4. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 19-134, regarding increasing funding to the City's HomeBridge program.

CMA 2020 #276

This communication from reports back on [a policy order](#) Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Toomey, and I filed last year asking the City to increase the funding for the City's [HomeBridge program](#) to offer homeownership opportunities to a wider range of incomes. Through HomeBridge, the City gives homebuyers 40%-50% of the home's purchase price, putting homeownership in reach for low and middle income residents. Previously, HomeBridge only served residents earning up to 100% area median income (AMI), but it has now been expanded to include residents earning up to 120% AMI. This communication also announces that the Affordable Housing Trust will be investing \$3 million for homebuyers earning between 100%-120% AMI, which will help eight to ten residents become homeowners and stay in Cambridge.

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This item was placed on file.

5. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of Federal CARES Act funds in the amount of \$1,256,118 to the Public Investment Fund Community Development Department Extraordinary Expenditures account which will be used to assist residents and small business owners who are impacted by the virus, and to support emergency housing assistance efforts.

CMA 2020 #277

This communication announces that over \$1.25 million in CARES Act funds will be used to support small businesses and residents. Half of the funding will be used to issue a second round of grants to small businesses through [the Small Business Relief Program](#) that Mayor Siddiqui and I have worked on and advocated for across these past several months. Approximately 100 small businesses will receive grants of up to \$6,000 for mortgage or rent payments, inventory, payroll, or costs associated with purchasing PPE. Since this funding comes from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), only businesses covered under their 2020 revitalization strategy areas will be eligible, but we're looking to fill in those funding gaps with funding from [the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund](#) and the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority. As we prepare to open applications for this next round, the Community Development Department is preparing an outreach campaign targeting HUD-eligible areas and Minority and Women Owned Businesses and Enterprises (MWBES). 70% of businesses who received funding in the first round of grants were owned by minorities and/or women, but there's still room to improve and ensure we're reaching the businesses who need this assistance the most.

The second half of this funding will be used to continue the COVID-19 [Housing Stabilization Program](#), which provides short-term rent relief to residents in need. This additional allocation will support 150 more households. Due to HUD rules, no one household is able to receive more than six months of rental assistance through this program, but [the City's Multiservice Center](#) and Housing Liaison, Maura Pensak (mpensak@cambridgema.gov) can help residents find other housing resources available to them. I'm incredibly grateful to see this allocation and to see the City step up to support our small business community and our residents with financial assistance. As we enter into a new case surge, this funding is very timely, and I look forward to continuing to advocate for critical resources like these that will help our most vulnerable community members weather this pandemic.

This item was adopted.

6. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of new Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the amount of \$2,268,869.00 to the Grant Fund Department of Human Services Programs Salary and Wages account (\$106,013.00) and to the Grant Fund Department of Human Services Programs Other Ordinary Maintenance account (\$2,162,856.00) and will be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic among individuals and families who are homeless and will support shelter operating costs and provision of essential services to homeless persons outside of a shelter setting.

CMA 2020 #278

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

7. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of the Friends of the Community Learning Center (CLC) grant in the amount of \$36,450.00 to the Grant

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Fund Department of Human Service Programs Salary and Wages account (\$32,817.00), and to the Other Ordinary Maintenance account (\$3,633.00) will be used to fund the classes, advising and coaching of the Bridge to College Program students from July 2020 through June 2021.

CMA 2020 #279

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

8. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of the Friends of the Community Learning Center (CLC) grant funded by Friends of the Community Learning Center through individual donations in the amount of \$4,550.00 to the Grant Fund Department of Human Service Programs Salary and Wages account (\$4,550.00) which will be used to support English for Speakers of Other Languages classes at the Community Learning Center.

CMA 2020 #280

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

9. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of the Friends of the Community Learning Center (CLC) grant in the amount of \$38,000.00 to the Grant Fund Department of Human Service Programs Salary and Wages account (\$31,828.00), to the Other Ordinary Maintenance account (\$4,672.00), and to the Travel and Training account (\$1,500.00) and will provide support for Bridge Program advising, coaching and mentoring, advising for the ESOL/Certified Nursing Assistant Program, and education and career advising for other CLC students.

CMA 2020 #281

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

10. 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 \$55,125.00 to the Grant Fund Department of Human Service Programs Salary and Wages account (\$48,411.00) and to the Other Ordinary Maintenance account (\$6,714.00) 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; to support a portion of salary and benefit costs of staff who lead parenting education and support programming across the city; and to also be used for parent participation stipends and program supplies.

CMA 2020 #282

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

II. CALENDAR

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. A Zoning Petition has been received from BMR–Third LLC c/o BioMed Realty, L.P. regarding a Zoning Amendment Petition for a new Planned Unit Development PUD District CDK.

PASSED TO A SECOND READING AS AMENDED ON NOVEMBER 30, 2020. TO BE ORDAINED ON OR AFTER DECEMBER 21, 2020.

APP 2020 #34

No action was taken.

III. APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS

1. An application was received from Stefanie Cambre representing Massachusetts Institute of Technology, requesting permission for a projecting sign at the premises numbered 45 Carleton Street. Approval has been received from Inspectional Services, Department of Public Works, Community Development Department and abutter.

APP 2020 #45

This application was approved on the consent agenda.

2. A Zoning Petition Has been received from Amy Oliver, regarding that the City require the installation of GREEN ROOFS vegetated or BioSolar on future construction and significant rehab of buildings that are 20,000 square feet and larger.

APP 2020 #46

This zoning petition submitted by Mothers Out Front would amend Cambridge's current [Green Roofs Ordinance](#) to require vegetative or biosolar green roofs be installed on all future construction and significant rehabs of buildings over 20,000 square feet. The current Green Roofs Ordinance only makes it easier for developers to add a green roof for their project, but it doesn't require it. Cambridge is significantly denser than other cities because we lack open green space, and the open green space we do have isn't distributed equitably across the City. This is a meaningful step we can take to develop more green space for residents to enjoy and engage with nature, while helping mitigate the impacts climate change is having on our community. While we heard some concerns from residents during public comment that a green roof requirement could negatively impact affordable housing projects by increasing costs, I met with Mothers Out Front about this petition and connected them with a local non-profit affordable housing developer that was excited about the idea and incorporated a green roof into their newest project plan. I look forward to discussing this petition further with my colleagues in the Ordinance Committee, and hearing the Planning Board's recommendations. [Click here](#) to read the full petition.

This application was referred to the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board for hearing and report.

IV. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

1. 105 Windsor Street

Councillor Zondervan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Carlone

POR 2020 #285

This policy order asks the City Manager to initiate a community process to develop an underutilized City-owned property located at 105 Windsor Street in the Port. The order also suggests using the space as a community space for economic empowerment opportunities for black and brown residents who live in the Port. As he could not connect with Councillor Simmons, a member of the Port neighborhood, before submitting this order, Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right to get her input.

Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

2. Policy Order re Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund

Councillor Simmons, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Toomey

POR 2020 #286

This order asked the City Manager to explore the feasibility of offering small businesses with another round of grants using money raised by [the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund](#). However, since new small business grants were announced earlier in the meeting (see City Manager's Agenda Item #5), Councillor Simmons moved to place this order on file, rather than adopting it.

This order was placed on file.

3. Supporting Food Pantries & Closing the SNAP Gap PO

Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor McGovern

POR 2020 #287

Amid mass layoffs and business closures, hunger has skyrocketed in Cambridge due to COVID, with 15,080 residents, of 13% of Cambridge's population, experiencing food insecurity. With community need soaring as fears over a potential case surge and the upcoming expiration of key unemployment benefits rise, our food pantries are struggling to keep up. Anecdotally, our food pantries are seeing a 10-15% increase in use during the past few months, and that will only continue to grow exponentially, so we have to ensure these food access organizations are well-equipped to uplift our low-income residents and fill in resources gaps. That's why I filed this policy order with Mayor Siddiqui and Councillor McGovern asking the City Manager to work with local food access organizations to learn more about what they're seeing on the ground, and develop ways we can support them and their work. One way we could alleviate the burden on food pantries is by encouraging more residents to sign up for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, AKA food stamps), which is a longer-term, more sustainable solution to hunger. The order also asks the City to create a comprehensive outreach campaign focused on closing the SNAP Gap, the difference between the number of MassHealth recipients who are likely SNAP eligible, and the number of residents actually receiving SNAP. Our City-wide SNAP Gap impacts 7,338 residents, any while the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee has done incredible work these past several months in signing residents up, we still need a tremendous effort to get the word out.

With so much on the line as hunger skyrockets, we need your help too. [Click here](#) to read more about the newly launched Cambridge Challenge Against Hunger, or [click here](#) to make a charitable donation to one

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of the food access organizations supporting our most vulnerable residents. I'll be matching donations to food access organizations up to \$1,000, so email your donation receipt to amallon@cambridgema.gov to double the impact and help a family in need.

This order was adopted.

4. Supporting Food Pantries & Closing the SNAP Gap PO

Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui

POR 2020 #288

I submitted this late order with Mayor Siddiqui to ask the City Council to go on record as urging Governor Baker to move forward with creating a 'common application' that would allow MassHealth Applicants to apply for SNAP at the same time. The FY21 budget that's been approved by the State Legislature and that's awaiting the Governor's signature allocates \$5,000,000 in funding to create this streamlined application that will help close the SNAP Gap and support food-insecure residents by making it easier and more convenient to access food benefits. This order was amended to add the full City Council as co-sponsors.

This order was adopted as amended.

V. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

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

COF 2020 #76

This communication from Mayor Siddiqui outlines the work she and the School Committee are doing to support our CPS scholars. [Click here](#) to read her full update.

This communication was placed on file.