

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 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, November 21, 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 – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Absent*
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Absent*
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 12, Absent – 3. Quorum established.

*Member Nikolas Bowie and Jim Stockard were present at 5:35p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt communications from Committee members and the public.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

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

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 14, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Dan Totten shared that they were excited to learn that the Charter Review Committee had switched to a strong Mayor form of government and offered comments relative to their experience as a Council Aid.

Kevin Hsu offered comments on municipal government and concerns with City Manager/Council form of government.

Heather Hoffman offered comments on the form of government and City Council meetings.

The Chair, Kathleen Born turned the meeting over to Anna Corning, Project Manager. Anna Corning shared on her screen and reviewed the Cambridge Charter Review Committee proposed final report outline (Attachment A). Anna Corning opened discussion to Committee members to offer comments and suggestions. Member Shachter shared the importance of the Charter Review Committee and the City Council being able to have the opportunity discuss the proposed language together. Chair Born and Anna Corning reviewed what the process would look like after submitting the proposed language to the City Clerk's Office by the end of the year and what could potentially follow once it is submitted.

Anna Corning shared that the focus of the meeting was going to be around discussing recall, veto power of the Mayor, the Finance article, and the Mayor's role on the School Committee.

Anna Corning recognized Committee members to offer comments on veto power with the Mayor, noting in many cases the Mayor has the ability to veto things passed by the City Council and the City Council can override the veto with a 2/3 vote. Patricia Lloyd from the Collins Center was available to provide some insight on veto power with Mayor and how it is used in

other municipalities. Committee members offered suggestions on veto power of the Mayor as well as the possibility of having the City Council override votes other than using a 2/3 majority. In addition, Committee members shared concerns with having the City Council use a 2/3 majority vote to override a veto by the Mayor.

Anna Corning requested that the Committee take a straw poll to see who is interested in having override of veto to be a 2/3 vote or a majority vote. There were ten members who voted in support of a 2/3 vote, four members who voted in support of a majority vote, and one member was absent.

Anna Corning reviewed section 3.9 of the draft language with members and recognized them to offer their comments and suggestions relative to approval of Mayor, veto.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Patrick Magee who made a motion to approve Section 3.9, Approval of Mayor, veto.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

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 Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 14, No – 0, Absent -1. Motion passed.

Anna Corning moved the conversation to discuss recall provisions in the proposed language.

Anna Corning asked Committee members to consider what thresholds they would like to consider relative to recall language, if a recall should apply to the Mayor only, and if there should be a voter turnout minimum for recall, noting that a 20% turnout would be a reasonable threshold based on election turnout. Committee members were recognized for comments. After much discussion, Committees members requested additional data related to recall and asked to continue the discussion and take votes on recall at the next meeting. Some Members of the Committee offered comments of concern with having a recall provision in the Charter language, while many others offered comments of support and offered suggestions relative to what the recall language could look like in the Charter. Additionally, Patricia Lloyd offered a review of the process of a recall.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Jim Stockard who made a motion to add a recall provision in the Charter.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – No

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – No

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – No

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – No

Yes – 9, No – 4, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning offered a review of the Financial Procedure proposed language and shared that she would like for the Committee to help revise the language to lean more towards a Strong Mayor form of government, noting that much of the language was previously approved with a Strong Manager form of government. While reviewing the language, Anna Corning noted where changes should be made. Committee members offered suggestions related to the Submission and the Action of the Operating Budget and the Capital Improvement Program. Member Jim Stockard had a clarifying question regarding if the Mayor is able to veto the budget. Patricia Lloyd offered comments and shared she would like to investigate it further. Anna Corning noted that the budget and finance discussion can be continued at the next meeting.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 8:00p.m.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Proposed final report outline.

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/622?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=c22ea4c53cd228f0caa3135f96978e52