

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 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 Makarious
Lisa Peterson
Ellen Shachter
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a Roundtable meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts.

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

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent*

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Present

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent*

Kai Long – Present

Patrick Magee – Present

Mina Makarious – Present

Lisa Peterson – Present

Ellen Shachter – Present

Susan Shell – Present

Jim Stockard – Present

Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 9, Absent – 6. Quorum established.

***Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo was marked present at 5:40p.m.**

***Member Jennifer Gilbert was marked present at 5:37p.m.**

Members of the Charter Review Committee held a roundtable meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, to continue their discussion on the form of government in Cambridge.

The Chair, Kathleen Born, reminded members of the Committee and the public that it was a roundtable meeting, noting that no public comment and no votes would be taken during the meeting. Present at the meeting were Michael Ward and Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center who made themselves available to respond to any questions or comments brought forward by Committee members.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, gave an overview of the agenda for the meeting and noted that the discussions would be on City Manager-Council-Mayor form of government and related changes and on Mayor-Chief Administrative and Finance Officer (CAFO)-Council form of government and related changes. Anna Corning shared that Committee members should be concentrating on the strengths and challenges of each during the discussion.

Anna Corning recognized member Jim Stockard who led a focused discussion on City Manager-Council-Mayor form of government. Jim Stockard gave an overview of the pros of having a City Manager, sharing that City Managers are not subject to political pressure and are able to choose a successful team to run the various City Departments. Jim Stockard shared that they feel with the many communications, public comment, and forums the Charter Review Committee has conducted, the public seem to be leaning towards keeping a City Manager. Jim Stockard shared a question that was brought forward by a member of the public which was, "What is the problem you are trying to fix?". Jim Stockard shared that that question has stuck with him and believes that the City, for the most part, runs fairly well with the current form of government. Jim Stockard reviewed some of the cons that have been brought up during discussion regarding City Manager form of government, sharing the most noticeable concern with members is the City Manager not being an elected official and having too much power overseeing the budget. After Jim Stockard reviewed the pros and cons of the City Manager-Council-Mayor form of government, Committee members were able to offer comments and concerns, with many members sharing their opinion on this type of form of government.

Anna Corning recognized member Nikolas Bowie who led a focused discussion on Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government. Nikolas Bowie shared that no form of existing democracy is a guarantee that an elected leader will care about everybody in the community, but what democracy does well is create a strong incentive for elected officials to care what people think. Nickolas Bowie noted that as members of the Committee, they have many resources to ensure that City government is accountable. They noted that it is important, whether it is with electing a strong Mayor, or any type of form of government, that elections are as inclusive and as representative as possible. By stressing the importance of having representation in elections, voters will have the ability to make the government more accountable than it currently already is. Nikolas Bowie stressed that democratic accountability has been the biggest factor in those in favor of a strong Mayor. Nikolas Bowie shared that they were in favor of a suggestion made by the Collins Center, which would include a Resident Advisory Committee for strong Mayor form of government and suggested that having a citizen jury and/or having random people chosen to participate in decisions would be beneficial. Nikolas Bowie ended by noting that they believe

that the City will work better if everyone can equally participate in deciding how everything in the community can flourish. After Nikolas Bowier reviewed the pros and cons of the Mayor-CAFO- Council form of government, discussion was open to Committee members to offer their comments and concerns.

Anna Corning suggested that moving forward it could be a good idea for the Committee to start focusing on other aspects of the Charter and return to a form of government discussion after Committee members have thought about it more.

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered closing remarks about form of government and shared they agreed with Anna Corning on the idea of taking a break on form of government discussion and coming back to it later. The Chair shared that it is important to discuss other topics of the Charter so the Committee can continue moving forward.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Clerk's Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record.

The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/491?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=c12c827141cb251ff084cfe8d4262b66