



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA • JUNE 21, 2021

Regular Meeting

Sullivan Chamber

5:30 PM

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

Submission of the Record

Submission of the Record for the Regular City Council Meeting held on April 26, 2021

These minutes were accepted and placed on file.

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 #163

City staff gave a COVID update.

Reopening Update: Residents will have walk-in access to City buildings Tuesday through Thursday this week, and walk-in access Tuesday through Friday next week, before full walk-in access returns Monday through Friday on July 12th. City buildings are currently open by appointment five days a week. Hours for the Cambridge Public Libraries increase by 97 hours this week, and next week, all seven libraries will be open. The Senior Center located at 807 Massachusetts Avenue reopened on June 15th, while the Senior Center located at 2050 Massachusetts Avenue will reopen on July 12th. The Governor recently signed a bill into law that will extend certain COVID provisions, including an extension of outdoor dining, remote public meetings, off-premise consumption of alcohol sold by restaurants, and more, through spring 2022.

Vaccine Update: The vaccine is available for free to anyone who lives, works, or studies in Massachusetts aged 12+, and it's a safe, effective, and easy way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the threat of COVID. Many vaccination sites don't require appointments, but you can make an appointment or find a site near you [by clicking here](#). If you need any assistance, from booking an appointment to securing transportation to a clinic, don't hesitate to contact my office by emailing amallon@cambridgema.gov.

71% of Cambridge residents have received at least one dose, while 64% of residents are fully vaccinated. The City has administered 6,748 doses at City-run clinics, and will continue to offer vaccine clinics throughout the summer, including a clinic at [the King Open School on July 14th](#). We're outpacing the state's vaccination uptake rates for Black, Latinx, and white residents, as well as in most age groups, but we have to continue working to remove barriers to access and address vaccine hesitancy among the 29% of eligible residents who haven't been vaccinated. Currently, the City does not have plans to require residents to get the vaccine, although it is considering limited mask policies in City buildings, as well as targeted outreach for young teens who don't feel they need the vaccine.

Testing Update: Due to declining demand, the City pivoted at the beginning of the month to offer [free testing](#) four days a week, rather than seven days a week. Appointments are recommended, but not required, and can be made [by clicking here](#) or calling (617) 349-9788. Starting in July, testing will only be offered once a week, each Thursday from 11am to 3pm, at CambridgeSide, which will convert to a walk-in, rather than drive-up, clinic. The CPS surveillance testing program concluded last week, with over 40,000 tests administered to CPS staff since last October. Pool testing will continue for summer programs at schools and youth centers.

Public Health Update: Cambridge's [COVID case count](#) currently stands at 6,055 cases, with just .11% of which are active, and with just two new cases last week, the fewest weekly case rate since the pandemic began. So far, 52 of these cases have been identified as variants. No municipality in Massachusetts is currently considered a high risk community.

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[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 Constables for a term of three years, effective the first day of January, 2021: Jean Rogers (reappointment With Power), and Eric Williams (Without Power).

CMA 2021 #164

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

3. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$1,000,000 from Free Cash, to the Public Investment Fund School Department Extraordinary Expenditures account to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of our older elementary school buildings in the City.

CMA 2021 #165

We expect school enrollment to increase in the coming years, so these funds will be used to review each elementary school's condition and capacity for expansion. As we assess our schools, the City must keep equity at the center of this conversation. The Fletcher Maynard Academy and Kennedy Longfellow School, in particular, show an intense amount of wear and tear, and don't provide our scholars with a welcoming learning environment. These schools also serve a large amount of low-income and neurodivergent students, and if we want to close the achievement gap, our efforts have to include capital improvements to ensure pupils have the tangible resources and mental wellbeing they need to succeed.

This item was adopted.

4. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of the FY21 Massachusetts Cultural District Grant made by the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) in the amount of \$7,500 to the Grant Fund Public Celebrations (Arts Council) Other Ordinary Maintenance account which will supports District-based initiatives that drive economic growth and strengthen the distinctive character of the Central Square Cultural District.

CMA 2021 #166

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

5. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of the FY21 Local Cultural Council grant made by the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) in the amount of \$28,500 to the Grant Fund Public Celebrations (Arts Council) Other Ordinary Maintenance account which will be used to support the Arts Council's Artist Grant Program which provides financial grant opportunities and partnership from Cambridge Arts.

CMA 2021 #167

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

6. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to a request for authorization of a spending limit of \$1,900,000 for Fiscal Year 2022, for the Renewable Energy and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction revolving fund (Revolving Fund), pursuant to Chapter 3.24 of the Municipal Ordinance titled "Departmental Revolving Funds".

CMA 2021 #168

This item was adopted.

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7. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of a grant in the amount of \$641,639 from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the HOME Program to the Public Investment Fund Community Development Extraordinary Expenditures account (\$602,925) and to the Salary & Wages account (\$38,714) which will be used for development activities and administration of the HOME program.

CMA 2021 #169

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

8. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 20-37, regarding renaming the Central Square Library.

CMA 2021 #170

In this communication, a response to [a policy order](#) calling for the Central Square Library to be renamed to honor Maria Baldwin and Rep. John Lewis, the City Solicitor opines that the City Manager has the authority to rename libraries, not the City Council. However, the City Manager announced that he would be appointing a task force of community stakeholders to examine the possibility of renaming the Central Square Library, and establish a new library collection that centers black voices.

This item was placed on file.

9. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$280,000 from Free Cash to the General Fund Law Department Other Ordinary Maintenance account which will be used to cover unanticipated increases in costs relating to legal matters handled by outside counsel legal services, stenographers and court reporters, constable services, consultants and experts, as well as filing fees and related costs in matters pending in courts and/or administrative bodies.

CMA 2021 #171

This item was adopted on the consent agenda.

10. Transmitting Communication from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$65,019,211, received from the U.S. Department of Treasury through the new Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF) established by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to the Grant Fund Finance Department Other Ordinary Maintenance account

CMA 2021 #172

[This communication](#) requests the appropriation of federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, to support public health and economic revitalization efforts. Of this \$65 million, \$25 million has already been used to reimburse the City for previous efforts, while the rest will go towards future projects that fit federal guidelines. We'll be scheduling a Finance Committee meeting on these funds, and this important baseline conversation needs to happen soon, for us to decide in broad strokes where we want to direct our efforts and energy with this funding. This communication contains potential projects and ideas to fund, and while this list already speaks to a lot of City Council priorities, this discussion will help ensure we're not leaving out anything important, and to bring in community members to share their ideas, learn how this money can be spent, and ease their concerns. Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right (discussion ended, no vote was taken, and it appears on the next agenda).

Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

II. CALENDAR

ON THE TABLE

1. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 21-13, regarding next steps on implementation of Universal Pre-K.
PLACED ON THE TABLE IN COUNCIL MAY 17, 2021
CMA 2021 #123
No action was taken.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2. 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.

3. A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to proposed amendments to the Tree Protection Ordinance.
PASS TO A SECOND READING ON JUNE 14, 2021
TO BE ORDAINED ON OR AFTER JUNE 28, 2021
CMA 2021 #50
No action was taken.

4. Live Acoustic Entertainment Ordinance
PASSED TO SECOND READING IN COUNCIL JUNE 7, 2021
TO BE ORDAINED ON OR AFTER JUNE 21, 2021
POR 2021 #119

I joined Councillors Sobrinho-Wheeler, McGovern, and Carlone in introducing this ordinance that would allow any business to host live acoustic performances without a license. Then-Councillor Devereux filed a policy order on this idea in 2017, and I followed with [my own order](#) calling for this change last November, but my colleagues and I were disappointed to see the License Commission's refusal to consider a pilot. Not wanting to lose this opportunity to remove an onerous barrier that our small businesses face, this ordinance would implement the change without the need for approval from the License Commission or City Manager. This effort was envisioned as a creative way to help struggling small businesses that don't typically have live entertainment, like bookstores, attract new customers and create a welcoming, vibrant environment. As we transition into a long path towards recovery, simple yet effective solutions like these are key in reducing time, stress, and costs for small businesses, while also uplifting musicians, so I was glad we moved this proposal forward. This item was amended for clerical corrections, before being ordained.

This item was ordained as amended.

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5. Amending City Council Rules for Remote Participation

ADOPTED IN COUNCIL JUNE 14, 2021

**MUST BE ADOPTED AGAIN IN COUNCIL JUNE 21, 2021 PURSUANT OF RULE 36B
POR 2021 #132**

This order would amend the City Council Rules to allow a permanent remote public comment option. Political participation has long been a function of privilege, but it doesn't have to be. We've seen more, diverse residents lend their voices to important conversations at public meetings, since the introduction of remote public comment. Earlier this year, I joined Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Simmons, and Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler in filing [a policy order](#) calling for a Government Operations Committee hearing to learn more about remote participation options, and after [the City Solicitor opined](#) that the City Council can create a permanent remote public comment option with a simple change to the City Council rules, this policy order will ensure one of the few bright spots of the pandemic won't end with the public health emergency. This order was amended to clarify the language of the rule change, and due to City rules, this order must be approved twice before it is formally included in the City Council rules.

This item was adopted as amended.

6. ORDINANCE 2021-8 Cannabis Delivery Zoning Amendments

PASS TO A SECOND READING ON JUNE 14, 2021

TO BE ORDAINED ON OR AFTER JUNE 28, 2021

POR 2021 #140

No action was taken.

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III. APPLICATIONS AND PETITIONS

1. An application was received from Linda Slauenwhite, representing Starbucks, requesting permission for a projecting sign at the premises numbered 11 First Street approval has been received from Inspectional Services, Department of Public Works, Community Development Department and no abutter response proof of mailing has been provided.

APP 2021 #33

This application was approved on the consent agenda.

IV. POLICY ORDER AND RESOLUTION LIST

1. That the City Manager is requested to direct the appropriate City staff to determine the feasibility of establishing a pilot reparations program that would take a to-be-determined percentage of revenue from local cannabis sales and distribute these monies to local Black-owned businesses and to economic empowerment applicants.

Councillor Simmons, Councillor Nolan

POR 2021 #141

This order asks the City Manager to determine the feasibility of establishing a racial reparations pilot program using revenue from local cannabis sales or other funds, to be distributed to black-owned businesses and Economic Empowerment applicants (in 2019, Cambridge introduced a moratorium that only allows Economic Empowerment applicants to open cannabis retail stores for two years to mitigate the impact that the War on Drugs has had on black and brown communities). As he wants to discuss this order with the co-sponsors, Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

Councillor Zondervan exercised his charter-right.

2. That the City Council go on record in favor of filing of the attached Home Rule Petition entitled: AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE TO INCLUDE A BALLOT QUESTION ON THE NOVEMBER 2, 2021 MUNICIPAL BALLOT RELATIVE TO THE HOME RULE CHARTER.

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

POR 2021 #142

This order asks the City Council for approval in filing a Home Rule Petition that, if adopted by the State Legislature, would include questions on changing the City's charter on this year's municipal ballot. Cambridge's charter, or the document laying out our structure of government, has not been formally reviewed since it was instituted nearly eighty years ago, and these questions are part of an ongoing process to examine our charter and ensure it aligns with our values and our collective vision for the future. Specifically, if approved by voters, these changes would require the City Manager get approval from the City Council on commission and board appointees, create a mandatory annual City Council review of the City Manager's performance, and institute mandatory charter review every ten years. Councillor Toomey exercised his charter-right.

Councillor Toomey exercised his charter-right.

3. That the City Manager is hereby requested to work with the appropriate departments and building contractors to reconsider the current plan which eliminates many trees including large old growth trees that are not part of the new building footprint and specifically do everything possible to save the three Oak trees on the west side of the property and any other large trees on the site.

Councillor Nolan, Councillor Zondervan

POR 2021 #143

[A recent report](#) on the Tobin Montessori and Vassal Lane Upper Schools reconstruction plan states that 94 of the site's existing 129 trees will be removed. While these plans include provisions for replacement trees as required under City law, the site's tree canopy will be reduced by 79%. Maintaining and expanding our tree canopy is a powerful tool in mitigating the urban heat island effect, so this order asks the City Manager to work to reconsider this plan, and to prioritize saving large, significant trees. Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right on this order to give herself time to learn more.

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Councillor Simmons exercised her charter-right.

4. That the City Manager is requested to work with all appropriate City Departments to issue a second RFP that will work in conjunction with the current RFP, to assess the feasibility of building housing above the Central Square Library, and this RFP should include information on funding possibilities.

Councillor McGovern, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Simmons

POR 2021 #145

This policy order, filed by Councillors McGovern, Simmons, and I, responds to [an appropriation request for Central Square Library studies](#) on last week's agenda. There's no question that the Central Square Branch needs some serious investment, and these studies would align with previous and ongoing efforts to revamp the library. But given the Library's unique position, as a City-owned building, in a transit-oriented location, with the tall Manning Apartments close by, adding affordable housing or another community resource on top of the Library would be a critical opportunity that should be considered in a complementary RFP, which is called for in this order. As the City examines how we can use City-owned lots to advance our community goals, we also need to take a deeper look into the Green Street Parking Garage, and how it can be used to mitigate lost parking spaces from redeveloped lots. This order was amended to add Mayor Siddiqui as a co-sponsor

This order was adopted as amended.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. The Ordinance Committee met on March 10, 2021 to continue discussion on the Real Estate Transfer Fee Home Rule Petition.

This report contains minutes from [the Ordinance Committee hearing held on March 10th](#) to discuss the Real Estate Transfer Fee Home Rule Petition.

This report was accepted and placed on file.

- A. Motion to amend the Home Rule Petition by substitution with the amendments recommended by the Ordinance Committee

This item was adopted.

- B. That the Cambridge City Council pass the attached Real Estate Transfer Fee Home Rule Petition **POR 2020 #174**

Councillor Carlone, Councillor Nolan, Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

As the affordable housing crisis continues to plague our community, instituting a Real Estate Transfer Fee is one of the critical ways we can generate funding for the Affordable Housing Trust. Under this amended Home Rule Petition language, both sellers and buyers in residential and commercial real estate transactions would be taxed 2% of the purchase price above \$1 million. This petition will move on to the State Legislature, where it has to be approved before it can be implemented.

This order was adopted.

- C. That the City Manager is requested to instruct the Law Department to draft an amendment to the "Transfer Fee Home Rule petition" that sets a threshold of the purchase price at "not less than \$1,000,000" and further to ask the Solicitor for a recommendation about how best to direct the funds generated by the fee to home ownership production.

POR 2021 #144

Councillor Zondervan, Councillor Carlone, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Nolan, Mayor Siddiqui

This order was adopted.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

1. A communication was received from Mayor Siddiqui and Councillor Simmons transmitting information about the community process for changing the name of Agassiz / Neighborhood 8

COF 2021 #65

This communication contains information gathered by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council during community discussion on renaming the neighborhood to replace the name of someone who upheld white supremacy with a name that embodies the spirit and values of the neighborhood. [Click here to read the full report.](#)

This communication was placed on file.

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

COF 2021 #66

In this letter, Mayor Siddiqui gives an update on the work she and the entire School Committee are doing to support CPS scholars, staff, and caregivers. [Click here to read her full update.](#)

This communication was placed on file.

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

COF 2021 #67

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 communication was placed on file.