



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA • MARCH 15, 2021

Regular Meeting

Sullivan Chamber

5:30 PM

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

I. RECONSIDERATION LIST

1. Task Force Transparency

RECONSIDERATION FILED BY COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN ON MARCH 9, 2021 POR 2021 #36

Last week, the City Council adopted an amended policy order that asks [the Task Force to Examine the Future of Public Safety](#) to hold at least one public meeting before issuing final recommendations, and to provide monthly updates to the City Council. The original order asks that all of the Task Force's meeting materials be made public, and this amended order was a compromise to increase transparency and community engagement, while protecting the privacy of Task Force members. The [City Council rules](#) allows any City Councillor who was on the prevailing side of a vote taken on an item to file for reconsideration, and Councillor Zondervan filed for reconsideration on this order. The majority of the City Council voted against reconsidering the vote, so the order was made final.

Reconsideration failed.

II. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

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

CMA 2021 #47

City Staff gave a COVID update.

City Services Update: While the pandemic has delayed some City services, staff is working to clear backlogs. Residential parking permits are being extended through May 31st, and the Inspectional Services Department and the Fire Department have caught up on commercial inspections. The Library is continuing to offer [contactless holds pickup](#), and will begin making deliveries to homebound residents starting in April, as they work to develop a reopening plan.

Vaccine Update: The Commonwealth's vaccination plan remains at Phase 2, Group 3, and eligible residents can make their vaccine appointment [by clicking here](#), or calling 211. Mayor Siddiqui and I have formed the Cambridge Vaccine Volunteer Corps, a group of trained staff and volunteers to help residents find vaccine appointments, so if you're struggling to make an appointment, don't hesitate to reach out by emailing amallon@cambridgema.gov. There isn't any definitive word on when Phase 2, Group 4 will become eligible, but residents who aren't eligible yet can pre-register for the vaccine [here](#).

So far, 22% of Massachusetts residents have received at least a first dose of the vaccine, including the 2,289 residents or City staff who have been vaccinated at a City-run clinic. The state recently began releasing municipal vaccine data with details at the local level, and that information will be added to the [City's COVID data dashboard](#) soon. The Commonwealth receives 400,000 doses each week, and CPHD has received 800 doses of the newly authorized Johnson & Johnson single-shot vaccine. These doses are being used to vaccinate elderly residents onsite at senior housing buildings, and the single-shot will prove instrumental in ensuring homebound individuals are able to get vaccinated. CPHD will get separate doses for its Homebound Vaccination Program and is working to identify eligible residents to get vaccinated in their homes.

Early race and ethnicity data shows that black and Latinx residents in Cambridge have slightly higher vaccine uptake rates than these communities statewide, but it's critical that we continue monitoring these numbers and conducting outreach to communities to ensure equitable access and distribution of the vaccine as they experience disparate health outcomes. Last week, the Cambridge Health Alliance offered 100 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to in-person CPS staff, primarily food workers and bus drivers, on a first-come, first-serve basis. CPHD is continuing to advocate for a vaccination site at CambridgeSide, as all CPS staff could be vaccinated there in a week, but the state has not yet approved it or supplied the necessary doses. Moving forward, CPHD will continue advocating for a regional vaccination site in Cambridge, while educating our community about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine through community forums, outreach at parks from the Cambridge Community Corps, and the Clinicians Speaker's Bureau. For more information on the vaccine, [click here](#).

Testing Update: The City continues to offer [free, daily COVID testing](#). Appointments are encouraged, but not required, and can be made by [clicking here](#) or calling 617-349-9788. More than 9,000 tests were administered by the City in the first eleven days of March, for a total of roughly 150,000 tests administered since last April, including CPS' testing program. CPS pool testing has launched for in-

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person learners, and among roughly 1,000 K-5 students who participated last week, just one case was found. Cambridge's positivity rate currently stands at .45%, with an average of 16.6 cases each week per 100,000 residents. These numbers have plateaued, mirroring statewide trends, and CPHD is urging residents to remain vigilant as we approach mass-vaccination.

Public Health Update: As we mark the anniversary of the City's shutdown, [Cambridge's COVID case count](#) currently stands at 5,128 cases, 15% of which are active, and a devastating 121 deaths. While our overall case numbers are plateauing, East Cambridge and North Cambridge, two of the hardest hit neighborhoods, are seeing fewer cases, while cases in the Port remain steady. CPHD warns that a few cases of COVID variants have been found in our community, and there are likely more going undetected.

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

This item was placed on file.

III. CALENDAR

ON THE TABLE

1. Resolution on the Death of William Leeds.
TABLED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN COUNCIL JANUARY 11, 2021
RES 2021 #5
No action was taken.
2. Vaccinating CPS Staff Plan PO.
TABLED IN COUNCIL FEBRUARY 3, 2021
POR 2021 #21
No action was taken.
3. 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.
4. 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.
TABLED IN COUNCIL MARCH 8, 2021 BY COUNCILLOR NOLAN
APP 2021 #6
No action was taken.
5. The Health & Environment Committee met on October 13, 2020 to discuss amending the Tree Protection Ordinance based on the findings of the Urban Forest Master Plan Task Force.
TABLED IN COUNCIL MARCH 1, 2021 BY COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN
No action was taken.
6. The Health and Environment Committee met on November 10, 2020 to continue discussing amending the Tree Protection Ordinance based on the findings of the Urban Forest Master Plan Task Force.
TABLED IN COUNCIL MARCH 8, 2021 BY COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN
No action was taken.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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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

No action was taken.

CMA 2018 #286

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

**PASSED TO A SECOND READING IN COUNCIL MARCH 1, 2021 TO BE
ORDAINED ON OR AFTER MARCH 15, 2021**

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. I had serious concerns on the City's mitigation package, the amount of housing the petition would create, and the zoning of the Alewife area as a whole, so I voted against this petition, as did the majority of the City Council. Since this petition received a favorable recommendation from the Planning Board, the petitioners can re-submit the zoning amendment without a waiting period.

This petition failed.

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IV. APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS

1. An application was received from Bridgette Morris representing TD Bank, requesting permission for a projecting flag mount sign at the premises numbered 1270 Massachusetts Avenue approval has been received from Inspectional Services, Department of Public Works, Community Development Department and abutters response proof of mailing has been received.

APP 2021 #8

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

2. A petition was received from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, requesting permission for a temporary banner hung across the public way located at JFK at Mount Auburn Street, from March 22, 2021 through April 19, 2021

APP 2021 #9

This application was approved on the consent agenda.

V. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

1. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Department of Public Works, the Economic Development Division of the Community Development Department, the Budget Department, Cambridge Table to Farm, the local Business Associations, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, and other relevant groups to explore the feasibility of creating a Commercial Composting Pilot Program to serve at least 100 small businesses with fewer than fifty employees
Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Toomey, Councillor Nolan
POR 2021 #45

Food waste is a major environmental hazard, releasing greenhouse gases as it decomposes in landfills, and as food waste piles up in landfills, trash removal costs pile up for our local small businesses. That's why I've submitted this policy order with Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Toomey, and Councillor Nolan asking the City to create a Commercial Composting Pilot Program to serve at least 100 small businesses, especially those owned by minorities, women, and other historically disadvantaged groups. Our struggling small businesses and the climate crisis both demand a sense of urgency, and this is a creative way we can tackle both issues at the same time, so I hope we can join the growing number of cities across the country that are developing Commercial Composting Pilots.

This order was adopted.

2. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Historical Commission to initiate a process to begin chronicling the rich and vibrant history of people of color in Cambridge, similar to other City-commissioned books such as “We Are the Port: Stories of Place, Perseverance, and Pride in the Port/Area 4 Cambridge, Massachusetts 1845-2005” and “All in the Same Boat” and “Crossroads: Stories of Central Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1912-2000”
Councillor Simmons
POR 2021 #46

This order was adopted.

3. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Purchasing Department to provide a report detailing the City’s annual stationary expenditures, what percentage of that budget is spent at local retailers, and whether this percentage can be increased during the Covid-19 crisis
Councillor Simmons
POR 2021 #47

This order originally asked the City Manager to report on how much the City spends on stationary each year, what percentage of this stationary budget goes towards local retailers, and if the City can purchase more stationary from local businesses. As so many of our local businesses are struggling, this order was amended to ask the City Manager to explore the possibility of purchasing more goods and services from local vendors, not just stationary, during and beyond this pandemic. With an annual budget of more than \$1 billion (including Capital projects) for the current fiscal year, the City infuses a lot of money into the economy, and directing as much of that funding as possible towards our local small businesses will help support this struggling sector.

This order was adopted as amended.

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4. Student Loan Crisis

Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Zondervan
POR 2021 #48

This resolution asks the City Council to go on record in favor of [a resolution](#) related to the Higher Education Act, sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Warren. This resolution outlines President Biden's authority to cancel student loan debt and directly asks him to enact a plan to cancel student loan debt by his 100th day in office.

This resolution was adopted.

5. That the City Manager be and is hereby requested to work with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to open Riverbend Park before the end of March and on other days in addition to Sundays, and explore the feasibility of extending Riverbend Park to the BU Bridge and beyond

Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Zondervan
POR 2021 #49

This order asks the City Manager to work with the state Department of Conservation and Recreation to close Memorial Drive to cars and open Riverbend Park up for cyclists and pedestrians before the end of March for multiple days a week, and explore extending the road closure to the BU Bridge and beyond. Memorial Drive would typically close on the last Sunday in April, but given the popularity of its expanded closures last year, I hope we can get this effort up and running again as soon as possible, and expand it to more parts of the City.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

6. Ending the U.S. embargo on Cuba

Councillor Nolan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Zondervan
POR 2021 #50

This order has the City Council go on record in support of ending the United States embargo on Cuba. Back in 2014, then-President Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations between the two countries, but the main portions of the U.S. embargo, focusing on travel and trade, on Cuba continue.

This order was adopted.

7. Thank You to My Brother's Keeper Cambridge

Mayor Siddiqui

RES 2021 #74

This resolution thanks the [My Brother's Keeper Task Force](#) for their hard work in partnering with the Tufts School of Medicine and the Cambridge Health Alliance to hold a series of vaccination clinics at the Cambridge Community Center. The first clinic was held on March 3rd, and through the leadership of My Brother's Keeper, many residents who otherwise lacked access to vaccine appointments were able to receive their first dose.

This resolution was adopted.

8. Order to amend the Municipal Code of the City of Cambridge to insert new section Restricting the Use of Chemical Crowd Control Agents and Kinetic Impact Projectiles

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Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Nolan, Councillor Zondervan
POR 2021 #51

This proposed ordinance would restrict the Cambridge Police Department's use of chemical crowd control agents, like tear gas, and kinetic impact projectiles, like rubber bullets. These sorts of materials are often used across the country against protestors exercising their First Amendment rights, and while CPD hasn't used tear gas in over thirty years and Commissioner Bard is working on an internal policy banning the use of tear gas, this is an important step to take to codify the City's commitment to free speech, public health, and just public safety. While the City Solicitor previously opined that the City Council doesn't have the authority to ban the use of tear gas, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler worked with a local lawyer to put together a [legal memorandum](#) arguing that the City Council can move forward with a tear gas ban. This proposal is now moving onto the Ordinance Committee, where I look forward to having a more robust conversation with my colleagues and community members.

This order was referred to the Ordinance Committee.

9. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to reimplement capacity restrictions on indoor dining to ensure the safety of restaurant workers, diners, and Cambridge residents until widespread vaccination of the general public is achieved in the coming weeks

Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler
POR 2021 #52

On March 1st, the City [lifted percent capacity limits](#) at our local restaurants, and this policy order asked the City Manager to reimplement capacity restrictions for indoor dining. However, while the percent capacity limits were lifted, other public health regulations, such as the mandatory six-foot distance between tables, weren't. Since our local restaurants tend to be small, most restaurants weren't actually able to serve more diners because of these regulations, and the few larger restaurants that did increase capacity only added a few tables.

This order failed.

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VI. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

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

COF 2021 #24

This communication from Mayor Siddiqui outlines new state regulations for in-person learning, and details how she and the School Committee are working to support CPS scholars and staff.

[Click here](#) to read her full update.

This communication was placed on file.

2. A communication was received from Mayor Siddiqui, transmitting questions for the City Manager's COVID-19 update.

COF 2021 #25

This communication contains questions asked by City Councillors that were answered in the City Manager's COVID update (City Manager's Agenda Item #1).

This item was placed on file.