



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA • FEBRUARY 8, 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 an update on Covid19 vaccination rollout.
CMA 2021 #22
City staff gave a COVID update.

Rollbacks & City Services Update: As case numbers have been trending in the positive direction, the City returned to Phase 3, Step 1 on February 8th. [Capacity limits for certain businesses](#) have been increased from 25% to 40%, while indoor gatherings are still capped at ten people, and outdoor gatherings are limited to 25 people. The Inspectional Services Department is working to drop by businesses to inform them of the latest public health guidelines and ensure compliance. In-person appointments and contactless library holds pickups have resumed.

Vaccine Update: Since February 1st, all Cambridge residents aged 75 or older have been eligible for [the vaccine](#). Appointments are required, and can be made by [clicking here](#) or calling 211. Although Cambridge currently doesn't have a vaccination site, [Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services](#) is offering free rides to local vaccination clinics, and you can book your ride by calling 617-628-2601 or emailing info@eldercare.org. The state has full control over where vaccination sites are, and the City is continuing to advocate to switch the CambridgeSide testing site into a vaccination site. Meanwhile, vaccines are being administered in Cambridge for patients at Mount Auburn, CHA, and Beth Israel, and patients 75+ should expect to have their healthcare providers reach out to make an appointment. Mayor Siddiqui also shared during discussion that a CVS near the Fresh Pond Rotary will begin administering vaccines this week.

This week, CPHD is working to administer second vaccine doses to first responders, before moving on to give second vaccine doses to homeless shelter guests and staff next week. Although the state announced that municipalities would only receive 100 vaccines doses a week, CPHD successfully advocated to receive 400 doses a week, enabling them to vaccinate staff and residents at the Millers River and Frank J. Manning senior housing buildings last week. Cambridge Community Corps members are working to reach out and answer questions that residents have at the Lyndon B. Johnson and Daniel F. Burns apartments before CPHD is onsite later this week for vaccinations. When choosing the order to vaccinate our senior housing buildings, CPHD considers the size of the buildings, and how much transmission has occurred there.

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Moving forward, CPHD has begun tracking racial demographic information of those receiving the vaccination. As COVID has hit our black and brown communities especially hard, it's critical we have this data to ensure these communities are getting the engagement they need to trust the vaccine. The City is also working on a multi-pronged education strategy using several different means of communication. City consultants have conducted interviews with seniors, immigrants, residents of color, and low-income residents to gain insight into how the City can best conduct outreach to these vulnerable groups, and a City-wide vaccine opinion survey will be released in eight different languages next week.

Testing Update: The City continues to offer [free, daily testing](#) to everyone who lives and works in Cambridge. While appointments are recommended, and [can be booked here](#), they aren't required. Demand for testing has been decreasing as we move further away from the holidays, so the City is exploring converting some testing sites into vaccination sites, should the state allow it. 14,174 tests have been administered to 1,200 CPS staff as part of their voluntary testing program, and 308 symptomatic students and student athletes have been tested as well.

Public Health Update: Cambridge's [COVID case count](#) currently stands at 4,476 cases, 21% being active, alongside a devastating 117 deaths. Currently, there are 13.8 cases per 100,000 and Cambridge's positivity rate stands at 1.06%. Both of these statistics have steadily dropped in recent weeks, consistent with trends across the Commonwealth. Additionally, our wastewater surveillance data indicates that Cambridge's viral load is lower than regional levels, though CPHD explains that this is a newer technology, and should be considered alongside other data. Moving forward, the Expert Advisory Panel is continuing to keep a close eye on COVID variants, and while there isn't evidence of widespread COVID variant transmission in the Commonwealth, they advise residents to stay vigilant with mask use, physical distancing, and hand hygiene as we await mass-vaccination.

[Click here](#) for CPHD's full update.

This item was placed on file.

2. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appointment of the following new members of the Commission on the Status of Women, effective February 8, 2021 for a term of three years: Sucharita Varanasi, Hiwot Behabtu, Sandra Middleton, Shamika Naidu and Rhonda Greene.

CMA 2021 #23

[Click here](#) to learn more about the new appointees.

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

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the new appointment of the following person as a member of the Conservation Commission for a term of three years, effective February 8, 2021: Michelle Lane

CMA 2021 #24

[Click here](#) for more on Michelle Lane's qualifications.

This item was placed on file on the consent agenda.

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4. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to new appointments and reappointments to the Community Benefits Advisory Committee effective February 1, 2020 for three year terms.

CMA 2021 #25

This communication announces the appointment of Caleb Hurst-Hiller, Michelle Lower, Amal Abshir Mohamed, Taha Jennings (the City's Budget Director), Ellen Semenoff (Assistant City Manager for Human Services), Sandra Clark (Deputy Director of the Community Development Department), Amy Solomon, Rowan Murphy, Paul Parravano, Kathryn Fenneman, Elizabeth Aguilo, and Geeta Pradhan to the Community Benefits Advisory Committee. [Click here](#) to read more about each appointee's qualifications. The date in the summary is a typo, and should read "February 1, 2021."

This item was placed on file.

5. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$1,000,000 from the Community Benefits Stabilization Fund to the Grant Fund Human Services Other Ordinary Maintenance for the purpose of entering into grant agreements with nonprofit organizations to provide services to vulnerable residents during the COVID-19 emergency and recovery.

CMA 2021 #26

This communication announces a second round of grant funding to local nonprofits serving vulnerable residents during the pandemic. Last year, Mayor Siddiqui and I championed the effort to [disperse \\$10,000 grants to local nonprofits](#) who have stepped up and filled in critical resource gaps in our community, even as direct funding has dried up, so I was incredibly grateful to see this second appropriation. During discussion, City staff explained that this funding process will look a lot like it did last time, and will incorporate suggestions from the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition to make the process as quickly and fairly as possible. Funding is expected to be distributed in March, and [the application will be released](#) tomorrow, February 10th, 2021.

This item was adopted.

6. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 20-52, regarding a report on what impact the Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping may have on the City of Cambridge.

CMA 2021 #27

This communication responds to [a policy order](#) filed by Councillor Simmons, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Mayor Siddiqui, and I last October asking how the Trump Administration's "[Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping](#)" would impact the City. The Executive Order sought to tamp down on cultural and diversity sensitivity workplace training, and those who didn't comply were at risk of losing their federal funding. However, this report explains that the Biden Administration has rescinded this Executive Order, and that the City likely wouldn't have been impacted even if it hadn't been rescinded.

This item was placed on file on the consent agenda.

II. CALENDAR

CHARTER RIGHT

1. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 20-63, which requested a review of the granting of an extension for the 605 Concord Avenue project.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCIL NOLAN
IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 3, 2021
CMA 2021 #14**

This communication responds to [a policy order](#) from last November, which asked the City Manager to review granting a permit extension for the 605 Concord Avenue. As she had some unanswered questions on the response, Councillor Nolan exercised her charter-right (discussion ended, no vote was taken, and it appears on the next agenda) last week. She's since asked for additional information, and as she wants the responses in writing, she asked that this communication be placed on the table.

This item was placed on the table.

2. Policy Order re Renaming Fairmont Avenue.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN
COUNCIL FEBRUARY 3, 2021
POR 2021 #20**

This order was filed by Councillor Simmons to ask that Fairmont Avenue be renamed to avoid confusion with Fairmont Street, but she exercised her charter-right last week. This week, Councillor Simmons asked that this order be withdrawn.

This order was withdrawn.

3. Eliminating Hostile Architecture.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR NOLAN IN
COUNCIL FEBRUARY 3, 2021
POR 2021 #23**

This order originally asked the City Manager to ensure hostile architecture isn't used when public spaces are being designed or redesigned, and to remove existing hostile architecture. Hostile architecture, like the bench bars that were recently placed in the Central and Harvard T stations, is a design strategy to intentionally make unhoused residents feel unwelcome, and as a City that prides itself on being welcoming to all, hostile architecture has no place here. As there are some concerns over accessibility, as an elder or someone with mobility impairments could, for example, use bench bars to help them get off a bench, this order was amended to ask the City Manager to confer with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities when public spaces are being designed or redesigned. This order was further amended to ask that the City Manager work with the Department of Human Services, the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and the Council on Aging to determine how bench fixtures can be used to support all residents, rather than asking the City Manager to eliminate them outright. There needs to be an inclusive process to examining our architecture, to come to a solution that addresses the needs of all residents.

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This order was adopted as amended.

4. Retirement of CCTV Executive Director, Susan Fleischmann.
CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY VICE MAYOR MALLON IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 3, 2021
RES 2021 #20

Last week's City Council agenda was very long, so I exercised my charter-right on this resolution honoring CCTV Executive Director Susan Fleischmann to give her a proper send-off. Susan was a founding staff member of CCTV when it first opened its doors in 1988, and rose to lead CCTV as its Executive Director in 1993. She's used her in-depth expertise to transform CCTV from a fledging community media center into a nationally-recognized, award-winning powerhouse. Her leadership throughout this pandemic has ensured that Cambridge residents have a reliable source for news and programming, and her legacy will continue to inspire creators and the communities she worked with for years to come. [Click here](#) to read the full resolution and learn more about Susan's critical work. This order was amended to include the full City Council as co-sponsors.

This resolution was adopted as amended.

ON THE TABLE

5. Resolution on the Death of William Leeds.
TABLED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN COUNCIL JANUARY 11, 2021
CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN COUNCIL JANUARY 4, 2021
RES 2021 #5
No action was taken.
6. Vaccinating CPS Staff Plan PO.
TABLED IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 3, 2021
POR 2021 #21
No action was taken.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. 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.
8. 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.

III. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

1. Retail Table of Land Use Update PO
Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui
POR 2021 #25

I submitted this order with Mayor Siddiqui to refile potential zoning amendments to the Retail Table of Land Use. By clarifying the definitions of certain uses, expanding or creating new uses to reflect the changing face of retail, and removing onerous requirements, updating the table of land use is a critical way the City can reduce the burden of starting or expanding a small business in Cambridge. These proposed amendments were first unveiled at [an Economic Development and University Relations Committee hearing](#) I convened on July 30th, 2020, but ultimately expired after an Ordinance Committee meeting on this topic had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. Updating the Retail Table of Land Use has been a long, labor-intensive process, and now that the struggles of our small business community have been exacerbated by this public health crisis, I hope we can move forward with this refiling swiftly. [Click here](#) to read the proposed amendments.

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

2. Support for Universal School Meals
Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui
POR 2021 #26

This policy order that I filed with Councillor McGovern and Mayor Siddiqui asks the City Council to go on record in support of state bills [HD.1161](#) and [SD.519](#), An Act Relative to Universal School Meals. The cost of school meals has long been a barrier for low-income kids, and the COVID pandemic has only exacerbated food insecurity, with childhood hunger up to [14.9% in Middlesex County](#). Schools have traditionally used means testing to determine who qualifies for free school meals, but means testing can feel intrusive, and fails to capture students whose family barely exceeds income limits, or those who are not comfortable signing up for a government program if their future immigration status could be in question. By stripping away means testing and making free school meals universal, we can not only ensure that kids aren't going hungry, but also improve students' academic performance, protect their physical and mental health, and remove stigma surrounding students' economic status.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

3. Support for Lifting Our Kids Out of Deep Poverty
Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Simmons
POR 2021 #27

I filed this policy order with Councillor McGovern, Mayor Siddiqui, and Councillor Simmons to ask the City Council to go on record in support of state bills [HD.1158](#) and [SD.430](#), An Act to Lift Kids Out of Deep Poverty. These bills would increase certain cash assistance programs by 20% each year until the grant amount reaches 50% of the federal poverty level. While these cash assistance grants are a lifeline for low-income families, they're far too low to meet basic needs, and incrementally increasing them will help ensure our vulnerable residents have the financial support they need to stay afloat.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

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4. Redesigning Cambridge Voting Stickers
Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler
POR 2021 #28

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

5. That the City Manager instruct his staff to develop a ten-year infrastructure plan for the City Council that outlines all future needs and plans for infrastructure, public safety and public services.
Councillor Carlone
POR 2021 #29

This order asks the City Manager to work with his staff to develop a ten-year infrastructure, public safety, and public services plan, update that plan every five years, and give annual reports on the issue to the City Council. After concerns over a proposed Eversource substation in a residential area came to a head, and the onerous process of finding an alternative site for it, it is crucial that the City Council stay informed about infrastructure needs that will impact the community. This order was amended to add Councillor Nolan as a co-sponsor, and to ask the City to examine water supply needs.

This order was adopted as amended.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

1. A communication was received from Vice Mayor Mallon, regarding Data Collection from Transportation Network Companies.

Vice Mayor Mallon

COF 2021 #7

In 2019, I filed [a policy order](#) with former Councillor Kelley and former Vice Mayor Devereux asking the City to partner with a research institution to gather data from Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), like Uber and Lyft. Last week, [the City Manager announced](#) that the City has begun initial discussions with MIT to obtain this data, and asked what kind of policy initiatives may come from this, to guide the data collected and analyses performed. Although it's difficult to say what policies may come from data that hasn't been captured yet, I highlighted some data points I'd like to see in this communication. TNCs are notoriously secretive with their data, but we need to understand the impact they are having on our climate and transportation goals, so I'm hopeful that this partnership with MIT will help us build a stronger relationship with TNCs. [Click here](#) to read my full communication.

This communication was placed on file on the consent agenda.

2. A communication was received from Vice Mayor Mallon and Mayor Siddiqui, transmitting Family Policy Council – Language Access.

Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui

COF 2021 #8

I filed this communication with Mayor Siddiqui to update the City Council on the work we are doing on the Family Policy Council (FPC). Our current project focuses on language access, and how a lack of language access can be a significant barrier to civic participation or critical information for residents whose primary language is not English. FPC has convened a working group to tackle this issue, which is examining ways to develop City-wide supports to language access. As FPC will make recommendations with potential budget implications, Mayor Siddiqui and I wanted to keep the City Council and the public informed on the work being done to expand language access and ensure families with a primary language other than English are informed, engaged, and feel valued. [Click here](#) to read our full letter.

This communication was placed on file.

3. A Communication has been received from Mayor Siddiqui, transmitting Information from the School Committee

COF 2021 #9

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

This communication was placed on file on the consent agenda.

4. A communication was received from Councillor Dennis Carlone, transmitting Coming to Terms with Climate Change's Relentless, Long-Term Fallout by Jonathan Shaw (Harvard Magazine November December 2020).

COF 2021 #10

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[Click here](#) to read the article referenced in this communication.

This communication was placed on file.