

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 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, June 20, 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 – Present
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
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 – 12, Absent – 3. Quorum established.**

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from the May 23, 2023 Charter Review meeting.

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

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born, recognized Elliot Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor, who reviewed the memo that was included in the Agenda Packet from the Law Department to the Charter Review Committee regarding the response to Council Order No. O-4 of April 10, 2023, and made himself available to respond to questions and concerns from Committee members.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adopt the memo from the Law Department to the Charter Review Committee.

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

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

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

Anna Corning, Project Manager, opened public comment.

Valerie Bonds thanked Anna Corning for hosting an event in the community room at 808 Memorial Drive and making herself available to questions from residents and offered comments and suggestions on term limits for Councillors.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to conduct a straw poll to help focus meeting discussions on topics the Committee members are most interested in and use the poll as a tool moving forward.

The first straw poll was to determine if Committee members were interested in keeping an at-large City Council, or continuing the discussion about adding district Councillors. Nine Committee members were in favor of maintaining at-large Councillors, three Committee members were in favor of continuing the discussion, and three members were recorded as absent.

The second straw poll was to determine if Committee members are interested in continuing the conversation on term lengths for City Councillors or if they are interested in keeping the current term length. The Committee members who were present chose unanimously to keep the current term length for City Councillors.

The final straw poll was to determine if the Committee was interested in discussing the addition of term limits for the City Councillors. Four Committee members were in favor of continuing the discussion of adding term limits and eight were not in favor of continuing the discussion.

Anna Corning shared that Chair Born, Member Max Clermont, and Member Lisa Peterson have been discussing ideas on adding additional elements for public engagement into the Charter. Anna Corning gave an overview of the discussions between the Committee members around engagement. Anna Corning shared that one thing that she would like the Committee to focus on is citizen participation mechanisms, which include free petitions and group petitions, and offered examples of both. Member Max Clermont noted that a free petition gives residents the opportunity to bring issues forward on the City Council Agenda by submitting the petition as a communication. Anna Corning shared with the Committee that a group petition needs a threshold of anywhere between 150-300 resident signatures or a percentage of the voters from the last municipal election, which could be around 2%-5%, once the petition has collected signatures it would then and require the City Council to hold a public hearing on the matter being brought forward through the petition. Committee members were recognized for questions and concerns and team members from the Collins Center Michael Ward and Elizabeth Corbo were available to respond and provide further information on petitions and public engagement. It was noted that if more public engagement were to be proposed in the Charter, the Committee should focus on language that would include goal setting for City Councillors and how information should be more accessible to the public.

Anna Corning shared that Chair Born, Member Clermont, and Member Peterson discussed two other potential provisions. The first was a resident assembly, which would include a large group of random, diverse individuals who are given questions and topics that they are to address. Anna Corning offered suggestions and examples of how a resident assembly could be used in

Cambridge. Member Nikolas Bowie and Member Jim Stockard shared that they strongly support resident assemblies. Member Jennifer Gilbert and Member Susan Shell offered comments and shared concerns about resident assemblies only having a short time together to focus on important topics and how participants in resident assemblies are selected. Anna Corning shared additional information on resident assemblies and made suggestions on how the Charter Review Committee can move forward with the addition on resident assemblies in the Charter.

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

Clerk's Note: This is a permanent record.