



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA • FEBRUARY 22, 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 COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

CMA 2021 #28

City staff gave a COVID update.

Small Business Update: As we approach the spring, the City is working with the local restaurant community to prepare for outdoor dining. While outdoor dining has been allowed throughout the winter, City staff reached out to restaurants to remind them that outdoor dining permits are valid until sixty days past the end of the state-declared state of emergency. In addition to creating [a one-stop-shop](#) for outdoor dining permitting, the City continues to offer financial support for restaurants winterizing their outdoor dining spaces through [the Patio Heater Reimbursement Program](#) I advocated for.

City Services Update: In-person appointments at City buildings will expand to four days a week starting on March 1st, and contactless library holds pickups will expand as well.

Schools & Universities Update: 14,174 tests have been administered to 1,200 Cambridge Public School staff members since October 15th as part of a voluntary testing program, and an additional 308 symptomatic students and student athletes have been tested as well. As we prepare for the March 1st return to in-person learning, extra health aides have been hired for additional testing support. All CPS staff were tested on Monday, February 22nd and will be tested again on Friday, February 26th. Weekly pool testing will begin on March 2nd for JK-5th grade (piloted in a few elementary schools and a full roll out soon after that), while PCR testing will be conducted twice a week for high schoolers and once a week for middle school students who are learning in person. CPHD is examining school staff testing uptake rates by school, and as I've heard anecdotally that some schools have more rigid testing windows than others, and teachers do not have a lot of flexibility in their work days. I hope there can be more flexibility to make it easier for school staff to get tested regularly.

Harvard and MIT have started to welcome back a reduced number of students for the spring semester. [Harvard](#), which has less than 30% of undergraduate students on campus taking entirely online classes, has a positivity rate of just .08%. Likewise, [MIT](#)'s positivity rate stands at .06%

Vaccine Update: As residents with two or more qualifying health conditions and elders aged 65+ are now eligible for the vaccine, the City mailed out over 10,000 postcards to residents and placed a second round of calls to seniors informing them of their eligibility. Appointments are required, and can be made

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by calling 211, or using [the online scheduling system](#). If you or a loved one are struggling to find an appointment, don't hesitate to contact my office by emailing amallon@cambridgema.gov for assistance.

The state recently announced that it would be prioritizing regional vaccination sites, and would stop supplying vaccine doses for local clinics on March 1st. City leadership is working with regional partners and is ready to host a mass-vaccination site using the existing infrastructure at the CambridgeSide testing site, as soon as the State approves the site and provides doses. CPHD is compiling data on Cambridge's health vulnerability, especially for residents of color, to advocate for more vaccines. Until then, the CVS located at 215 Alewife Brook Parkway is administering vaccines, and Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) patients will be able to make appointments at a CHA vaccination center located at 176 Somerville Avenue.

Currently, CPHD is working to administer second doses to homeless shelter staff and guests, and will be onsite at the Weaver Apartments and Linnaean to administer first doses to seniors. CPHD is also partnering with the Cambridge Court Apartments and 2 Mount Auburn Avenue, non-Cambridge Housing Authority senior housing buildings, to ensure residents are vaccinated.

As we approach mass-vaccination, the City is ramping up outreach and education efforts, especially those targeted towards seniors, immigrants, communities of color, and other vulnerable communities. [The City's vaccine webpage](#) has been redesigned to make it more accessible, and CPHD will be using this webpage, social media, emails, community partners, door-to-door campaign, and more to communicate about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. A Clinicians' Speakers Bureau has been established to match clinicians and CPHD staff with community organizations to host forums to answer residents' questions on the vaccine. Mayor Siddiqui and others will also be hosting [a town hall](#) focused on addressing communities of color's hesitancy surrounding the vaccine on Tuesday, February 23rd at 5:30pm. In addition to conducting stakeholder interviews, the City is conducting a survey through Friday, February 26th to better understand how residents feel about the vaccine. [The survey](#) is available in multiple languages, and has been completed by over 1,300 residents so far.

Testing Update: The City is continuing to offer [free, daily testing](#) to anyone who lives or work in Cambridge, and while appointments aren't required, they are recommended ([make yours here](#)). 17,782 tests have been administered through this testing program since the start of February. Cambridge's positivity rate is trending in the right direction, currently standing at .53%, and with 10.6 confirmed cases per 100,000 residents. CPHD were onsite at the Rindge Towers and Jefferson Park on February 17th to conduct testing, and the Cambridge Community Corps previously went door-to-door to reach out to residents about this opportunity.

Public Health Update: Cambridge's [COVID case count](#) currently stands at 4,709 cases, 17.5% of which are active, and a devastating 120 community deaths. While the rate of new infections continues to decline since hitting a peak in early January, CPHD warns that we may see an uptick due to February break, and urges residents to remain vigilant on mask use, physical distancing, and hand hygiene. Wastewater surveillance data shows that Cambridge's viral load is consistently lower than regional data, but this is a new technology that should be considered with other metrics. Last week, CPHD announced that the first Massachusetts case of the South Africa variant [appeared in a Cambridge resident](#), and a second case has since been detected in the Commonwealth. The Expert Advisory Panel is continuing to meet and provide guidance to City leadership as we navigate this public health crisis.

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

This item was placed on file.

2. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the Final Landmark Designation Report for the St. Augustine's African Orthodox Church at 137 Allston Street.

CMA 2021 #29

This communication asks the City Council to officially designate St. Augustine's African Orthodox Church as a historical landmark. Located at 137 Allston Street, the Church was originally built in 1886, and has served as a pillar in Cambridge's black community since the 1920s. This historical landmark designation isn't just about preserving a building, but the legacy of those who built a community within its walls as well. [Click here](#) to read the Historical Commission's full report on St. Augustine's African Orthodox Church.

This item was adopted.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the reappointment of the following members of the Affordable Housing Trust for a term of three years, effective February 9, 2021: Peter Daly, Florrie Darwin, Gwendolyn Noyes, Susan Schlesinger, James Stockard, William Tibbs, Elaine Thorne.

CMA 2021 #30

[Click here](#) to learn more about the re-appointed members.

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

4. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a proposed amendment to Section 8.66 of the Municipal Ordinance relating to Tree Protection and related Order.

CMA 2021 #31

This communication contains an amendment to [the City's Tree Protection Ordinance](#) that would extend the Ordinance by sixty days, until April 29th. This Ordinance was previously set to expire on February 28th, and Councillor Zondervan is working with the Department of Public Works and the Law Department on amendments, but needs additional time to finalize the language. The City Council invoked emergency provisions in [the City's Ordinance](#) to ordain this amendment in a single vote, instead of going through the typical ordination process that takes several weeks and multiple votes.

This item was ordained.

5. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 20-64, requesting Home Rule language to allow for acoustic live entertainment performances in small businesses under certain conditions without a license.

CMA 2021 #32

This communication responds to [a policy order](#) I co-sponsored in February 2019 (and filed in the previous term by Councillor Devereux) asking the City Solicitor to draft Home Rule Petition language that would allow for acoustic live performances in small businesses without a license. This effort was envisioned as a way to help small businesses that typically don't have live entertainment, like bookstores, attract new customers and create a welcoming, vibrant environment. This is a creative way to support the struggling small business community and remove another hurdle for them, so I was disappointed by this response from the License Commission that simply opposes the idea, instead of

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suggesting a path forward. As this idea has had the strong support of the City Council for over four years, a late policy order was submitted on the floor to again ask the City Solicitor to prepare Home Rule Petition language, as well as any necessary municipal zoning amendments, that would allow acoustic music performances without a license. The City Council decided to place this communication on the table until the City Solicitor provides the language and zoning amendments.

This item was placed on the table.

6. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 19-144, regarding the feasibility of creating a Fire Cadet Program.

CMA 2021 #33

In 2019, I filed [a policy order](#) with Councillors Toomey, McGovern, and Simmons asking the City to create a Fire Cadet Program, and this communication contains the Home Rule Petition language needed to send to the state legislature and get this program approved. The Police Cadet Program has been a huge success, increasing racial and gender diversity within the department while offering young Cambridge residents well-paying jobs, and a similar Fire Cadet Program would offer another meaningful public service opportunity. The Cambridge Firefighters' Union fully supports creating a Fire Cadet Program, so I'm hopeful that our Home Rule Petition can quickly move through the state legislature, so funding for the Fire Cadet Program can be included in Fiscal Year 2022's budget. will get update on civil service soon

This item was adopted.

7. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a further response to Calendar Item Number 2, regarding a report on reviewing the granting of an extension for the 605 Concord Avenue project, which was previously answered as Awaiting Report Item Number 20-63 on February 1, 2021.

CMA 2021 #34

At the February 1st City Council meeting, the City Manager submitted [a communication](#) (Calendar Item #2) responding to [a policy order filed](#) by Councillors Nolan, McGovern, Zondervan, and Sobrinho-Wheeler asking the City Manager to review granting a permit extension to the 605 Concord Avenue project. Councillor Nolan exercised her charter-right at that meeting to give herself time to submit questions on the response, and the communication was later tabled. This communication responds to those submitted questions, but as she still has unanswered questions, this communication was placed on the table to give Councillor Nolan time to follow up with City staff.

As he had some questions of his own, Councillor McGovern submitted a late policy order to formally ask the City Solicitor if the City can require written notice be sent to all abutters when a building permit extension request is submitted to the Planning Board. This late order also asked the City Solicitor to report back on how many permit extensions can be granted by law, and was amended to clarify state law and local ordinances. The late order was adopted as amended.

This item was placed on the table.

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II. CALENDAR

ON THE TABLE

1. 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.
2. 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 Tabled IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 8, 2021
CMA 2021 #14
No action was taken.
3. Vaccinating CPS Staff Plan PO.
TABLED IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 3, 2021
POR 2021 #21
No action was taken.

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.
5. 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. Policy Order re Services for the Unhoused

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

POR 2021 #30

Councillors Simmons, McGovern, Toomey, and I submitted this policy order to ask the City Manager to provide an overview of City services offered to the unhoused community and those at-risk of becoming homeless, and report back on how the City measures the effectiveness of these programs. The City offers a wide range of services to those experiencing homelessness and housing instability, but if residents don't know these services are available, they can't take advantage of them. As expanding education around these services is critical in ensuring our most vulnerable residents are supported, this order was amended to include the full City Council as co-sponsors.

This order was adopted as amended.

2. That the City Manager and appropriate staff are requested to work with the local organizers of the Floral Heart Project-Cambridge, to place a Floral Heart Shaped wreath at an appropriation location on the lawn on City Hall on March 1, 2021, in honor and memory of those lost to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mayor Siddiqui

POR 2021 #31

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

3. Policy Order for Dedication in Memory of Sabbatino Gagliardi

Councillor Simmons

POR 2021 #32

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. The Health & Environment Committee met on October 13, 2020 to conduct a public hearing to discuss amending the Tree Protection Ordinance based on the findings of the Urban Forest Master Plan Task Force.

For more from this Health & Environment Committee hearing, [click here](#). As he wanted to discuss this committee report with minutes from a follow-up Health & Environment Committee meeting held on November 11th, 2020, Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

2. The Neighborhood & Long-Term Planning; Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee held a public hearing on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 to discuss the Municipal Broadband Feasibility Study RFP

For more from this Neighborhood & Long-Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts & Celebrations Committee hearing, [click here](#).

This report was accepted and placed on file.

V. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

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

COF 2021 #14

This communication from Mayor Siddiqui outlines the work she and the School Committee are doing to support CPS scholars and staff, and prepare for CPS' return to in-person learning on March 1st. To read her full letter, [click here](#).

This communication was placed on file.

2. A communication was received from Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, transmitting questions for the COVID-19 Update.

COF 2021 #15

This communication contains the questions asked by members of the City Council to City staff as part of the weekly COVID update (see City Manager's Agenda Item #1). Previously, Councillors would ask these questions during discussion, but submitting them ahead of time allows City staff to proactively include answers in their presentation, making it more efficient and informative.

This communication was placed on file.