

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**
TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2023

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kathleen Born, Chair
Kaleb Abebe
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo
Mosammat Faria Afreen
Nikolas Bowie
Kevin Chen
Max Clermont
Jennifer Gilbert
Kai Long
Patrick Magee
Mina Makarios
Lisa Peterson
Ellen Shachter
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this meeting was remote via zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Absent*
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 12, Absent – 3. Quorum established.

*Member Patrick Magee was marked present at 5:38p.m.

Chair Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes from the January 17, 2023 and November 22, 2022 Charter Review Committee meetings. Member Jim Stockard made a motion to adopt both minutes, and the motion was seconded by member Kevin Chen.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Chair Born noted that there were nine written communications that were received from the public (Attachments A-I). Chair Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt the written communications and place them on file, the motion was seconded by member Jim Stockard.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Absent

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on ways the Charter Review Committee could help change the City government.

Robert Winters, shared that he would like to see in the Charter Review process a redress of grievances and offered to volunteer to the Charter whenever he is needed.

Lee Farris, shared they attended the public forum and asked if there would be a summary or discussion given to the Committee. She commented that she asked the forum to be more informative in the future.

Anna Corning introduced Elizabeth Corbo and Michael Ward from The Collins Center who did an overview of a memo (Attachment J) they submitted to the Charter Review Committee. After their presentation they made themselves available to Committee members for any questions or concerns.

Member Nikolas Bowie questioned if other cities have changed rules to allow City Council to increase certain aspects of the budget. Elizabeth Corbo responded by sharing that in many municipalities the executive branch is responsible for assembling the budget.

Member Ellen Shachter shared concerns about transparency and free cash and asked for clarity regarding budget discussions with Department Heads and City Manager. Michael Ward was able to provide a response, sharing that there could be ways the City break downs the budget when it comes to free cash.

Member Jim Stockard shared the importance of the City Council having goals when it comes to the budget and referenced the interviews he had done with two former City Managers regarding the budget and offered thoughts on how the process could improve.

Member Mina Makarious echoed comments made by member Jim Stockard about having goals. They shared concerns about the budget process regarding the City Council and public participation and how the Committee should be bold about what the Committee wants from the legislature.

Member Susan Shell noted that she agreed with all the comments made from Committee members who spoke before her.

The Chair, Kathy Born spoke on the importance of goal setting and structure, and how specific the charter could be structured.

Anna Corning introduced Charles Maquardt, Chair of the Election Commission, who was joined by his team member Assistant Director Lesley Waxman, and Commissioners Larry Ward, Ethridge King, and Victoria Harris. Lesley Waxman did a presentation titled "Presentation to the Charter Review Committee" (Attachment K). Members from the Election Commission made themselves available to Committee members for any questions or concerns.

After the Election Commissions presentation, members from the Charter Review Committee offered questions and concerns around the City of Cambridge elections. Topics that were brought up were statutory requirements regarding areas and wards, proportional representation, voter information that is provided through the City on candidates, odd and even number election years and the possibility of having an election during an even numbered year, how voters are informed about how the voting system works, and voter turnout.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes. The motion was seconded by member Susan Shell.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The discussion continued with members offering questions and concerns regarding elections. Topics that were brought up were ways the City could get more voters out on election days, rank choice voting, accessibilities that Cambridge is providing for voters who need it at the polls, mail in voting, and having institutes be accountable for their students and registration.

Members from the Election Commission shared the importance of having youth being involved with the voting process, and had students helping at the polls at the last election. They plan on continuing to have youth be involved and stressed the importance of having voters start voting when they are eligible to do so. The team noted that they do student outreach with college students and stressed how it important it is to engage and support registration efforts across the City.

The Meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:47p.m.

The Charter Review Committee received nine written communications, Attachments A-I
Attachment J – Memorandum from The Collins Center Charter Project Team
Attachment K – Presentation titled, “Presentation to the Charter Review Committee”

Clerk’s Note: The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/431?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=689502f35cf7fb77ff48a2e9d91d60aa