



# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA • MARCH 1, 2021

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Regular Meeting

Sullivan Chamber

5:30 PM

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

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## I. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

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1. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to an update on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout.

**CMA 2021 #35**

City staff gave a COVID update.

**Reopening Update:** On March 1st, 2021, [the City advanced to Phase 3 Step 2 of the Commonwealth's reopening plan](#), with limited exceptions. Capacity limits across all impacted sectors were increased to 50% excluding employees, while restaurants will no longer have a percent capacity limit, though a 6' distancing requirement is still in place so although the percent capacity limits were removed, restaurants will not be at FULL CAPACITY. Live musical performances at restaurants are prohibited until further notice. The opening of indoor performance venues has been postponed until March 22nd, and venues will need approval from the Inspectional Services Department before opening.

**Schools Update:** In-person learning resumed at CPS on March 1st for those who opted in. To date, 1,360 CPS staff members have been tested 16,683 times since October 15th, 2020 as part of a voluntary testing program. 568 tests have also been administered to student athletes and students who developed symptoms during the school day through this testing program. Overarchingly, case numbers are low across the school district, but there did seem to be a concerning uptick among staff at the Fletcher Maynard Academy last week. CPHD is performing contact tracing and offering support, and students at the school will begin twice-weekly testing next week.

**Vaccine Update:** The Commonwealth is still in Phase 2 Step 2 of its vaccine rollout plan, so those aged 65+ or with 2+ qualifying health conditions are eligible to get vaccinated. Appointments are required to get vaccinated, and can be made by [clicking here](#) or calling 211. Currently, 1 million people who live, work, or study in Massachusetts have been vaccinated, including 2,000 people who received their first dose of the vaccine at a City-operated vaccine clinic. Research also suggests that the vaccine is effective against variants, and Moderna and Pfizer have begun looking into creating vaccine booster shots.

There's a severe statewide shortage of vaccines, with Massachusetts receiving just 139,000 doses from the federal government each week. With the recent FDA approval of the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine, we will see vaccine availability increase; the first doses of this vaccine are expected to be

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delivered as early as this week. This severe vaccine shortage has, however, limited local Public Health Department's ability to run local clinics at the state has chosen to prioritize regional mass-vaccination sites. On February 26th, Cambridge joined a regional collaborative with eight other local municipalities, and submitted a formal proposal to the state to operate a regional vaccination site. Under this proposal, the Cambridge Health Alliance would serve as a hub for vaccines, and would be responsible for ordering, storing, and transporting doses.

In the meantime, CPHD is working to continue vaccinating first responders and senior housing building residents. 1,180 first doses and 893 second doses have been administered to first responders, with an additional clinic for second doses scheduled for March 3rd. A total of 629 first doses were administered to residents in senior housing buildings throughout the month of February, and CPHD will be onsite at Millers River and the Manning Apartments to administer second doses this week. Participation has been high, with more than 70% of senior housing residents opting to get vaccinated at these clinics. CPHD also held clinics last week to administer second doses to 281 homeless shelter guests and staff. Moving forward, CPHD is working on gathering information on homebound seniors in anticipation of vaccinating them within their homes, and is awaiting further guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

CPHD has convened a Clinicians Speakers Bureau with thirty healthcare providers to educate residents on the benefits of the vaccine, and is holding a series of community forums targeted at high-risk communities, such as seniors, residents of color, and immigrants. The City's COVID Vaccine Opinion Survey ended last week, and information gathered from this survey, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews will be used to identify common themes and better inform the City's outreach strategy.

For more information on the vaccine, [click here](#).

**Testing Update:** The City continues to offer free, daily testing to everyone who lives or works in Cambridge. Appointments are recommended, but not required, and can be made by [clicking here](#) or calling 617-349-9788. More than 24,000 tests were administered through this testing program in February, and the City's positivity rate has dropped to .41%, with a seven day average of 12.9 cases per 100,000 residents.

**Public Health Update:** Cambridge's [COVID case count](#) currently stands at 4,849 cases, and is holding steady with a devastating 120 deaths. 20% of these cases are currently active, and data trends show that cases have flattened out to pre-Thanksgiving levels, but aren't continuing to trend downwards. CPHD is urging residents to stay vigilant about mask use, physical distancing, and hand hygiene, and continues to examine case data by race. For routine healthcare, the Cambridge Health Alliance and Mount Auburn Hospital are prioritizing the highest need individuals and children for preventative care. While access to in-person care is still slightly limited, many families prefer telehealth visits, which are widely available.

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

This item was placed on file.

2. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to additional information and revised Financial Analysis for the Alewife Zoning Petition.

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### ***CMA 2021 #36***

[This communication](#) contains updated information on the Alewife Zoning Petition. See Committee Reports Item #3A for further discussion.

This item was placed on file.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the City of Cambridge retaining its AAA rating from the nation's three major credit rating agencies.

### ***CMA 2021 #37***

This communication announces that the City has retained its AAA bond rating from the nation's three major credit rating agencies for the 22nd year in a row. Only 27 communities across the country achieved this rating this year, and this rating will allow the City to finance projects, like the Tobin Montessori and Vassal Lane Upper School reconstruction, at the most favorable interest rate. [Read the full report here.](#)

This item was placed on file.

## II. CALENDAR

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### CHARTER RIGHT

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.

**CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN IN COUNCIL  
FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

Last week, Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right (discussion ended, no vote was taken, and it appears on the next agenda) on [this report](#) because he wanted to discuss it with minutes from a follow-up Health & Environment Committee meeting held on November 11th, 2020, as well as proposed amendments to the Tree Protection Ordinance. As those minutes and amendments haven't yet been finalized, this report was laid on the table

This report was placed on the table.

### ON THE TABLE

2. 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.
3. Vaccinating CPS Staff Plan PO.  
**TABLED IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 3, 2021**  
**POR 2021 #21**  
No action was taken.
4. 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.  
**TABLED IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 22, 2021**  
**CMA 2021 #32**  
No action was taken.
5. 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**

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### **CMA 2021 #14**

This item was placed on file. See Calendar Item #6 for further discussion.

6. 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.

**TABLED IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

### **CMA 2021 #34**

At the February 1st City Council meeting, the City Manager submitted [a communication](#) (Calendar Item #5) 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 submitted by the City Manager 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 she's had time to confer with City staff, these communications were taken off the table and placed on file.

This item was placed on file.

## **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.

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### III. APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS

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1. An application was received from Patrick Conte, requesting permission for a curb cut at the premises numbered 303 Binney Street; said petition has received approval from Inspectional Services, Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Historical Commission and Public Works. Response has been received from the neighborhood association.

***APP 2021 #5***

This application was approved on the consent agenda (no discussion).

2. An application was received from TD Bank, requesting permission for 4 (four) awnings at the premises numbered 617 Massachusetts Avenue. Approval has been received from Inspectional Services, Department of Public Works, Community Development Department and abutters.

***APP 2021 #6***

As he had some unanswered questions on this application, Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

3. ORDINANCE 2021-6: A Zoning Petition Has been received from Beals Associates Inc. regarding Broad Canal Subdistrict Zoning Petition as submitted with strike outs.

***APP 2021 #7***

This zoning petition proposes creating a Broad Canal Subdistrict, which would allow for the construction of up to 582,000 additional square feet. The City Council took a procedural vote to refer this petition to the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board, and I look forward to discussing this petition further. [Click here](#) to read the full zoning petition.

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

## IV. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

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1. Lowell Street Property  
**Councillor Nolan, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Mayor Siddiqui**  
***POR 2021 #35***

This order asks the City Manager to begin an exploratory process with community members and City staff to determine the best use of a City-owned parking lot located at 25 Lowell Street. This parking lot doesn't see much use, but it's close to public transit and a park, which could make it a good location for an affordable housing project. The City Council has been pushing for City-owned lots to be redeveloped into community spaces and uses in recent years, and this could be a critical opportunity to add affordable housing stock into the West Cambridge neighborhood.

This order was adopted.

2. Task Force Transparency  
**Councillor Zondervan**  
***POR 2021 #36***

In response to [a policy order](#) I filed with Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Simmons, and Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler last summer asking the City to create an alternative Public Safety Crisis Response System, the City Manager announced [a Task Force to Examine the Future of Public Safety](#). This Task Force is exploring ways to reform policing by redirecting certain emergency calls and centering restorative justice. Community input is critical as we embark on this process, but Task Force meeting agendas, recordings, and minutes haven't been published yet, so this policy order asks the City Manager to ensure these materials are available, and to publicly notice these meetings to promote transparency and community engagement. Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right before discussion on this item.

Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right.

3. Budget Reallocation Update  
**Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Nolan**  
***POR 2021 #37***

As the City expected to experience revenue shortfalls due to the pandemic, hiring for vacant City positions were put on hold last summer. However, the City Council passed [a policy order](#) last June asking the City Manager to place a temporary hold on Police Department hirings, and instead prioritize hiring for certain roles, including a new case manager for the Housing Liaison's Office, a social worker for the Central Square Library, and more. This policy order asks the City Manager to provide an update on which of these certain positions have been filled.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

4. Shelter Wages  
**Councillor Zondervan, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler**  
***POR 2021 #38***

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It's recently come to the attention of the City Council that staff at the 240 Albany Street are paid \$15/hr, less than the \$16.46/hr mandated under the City's [Living Wage Ordinance](#) for contractors. While the 240 Albany Street isn't City-funded, other resources, such as the Warming Center, are, and this pay discrepancy has been reported as creating low morale among staff. Since the City uses state funding, not taxpayer dollars, for shelter programs, I submitted amendments that would bring the state, as well as Bay Cove Human Services, which runs 240 Albany Street, and stakeholders, into this conversation as we try to rectify this pay disparity. My amendments also ask that the City Manager work with Bay Cove Human Services to present options on a path forward to ensure shelter guests are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. Councillor Zondervan wanted to discuss my proposed amendments with me, so he exercised his charter-right.

Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

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### V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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1. The Ordinance Committee met on December 16, 2020 to conduct a public hearing on the Alewife Quadrangle Northwest Overlay petition.  
[Click here](#) for the minutes from this meeting, and see Committee Reports Item #3A for further discussion.

This report was accepted and placed on file.

2. The Ordinance Committee met on February 10, 2021 to conduct a public hearing on the Alewife zoning petition.  
[Click here](#) for the minutes from this meeting, and see Committee Reports Item #3A for further discussion.

This report was accepted and placed on file.

3. The Ordinance Committee met on February 16, 2020 to conduct a public hearing to continue discussion on the Alewife zoning petition.  
[Click here](#) for the minutes from this meeting, and see Committee Reports Item #3A for further discussion.

This report was accepted and placed on file.

A Zoning Petition Has been received from Arvind Srinivasan regarding zoning language relative to the Alewife Quadrangle Northwest overlay

***APP 2020 #39***

This Alewife Quadrangle Northwest overlay petition asks for increased building height, exclude ground-floor light industrial uses and customer-facing businesses from Gross Floor Area calculations, and additional FAR in exchange for public benefits. This process for moving this petition forward has been rushed, and the City Council still hasn't seen an updated letter of commitment from the petitioners, or a formal commitment to use union labor (a Project Labor Agreement or PLA) to build the project. This petition covers 26 acres of land, and the Alewife area needs to be examined and zoned holistically, which cannot happen under the strict timeline this petition requires. With an expiration date of March 15th, and the further work and conversations needed to update this petition, I voted against passing this petition to a second reading. The majority of the City Council voted in favor of passing it to a second reading, so it will reappear on the March 15th City Council agenda, for a vote on final ordination.

This item was passed to a second reading.

## VI. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

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

**Mayor Siddiqui**

***COF 2021 #16***

This communication contains questions asked by City Councillors, with answers included in the City's COVID update (City Manager's Agenda Item #1).

This communication was placed on file.

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

***COF 2021 #17***

This communication from Mayor Siddiqui outlines the work she and the School Committee are doing to support CPS scholars and staff as many return to in-person learning, and handle grief from the tragic death of CRLS student Sina Ball. [Click here](#) to read her full letter.

This communication was placed on file.