



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA • JANUARY 11, 2021

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 2021 #5

City staff gave a COVID update.

Rollbacks Update: The Baker-Polito administration has [extended reduced gathering limits and industry capacity limits](#) through January 24th, 2021. The City Manager also announced that he will be issuing an emergency order extending City rollbacks until January 31st, 2021.

City Services Update: In-person appointments for City services won't be available through January 31st, 2021, at least. The decision to eliminate in-person appointments was made after an increasing number of City employees contracted COVID. In attempt to mitigate the impacts this will have on the community, the City will be extending parking permits' expiration dates, and is working on a pilot to distribute books to low-income residents in hotspot neighborhoods.

Housing Update: Yesterday, January 11th, the City began accepting new applications for [the COVID-19 Housing Stabilization Program](#). This program offers short-term financial assistance to residents experiencing housing instability due to the economic impacts of COVID. New applicants who meet the eligibility requirements can receive up to six months of assistance, and can [learn more here](#).

CPS Update: Last week, the School Committee approved the district's updated health and safety recommendations based on the "Schools and the Path to Zero" framework, which focuses more on in-school transmission, rather than community transmission, and strengthening infection control measures. As part of CPS' voluntary testing program, 1,132 CPS staff members have been tested 9,428 times since October 15th. The average staff person was tested 8.3 times, and 241 students have been tested as well.

Vaccine Update: Vaccinations for healthcare workers and long term care facility workers and residents continue. This week, the Public Health Department (CPHD) began "Operation Nightingale," with the goal of vaccinating 1,000 first responders between January 11th and 15th. Yesterday, CPHD met their daily goal, having vaccinated 212 first responders. They are currently waiting for confirmation from the State on the next round of vaccination for congregate living sites, home-based healthcare workers, and healthcare workers doing non-COVID facing care.

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CPHD began implementing a multi-phase communications strategy this month, with the goal of increasing community trust in the vaccine, especially among residents of color and the elderly. This communications strategy will continue through the fall using different communication channels. CPHD expects to get more inquiries on the vaccine as we get closer to mass-distribution to the general public, so it's increasing staff in the Vaccine Call Center. As we approach phase 2 of the Commonwealth's vaccination schedule, I hope CPHD can create a robust plan to vaccinate CPS staff safely and efficiently. Reopening our schools has to be a priority, and as women are bearing the brunt of COVID-related job loss due to childcare needs, we have to use existing frameworks and prepare to vaccinate educators as soon as possible.

Testing Update: The City is continuing to offer [free, daily testing](#) to all residents. The State reports that Cambridge has a 1.79% positivity rate, but as there is a delay in case reporting, and cases have been steadily rising since the holidays, our positivity rate is likely closer to 2%. From January 2nd to January 10th, the City administered 11,199 tests, putting us on track to set a new record for tests administered in a month. This testing rate likely isn't sustainable, as more and more non-Cambridge residents are coming to testing sites, but it has helped CPHD determine capacity for future vaccination sites.

Public Health Update: Cambridge's [COVID case count](#) currently stands at 3,617 cases, including a tragic 111 deaths in our community. We've lost two residents already in 2021, as COVID cases have increased by 30% in the two weeks following Christmas. The City is seeing an average of 29.5 cases per 100,000 residents, and is still considered a "yellow," moderate-risk community. 23% of cases are currently active, and CPHD is keeping a close eye on infections, trying to determine if this sharp increase in cases will continue to grow, or return to a baseline as we get further away from the holidays.

[Click here](#) for the Public Health Department's full update.

This item was placed on file.

2. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appointment of Arantxa Ortiz as a new member of the Commission on Immigrant Rights & Citizenship for a term of three years, effective January 11, 2021.

CMA 2021 #6

This communication announces the appointment of Arantxa Ortiz, a native of Chile, to the Commission on Immigrant Rights & Citizenship. She has a wide range of volunteer and advocacy experiences with the immigrant community, and will use her expertise to help improve outreach to immigrants, and raise awareness of their concerns.

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

II. CALENDAR

CHARTER RIGHT

1. Resolution on the Death of William Leeds.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN COUNCIL
JANUARY 4, 2021**

RES 2021 #5

This resolution mourns the death of William Leeds, father of Cambridge resident Maria Jobin-Leeds. Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right (discussion ended, no vote was taken, and it appears on the next agenda) as Councillor McGovern had submitted his own resolution on Mr. Leeds' death, and wanted to add in additional details about his life and legacy from that resolution. This resolution was placed on the table to give them more time to add in those details.

This resolution was placed on the table.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. That Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.150 of the Cambridge Municipal Code, entitled "Definitions for Article III" be amended.

PASSED TO A SECOND READING IN COUNCIL DECEMBER 21, 2020

POR 2020 #297

No action was taken.

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III. APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS

1. A request was received from Adam Braillard representing Santandar Bank, regarding Revocation of Bond #106054492 for Santandar Bank, 125 Mount Auburn Street. Response from the Inspectional Services Department has been received confirming said sign has been removed
APP 2021 #1

This application was approved on the consent agenda.

2. An application was received from Michael Malmberg representing Daily Table, requesting permission for a projecting sign at the premises numbered 684 Massachusetts Avenue approval has been received from Inspectional Services, Department of Public Works, Community Development Department and abutter.
APP 2021 #2

This application is from [Daily Table](#), a low-cost grocery store that is joining the Central Square community soon, and that will serve as an incredible opportunity to ensure our low-income neighbors have reliable access to nutritious food.

This application was approved.

IV. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

1. That the regular City Council meeting scheduled for January 25, 2020 be a Roundtable/Working meeting to discuss the 2020 Cambridge Resident Survey.

Mayor Siddiqui

POR 2021 #7

During last week's City Council meeting, the City Manager shared [results from the 2020 Cambridge Resident Survey](#), a survey conducted over the phone and online every other year. These results offer valuable insight into areas that the City could improve, but we need more context on some of the results, so this policy order schedules a Roundtable discussion on the survey on January 25th, in place of our regular City Council Meeting.

This order was adopted.

2. Lighting Up City Hall for a National Moment of Unity and Remembrance

Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Toomey

POR 2021 #8

President-elect Joe Biden has called upon communities across the country to light up buildings or ring church bells at 5:30pm on January 19th to remember and mourn the lives lost to COVID. This policy order asks that City Hall be lit up then to memorialize the 111 cherished community members we've lost, as well as [the 373,167 nationwide pandemic deaths](#).

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

3. Policy Order re Dedication Request for Eurie Stamps, Sr.

Councillor Simmons

POR 2021 #9

This order asks a portion of Brookline Street be dedicated to Eurie Stamps, Sr., a former Cambridge resident who was murdered by police in Framingham in 2011.

This order was adopted.

4. That the city manager and his staff prepare a memorandum outlining any federal, state or municipal law that restricts the City of Cambridge from allocating direct financial assistance to residents, non-profit agencies or small businesses and develop a plan to offer direct financial assistance to Cambridge residents, non-profit organizations and small businesses suffering during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Councillor Carlone, Councillor Simmons

POR 2021 #10

This order originally asked the City Manager to outline any federal, state, or municipal law prohibiting the City from offering direct financial assistance to residents, small businesses, and non-profits, and to immediately develop a plan to offer that direct financial assistance if no such law exists. Cambridge has a much stronger financial position than any other municipality in the Commonwealth, and it's needed now more than ever. I've been researching and asking how the City could leverage its free cash to uplift residents, small businesses, and non-profits, but I've always received the same frustrating answer: that it violates the Anti-Aid Amendment in the State Constitution. Mayor Siddiqui, myself and other

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colleagues have had to jump through hoops to create other financial relief programs and find funding streams other than the City's free cash, so I offered friendly amendments to this order in the hopes of receiving a more productive answer this time. The policy order now asks the City Manager to provide any State advisory that outlines the restrictions that prohibit the City from offering direct financial assistance, as well as the City's existing Free Cash Policy. If such a City policy doesn't exist, it asks the City Manager to prepare a request to the State Department of Revenue to issue an Informational Guideline Release that allows for more robust parameters on eligible expenses from free cash to directly assist residents, small businesses, and non-profits. Budgeting season is rapidly approaching, and as we know this pandemic will continue to impact our lives for a long time, we must act quickly.

This order was adopted as amended.

5. That the City Council go on record asking the MBTA to reconsider bench bars at the Central Square T **Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Zondervan, Mayor Siddiqui**
POR 2021 #11

This order originally asked the MBTA to reconsider the bars it placed on benches at the Central Square T Station. Bench bars are a form of hostile architecture that often make unhoused residents feel unwelcome in spaces, and the pandemic is only exacerbating the impact these bench bars will have on our homeless neighbors as they struggle to find safe places to rest. The MBTA purportedly installed these bench bars to make it easier for elderly or disabled people to get off the benches, but there are other ways to thoughtfully address the needs of both communities, simultaneously. As bench bars have reportedly also been placed in the Harvard Square T Station, and there could be more in other stations, this order was amended to ask the MBTA to reconsider placing bench bars in any Cambridge-based T Station, and instead create a design that addresses accessibility concerns without installing hostile architecture.

This order was adopted as amended.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Human Services & Veterans Committee met on November 12, 2020 to discuss homelessness.

This committee report contains minutes from the November 12th, 2020 Human Services & Veterans Committee hearing on homelessness. For more on that hearing, click [here](#). This report was amended to reflect that Mayor Siddiqui attended the meeting.

This report was accepted and placed on file as amended.

- A. That the city manager be and hereby is requested short term measures to fund, support unhoused members of the community including public showers, portable toilets, hand washing stations and food programs until further notice.

POR 2021 #12

Councillor McGovern

This order came out of the November 12th, 2020 Human Services & Veterans Committee hearing. This pandemic has impacted or eliminated a lot of the traditional community resources homeless residents typically used, so this order asks the City to step up to fill in critical resource gaps surrounding sanitation and nutrition. The City has already supported the unhoused community, including working with First Church to provide showers and funding a shelter meals program with local restaurants, but since need is at an all time high, there is still more to be done.

This order was adopted.

- B. That the City further investigate renting space from the New England school of English to house appropriate members of our unhoused community.

POR 2021 #13

Councillor McGovern

This is another order that came from the November 12th, 2020 Human Services & Veterans Committee hearing. This order originally asked that the City investigate renting space from the New England School of English to use as non-congregate shelter space for unhoused residents. Since that meeting, however, the State began operating a homeless shelter out of that space, but there's a possibility that the State will end their contract for the space in April. If that happens, the City will have to step in and fill in the resource gap it will leave, so this order was amended to ask the City to investigate renting additional space to house homeless residents, rather than just exploring the New England School of English as an option. As the decision to fund a non-congregate shelter, in addition to the temporary emergency shelter located at Spaulding Hospital, could result in higher tax bills, Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right to allow time to hear from property taxpayers.

Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right.

2. Ordinance Committee met on November 19, 2020 to discuss the KSURP Zoning Ordinance Amendment.

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This committee report contains minutes from the November 19th, 2020 Ordinance Committee hearing on the KSURP Zoning Ordinance Amendment. See Committee Reports Item #3 for discussion, or [click here](#) for more on this meeting.

This report was accepted and placed on file.

3. Ordinance Committee met on January 5, 2021 to continue discussion of the KSURP Zoning Ordinance Amendment petition.

This committee report contains minutes from the January 5th, 2021 Ordinance Committee hearing on the KSURP Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Two years ago, Eversource announced plans to build an energy substation at 135 Fulkerson Street, across the Street from the Kennedy-Longfellow Elementary School, near Linden Park, and in a residential neighborhood. City leadership, the neighborhood, and local businesses emphasized the need to move the planned substation to an alternative site. This zoning amendment would allow Eversource to instead build the substation underground where the Blue Street Garage, owned by Boston Properties, currently sits. The petition has received a favorable recommendation from the Planning Board, and has been passed to a second reading. It will reappear on the City Council's agenda in three weeks for ordination with an updated letter of commitment including a timeline for implementing affordable housing units.

This report was accepted and placed on file.

- A. That the KSURP zoning petition filed on September 17, 2020 is hereby amended by substitution

POR 2021 #14

Councillor Carlone

This order was adopted.

- B. A Zoning Petition Has been received from Cambridge Redevelopment Authority regarding a Zoning Ordinance to reflect the proposed changes to the KSURP

APP 2020 #35

This petition was passed to a second reading as amended.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

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

COF 2021 #3

This letter from Mayor Siddiqui outlines the work she and the School Committee are doing to support our CPS students. This week's update primarily focuses on the School Committee's recent decision to adopt a new COVID-19 health and safety framework, and Superintendent Salim's updated Second Semester Plan. [Click here to read the full communication.](#)

This item was placed on file.