

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MAY 23, 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, May 23, 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 General Court 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 – Absent
Nikolas Bowie – Absent*
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 10, Absent – 5. Quorum established.

*Member Nikolas Bowie was marked present at 5:41p.m.

*Member Kaleb Abebe was marked present at 6:00p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt and place on file written communications received from the public. 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 – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born noted that the meeting was for Committee Members to continue the discussion on forms of government and shared that Michael Ward and Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Centers were present at the meeting.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

James Williamson shared that he was supportive of Committee Members moving towards a more democratic government and offered comments and suggestions on different forms of government.

Member Kai Long offered comments on using the word “democracy” when discussing form of government and shared they would like to have a better understanding of how other Committee Members feel they are using the word “democracy” when they are offering comments during conversations. Member Nikolas Bowie responded by sharing their thoughts on democracy and offered comments on Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government, as well as the budget. Members Jim Stockard, Ellen Shachter, Susan Shell, Lisa Peterson, Kai Long, Max Clermont, and Patrick Magee responded to remarks made by Nikolas Bowie and offered comments on form of government, democracy in the community, and the budget. Member Nikolas Bowie stressed the importance of building up a democratic body. The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that based on discussions in the Committee, it feels that there is a universal support for budget process reform regardless of what form of government Committee Members are leaning towards. Michael Ward offered comments on voter turnout and Mayor and Manager forms of government.

Anna Corning recognized Elizabeth Corbo who shared a chart titled “Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch” (Attachment A), with the focus being on Mayor-CAFO-Council form of

government. The chart reviewed the potential decision areas which included qualifications, term of Office, compensation, prohibitions, evaluation, goal setting, powers/duties, appointments by Office, temporary appointments, temporary vacancy in Office, removal (City Manager), and Veto (Mayor). While reviewing the chart, comments and concerns that were brought forward by Committee members were added to the document (Attachment B). Members from the Collins Center and Anna Corning were available to respond to questions and concerns from Committee members.

Member Ellen Shachter shared concerns about the procedure for the Committee moving forward with decision making. Anna Corning noted that the plan was to try and finish up the form of government discussion at the current meeting with the goal of a vote being taken at the next meeting. Anna Corning shared that the majority vote on form of government would then be the focus moving forward and members who vote in the minority would have the opportunity to produce a minority section on that form of government to be submitted with the final report. Member Ellen Shachter suggested that if Members were not available to vote at the next meeting, they could possibly submit a vote by proxy. The Chair, Kathleen Born noted that the Law Department should be consulted on this issue.

Members Kai Long and Susan Shell offered comments on democracy and voter turnout. Member Nikolas Bowie shared that they agree with Kai Long and Susan Shell on voter turnout and noted that the low turnout in the City is not a good way to run the City. Nikolas Bowie noted that the Committee can make changes within their control to change voter turnout. Anna Corning and Michael Ward offered comments and suggestions about voter turnout and shared that the Committee can look at other ways to increase voter participation. The Chair, Kathleen Born asked for clarification on ways to increase participation in elections. Anna Corning and Member Nikolas Bowie, noted that under the State's Home Rule Amendment, municipalities are not allowed to change voting laws without State Legislative approval.

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

Attachment A – Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch

Attachment B – Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch with comments and questions

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/515?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=a9eb99a2717b74e1865b80f83ba5a5d9