

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, October 25, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30 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.

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosammat Faria Afreen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathleen Born (Chairperson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nikolas Bowie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max Clermont	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kai Long	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrick Magee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mina Makarious	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lisa Peterson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	13	0	0	2
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

13 members recorded as present. 2 members recorded as absent.

The Chair gave a brief introduction of the meeting and apologized for the cancellation of the previous meeting. The Chair reaffirmed her commitment to continuing the work of the Committee and working within the Open Meeting law. The Chair then introduced Committee staff member, Anna Corning, and explained that Anna would be assisting the Committee with its work along with current staff member, Patrick Hayes. The Chair invited Anna Corning to introduce herself. Anna Corning spoke about her previous work on the Somerville charter review process, working with the Collins Center, and talked about her deep ties to Cambridge.

Chair Born recognized Member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to amend the minutes from the meeting held on September 29, 2022, to remove a sentence on the second page. The motion was seconded by Member Susan Shell.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosammat Faria Afreen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathleen Born (Chairperson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nikolas Bowie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max Clermont	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kai Long	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrick Magee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mina Makarious	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lisa Peterson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	12	0	0	3
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

The motion to amend the minutes from the meeting held on September 29, 2022, passed.

Chair Born made a motion to accept the minutes from the meeting held on September 29, 2022, as amended. The motion was seconded by Member Jim Stockard.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosammat Faria Afreen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathleen Born (Chairperson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Kevin Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max Clermont	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kai Long	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrick Magee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Susan Shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	13	0	0	2
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

The motion to accept the minutes from the meeting held on September 29, 2022, as amended, passed.

The Chair took the following Communications received from the Committee to be placed on file as follows:

- Communications from Committee Members
 - Communication from Kathy Born to the City Law Department
 - [Communication from Susan Shell to Committee](#)
- Communications from Council Members
 - [Communication from Councillor Burhan Azeem to Committee](#)

Chair Born recognized Member Jim Stockard who made a motion to place the communications received by the Committee on file. The motion was seconded by Member Lisa Peterson.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Nikolas Bowie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max Clermont	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Mina Makarious	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Susan Shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	12	0	0	3
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

The motion to place communications received by the Committee on file passed.

The Chair introduced Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center to discuss [the memo](#) of the September 9 Charter Review Committee meeting, which detailed discussion questions for this meeting. Ms. Corbo encouraged members to share things that are working well in Cambridge and things that are not working as well, acknowledging that not all issues can be addressed through the Charter, as it is a document dealing primarily with governmental operations. Ms. Corbo explained that these ideas will be incorporated into the Charter later in the process. Ms. Corbo then opened the floor for members to share their thoughts and ideas.

Member Faria Afreen asked questions about the City Manager in relation to the City Council, asking how planning of the annual City budget can be more democratic, funding, and a question about adding ranked choice to the Charter.

Member Kai Long talked about power, and the desire for more diversity as relates to finances required to become a City Councillor. She mentioned the perceived inequity in who has the resources to become a Councillor, the divide in the city between poor and rich (with the rich making decisions that effect the poor), and how to make city government more about the community and less about money.

Member Mina Makarios expressed support for the previous members thoughts and spoke about the need to balance the desire for more participation and democratic action without losing the benefits of having a single unitary government. He expressed concern for what happens in smaller communities when every single decision becomes a political process, particularly the longstanding housing issues becoming even more politicized and hopes to increase accountability and be nimbler.

Member Ellen Shachter stated the need for understood, value-driven guiding principles, regardless of the form of government going forward. She wants the committee to explore the value of a ward system, how to get feedback to the Council regarding departmental needs as relates to the budget, and public participation and stipends for more representative committees.

Member Kevin Chen spoke about examining some of the structural issues in the City Manager role, structure of the Council (and potential changes to consider) and injecting values into the Charter (preamble, equity lens provision).

Member Susan Shell shared concerns regarding clarity on what the committee is tasked with, stating that changes made now must work for future demographics in the city. She stated that there appears to be a lack of deliberation with a process where opinions can be expressed and there can be productive conversation and a genuine, deliberative public process.

Member Jennifer Gilbert spoke about how to encourage participation, what can lead to increased voting, and how the current form of government works in the context of increased need for regional thinking on issues including housing and climate. She spoke about the need for a system that clarifies accountability and decision-making and makes participation more approachable. She also asked if there is data comparing costs to run in other cities using some of the proposed methods.

Member Lisa Peterson shared appreciation for the idea of looking at the Charter with an equity lens, how the City Manager and Council can work together more effectively, and what some barriers to that might be. She called out the 2-year election cycle as one of the barriers to this efficiency, with a preference for a 4-year term, to give greater opportunity for the Council to be a team, and act as a body. She also spoke about the need for the Council to set or reaffirm goals at the start of each term for greater clarity.

Member Patrick Magee agreed with the members before him, adding his hope that the Collins Center will return with information regarding all that has been suggested regarding pros and cons. He said that for him, the challenges in Cambridge come down to transparency in the decisions from the City Manager, how they align with what the Council is asking for, and the impact of strong financial management. He

cited the example of the Somerville public meeting process as joint meetings of Council and City staff to increase transparency.

Member Jim Stockard wants to understand the technological advances/increase in technological capacity going forward, and the ability to share information as relates to facilitating productive dialogue. He shared ideas around adjusting terms and election cycles, and asked if there are ways the budget could be used to embrace ideas such as reparations, or other powers that could be enabled to better serve the community (asking what is capable through the charter).

Member Nikolas Bowie spoke on the importance of enacting legislation that is important to the people of Cambridge (demand more local autonomy), increased fiscal autonomy, and more democratic decision-making within the city. He talked about the structures lending primarily to those with time, money, and resources and how to enfranchise the disenfranchised (including those who work here, can't afford to live here, etc.).

Member Jessica Acevedo talked about a strength-based approach, and her hopes for some type of action. She said she sees the working-class being pushed out of Cambridge, the direct correlation to the affordable housing crisis here and comparing national poverty line, and the threshold affordable housing eligibility here in Cambridge. She also spoke about the other supports needed by citizens (education, family supports), equitable compensation/support for people's time to participate in these conversations and comparing Cambridge to communities farther from home (higher numbers of black and brown citizens).

Member Ellen Schachter added that there needs to be support in taking some risks, and ways to challenge the systems within the city that tend toward the status quo and not think out of the box.

Member Kai Long stated the perception of Cambridge and progressiveness, but how the city works does not reflect that. She said that in thinking about the Charter, the progressiveness needs to be reflected.

Member Susan Shell compared the Charter to being like a Constitution and wondered if it's the place for asserting progressiveness (as related to the purpose of the Charter). She asked that the Committee think more broadly about the common ground and not get too carried away with progressive as a label.

Member Mina Makarios asked whether the Collins Center and the City Solicitor could research items stuck in legislature such as non-citizen voting, rent control, and holding remote public meetings.

Member Faria Afreen added the need to have more information on what is possible considering legislature constraints and interest in term limits.

Member Jim Stockard followed Member Shell's statements regarding progressiveness as part of a preamble stating things the city strives for, including aspirational values.

Chair Born expressed her appreciation for the preceding discussion and spoke about elections and how the cycles can hamper collaboration. She expressed concerns about proportional representation, and the perceived impasses between the Council and the Manager (and clarity on how it works) and her preference for stability over the ups and downs of different personalities. She reminded everyone of recent successes in Cambridge, such as the city support for small businesses during COVID, including minority and women-run

businesses and the key role of the City Manager in those decisions. She concluded with thoughts about who can run for Council and how money factors into who can do so.

Ms. Corbo thanked the Committee for their thoughts and expertise, appreciating many of the common themes. She stated that at the next meeting she will walk the group through the questions and deliberations the group can undertake to incorporate the ideas shared.

The Chair announced that the Committee will appoint a 7-member planning subcommittee as well as volunteers who will work on later drafting and writing (not a subcommittee).

Member Patrick Magee asked if there should be a Vice Chair elected to help share the work.

Elliot Veloso (City Solicitors Office) said the Law Department could look into appointing of a Vice Chair, and suggested that the vote be taken to show that it is the will of the Committee to form a subcommittee and state its purpose of assisting with planning agendas.

Chair Born recognized Member Ellen Schachter who made a motion to form a planning subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Member Jessica Acevedo.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosammat Faria Afreen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathleen Born (Chairperson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Max Clermont	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Mina Makarious	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lisa Peterson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	12	0	1	2
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

The motion to form a planning subcommittee passed.

The Chair opened the floor to hear from members of the public (Public Comment)

Lee Farris thanked members for the meeting and asked if there is a way to require the Manager and Council to agree on goals and metrics. She also asked to see goals between the Manager and Council prioritized in relationship to each other. She asked if there could be an email list where people could receive notes, agendas, and materials to build participation.

Jameson Quinn stated their interest and expertise in voting systems and reminded the Committee that Cambridge already has ranked-choice voting and some pros and cons of this. They hope to assist in refining the voting systems/process to set it as a model.

John Hawkinson spoke about progressive values in the Charter being blocked by statutory or other constraints and that the Committee look carefully at how to remove some of these roadblocks. He said he would like to see the Committee take up a published calendar of milestones so members of the public can get a sense of deadlines.

The Chair committed to having a robust notification list and asked that members use their networks to advertise the meetings. She also stated that there will be some updates to the Charter review website to make further improvements.

Member Kai Long added a comment that comparing the Charter to the Constitution is upsetting as the history of misrepresentation is known, and hopes the Committee will think about what is good for all, regardless of the label of "progressive".

Member Faria Afreen asked for clarification on the purpose of the planning subcommittee. Anna Corning explained the process used by the Somerville Charter Committee, using the subcommittees to breakdown the larger decisions of the Committee. Chair Born explained that the subcommittee would discuss sequencing aspects of the charter reform.

Chair Born listed those who had expressed interest in volunteering for the planning subcommittee including Kaleb Abebe, Jennifer Gilbert, Kai Long, Susan Shell, Jessica Acevedo, Jim Stockard and Lisa Peterson. She also stated that Mina Makarious, Faria Afreen, and Ellen Shachter had volunteered to assist with writing and drafting.

Ms. Corbo further summarized next steps for the next meetings including walking through the Charter to see where the ideas shared could be reflected in a modern Charter. Member Patrick Magee restated the ask for more information regarding pros and cons/background reading that could be shared to the Committee. The Chair said that she had been asked about compiling a list of resources for background reading.

Chair Born recognized Member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Member Faria Afreen.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosammat Faria Afreen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathleen Born (Chairperson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nikolas Bowie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max Clermont	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Lisa Peterson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Susan Shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	13	0	0	2
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm with 13 members voting yes, and 2 recorded as absent.