

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 20, 2022**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kathleen Born, Chair
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 20, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.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 meeting was remote via zoom.

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

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

Present – 15 Absent – 0. Quorum established.

Chair Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes of the December 6, 2022, meeting and recognized a motion from member Jim Stockard and seconded by member Ellen Shachter.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaled 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 Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born, Chair - Yes

Yes – 15 No – 0. Motion passes.

The Chair noted that there was one Communication submitted from Dr. Jameson Quinn (ATTACHMENT A).

The Chair recognized a motion from member Jim Stockard and seconded by member Mosammat Faria Afreen to place the Communication on file.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaled 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 Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born, Chair - Yes

Yes – 15 No – 0. Motion passes.

Anna Corning began the meeting by reviewing the next steps for interviews and opened discussion to members for their input.

Member Ellen Shachter shared their thoughts and concerns about interview questions, and suggested the focus be more on engagement with the City Council and less focus on the charter.

Jim Stockard noted that he didn't want to raise expectations for residents and that the committee should try and be as straight forward as possible to achieve goals for the City.

Member Jennifer Gilbert had a clarifying question on the surveys and suggested if they should be anonymous because people may be more truthful with their answers. She noted that she hoped to interview external people who have no ties to Cambridge.

Anna Corning noted that it was a good idea to make the survey anonymous to help people feel as comfortable as possible.

Member Susan Shell made suggestions on people the Committee could interview.

Member Max Clermont agreed with comments and questions from other members and noted that starting public engagement and seeing how the process will go sooner is a good idea, Committee needs to start seeing data.

Member Lisa Peterson noted that if we are expecting to have thirty minute or longer interviews, members should limit the questions to only four or five. She also suggested that the Committee look at current and past School Committee members. Most people will have basic opinions, but others will have very detailed feedback. She suggested focusing on elections and voting.

Chair Born noted that she liked all the suggestions being made by members and is eager to get started with the process. She noted that it's ok if discussion is ongoing during the work being done.

Member Kai Long stressed her concerns about the length of the list and questioned if the members can organize the list so it's helpful to the Committee.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen shared concerns about talking to people who are already in the City government, and noted that the Committees time should be focused on those who are not currently within the government.

Member Mina Makarious noted the interviews could be productive if the Committee asks to have members from City Council and other boards and committees allow the Charter Review Committee interviews to be on their agenda in order to get the feedback the Committee is looking for and it would be an opportunity for residents to be able to listen in on multiple occasions.

Member Lisa Peterson suggested doing smaller focus groups and noted the importance of interviewing neighborhood groups. Noting that the Committee should look in to interviewing executive directors to get their insight on what is working and what is not working for them as employees.

Chair Born commented that she has spoken with the City Manager, and he is more than willing to be interviewed.

Member Jennifer Gilbert shared concerns about acting on the community engagement and interview plans. Jennifer also suggested having the option for Panel or individual survey to help people being interviewed feel comfortable and whichever setting.

Member Max Clermont had clarifying questions for community outreach.

Anna Corning noted that in January there will be two public forums. The first on Tuesday, January 24th at a Library for residents to provide comments and then the following Saturday residents would have the opportunity to participate virtually.

Patrick Hayes Emphasize it is up to the committee to engage with the community and do the hard work.

Anna Corning opened discussion to all members on what is working about the City Council/City Manager form of government, what are the challenges about the City Council/City Manager form of government and should the city form of government stay the same or change. What have you heard is working well, what needs improvement from members of the community.

Members went into discussion about the challenges and concerns they feel as residents. Noting that there is a disconnect between the political side of the government and professional side. Many members commented that they were intrigued by a strong Mayor form government. Members noted that a goal for the Charter should be to strengthen the government we already have, and that we should have a government that focuses on helping residents and getting things done, and that it's slow to make change in Cambridge. There were comments made that there is divide between the rich and the poor, and Cambridge does not have a strong middle class. Some members suggested looking at the School Committee as an option to help with planning and reorganizing. A big concern was voting for politicians and not seeing the outcome that was promised.

Chair Born noted that the discussions tonight were very meaningful, and every member had brought great suggestions and thoughts forward. She thanked members for their input.

Public Comment

John Hawkinson offered informational comments, noting that much of the assessment of the system seem right now to depend on the new City Manager and the Council supervision of him.

Anna Corning offered members to discuss if there were any lingering questions or comments based on the discussions of the meeting.

Chair Born suggested the Committee discuss how they would like to proceed with the next meeting, with hopes that members can take the framework that has been provided and use it to focus on future discussions.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen stressed the importance of being able to explain form of government and how the city government operates to people.

Member Jennifer Gilbert noted the importance of bringing actual data to the discussion, so members have something to look at and go off of.

Member Jim Stockard suggested the Committee look at the National City Manager Association to see what they could offer in terms of evaluation formats and histories of relationships between Council members and Managers.

Chair Born and Anna Corning thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:28p.m.

The Charter Review Committee received one written communication, Attachment A

Clerk's Note: The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/384?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=b0c14ed8855894066df36616103f52e6