

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, DEEMBER 5, 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 meeting on Tuesday, December 5, 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 Makarious – Absent*
Lisa Peterson – Absent*
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Absent*
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Member Nikolas Bowie was marked present at 5:35p.m.
*Member Mina Makarious was marked present at 5:38p.m.
*Member Lisa Peterson was marked present at 5:40p.m.

*Member Susan Shell was marked present at 6:30p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from November 14, 2023 and November 21, 2023.

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 – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mosammat Faria Afreen who made a motion to adopt communications received from Committee members, City Councillors, 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

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Councillor Simmons thanked the Committee for all their work and offered comments relative to her experience as a City Councillor. Councillor Simmons shared that she was in favor of a City Manager form of government and noted that the form of government that the City currently has continues to effectively serve the community.

Adriane Musgrave offered comments that were in favor of the current system of form of government.

Matt LeMay offered comments that were strongly opposed to a strong Mayor form of government.

Eugenia Schra offered comments that were in support of the current form of government system.

Susan Fleischmann spoke in opposition to changing the Charter to a strong Mayor.

Rachel Liao spoke in opposition to changing the current form of government.

Lynn Lee shared they were in favor of the current system versus a strong Mayor system.

Liz Speakman, City of Cambridge employee, strongly supports a City Manager form of government.

Joyce Majewski spoke in favor of keeping a City Manager form of government.

Caroline Zheng spoke in strong support of the current form of government.

Jesse Baer offered comments on form of government, democracy, and elections.

Chris Cassa shared that having a City Manager has provided stable leadership.

Jane Donohue spoke in favor of a City Manager form of government.

Dan Totten spoke in favor of a strong Mayor form of government and shared concerns with the current form of government.

Payal shared their support for a strong Mayor form of government.

Phil Rinehart spoke in favor of the current form of government system.

Jacqui Fahey Sandell spoke in strong opposition to a strong Mayor form of government.

Robert Winters shared that they are strongly opposed to a strong Mayor form of government.

Kit Kanes shared they were in support of a strong Mayor form of government.

Stephen C. offered comments and suggestions on forms of government.

Hayden B. noted the importance of accountability, inclusion, equity, and proportional representation.

Anna Corning, Charter Review Project Manager thanked everyone who participated in Public Comment. Anna Corning recognized Committee members for comments.

Member Kai Long shared that it is hard to make change, but to create change you have to take the first steps, which is not always easy.

Member Jennifer Gilbert shared that she would be in favor of putting the choice of form of government to the voters.

Member Susan Shell reminded Committee members and the public that their recommendation on form of government does become a public vote, and there are many more steps that need to be taken before it gets to the voters of Cambridge.

Member Mina Makarious shared that the Committee has worked very hard discussing both sides of form of government and noted that cities with strong Mayors are not necessarily doing better with similar issues that Cambridge is facing, such as affordable housing.

Member Ellen Shachter shared that there have been strong arguments from both sides, although she does support a strong Mayor, she recognizes that there could be challenges that come with the change.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo shared that they have reviewed all the information that has been provided but is in favor of a strong Mayor. Member Acevedo noted the importance of creating progressive and innovative motions going forward and that the City currently lacks diversity and accessibility.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen responded to comments made by Councillor Simmons and shared that what the Committee is discussing is having a Mayor who is directly accountable to the Councillors and the voters. Member Afreen also shared that she would be in favor of having a democratically elected Police Review Advisory Board (PRAB) and would like the Committee to take a vote on it.

Member Nikolas Bowie offered comments relative to the budget and having a CAFO with a strong Mayor, noting how it will reflect the priorities of those who vote. Member Bowie offered comments that were in support of a strong Mayor.

Anna Corning noted that due to the time, and some members needing to leave the meeting early, the Committee should vote on the Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion that the Committee recommend a Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government for the Plan E Charter.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – No

Max Clermont – No
 Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
 Kai Long – Yes
 Patrick Magee – No
 Mina Makarious – No
 Lisa Peterson – No
 Ellen Shachter – Yes
 Susan Shell – Yes
 Jim Stockard – No
 Kathleen Born – No
Yes – 8, No – 7. Motion failed.

Anna Corning shared that members Long and Afreen would be creating a statement relative to a strong Mayor form of government to include in the proposed language for the Charter and asked if any other Committee members would be available to help. Anna Corning noted that the statement is to provide a reflection of the discussions around a strong Mayor.

Member Jennifer Gilbert asked for more information related to PRAB and why the Committee would potentially be voting on it. Anna Corning shared that although this is not a topic that has been discussed by the Committee, members of the public have submitted communications on that topic.

Member Jessica DeJesus had clarifying questions for the final report and future discussions. Anna Corning was available to respond and review the outline of the final report. Chair Born reviewed what the next steps are for the final meeting on December 19, 2023 and that the final report will be the record that reflects the votes and actions that were taken by the Committee. Chair Born noted that there needs to be a 2/3 majority vote to support the final report to forward to the City Council and shared what would happen if there was not a 2/3 majority vote. Chair Born stressed to Committee members that the 2/3 vote for the final report is not a vote for or against the issue of form of government, but to approve the report that offers detailed information and recommendations relative to the many discussions that have taken place over the last year and half. Chair Born shared the importance of having a 2/3 vote in order to submit the final report and the Committees recommendations to the City Council for their review, noting that both statements relative to Strong Mayor and Strong Manager will be included.

Member Ellen Shachter shared that they feel the end of the Committee meetings and the final report feels very rushed, and shared concerns about the report. Anna Corning shared that she is open to having members assist with the writing of the final report and include information they believe is important for the City Council to review.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen shared again that they would like the Committee to vote on a democratically elected PRAB.

Member Mina Makarious agreed with comments by member Shachter regarding feeling rushed and asked what it would look like for the Committee to potentially ask the City Council for an additional extension. Chair Born and Anna Corning provided comments relative to extending.

Elliott Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor, advised that due to PRAB not being on the Committee's Agenda, he would express caution with the Committee voting on it because it would violate the Open Meeting Law. Additionally, Elliott Veloso provided a response to the Committee potentially asking for an extension and the process on how to extend.

Committee members were recognized for comments and concerns on the possibility of extending the Committee as well as voting on PRAB. Member Afreen asked if the PRAB topic could be added on to the Agenda for the next meeting.

Anna Corning asked Committee members to take a straw poll to see if they would like to add PRAB to next week's decision point list. Four members were in favor of adding it, five members were not in favor, five members voted as present, and one member was absent.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to request to the City Council an extension to the end of January 2024 with no additional topics to consider but to finalize and edit the committee's final report.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 12, No – 0, Present – 2, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 8:00p.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/633?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=8a7c6de54e41f85f71746c8c5609b290