



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA • MARCH 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 a COVID-19 update on vaccination rollout.

CMA 2021 #48

City staff gave a COVID update:

Reopening Update: The City will not advance to [Phase IV](#) of the Commonwealth's Reopening Plan, and [will remain at Phase III, Step 2](#). Gathering limits for event venues and public settings are capped at 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors, while outdoor gatherings at private residences remain limited to 25 people, and indoor gatherings at private residences are capped at 10 people. The prohibition on City-sponsored community events and events permitted in City parks has been extended through May 31st, 2021.

City Services Update: The City announced it would be hosting an in-person Spring in the Sun outdoor activities series for JK-8th graders beginning in mid-April. Run by the City's Department of Human Service Programs, this program will provide childcare on Mondays through Fridays, 3-6pm, and offer kids the opportunity to engage in games, sports, crafts, science activities, and more. Last year's Fall on the Fields program was a lifeline for working parents struggling to care for their children after school, and I'm so grateful to see that this critical resource is coming back for the spring. The Cambridge Public Libraries, another crucial community resource, is actively planning for the next phase of reopening, which will likely include [contactless holds pickup](#) at all branch libraries, and limited in-person browsing at the Main Library. An announcement is expected to be made within the next few weeks. City staff is also engaging in discussion on in-person programming for youth this summer, and while the state hasn't issued guidance on summer camps yet, there may be an opportunity for programming in schools and youth centers.

The City is continuing to offer outdoor dining space extended into public areas, and restaurant pick up zones for residents. As the MBTA slashed public transit with its ["Forging Ahead" Plan](#), the City secured a commitment from the MBTA to run the [#68 bus](#) in the morning and afternoon to accommodate CRLS students heading to school. However, the MBTA also [recently announced](#) that pre-pandemic levels of train and bus service will be fully funded in the next fiscal year, which starts on July 1st. The City has also worked with HRI to ensure the CASCAP Representative Payee program continues through the end of June, giving City staff additional time to determine a solution

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MARCH 22, 2021

for the 120 residents currently using this program to access their Social Security benefits. To learn more about all the ways the City has supported our residents in the past year, [click here](#) to view the Cambridge COVID-19 Response Timeline.

Vaccine Update: Residents aged 60+ and certain workers, including those employed in the transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public health, and public workers sectors, are now eligible for vaccination. Pre-registration for the vaccine is open for anyone who lives, works, or studies in Massachusetts, regardless of current eligibility, and you can [pre-register here](#). Residents ages 55+ and those who have one certain health condition will become eligible for the vaccine starting on April 5th, while everyone aged 16+ will be eligible on April 19th. While [21% of Cambridge residents](#) have received at least one dose, compared to 25% of Massachusetts residents statewide, Cambridge also has a higher vaccine uptake rate among black and Latinx residents.

The Cambridge Pandemic Collaborative has helped administer vaccines to 2,480 people at City-run clinics, and will begin reaching out to seniors living in CHA elderly/disabled housing buildings. The Cambridge Community Corps is being redeployed, and uses data-driven techniques to identify where most new infections arise, and where their education and outreach efforts are most needed. CPHD is working with City and community partners to identify and screen homebound residents who are eligible to be vaccinated in their homes, including those who are bedbound, those with cognitive or behavioral issues such as dementia, and those with mobility issues who cannot leave their home without significant assistance. For more information on the Homebound Vaccination Program, call 617-349-6220.

Cambridge has joined the Metro North COVID-19 Vaccination Partnership with the Cambridge Health Alliance, Tufts University, and eight other local municipalities. Although the state approved this partnership, which has proposed hosting vaccination sites in the Tufts Gantcher Center and the CHA's Somerville Vaccination Center, doses aren't yet available to activate these sites, and there is no set start date. In the meantime, CPHD is continuing to launch its multi-pronged communications strategy to reach hard-hit, vulnerable communities, and educate them on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. In addition to a set of community forums with clinicians, they're also created a grassroots campaign in hard-to-reach communities to address hesitancy, registration, and accessibility.

Testing Update: The City continues to offer [free, daily COVID testing](#), and appointments are encouraged, but not required. Make your appointment by [clicking here](#) or calling 617-349-9788. Mondays and Tuesdays are the busiest days for the City's testing sites, and over 17,000 tests were administered through them in the first three weeks of March. Cambridge's positivity rate currently stands at .45%, with a seven-day average of 15.4 cases per 100,000 each day.

Public Health Update: Cambridge's [COVID case count](#) currently stands at 5,284, with a devastating 121 deaths. 16% of cases are active, and as case numbers plateau in Cambridge statewide, CPHD warns that residents need to remain vigilant on mask use, physical distancing, and good hand hygiene.

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

This item was placed on file.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MARCH 22, 2021

2. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of a grant received from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Accelerating Climate Resiliency (ACR) Grant Program, in the amount of \$52,250 to the Grant Fund Public Works Other Ordinary Maintenance Account which will be used for technical assistance for 1) planning and permitting the expansion of the floating wetland pilot in the Charles; 2) outlining and disseminating a permitting road map and lessons learned that can enable similar capital, resiliency projects; and 3) engagement with the wider community to support understanding of water quality and to inform the expansion process.

CMA 2021 #49

[Click here](#) for more information on the Floating Wetland Pilot in the Charles River.

This item was adopted.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to proposed amendments to the Tree Protection Ordinance.

CMA 2021 #50

This communication contains proposed amendments to the City's [Tree Protection Ordinance](#).

Generated through the Urban Forestry Master Planning Process, these amendments propose:

- Redefining Significant Trees as trees at least six inches in diameter, rather than eight inches;
- Introduces the concept of Exceptional Trees, trees that are more than 30 inches in diameter;
- Requires permits for all Significant Trees removed;
- Provides the option of including affordable housing projects within the jurisdiction of the Ordinance. Currently, affordable housing projects are waived from these requirements;

among other suggestions. This communication was referred to the Ordinance Committee, where I look forward to having a fuller conversation with my colleagues on the City Council.

This item was referred to the Ordinance Committee.

4. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to recommendations for the block rates for water consumption and sewer use for the period beginning April 1, 2021 and ending March 31, 2022.

CMA 2021 #51

This letter recommends that the City Council approve a 1% increase in the water consumption block rate and an 8% increase in the sewer use block rate, for a combined 6.5% increase beginning April 1st, 2021. [Click here](#) to learn more.

This item was adopted.

5. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to suggested zoning text amendments as well as amendments to Chapter 5.50 of the Municipal Code regarding cannabis delivery businesses.

CMA 2021 #52

This communication contains potential amendments to the City's [Cannabis Business Permitting ordinance](#) to allow for cannabis delivery businesses, aligning with regulatory changes adopted by the Cannabis Control Commission. These amendments were sent to the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board for a fuller discussion, and you can learn more about the proposed changes by [clicking here](#).

This item was referred to the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board for hearing and report on the consent agenda (no discussion).

II. CALENDAR

ON THE TABLE

1. Resolution on the Death of William Leeds.
TABLED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONS IN COUNCIL JANUARY 11, 2021
RES 2021 #5
Back in January, Councillor Simmons asked that this resolution be tabled to allow for additional time to properly reflect on William Leeds' life and legacy in this resolution. This week, Councillors Nolan and McGovern brought forward language that shares his story, including his long career in the field of public health, his anti-war and civil rights activism, and his beloved family. Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Nolan, and Councillor McGovern were added as co-sponsors to this resolution.

This resolution was adopted as amended.
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 BY COUNCILLOR NOLAN IN COUNCIL MARCH 8, 2021
APP 2021 #6
This application was tabled a few weeks ago due to questions on whether these awnings fit the zoning definition of signs or awnings. Since it's been weeks without progress towards finding an answer, I moved to have the City Council vote on this application. The application failed, and the petitioner will be able to resubmit their application.

This application failed.
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
This item contains minutes from the October 13th, 2020 Health & Environment Committee meeting. [Click here](#) for more from this Committee hearing. Councillor Zondervan previously asked that this report be tabled so it could be discussed alongside proposed amendments to the City's [Tree Protection Ordinance](#) (see City Manager's Agenda Item #3).

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MARCH 22, 2021

This report was referred to the Ordinance Committee.

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

This item contains minutes from the November 10th, 2020 Health & Environment Committee hearing. [Click here](#) for more from this Committee hearing. Councillor Zondervan previously asked that this report be tabled so it could be discussed alongside proposed amendments to the City's [Tree Protection Ordinance](#) (see City Manager's Agenda Item #3).

This report was referred to the Ordinance Committee.

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.

III. APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS

1. An application was received from Samantha Nardone representing Boston Properties, requesting permission for a (5) five temporary banners across Main Street announcing Kendall Center Brand thru October 1, 2021.

APP 2021 #10

This application was approved on the consent agenda.

2. An application was received from Brian Walsh, requesting permission for a curb cut at the premises numbered 75 Smith Place; said petition has received approval from Inspectional Services, Traffic, Parking and Transportation, Historical Commission and Public Works. No response has been received from the neighborhood association.

APP 2021 #11

This application was approved on the consent agenda.

IV. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

1. Opposing wood-burning biomass plants

Councillor Nolan, Councillor Zondervan, Mayor Siddiqui

POR 2021 #53

Wood-burning biomass releases pollutants, and since new regulations were introduced in 2012, only small, efficient combined-heat-and-power biomass plants have been eligible for the Commonwealth's renewable energy incentives. Last December, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources proposed changes that would make these renewable energy incentives available for inefficient, large-scale biomass plants that pose a major environmental hazard. That's why this resolution asks the City Council to oppose these changes, and calls upon the state legislature's Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy to hold an accessible public hearing on these proposed changes. This order was amended to reference a resolution where the City Council previously went on record opposing previous attempts to rollback biomass standards.

This order was adopted as amended.

2. In Support of the FARE Act

Vice Mayor Mallon, Mayor Siddiqui

POR 2021 #54

This resolution, filed by Mayor Siddiqui and I, asks the City Council to go on record in support of [the FARE Act](#), a state bill that would make public transportation free on statewide primary and general election days. As lower-income residents and communities of color are [more likely to lack access to cars](#), making public transportation free on election days will remove a roadblock to voting for vulnerable residents, and help ensure our political leadership accurately reflects our community's values.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

3. Making Remote Participation in City Council Meetings Permanent

Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

POR 2021 #55

I joined Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Simmons, and Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler in sponsoring this policy order calling for the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee to amend [the City Council rules](#) to allow for a permanent remote participation option in public meetings. On March 12th, 2020, Governor Baker issued [an executive order](#) allowing residents to give public comment remotely, increasing flexibility and allowing more residents, especially those who may typically find it difficult to attend an in-person meeting, to weigh in on important topics, while accommodating their other responsibilities, like childcare, or their lack of transportation. Residents with disabilities may also find it easier to participate in meetings remotely, and since political engagement has long been a function of privilege, I hope we can move forward and ensure remote participation doesn't end with the pandemic. This order was amended to ask the City Manager to work on allowing remote virtual participation at other public meetings, such as the Planning Board and BZA, and to add the full City Council as co-sponsors.

This order was adopted as amended.

4. That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Department of Equity and Inclusion, the Economic Development Division of the Community Development Department, the Purchasing

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF MARCH 22, 2021

Department, the Information Technology Department, and other relevant City departments to provide an update on progress made towards including this information from the Cambridge Minority Business Enterprise Program in the Open Data Portal

Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Simmons

POR 2021 #56

At [an Economic Development and University Relations Committee hearing](#) I convened last year, Committee members and City staff discussed the possibility of adding data from the [Cambridge Minority Business Enterprise \(MBE\) Program](#) to the City's [Open Data Portal](#). I filed this order with Councillor Simmons to ask for an update on any progress made towards adding this information to the Open Data Portal. This program requires qualifying construction contractors to subcontract at least 10% of the bid amount to MBEs, or purchase materials from MBEs, and since it infuses a lot of money into our local economy, transparency is key to ensuring we meet our goals on supporting diverse small businesses.

This order was adopted on the consent agenda.

5. Opposing The MBTA Service Cuts

Councillor Nolan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor McGovern

POR 2021 #57

This resolution asks the City Council to support any efforts to fully fund the MBTA and rollback service cuts in its [“Forging Ahead” Plan](#). This plan drastically cuts bus, subway, commuter rail, and ferry service, especially at “off-peak” hours, and will disproportionately impact low-income residents, people of color, and essential workers, while creating a public health hazard for riders and employees as less frequent service will lead to more densely-packed buses and train cars amid a global pandemic with an airborne virus. These cuts also encourage more residents to opt for private transportation, hurting the City's climate goals and creating more traffic. Savings from these service cuts have totaled around \$21 million, and even though the MBTA has received roughly \$2 billion in federal pandemic assistance, most of these funds have been allocated to the MBTA's capital budget or saved for post-pandemic operating costs, instead of increasing this vital public service. This resolution was amended to ask that it be sent to the Governor's Office and the MBTA Board, as well as Cambridge's state legislative delegation. Thankfully, [the MBTA recently announced](#) that it would be fully funding pre-pandemic levels of service for buses and trains for the 2022 Fiscal Year, and while the full slate of services won't be available when the next Fiscal Year starts on July 1st, this is definitely a step in the right direction for ensuring our residents can access this critical resource.

This order was adopted as amended.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. The Public Safety Committee met on October 14, 2020 to discuss traffic enforcement and PO 2020 #178.

This report contains minutes from the October 14th, 2020 Public Safety Committee hearing, which centered on [a policy order](#) asking the City to explore using civilians, rather than police officers, for traffic enforcement. [Click here](#) for more from this meeting.

This report was accepted and placed on file on the consent agenda.

2. The Ordinance Committee met on October 28, 2020 to discuss the Real Estate Transfer Home Rule Petition.

This report contains minutes from the October 28th, 2020 Ordinance Committee hearing, where the City Council discussed sending a Real Estate Transfer Home Rule Petition to the state legislature, which, if approved, would tax real estate transfers above a certain amount of money, and channel that revenue into Cambridge's [Affordable Housing Trust](#) Fund. [Click here](#) for more from this hearing.

This report was accepted and placed on file on the consent agenda.

3. The Ordinance Committee met on February 11, 2021 to conduct a public hearing on a petition to amend Article 8.000 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.

This report contains minutes from the February 11th, 2021 Ordinance Committee hearing, where Committee Members discussed [a zoning petition](#) (Committee Reports Item #3A) submitted by City staff that would bring our Zoning Ordinance into compliance with a court ruling. This zoning amendment petition that would allow owners of pre-existing nonconforming single and two-family homes to only obtain a special permit, rather than a variance, for an alteration or addition of their home that would only increase the nonconformity, and not create a new conformity. [Click here](#) for more from this Committee meeting.

This report was accepted and placed on file on the consent agenda.

- A. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a Zoning Petition which amends Article 8.000 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.

CMA 2021 #3

See Committee Reports Item #3 for further discussion.

This item was passed to a second reading on the consent agenda.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

1. A communication was received from Mayor Siddiqui and Vice Mayor Mallon transmitting information about a Commercial Composting Pilot Program in Cambridge

COF 2021 #26

Mayor Siddiqui and I submitted [this communication](#), which contains a report prepared by [Cambridge Table to Farm](#), a local advocacy group. We worked with Cambridge Table to Farm to introduce [a policy order](#), co-sponsored by Councillors Toomey and Nolan, calling for a Commercial Composting Pilot Program last week, and wanted to provide additional information on how this Pilot will support both our local small businesses and our climate goals.

This item was placed on file on the consent agenda.

2. A communication was received from Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, transmitting an update on the Charter Assessment Review.

COF 2021 #27

This [communication](#) from Mayor Siddiqui serves as an update on the City Council's progress on completing a Charter Assessment Review. This process began with [a Special City Council Meeting on September 23rd, 2020](#), and the City has since contracted with [the Collins Center for Public Management](#) to explore options to change our [Plan E Charter](#), which requires a City Council that is elected at-large and which elects a Mayor from its members, and a City Manager.

This item was placed on file on the consent agenda.

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

COF 2021 #28

This letter from Mayor Siddiqui provides an overview of the work she and the entire School Committee are doing to support CPS scholars and educators, and plan for the months ahead. [Click here](#) to read her full communication.

This item was placed on file on the consent agenda.

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

COF 2021 #29

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.