



CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ AGENDA ~

Thursday, September 29, 2022

5:30 PM

Remote Meeting

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee will meet to adopt the meeting minutes, discuss long term planning, and continue their work in reviewing the Cambridge Charter

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Sep 29, 2022 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Third Charter Review Committee Meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/83253118929>

Or One tap mobile :

US: +19294362866,,83253118929# or +16469313860,,83253118929#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 929 436 2866 or +1 646 931 3860 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 309 205 3325 or +1 312 626 6799

or +1 719 359 4580 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 386 347 5053 or +1 564 217 2000

or +1 669 444 9171 or +1 669 900 6833

Webinar ID: 832 5311 8929

International numbers available: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/83253118929>

Call to Order

A communication was received from Councillor Aide Patrick Hayes, transmitting CRC Meeting Agenda for September 29, 2022, Meeting Minutes from September 13, 2022 and Meeting Collins Center Memo.

A communication was received from Councillor Aide Patrick Hayes, transmitting a communication from Committee member to the Committee and a communication from Council member to the Committee.



City of Cambridge

COF 2022 #117
IN CITY COUNCIL
September 29, 2022

Agenda Items – Thursday, September 29, 2022

- I. Roll Call
- II. Adoption of Meeting Minutes from meeting of September 13, 2022
- III. Introduction by Chair, Kathy Born
 - Discussion of sub-committees, press requests, and public interface efforts.
- IV. Discussion of Collins Center Memo
 - Noting especially questions 1 and 4
 - In considering question 4, it may be helpful to review the language of Cambridge's current charter -
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/publications/documents/p/planecharter>
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Conclusion of Meeting

DRAFT**MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE****Tuesday, September 13, 2022**

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, September 13, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:33 p.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 public meeting was remote via zoom.

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

Kaleb Abebe - Present
 Jessica Dejesus Acevedo - Present
 Mosammat Faria Afreen - Present
 Nikolas Bowie - Absent
 Kevin Chen - Present
 Max Clermont - Present
 Jennifer Gilbert - Present
 Patrick Magee – Present (joined shortly after roll call)
 Kai Long - Present
 Mina Makarious - Present
 Lisa Peterson - Present
 Ellen Shachter - Present
 Susan Shell - Present
 Jim Stockard - Present
 Chair, Kathleen Born - Present

14 members recorded as present. One member recorded as absent.

Chair Born gave an overview of what would be covered in this meeting including the adoption of rules, acceptance of the minutes from the last meeting, a presentation by the Collins Center, and public comment.

The Chair offered that the Committee would be following Robert’s Rules and referenced a “Robert Rules Cheat Sheet” that was provided to members and is attached to these minutes.

The Chair recognized Member Jim Stockard who made a motion to accept Roberts Rules as the rules of the Charter Review Committee. The motion was seconded by Mina Makarious.

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

Kaleb Abebe - Yes
 Jessica Dejesus Acevedo - Yes
 Mosammat Faria Afreen - Yes
 Nikolas Bowie - Absent
 Kevin Chen - Yes
 Max Clermont - Yes
 Jennifer Gilbert - Yes
 Patrick Magee – Yes

Kai Long - Yes
 Mina Makarious - Yes
 Lisa Peterson - Yes
 Ellen Shachter - Yes
 Susan Shell - Yes
 Jim Stockard - Yes
 Chair, Kathleen Born – Yes

The vote was 14 – Yes, and 1-Absent. The motion to accept Roberts Rules as the Rules of the Committee passed.

The Chair recognized Member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to accept the minutes from the meeting held on August 16, 2022. The motion was seconded by Member Jim Stockard.

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

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

The vote was 14 – Yes, and 1-Absent. The motion to accept the minutes from the meeting held on August 16, 2022, passed.

The Chair recognized Michael Ward from the Collins Center to make a presentation. Michael Ward noted that the presentation would cover Collins Center Background, Municipal Government, Charter Basics and Process, and Cambridge Government and Charter. Michael Ward also noted that there would be time for questions and that Elizabeth Corbo, Patricia Lloyd and Marilyn Contreas were present and would be participating in the presentation. The representatives from the Collins Center made their presentation which took approximately 50 minutes. The complete presentation is attached to these minutes.

The Chair recognized Patrick Hayes to call upon members who had questions. Patrick Hayes recognizes members Shachter, Stockard, Afreen, Abebe, Chen, Shell, Long, Makarious, and Peterson who offered comments and asked questions that were addressed by representatives of the Collins Center. Among the several questions asked was “Can the Charter be aspirational?” “Can we contact the Collins Center directly” and “What will the process look like”. It was noted

that members should not contact the Collins Center directly, but rather should send their inquiry to the Chair.

Chair Born announced that the next meeting would be on Thursday, September 29, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. and it would be via zoom.

Chair Born called for public comment. Only one member of the public announced themselves to speak. John Hawkinson asked if a list could be maintained of individuals who want to be notified of meetings and receive all materials related to the work of the Committee. John Hawkinson also noted that there needed to be process for signing up for public participation as is done with other public bodies. John Hawkinson asked about a comment made earlier asking Committee members to email and copy all noting that this could appear to be an open meeting law violation.

The Chair addressed Mr. Hawkinson's comments noting that she appreciated the comments and that she and the Committee are sensitive to the requirements of the open meeting law. The Chair reiterated her commitment to providing opportunities for public comment.

There being no further business before the Committee, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Attachments: Roberts Rules Cheat Sheet

Collins Center Presentation – September 13, 2022



EDWARD J. COLLINS, JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
 JOHN W. McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES
 UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

100 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, MA 02125-3393
 P: 617.287.4824
 F: 617.287.5566
mccormack.umb.edu/centers/cpm
collins.center@umb.edu

Framework for Beginning Charter Review Discussions

Undertaking a review of the City's charter is an opportunity to have a significant impact on the municipality for years or even decades to come. However, it is also an extraordinarily challenging endeavor – statutorily, logistically, and politically. It can be difficult to know where to begin. This document provides several topic areas for consideration as you begin the process of charter review.

Before beginning, it may be helpful to conceptualize the charter as a foundational or structural document for City government operations. Charters do not typically address specific issues within the community, such as lack of affordable housing, but can address broader topics, such as strengthening related departments and committees. Charters can also create committees to study specific issues, identify solutions and recommend possible ways to address issues (something a charter committee does not typically have the time / capacity to achieve during its review).

One overarching question to use as a starting point: ***What are the systemic problems you are hoping to solve and/or the long-term threats that you are hoping to avoid?*** Note that this does not mean looking at short-term challenges. This means looking at major systemic or structural problems – issues that occur year after year, that affect government functions, or that are the result of fundamental problems of organization.

Another way to begin is to break potential issues with the charter into categories. Below are six questions to consider, each of which focuses on a different set of reasons to consider revising a charter:

1. ***Is the government responsive to the needs and preferences of the current population?***
2. ***Does the charter include a current understanding of best practices?***
3. ***Has the charter been kept consistent with changes in state or federal laws?***
4. ***Has the charter been kept consistent with changes in values or cultural changes?***
5. ***Is there any text in the charter that has caused confusion or dispute over interpretation?***
6. ***Have Special Acts enacted over the years been reviewed for current validity?***
7. ***Are there innovative charter provisions in other communities that you would like to see incorporated into Cambridge?***

For the upcoming meeting, please pick one question (or more) and write down your thoughts in relation to the Cambridge charter review process. It will help focus and guide our discussion. We look forward to hearing your thoughts!



City of Cambridge

COF 2022 #118
IN CITY COUNCIL
September 29, 2022

From: [Susan Shell](#)
To: [Cambridge Charter Review Committee](#)
Cc: [Hayes, Patrick](#); [Kathleen Born](#); [Susan Shell](#)
Subject: Meeting Materials for 9/29/22
Date: Tuesday, September 27, 2022 3:33:10 PM

To: Members of the Charter Review Committee
From: Susan Shell
Date: Sept. 27, 2022

Since I am unable to attend Thursday's meeting, I am sending along comments in advance, in response to Kathy's request that we be prepared at the upcoming meeting to discuss the issues we consider most important.

I assume that our main function as a charter review committee is to consider the overall structure of government in Cambridge and whether it is serving the current and longer - term interests of the city and its residents.

A city is not a supermarket; and though it must strive to meet the individual needs and be responsive to the individual preferences and values of its residents, it is also a civic body with a collective identity and interest over time. (We are not just consumers of city services but fellow citizens.)

That collective good is arguably best served when competing goals and values are weighed and balanced thoughtfully, and with a view to unavoidable trade-offs and the possibility of unanticipated consequences.

One way to achieve this is through public deliberation, in which arguments are presented from a number of sides, with a view not just to "winning" but in order to arrive at a better shared understanding of the collective interest and how to further it.

In lieu of such opportunities, honest differences of opinion are likely to degenerate into polarizing conflicts, with sub-optimal results from the standpoint of the common good.

I am not sure whether or not the current charter facilitates such constructive deliberation and weighing of priorities with a view to the short- and long-term interests of the city, or if modifications in the current structure would enable it to do so more effectively.

Specifically: Do current City Council election arrangements encourage such deliberation, or might they be improved – e.g., by the re-introduction of partial neighborhood representation, changes in the method of voting tabulation, different rules governing information provided to the public about candidates, etc.?

Additionally: Is too much currently expected of the City Manager by way of setting these priorities and/or might there be ways of easing his/her/their burden?

One way of addressing such questions is a mayoral system, in which candidates for office set out their priorities publicly in advance, and where voters have a chance to witness and participate in open debate. Are there ways we might incorporate some of the advantages of that system within a Council/City Manager structure? Or are things fine as is?

I have no particular take on these questions, but think it would be useful to address them.

Best,

Susan

To the members of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee,

I write to you before tonight's charter review committee hearing to ask that members consider looking into the feasibility of holding municipal elections on even numbered years in the hope of attracting more voter turnout.

In the last Cambridge municipal election ([Nov. 2021](#)), only 33% of registered voters turned out to the polls. This translates to 22,079 votes, which is up from 21,239 in the [2019 municipal election](#). Compare that to the [65.6% voter turnout](#) for the 2018 state election, and you will see the large disparity in turnout between even and odd numbered years.

An article in [The Urbanist](#) shows that odd-year elections tend to overrepresent a smaller segment of the voting bloc that is more heavily concentrated in wealthier areas. Even-year elections, on the other hand, have higher turnout that is more representative sample of the entire community.

Thanks,
Burhan

Burhan Azeem
City Councillor, Cambridge MA
617-349-4280 (office)
617-798-1140 (cell)