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Councillor Patricia M. Nolan
Councillor Joan Pickett
Councillor Sumbul Siddiqui
Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler
Councillor Paul F. Toner
Councillor Ayesha M. Wilson

January 31, 2024

To Mayor Simmons, Vice-Mayor McGovern, and the Honorable City Council:

It is my privilege to submit the final report of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee (as approved on January 23, 2024) to the Cambridge City Council. This report was prepared by Anna Corning, the Charter Review Project Manager, with input from the Collins Center of UMass Boston.

The Charter Review Committee convened thirty-six times in open meetings between August 2022 and January 2024 for the purpose of considering changes to the Cambridge City Charter.

Regarding the most fundamental aspect of the Charter, whether to amend Cambridge's existing form of government or propose a different form of government, the Committee was not able to come to an agreement of two-thirds of its members, as required by the ordinance that established the Committee.

The Committee did, however, reach two-thirds agreement regarding certain aspects of government common to both the Council/Manager and Mayor/CAFO/Council forms of government. The Committee's areas of agreement included a codified goal-setting process for city council, expanding voter eligibility regarding age and citizenship, moving local elections to align with state and national elections, refining Proportional Representation to reflect modern tabulation methods, and, of particular note, the innovative addition to government structure of a randomly selected Resident Assembly that would be tasked with consideration of Cambridge's most controversial issues.

The Committee agreed that city councillors should continue to be elected city-wide to two year terms through a system of Proportional Representation and that an Elected Mayor (if that system prevailed) should be elected through RCV (Ranked Choice Voting with STV (Single Transferable Vote)) tabulation to a four year term.

The Committee recommended several additional forms of resident involvement, such as recall of the Mayor (under the Elected Mayor system) and Resident Initiative Petitions to bring matters before the Council or directly to the voters.

Finally, the Committee identified a number of items for consideration in future Charter Review Committees.

It is not the responsibility of the Chair to analyze the patterns, the reasons or the circumstances around the divergence of opinion on the Charter Committee. However, I would like to offer my personal observation, derived from the public input we received in various formats, that the residents of Cambridge, like the members of the Charter Review Committee, are of mixed opinions about whether Cambridge should retain (with some revisions) its current Council/Manager system of government or switch to a Mayor/CAFO/Council system.

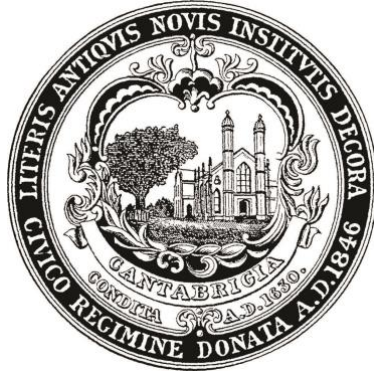
In other words, I believe that the opinions of our diverse Committee are a general reflection of the division of popular opinion in the citizenry that has participated in our meetings and other resident engagement activities...with the important caveat that it appears that, at this point in time, despite our outreach, which included a mailing to every household in Cambridge, a City of Cambridge webpage devoted to Charter Review, more than thirty public meetings virtual and in-person, and social media efforts, most Cambridge residents are not engaged in, or even aware of, the issue of Charter Reform. Most are unaware that a restructuring of the government is even being contemplated. When the City Council takes up the issue in 2024 and when, eventually, the issue is about to be put to the voters, hopefully there will be robust discussion and debate among a broader set of Cambridge residents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Leahy Born". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kathleen Leahy Born

Chair, Cambridge Charter Review Committee 2022-2024



Charter Review Committee - Final Report

City of Cambridge

January 31, 2024

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I. Introduction

To: Cambridge City Council
From: The Cambridge Charter Review Committee
Date: January 31, 2024

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee is pleased to present our final recommendations regarding revisions or replacements to the Cambridge City Charter. These include the proposed new modernized charter text. This report, which we endorse, is a reflection of our deliberations.

The city's charter is the foundation of Cambridge city government, outlining the structure, powers, and responsibilities of our government and its elected officials. Early in our deliberations, we voted unanimously to draft a new city charter, moving beyond the Plan E form and outdated gendered language, to modernize and clarify our city's governing document.

The final report results from 18 months of Committee meetings, deliberations, interviews, community engagement, and public comment. The Committee held 36 public Committee meetings, heard over 250 written and verbal public comments, attended community meetings, hosted four public forums, interviewed former and current elected officials and staff, and dedicated numerous hours of hard work and consideration. Documentation of the committee's work can be found on our website: www.cambridgema.gov/charterreview

Below is an overview of each section of the final report

Introduction Letter

This introduction letter serves as a preamble to the report, a brief overview of the Committee's purpose and scope, an explanation of the final report, and details of what is in each section.

Proposed Modern Charter Overview

A table of contents of a typical modern city charter detailing the elements defined in each section and what to expect, includes the committee vote to draft new charter text.

Key Recommendations for New Charter

Highlights each of the official recommendations of the Charter Review Committee that are applicable irrespective of the form of government. These recommendations fall into one or more of the values established by the Committee: Expanding Enfranchisement and Equity, Participation in and Accessibility of Government for all Residents, Effectiveness of Government, Responsiveness, and Accountability.

Form of Government Statements and Related Recommendations

As previously stated, the Committee did not come to a formal, super-majority recommendation on the question of form of government. This section, however, provides two statements, one from the eight Committee members supporting the Mayor/CAFO/Council form of government and one from the seven Committee members supporting the Council/Manager form of government. The section also includes details of votes related solely to either of those respective forms of government.

Charter Text for Mayor/CAFO/Council Form of Government & Charter Text for Manager/Council Form of Government

This section provides proposed draft charter text for each form of government, Council/Manager and Mayor/CAFO/Council. Because Cambridge had a plan form charter (dating back to the early 1900s), the Committee knew it was necessary, in addition to highlighting the Committee's recommendations, to include the recommendations in the context of a modern charter format and text. These draft texts include some boilerplate text that provides context for the framing and substantive decisions set within a modern charter text. Bolded sections reflect Committee votes.

Items for Future Charter Review Committee Consideration

Because this charter review was the first review since the adoption of the charter in 1940, and because the complete scope of topics covered by a modern charter was greater than the Committee's capacity and time allotted, there were some topics such as voting systems and campaign finance, that could not receive the full attention and expert consultation they merited. While the Committee addressed many relevant charter topics, it has identified several important issues that the next charter review Committee could take up.

Community Engagement Summary

This section summarizes all community engagement efforts undertaken by the Committee. It outlines the methods used, groups engaged, feedback received, and how public input was presented to the Committee for consideration in recommendations.

Appendix

- Appendix A: Committee Members
- Appendix B: Operations of the Committee and Acknowledgements
- Appendix C: Project History
- Appendix D: Cambridge Current Plan E Charter
- Appendix E: Meeting Minutes and Recordings
- Appendix F: Other Votes
- Appendix G: Public Comments
- Appendix H: coUrbanize Comments
- Appendix I: Former Elected Official and City Employee Interviews

Sincerely,

Kaleb Abebe

Jessica Dejesus Acevedo

Mosammat Faria Afreen

Kathleen Born

Nikolas Bowie

Kevin Chen

Max Clermont

Jennifer Gilbert

Kai Long

Patrick Magee

Mina Makarious

Lisa Peterson

Ellen Shachter

Susan Shell

Jim Stockard

II. Proposed Modern Charter Overview

Cambridge’s current “Plan E” charter (see Appendix I) was written by the Massachusetts General Court (Massachusetts state legislature) in the first half of the twentieth century as one of the charter templates offered to Massachusetts cities. Now, after roughly 100 years, there are only 12 of these “Plan” charters left operating in Massachusetts (and only one other “Plan E” charter). Cambridge’s Plan E charter consists of seven pages of Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L) text and three 2021 amendments requiring a written review of the city manager’s performance, establishing city council confirmation for board and commission appointments, and the establishment of a charter review committee every 10 years. It lacks an accessible format and substance to properly inform the public of Cambridge’s government structure and operations. As a document that is supposed to be the foundation of our government, it does not meet the moment. For that reason, the first decision of our Committee was to recognize that, independent of how members felt about what should replace it, the current charter text no longer works for Cambridge in 2024. A modern form and structured charter would better serve Cambridge’s government and residents.

Vote

A motion that the Committee recommend drafting new Charter text.

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5

The following is an outline of a modern city charter, including sections for each branch of government, critical city processes such as elections and finance, and a new article on Public Engagement and Communication.

ARTICLE 1: INCORPORATION; SHORT TITLE; DEFINITIONS

Defines the powers, definitions and framework for the city.

ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Defines roles and responsibilities of the city council including powers, requirements, appointments.

ARTICLE 3: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Defines the powers and duties of the executive branch.

ARTICLE 4: SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Defines the powers and duties of the school committee.

ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Defines the organizational structure of city departments and administration.

ARTICLE 6: FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

Defines the budget process and other financial elements for the city.

ARTICLE 7: ELECTIONS

Defines method of elections for the city including voting and tabulation methods.

ARTICLE 8: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION & COMMUNICATION

Defines public engagement goals and methods of resident petition, initiative and recall.

ARTICLE 9: GENERAL PROVISIONS

Defines standard elements including computation of time, periodic reviews, and charter regulation.

ARTICLE 10: TRANSITION PROVISIONS

Defines transition procedures, continuation of laws and personnel as well as new study committees.

III. Key Recommendations for New Charter

The following proposed changes to the Cambridge City Charter are a result of extensive deliberation, comparative research, community engagement, insights from current and previous Cambridge elected officials, background from city employees, best practices across Massachusetts, and innovative structures in the U.S. and internationally, as well as experiences of individual Committee members. In addition, the Committee developed a set of **values** to frame its deliberations.

Equity and Enfranchisement: Prioritizing fairness and inclusion ensures that all community members can fully participate in and with their city government.

Participation in and Accessibility of Government: Focusing on enhancing citizen engagement and making government processes more accessible and understandable to the diverse population of Cambridge.

Government Effectiveness: Striving for efficiency and efficacy in the functioning of government institutions to better serve the community's needs.

Responsiveness and Accountability: Building a structure promoting responsiveness and accountability, ensuring that the government remains attentive and answerable to the needs and concerns of its residents.

The following recommendations have at least *two-thirds* of the Committee's support, demonstrating a consensus among Committee members and meeting the requirements outlined in the ordinance (Appendix C). These changes are recommended separately from the form of government. These recommendations are not arbitrary but result from thoughtful Committee deliberations.

(i) Expand Enfranchisement and Equity

The Committee examined elections and representation in Cambridge and sought paths to foster more inclusive and equitable city elections and increase voter engagement in city elections. The Committee's recommendations aim to empower marginalized voices, increase election participation, and preserve the unique strengths of Cambridge's election method and composition of elected bodies.

- 1. Maintain an at-large city council elected by proportional representation.** The Committee engaged in deliberations regarding the composition and election method of the City Council. Emphasis was placed on the strengths inherent in Cambridge's distinctive at-large, proportionally representative model.

During the discussion, the Committee considered the potential benefits of district representation, acknowledging the community's expressed desire for more direct communication paths and accountability. The Committee also discussed the challenges of district based councilors which often leave a large number of unopposed city council races and thus a less democratic process overall. After careful consideration, the Committee concluded that alternative solutions outside the city charter, such as neighborhood liaisons, could effectively address the identified need for accountability. Two-thirds of the Committee voted to uphold the existing at-large, proportionally representative model for the City Council. (*See Section 2-1(a)*)

Community Feedback: The Committee heard numerous comments from residents regarding their preference for and against the at-large proportional representation model. Some residents and a few former elected officials expressed a desire for district-based councilors, emphasizing the advantages of clear communication channels and geographic accountability. Advocates for district representatives argued that it would foster closer connections between elected officials and their specific constituencies. The Committee also received significant feedback supporting the all-at-large system. Those favoring the current system highlighted its benefits for city-wide groups whose interests and causes transcend geographic boundaries.

Votes

A motion for the Committee to recommend Cambridge maintain a Proportional Representation system in Cambridge elections.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion for the Committee to recommend Cambridge maintain an at-large city council of nine members.

Yes – 11, No – 1, Present - 1, Absent – 0

- 2. Enfranchise non-citizens in municipal elections.** The Committee engaged in discussions regarding the enfranchisement of non-citizens, allowing them to vote in and run for municipal elections. The Committee recognized the present difficulties in getting the State Legislature to take up provisions regarding expanding the right to vote in municipal elections. Many other municipalities in Massachusetts have submitted home rule petitions to the State Legislature seeking to enfranchise non-

citizens in local elections, including Cambridge. The Committee recognizes the incredible contributions that the many non-citizens of Cambridge make every day to the civic, cultural, academic, and social life of our city. The Committee believes that our democracy is enhanced when all residents can participate in the decisions that impact their lives. The state legislature has begun to recognize the importance of expanding opportunities for immigrants by taking steps such as allowing undocumented immigrants to get driver's licenses and providing state-funded SNAP benefits for immigrants ineligible for federal benefits. This recommended charter change continues to move us toward being a true sanctuary city, empowering all our immigrant members. (*See Sections 2-1(a & c) & 4-1(a & c) & 7-2*)

Community Feedback: The Committee received a few comments in support of enfranchising non-citizens in municipal elections.

Votes

A motion to enshrine non-citizen eligibility to vote in municipal elections.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion to allow non-citizens to run for municipal elections.

Yes – 11, No – 2, Absent – 2

- 3. Enfranchise 16- and 17-year-olds in municipal elections.** The Committee also discussed lowering the voting age in municipal elections to 16 years old, a change other municipalities have petitioned the Massachusetts state legislature to allow. The Committee noted the benefits of establishing early voting habits, and some Committee members emphasized the benefits of civic engagement and the potential for enhanced political awareness among individuals at this age. The Committee also discussed recommending lowering the age requirement to 16 to be eligible to run for municipal office but did not reach two-thirds support. (*See Sections 2-1(a) & 4-1(a) & 7-2*)

Community Feedback: The Committee received a few comments in support of enfranchising 16- and 17-year-olds in municipal elections.

Vote

A motion to enshrine 16- and 17-year-olds eligibility to vote in municipal elections.

Yes – 12, No – 1, Absent – 2

- 4. Move municipal elections to even years.** The Committee expressed concern over the low voter turnout in local elections. Although higher than most Massachusetts municipalities, only 30% of Cambridge's registered voters typically turn out in municipal elections. The Committee discussed tactics to increase voter turnout and engagement in local elections. As documented from cities in CA, TX, and MD, turnout often doubles by aligning local elections with higher-profile election years (even-year cycles), such as those for state and federal offices. In the most recent even-year elections, Cambridge saw a 75% turnout in 2020 and 52% in 2022. The committee discussed this decision with Cambridge's Election Commission who raised several important concerns regarding resources, time and administrative requirements necessary to implement this change. The committee acknowledged

the administrative difficulties but believes the enhanced democracy and voter participation that could be achieved by moving municipal elections to even years means that Cambridge should allocate sufficient resources to overcome difficulties and adequately support the Election Commission. (*See Section 7-1*)

Community Feedback: The Committee received several comments in support of even-year elections, noting the potential benefits for voter turnout.

Vote

A motion to hold municipal elections in even numbered years.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

- 5. Create more flexibility and modernize election voting and tabulation methods in charter language.** The Committee acknowledged the necessity to modernize and refine the election language in the Charter, recognizing that Cambridge's current reliance on an antiquated state statute with specific and outdated limitations hinders the city's electoral processes. The existing statute permits proportional representation but imposes constraints, for instance, on tabulation methods, that no longer align with the dynamic and evolving needs of the community. In light of this, the Committee recommends that the City Council and election commission collaborate to update the language and create more flexibility. (*See Sections 7-4 & 7-5*)

Votes

A motion to recommend election procedure language be changed to authorize the City to use any tabulation method.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion that the Committee recommend that the election procedure language be changed to authorize the City to use any voting method of Proportional Representation.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion that the Committee recommend the remaining election procedures and relevant laws be compiled, updated, and drafted by the City, Election Commission, and Law Department consistent with all Charter Review Committee recommendations.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

(ii) Participation in and Accessibility of Government for all Residents

The Committee prioritized enhancing participation and accessibility of the city government for all residents. Hearing from the Cambridge community, the residents were eager for more accessible methods of engaging with their elected officials and city employees and a clearer way to play a role in creating city policies. Seeking opportunities to cultivate a more inclusive and equitable civic engagement experience, the Committee prioritized adding opportunities for thoughtful public feedback in multiple areas of the charter, expanding requirements around tracking and publishing council actions, and developing a framework for a Resident Assembly (representative lottery selected panel) to tackle critical city topics.

- 1. Require a Resident Assembly in the Charter.** A Resident Assembly is a lottery-selected panel, a democratic system designed to address challenging policy issues that governments face. Panelists, drawn from the general population, are tasked with a critical question or city issue and are supported with stakeholder engagement and education. The assembly deliberates, collaborates, and makes specific recommendations for the city. The Committee envisions that the Resident Assembly will bring new voices into city government and generate community-driven concepts and solutions. *(See Section 8-4)*

Should Cambridge adopt this Resident Assembly proposal, Cambridge would be the first municipality in the United States to codify such a structure in a city charter. The Committee spent extensive time discussing the intention, structure, and goals for a Resident Assembly in Cambridge. The Committee recommended that the City Council convene at least one assembly per term, offer adequate compensation to the panelists, and identify specific powers or decisions that the assembly could be tasked with. The Committee acknowledged that this would be a brand new civic structure in Cambridge and that specifics regarding the selection process, operational requirements, and best practices will evolve and require additional definition.

Community Feedback: Early on, the committee had heard from the public an interest in more collaborative city government and a desire for increased opportunities for engagement. In the development and deliberations of establishing a Resident Assembly, the Committee received positive feedback from the community and several city councillors.

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend to establish a Resident Assembly in the Charter

Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent – 3

Motion to approve the Purpose section (section 1) language of the Resident Assembly draft to read: In order to expand access to city government generally and include voices not typically heard in decision making, the City Council has the authority to establish and maintain one or more Resident Assemblies.

Yes – 10, No – 2, Absent – 3

A motion for the City Council to establish one Resident Assembly per city council term and to be added to the Mandatory Specifications Section (section 3) of the draft language.

Yes – 12, No – 1, Absent – 2

A motion to adopt the Power Section (section 2), section a.i. of the draft Resident Assembly, Section 2.a.i, to read: The power to issue recommendations on questions posed by the City Council and to specify 5 deadlines by which the City Council or city manager must publicly respond to the recommendations by hearing or other means

Yes – 11, No – 2, Absent – 2

A motion to adopt Section 2.i.2.a.ii of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: The power to issue endorsements or counter-endorsements for initiatives submitted to the City Council or voters, including initiatives that satisfy Section _'s procedural requirements.

Yes – 11, No – 2, Absent – 2

A motion to adopt Section 2.iv.2.a.v of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: The power, 8 on its own initiative, to make recommendations or propose draft legislation for review by the City Council or voters

Yes – 11, No – 1, Absent – 3

A motion on whether the Committee wishes to specify a minimum number of participants for a Resident Assembly.

Yes – 12, No – 0, Present - 1 , Absent – 2

A motion for 30 to be the minimum number of participants to be required in a Resident Assembly.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

A motion for the Committee to approve the Discretionary Specifications section of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

- 2. Public tracking mechanisms of council policy orders.** The Committee heard both from its own members and Cambridge residents the difficulty in tracking council policy orders, and discussed options for a public tool for tracking proposed policy orders, voting status, and actions taken by the executive branch to implement approved orders. While the committee supports greater transparency reporting they also acknowledge the necessary balance required to properly inform the public with city staff time and resources. *(See Section 3-2(t) & 10-9)*

Community Feedback: The Committee heard a desire from the public for accessibility of city council operations, policy orders and other legislative measures in addition to meeting minutes.

Vote

Recommend Public Tracking Mechanism of Council Policy Orders and other measures

Yes - 14, No - 0, Absent - 1

(iii) Effectiveness of Government

The Committee's recommendations aim to build on Cambridge's current strengths as a regional leader while introducing measures for a more effective government. To address community concerns, the recommendations focus on establishing a clear process for strategic vision planning that anticipates future challenges.

- 1. Measurable goal-setting.** The Committee emphasized the need for measurable goal-setting to establish a clear vision and a strategic plan for the city. Recognizing the absence of a clearly defined and comprehensive strategic vision, Committee members, as well as former elected officials and members of the public, expressed concerns about the prevalence of numerous council orders unrelated to any previously identified priorities. The Committee acknowledged the necessity of creating a structured vision for the city to guide elected officials in their decision-making processes.

The proposed approach involves the implementation of measurable goal-setting once per term during the first half of the first year of the city council's term. This strategic planning session creates a crucial opportunity to frame priorities for the budget, providing a roadmap for the remainder of the term. The Committee also recognized the importance of community involvement in this process, providing an opportunity for residents to contribute feedback and share their priorities for the city. (*See Sections 2-3(b)(iv), 2-11 & 3-1(f)*).

Community Feedback

Community feedback highlighted the perceived unstructured nature of council measures, and pressed the need to organize council priorities into overarching goals for the city. Many residents expressed frustration with the perceived lack of defined goals within the City Council, emphasizing the need for a more structured and strategic approach as well as for a better-defined collective political vision.

Vote

A motion recommending the proposed language for City Council Goal-Setting.

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5

- 2. Maintain 2-year terms for city councillors.** The Committee extensively deliberated on the term length for city councillors, ultimately recommending maintaining 2-year terms. The committee thoroughly discussed the benefits of maintaining this term length, emphasizing its capacity to hold councillors directly accountable to voters biennially. Almost all Massachusetts municipalities with a population over 50,000 have 2-year terms for city councillors. The Committee determined this term length was appropriate for Cambridge, ensuring more frequent opportunities for voters to express their preferences and align the city's leadership with evolving community dynamics. (*See Section 2-1(b)*)

In a related decision, the Committee chose not to pursue a recall provision for city councillors. The rationale behind this decision was anchored in the acknowledgment that the 2-year term serves as a mechanism for accountability. The frequency of elections under the 2-year term eliminates the

need for a recall provision, as voters can express their approval or disapproval in elections. It makes a recall provision operationally difficult, given the short time window.

Community Feedback

Community feedback on the topic of maintaining 2-year terms for city councillors was somewhat mixed. Supporters of the 2-year term emphasized its role in keeping elected officials directly and frequently accountable to the voters. They highlighted the opportunity it provides for new individuals to enter city council positions. Other community members expressed support for longer terms, citing the need to give councillors more time to adjust and advance legislative agendas between campaign seasons. Concerns were raised that longer terms might discourage potential candidates from running due to the extended commitment required.

Vote

A motion that the Committee recommend maintaining 2-year terms for city council.

Yes - 12, No - 1, Absent - 2

(iv) Responsiveness and Accountability

In relation to the Committee's value of Responsiveness and Accountability, the Committee has proactively endorsed a series of recommendations to strengthen accountability to residents. The proposed inclusion of a defined timeline for the budget process, coupled with establishing a formalized annual budget meeting and a process for city council budget priorities in the fall, seeks to enhance budget transparency and strategic planning. Additionally, the Committee recommends a significant change to the budgetary framework, granting the City Council the authority to add or increase line items.

To bolster resident engagement, two provisions new to Cambridge—the Resident Initiative Petition and Group Petition—are recommended. The former allows residents to bring forth new legislation, while the latter enables residents to prompt a city council hearing on a specific topic.

Finally, the Committee recommends forming a Campaign Finance Study Committee, dedicated to exploring avenues for implementing new programs or funding regulations.

- 1. Defined budget process + city council budget priorities.** Currently, Cambridge's budget process and timeline are defined by Massachusetts General Law, which requires the budget to be submitted 170 days from the beginning of the year (~June 20) and allows the City Council 45 days to approve said budget. The Committee discussed comprehensively the budget process and options to formally empower Cambridge's City Council with more substantial input early in the budget process. Increasing collaborations between the executive and the City Council on the development of the budget was a critical deliberation point for the Committee.

Recognizing the importance of early and defined input from elected officials, the Committee proposed additions to the budget process. These additions include introducing a codified annual budget meeting, delineating a straightforward process for the City Council to identify and communicate its budget priorities, and incorporating additional public input opportunities in the fall. These proposed steps aim to foster transparency, inclusivity, and collaboration in the city's budgetary decision-making process. (*See Sections 6-2 - 6-6*)

Proposed Timeline

- Fiscal Year: begin on July 1 and end on June 30 (current practice by Massachusetts General Law)
- Annual Budget Meeting: At least by Nov 1
- City Council Budget Priorities: by end of Calendar year (following annual budget meeting)
- Submission of Budget: At least by May 1
 - Including the Capital Improvement Plan (same timeline)
- City Council approve by end of fiscal year, June 30

Votes

A motion for the Committee to approve recommending the draft finance article text and reflected timeline for Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government.

Yes - 13, No - 0, Present - 0, Absent - 2

A motion for the Committee to approve recommending the draft finance article text and reflected timeline for Council-Manager form of government.

Yes - 12, No - 0, Present - 1, Absent - 2

A motion to recommend the proposed language for City Council Budget Priorities

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5

2. **City Council power to add or increase line items in the budget.** The Committee had several primary goals in their deliberations on potential changes to the budget process: increased transparency, increased public engagement, and an increased role for the City Council in creating the budget. Looking at Boston's recent charter change, which allows the City Council to add or increase line items in addition to the current state law that only allows the City Council to reduce or eliminate budget line items, the Committee voted to recommend under either form of government the City Council be allowed to increase or add items to the budget. This is in addition to a formalized process for the City Council to establish and share the budget priorities for the upcoming budget with the chief executive. This recommendation was discussed towards the end of the committee's process and the committee acknowledges additional time to deliberate, consider and interview city staff and electeds would have been valuable to the discussion. *(See Section 6-5(b))*

Votes

A motion that the Committee recommend that the City Council be allowed to amend the City budget (adding funds or line items, but not increasing the overall budget) prior to approval and be allowed to override the Mayor's budgetary amendments or veto under the Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government.

Yes - 11, No - 0, Present - 2, Absent - 2

A motion to recommend that the City Council be allowed to amend the city budget (adding funds or line items but not increasing the overall budget) prior to approval, with consultation with city manager, under Council-Manager form of government

Yes - 10, No - 1, Present - 2, Absent - 2

3. **Enshrine resident initiative provision.** The Committee, in its commitment to enhancing public engagement and participation in Cambridge city government, engaged in thorough deliberations on the introduction of a Resident Initiative Petition provision to the city charter. Currently lacking formal participation mechanisms, this provision would empower residents to initiate change by collecting signatures to petition the City Council to pass a specific ordinance. If the ordinance fails to secure approval from the City Council, the provision outlines additional steps for residents. They may collect further signatures to place the proposed ordinance on the ballot for Cambridge voters to decide its implementation. *(See Section 8-6).*

Vote

A motion that the Committee recommends a Resident Initiative Provision under both forms of government. The City Council shall collaborate with the Election Commission to determine the thresholds.

Yes - 11, No - 0, Present - 0, Absent - 4

- 4. Enshrine group petition provision.** The Committee, attuned to the community's call for increased paths for direct community participation, thoroughly considered the proposal to enshrine a Group Petition Provision in the city's charter. This provision would empower a group of residents to collect signatures on a specific issue, compelling the City Council to hold a public hearing on the matter. Recognizing the importance of fostering mechanisms that amplify residents' voices, the Committee prioritized direct resident engagement. The Committee expressed a shared conviction in the value of establishing a democratic process that allows residents to actively contribute to shaping the city's discourse. The Committee acknowledged and agreed with the community's desire for increased avenues of participation and its commitment to fostering a more inclusive decision-making framework.

Similar to the resident initiative petition process, the City Council is expected to collaborate with the Election Commission to determine the specific thresholds for signature collection, ensuring that they are reasonable and attainable. This collaborative effort is essential to fine-tune the implementation of the Group Petition Provision, ensuring its effectiveness in providing a meaningful platform for residents to engage with civic matters and have their voices heard. (*See Section 8-5*).

Vote

A motion that the Committee recommends adding a group petition provision to the Charter, the thresholds shall be relatively low. The City Council shall collaborate with the Election Commission to determine the thresholds

Yes - 11, No - 0, Present - 0, Absent - 4

- 5. Campaign finance study committee.** The Committee deliberated extensively on ways to alleviate the financial burdens associated with campaigning in Cambridge while fostering greater diversity among candidates. Recognizing the absence of public financing options in Massachusetts, as constrained by state regulations, the Committee identified the need for a dedicated study Committee. This study Committee aims to explore potential programs for Cambridge, such as a voucher program, contribution limits, and campaign spending programs, with the overarching goal of fostering more inclusive and accessible elections within the city.

The Committee acknowledged the limitations imposed by state regulations on elections and campaign finance reform. In response, a strategic recommendation emerged to amend the city's charter. This proposed addition would empower the City Council, the election commission, or another appropriate body to institute and oversee campaign finance reforms. By doing so, the Committee aimed to provide a framework for the implementation of progressive programs to enhance the democratic process in Cambridge. (*See Section 10-7*).

Votes

A motion to recommend enshrining that the City Council or an appropriate body of the City have the ability to allow to make Campaign Finance reforms.

Yes – 10, No – 3, Absent – 2

A motion for the Committee to establish a Campaign Finance Study Committee in the Transition Provisions.

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2

IV. Elected Mayor/CAFO/Council Statement with Related Votes

In support of an “Elected Mayor/CAFO/Council” form of City governance

Eight out of fifteen members of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee, after extensive research, discussion and ample opportunity for public comment, support a move to an “Elected Mayor” form of government along with the development of a new position of Chief Administrative and Financial Officer (CAFO) to oversee day to day administration of the City. While we cannot relay all that has been discussed on this topic, we wish to convey the key reasons why eight members of the Charter Review Committee have come to this conclusion:

- 1) **Enhancing democracy:** Democracy is the best form of government for ensuring that all residents of Cambridge can actively participate as equals in the project of self-governance. While it is critical that we seek to engage residents in City government in a myriad of ways, it is through the act of voting that the greatest number of residents, including those from historically marginalized communities, express their political choices and opinions. In our current form of government, many voters are unaware that they do not choose the person that manages the City and its budget. The representatives elected by the voters have only overbroad and seldom-used tools to ensure that the actions of the City Manager reflect the will of the people. By contrast, the democratic methods for holding an elected Mayor accountable are well known, powerful and accessible to all. While we understand that some residents and members of the Committee believe that the administration of the City should be “depoliticized”, we think that the “depoliticization” of city governance ultimately means there is less ability for residents of all types to have real impact on important City decisions.
- 2) **History of City Manager form of government to disenfranchise voters of color:** The Committee has explored research showing a strong positive correlation between cities that received many Black people during the Great Migration of the twentieth century and cities that adopted a city manager form of government during the same period. The explanation of this correlation reveals that many Progressive Era supporters of city manager governments intended to make local government as inaccessible as possible for new immigrants and people of color. While such reasons do not appear to have directly applied to Cambridge where the effort was mainly directed against perceived corruption, and while we do not believe that this goal is today the reason that other members of the Charter Review Committee support a city manager form of government, this history provides useful lessons about how broad democracy is limited when there are no elections for the Chief executive.
- 3) **Influence on the City budget:** Perhaps the greatest power of the City Government is the development of a city budget which ultimately is an expression of the values and priorities of the City. At present there is no mechanism for residents to have a direct impact on budget choices. Under the current charter arrangement, the City Council can only reduce budget expenditures but cannot allocate or reallocate budget items. While there may be indirect ability to impact on the budget process through the ability of the City Council to hire and fire a city manager, we see an

elected Mayor system as allowing for a far more effective means for residents to express their pleasure or displeasure with the budgets as developed by the Executive branch through the Act of voting.

- 4) **Combining a Chief Financial/Administrative Officer with an Elected Mayor provides the best of both worlds:** It is critical for Cambridge to have a person in charge of administration that is a highly skilled administrator with the background and expertise necessary to solve complex problems and make difficult choices. We acknowledge that the qualities that make a candidate the best candidate for Mayor are not necessarily the same qualities that make for high quality municipal administration. For this reason, we believe the City Charter should require the City to hire a Chief Financial and Administrative Officer with similar qualifications and responsibilities as a City Manager. The change to the Charter we propose—a change we consider critical—is that this new Officer should be answerable to an elected Mayor.
- 5) **Direct accountability to residents:** Elected Mayors have a strong incentive to be responsive to their constituency as they must win sufficient votes to remain in office. This incentive demands that successful Mayors make themselves available to residents and change their decisions in response to resident pressure. A move to an elected Mayor would also provide much needed clarity to residents who currently express confusion about how and where to seek redress, make policy suggestions or otherwise impact on government decisions.
- 6) **Possibility for a bolder agenda:** Direct accountability to the voters will in some instances allow for a bolder executive branch than exists with a city manager form of government. Unrelated to any particular city manager, a city manager may have some implicit incentive to perpetuate the status quo and not to urge bold action on the part of the City and its many division heads who implement policy. This may be particularly true in a city like Cambridge with enviable sources of income, a low tax rate and AAA bond rating. We note, perhaps tangentially in this context, that our current financial security and bond rating is not merely the product of a city manager; many of our neighbors, including Boston and Somerville, have the same high bond rating along with elected Mayors.

We believe that the current power, income, and wealth gap between residents, often correlated to race, means that while many are thriving in the City of Cambridge, others are struggling just to remain in this City, never mind thrive. People with this or other relevant life experience may demand, through the act of voting and otherwise, bolder action than we have seen to date in regard to anti-displacement, climate justice, public transportation, or the like. The debate over how bold to be and what risks to take is critical; but true debate is most meaningful when people truly have the power to determine the debate's outcome – in this case through the power of the vote.

- 7) **Leadership in External and Regional Efforts and Policymaking:** Increasingly we face challenges like climate and housing which one municipality cannot solve. An elected Mayor would have an expanded ability to represent our community, foster regional collaboration and provide visionary leadership on these and other critical issues.

- 8) **How adoption of an Elected Mayor/CAFO/Council form of government would relate to other recommendations of the Charter Review Committee:** The Charter Review Committee as a whole (“the Committee”) recognizes the influence that money can play in the ability of diverse candidates to successfully run for office. For this reason, the Committee is recommending that the City Council undertake a review of the possibility of implementing some form of public financing for elections. The Committee is also recommending additional means of enhancing direct democracy such as the formation of a Resident Council, requesting permission from the state to allow non-citizens and residents sixteen (16) and older to vote, and moving elections to even years to increase voter turnout. Mayoral elections will need to be combined with other strategies to truly enfranchise and empower a wider range of residents to engage actively in city government.

For these reasons and others each of us personally hold we favor a move to a strong Mayor/CAFO form of government.

Signed:

Kaleb Abebe

Jessica Dejesus Acevedo

Mosammat Faria Afreen

Nikolas Bowie

Jennifer Gilbert

Kai Long

Ellen Shachter

Susan Shell

(i) Mayor/CAFO/Council Related Votes

1. Four Year Term for Mayor.

Vote

A motion to recommend a four-year term for Mayor.

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5 (motion passed)

2. Three total terms for Mayor.

Vote

A motion to recommend a candidate for Mayor is eligible for only three total terms.

Yes – 9, No – 1, Absent – 5 (motion failed)

3. Add a Recall Provision for Mayor.

Vote

A motion that the Committee recommends a recall provision for the Mayor under Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government, the thresholds shall be difficult but not impossible to recall a Mayor.

The City Council shall collaborate with the Election Commission to determine the thresholds.

Yes - 13, No - 0, Present - 0 , Absent - 0 (motion passed)

4. Require a Chief Administrative and Finance Officer in the Charter.

Votes

A motion to require a CAFO, who is appointed by the Mayor, in the Charter

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5 (motion passed)

A motion that the City Council can veto the CAFO appointment by the Mayor with a super majority vote.

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5 (motion passed)

5. Mayor Veto Powers and Council Override.

Vote

A motion to approve section 3.8 Approval Of Mayor, Veto

Yes – 14, No – 0, Absent – 1 (motion passed)

6. Mayor and City Council President Role on School Committee.

Votes

A motion for the Committee to recommend the Mayor (executive) serve on the School (under the Mayor/CAFO/Council form of government)

Yes - 8, No - 1, Present - 4, Absent - 2 (motion failed)

A motion that the Committee recommend the Mayor is automatically the Chair of the School Committee under the Mayor/CAFO/Council form of government.

Yes - 0, No - 9, Present - 4 , Absent - 2 (motion failed)

A motion that the Committee recommend the City Council President serve on the School Committee under the Mayor/CAFO/Council form of government.

Yes - 4, No - 1, Present - 8 , Absent - 0 (motion failed)

7. Resident Assembly.

Vote

A motion that the Committee recommend that under a Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government that the City Council shall convene the Resident Assembly.

Yes - 12, No - 0, Present - 1, Absent - 2 (motion passed)

V. Council / Manager Statement with Related Votes

Reasons to prefer a City Council/City Manager form of government for Cambridge

The citizens of Cambridge have benefitted from steady, professional leadership in the position of the city manager for decades and there are numerous strong reasons to maintain our City Council/City Manager (Council/Manager) form of government.

Satisfaction of Residents

Citizen surveys over the past 20 years reflect a high level of satisfaction with Cambridge's form of governance, as did a significant number of the comments to the Charter Review Committee at its December 5 meeting. This is unsurprising. The city offers a high level of services, the lowest residential tax rate among surrounding communities, and the highest possible bond rating (which enables the city to undertake capital improvements such as schools and parks at lower costs). Further, external stakeholders can turn to a stable professional representative of the city with whom to partner rather than a politician with a limited term of office. Certainly, some citizens wish certain things were different in our city. The question for this report is whether changing the form of government would make a difference in those matters.

Separation of policy-making from policy-implementation

The primary reason to maintain the Council/ Manager form of government is the separation of policy-making from policy-execution. Policy-making should always be the responsibility of an elected body broadly representative of the city -- the City Council. Our system of Proportional Representation and at-large seats has, for decades, produced a richly diverse Council, currently almost precisely representative of the demographics of our population. However, policy implementation is different by nature. It is a highly professional, and often very technical operation, best led by a well-trained senior executive who must oversee thousands of staff, an annual budget of nearly \$1 Billion, and a labyrinth of federal, state and local regulations.

Popularly elected officials should decide **what** we should do as a city; well-trained professionals should decide **how** we do it most effectively.

The Council/ Manager form of government allows the broadly representative legislative body to choose and oversee such a professional who works at their direction. Since it takes at least five city councillors (with disparate constituencies) to vote to select a city manager, we are assured that the chief executive of the city will need to serve a wide range of our citizens with different needs and priorities.

Further, by separating the executive from the political process, the city manager can make important and even controversial decisions, such as hiring department heads and making contract decisions, without undue political pressure. Nor need the city manager spend time and/or political capital raising money, attending campaign events or seeking endorsements and financial contributions from people who may then feel they then have a right to influence the city manager's decisions on civic matters. The Manager can also lean on the experience of other city and town managers who are his professional peers for expertise in urban

can also lean on the experience of other city and town managers who are his professional peers for expertise in urban problem solving. Further, when the council is split on an issue, the Manager can offer a politically neutral party that can help fashion collaborative solutions addressing various factions' concerns.

Stability of government

The city manager's status as a professional employee of the city council allows for continuity in government. The manager can remain in office through multiple council elections as long as the new council approves of their performance.

Accountability

Changes to the relationship between the Council and the City Manager have been codified and strengthened by recommendations detailed elsewhere in this report. Joint public goal-setting between the Council and the Manager and a regular, thoughtful Manager evaluation process (as set out in our draft sample Council/Manager Charter) by the Council are important elements in increasing accountability and transparency in our government. The former is difficult and the latter does not exist in the case of an elected mayor. The addition of Resident Assemblies brings another force into the governance of the city and will ensure that more citizens are engaged and informed.

Direct Oversight by the City Council

In some versions of the mayor form of government, the mayor is authorized to hire a CAFO (Chief Administrative and Financial Officer) to administer the city while the elected mayor handles political chores and policy making. This would bring the somewhat professional expertise of a manager-type to the city. But, this approach consolidates power in the hands of two people (one not elected) at the expense of the more broadly representative council. And the CAFO reports only to the Mayor, not to the Council. Hence, the administration of city government is one step further removed from the Council and the voters than the current City Manager is. Mayor/CAFO conversations are typically in private and not subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. In the council/manager form, the chief executive works for the entire council and must respond to this broadly diverse body in open, public discussion. Policy debates take place among our elected councillors, and the City Manager is charged with implementing the policies that emerge.

Removal of the Chief Executive

While this report includes a Recall Provision for removing the mayor, it is undeniably a long and expensive one, involving two rounds of signature gathering and the expense of a city election. Removing a city manager only requires the votes of five city councillors and the expense of a hiring process and any severance that is included in the manager's contract. This is easier and faster than Recall in the case of drastically poor performance. Further, if the manager is removed due to poor performance, the replacement process is a purely professional one. When a mayor is recalled, it is the removal of a popularly elected official, and more likely the result of shifting political winds, potentially alienating a large part of the population.

aware of no indication that such motives were involved in the selection of the city manager form of government for Cambridge in the 1940s, nor that it is an element of the current practice of the system (and certainly not an element of the reasons to support its continuance). Sadly, American civic history is full of examples of policy choices elites have made to consolidate power for themselves at the expense of BIPOC and immigrant communities, regardless of the form of government in place at the time. The broad diversity of our elected city councils for many decades and the recent choice of a person of color to carry out administrative functions for our city are evidence that this terrible history does not apply to Cambridge today.

And, Cambridge is not alone: According to the International City/County Management association, nearly half of the U.S. cities with 2,500 or more people have a manager, as do roughly 60% of those with populations over 100,000. This includes several major cities such as Austin, San Jose, and San Antonio. In Massachusetts, Lowell, Watertown and Worcester also utilize the City Manager form of government, as well as a dozen “towns” with a City form of government such as Amherst.

Summary

We believe that Cambridge should have a professional and rational form of local government. We have a long history of strong and broadly representative city councils including many thoughtful leaders who have debated with great energy many of the most critical and controversial issues of their day. They have not always agreed with each other, as one would expect in a city like ours. But they have decided. We see no reason to doubt that this lively debate and decision-making will continue, and we hope it will be more transparent and inclusive given other changes recommended by the Committee.

And, once this body has arrived at a conclusion of the best direction for our city to take, they should turn those instructions over to a well-trained and nonpolitical professional who can implement those policies efficiently and effectively. Our city deserves no less.

Signed:

Kathleen Born

Kevin Chen

Max Clermont

Patrick Magee

Mina Makarios

Lisa Peterson

Jim Stockard

(i) Council/Manager Related Votes

1. City Council Goal Setting.

Vote

A motion recommending the proposed language for City Council Goal Setting.

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5 (motion passed)

2. City Manager Annual Review.

Vote

A motion recommending the proposed language for the City Manager Annual Review

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5 (motion passed)

3. City Council Budget Priorities.

Vote

A motion recommending the proposed language for City Council Budget Priorities

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent - 5 (motion passed)

4. Mayor Role on School Committee

Vote

A motion that the Committee recommend the Mayor (chair of CC) serve on the School Committee under the Council/Manager form of government.

Yes - 9, No - 1, Present - 3 , Absent - 2 (motion failed)

A motion that the Committee recommend the Mayor is automatically the Chair of the School Committee under the Manager/Council form of government.

Yes - 0, No - 11, Present - 2 , Absent - 2 (motion failed)

****Recommend a change to the title of Mayor. ****

Votes

A motion to recommend changing the title of Mayor to Chair of the City Council, Head of the City Council, or President of the City Council.

Straw poll: Changing Title - 11, No Opinion - 1, Absent - 3

SAMPLE DRAFT MAYOR-CAFO-COUNCIL FORM CHARTER FOR THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Last Revised: 1.26.2023

*The purpose of this “sample draft” mayor-cafo-council form of government charter is to put in one place the recommendations of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee. These provisions are shown in **black bold typeface**.*

*In order to create the full picture of what a complete mayor-cafo-council charter that incorporates these Committee decisions might look like in its entirety, the Collins Center has provided, for context only, standard/best practices text of a typical council-manager. These provisions are shown in *grey italic text*. Additionally, these sections of the text should not be considered to be recommendations by the Committee. The Committee did not vote on any draft language other than the provisions emphasized in **black bold typeface**.*

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ARTICLE 1: INCORPORATION; SHORT TITLE; ETC.

SECTION 1-1: INCORPORATION

The inhabitants of Cambridge, within the territorial limits established by law, shall continue to be a municipal corporation, a body corporate and politic, under the name “City of Cambridge”.

SECTION 1-2: SHORT TITLE

This document shall be known and may be cited as the “Cambridge Charter.”

SECTION 1-3: DIVISION OF POWERS

The administration of the fiscal, prudential, and municipal affairs of Cambridge, with the government thereof, shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a mayor and a legislative branch consisting of a council. The legislative branch shall never exercise any executive power, and the executive branch shall never exercise any legislative power.

SECTION 1-4: POWERS OF THE CITY

Subject only to express limitations on the exercise of any power or function by a municipal government in the Massachusetts constitution or General Laws, it is the intention and the purpose of the voters of Cambridge, through the adoption of this charter, to secure for themselves and their government all of the powers it is possible to secure as fully and as completely as though each power were specifically and individually enumerated in this charter.

SECTION 1-5: CONSTRUCTION

The powers of Cambridge under this charter are to be construed liberally in favor of the city, and the specific mention of any particular power is not intended to limit the general powers of the city as stated in the Cambridge Charter. To the extent that any provision of this charter shall conflict with any special act or general law adopted by the city, the provision of this charter shall prevail.

SECTION 1-6: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Subject only to express limitations in the constitution or general laws of the Commonwealth, Cambridge may exercise any of its powers or perform any of its functions, and may participate in their financing, jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, with the Commonwealth or any agency or political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or with the United States government or any of its agencies. The City Council and Mayor shall in the performance of their duties consider intergovernmental and regional relations.

SECTION 1-7: DEFINITIONS

[to be filled in]

ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

SECTION 2-1: COMPOSITION; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY, POWERS

(a) Composition - There shall be a city council of nine members nominated and elected by the voters at-large by proportional representation, as provided for in Article 7. The city council shall exercise the legislative powers of the city.

(b) Term of Office - City councillors shall be elected for terms of two years each beginning on the first Monday of January in the year following their election, except when that first Monday falls on a legal holiday, then the term shall begin on the following day, and until successors have been qualified.

(c) Eligibility - Any registered municipal voter over the age of 18 shall be eligible to hold the office of councillor. If a councillor moves from the city during the councillor's term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section [placeholder]. The city council shall determine whether a councillor has moved from the city.

(d) Legislative Powers - The city council shall have and shall exercise all the legislative powers of the city, except as such powers are reserved by this charter to the school committee or to the qualified voters of the city.

SECTION 2-2: CITY COUNCIL OFFICERS

(a) Election and Term - As soon as practical after the councillors-elect have been qualified following each regular city election, as provided in section [placeholder], the members of the city council shall elect from among its members a president and vice president, who shall serve for a 2-year term. The method of election of the president and vice-president shall be determined by City Council rules. The member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president until members elect a president

(b) Powers and Duties of Council President

(i) General Administration - The council president shall preside at all meetings of the council, shall regulate its proceedings, and shall decide all questions of order. The council president shall perform any other duties consistent with the office that may be provided by charter, by ordinance, by council rules, or by other vote of the council.

(ii) No Veto Power – The city council president shall have no power to veto but shall have the same powers as any other member of either such body to vote on measures before it.

(iii) Appointments of Committees - The council president shall appoint all members of all committees established by the rules of the council, whether special or standing.

(c) Temporary Absence - During a temporary absence of the council president, the duties of president shall be performed by the vice-president. If there shall be neither a president nor a vice-president, the member of the council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president until there is no longer an absence.

(d) Permanent Vacancy - If there is a permanent vacancy in the office of president or vice-president, the city council shall elect by majority vote one of its members to fill such office for the unexpired term. Until such vacancy is filled, the member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president until there is no longer an absence.

SECTION 2-3: PROHIBITIONS

Except as otherwise provided by the charter and as permitted by the Massachusetts General Laws, no member of the city council shall hold any other compensated city position. No former member of the city council shall hold any compensated appointed city position until 1 year following the date on which the former member's service on the city council has terminated unless such appointment is affirmed by 6 members of the city council. This section shall not prevent a city employee who vacated a position to serve

Committee Recommendations: **black bold**

Sample Text: *grey italic*

as a member of the city council from returning to the same position upon the expiration of the term for which that person was elected.

SECTION 2-4: COMPENSATION

- (a) Salary - The president and the members of the city council shall receive for their services such salary as the city council shall by ordinance determine, and they shall receive no other compensation from the city. No increase or reduction in the salaries of city councillors shall take effect during the year in which such increase or reduction is voted, and no change in such salaries shall be made between the election of a new council and the qualification of the new council.*
- (b) Expenses - Subject to appropriation, the council members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.*

SECTION 2-5: EXERCISE OF POWERS; QUORUM; RULES

- (a) Exercise of Powers - Except as otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter, the legislative powers of the city council may be exercised in a manner determined by the city council.*
- (b) Quorum – A majority of all the members elected to the city council shall constitute a quorum. Except as otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter, the affirmative vote, taken by a roll call vote, of a majority of members of the city council shall be required to adopt any ordinance, order, resolution, or vote, except that the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present shall be sufficient to adjourn any meeting of the city council.*
- (c) Rules of Procedure - The city council shall adopt rules regulating the procedures of the city council, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following rules:
 - (i) The city council shall fix suitable times for its regular meetings. Except in the cases of executive sessions authorized by Massachusetts General Laws, all meetings of the city council shall be open to the press and to the public, and the rules of the city council shall provide that residents and employees of the city shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any such meeting in regard to any matter considered;*
 - (ii) special meetings of the city council shall be held at the call of the president, or the vice-president of the city council, or any three members, for any purpose; provided, however, that notice of the meeting shall state the time of holding such meeting and be signed by the person or persons calling the same. Except in an emergency as declared by the mayor, the notice shall be delivered at least 2 business days in advance of the time set and shall specify the date, time and location of the meeting and the purpose for which the meeting is to be held. A copy of each notice shall be immediately posted.*
 - (iii) all sessions of the city council and of every committee or subcommittee of the council shall be open to the public, unless otherwise specified by law; and*
 - (iv) a full, accurate, up-to-date account of the proceedings of the city council shall be maintained by the city clerk. [PLACEHOLDER FOR TRACKING LANGUAGE]**

SECTION 2-6: CITY COUNCIL CONFIRMATION OF CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS

- (a) Department Heads
 - (i) Prior to posting and beginning the search for a department head position, the mayor shall meet with the city council to discuss priorities for the department and desirable qualifications and qualities of candidates for the position.*
 - (ii) The mayor shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the city clerk the name of each person the mayor desires to appoint as a department head. The city council shall have 30 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed**

with the city clerk to vote to approve the appointment with approval not to be unreasonably withheld. An approved appointment shall be effective immediately. The city council shall accompany a rejection of the appointment with a written statement describing the reason, which shall be delivered to and placed on file with the city clerk within 30 days of filing. If the city council does not take up the appointment within 30 days, the appointment shall be deemed approved.

- (b) *Multiple-Member Bodies - The mayor shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the clerk the name of each person the mayor desires to appoint or reappoint as a member of a multiple-member body. Appointment of a member of a multiple-member body made by the mayor will be effective upon a majority vote of the city council, which vote shall occur within 45 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed with the city clerk. The appointment may be approved or rejected by a majority of the full city council before 45 days. An appointment or reappointment shall take effect if the city council fails to act within those 45 days.*

SECTION 2-7: CITY COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

- (a) *City Auditor - The city council, by the affirmative vote of at least six members, shall appoint a city auditor for an indefinite term of office. The city auditor shall be appointed solely based on the candidate's professional qualifications and experience. The city auditor shall keep and have charge of the accounts of the city and shall from time to time audit the books and accounts of all city agencies. The city auditor shall have such other powers and duties as provided for auditors and accountants by general laws and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or by any other vote of the city council.*
- (b) *City Clerk - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a city clerk. The city clerk shall be appointed solely based on qualifications and experience. The city clerk shall have such powers and duties as provided for clerks by general laws and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or by any other vote of the city council.*
- (c) *Clerk of the Council - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a clerk of the council, who may be the city clerk. The clerk of the council shall give notice of its meetings to its members and to the public, keep the journal of its proceedings, and perform such other duties as may be provided by ordinance or by other vote of the city council.*
- (d) *Additional Staff - The council may establish additional council support positions and consultants by ordinance as the council deems necessary and may, by the affirmative vote of at least six members, appoint staff to serve in those positions. All officials of the city shall cooperate with employees and consultants of the city council in the performance of their oversight functions.*
- (e) *Salaries - The officers appointed under Section 2-7 shall receive such salaries as set by ordinance.*
- (f) *Supervision - The council president shall be responsible for day-to-day supervision of the city auditor, city clerk, and clerk of the council, including but not limited to the discipline of same up to and including an unpaid suspension of not more than five days; provided, however, that the council president may, at the council president's sole discretion, bring to the city council any personnel matter involving the city auditor or clerk of the council for appropriate action, and provided further that the affirmative vote at least six members of the city council shall be required to remove the city auditor or clerk of the council.*
- (g) *Removal: Any person appointed or elected by the council may be removed by the council.*

SECTION 2-8: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- (a) *In General - The city council may make investigations into the affairs of the city and into the conduct and performance of any city agency.*
- (b) *Information Requests*
- (i) *Mayor - The city council may, at any time, request from the mayor, specific information on any municipal matter within its jurisdiction and may request the mayor to be present to answer written questions relating thereto at a meeting to be held not earlier than 7-days*

from the date of receipt by the mayor of said questions. The mayor shall personally, or through the head of a department or a member of a multiple-member body, attend such meeting and publicly answer all such questions. The person so attending shall not be obliged to answer questions relating to any other matter. The mayor may attend and address the city council in person or through the head of a department or a member of a multiple-member body, upon any subject and at any time.

- (ii) *Department Heads, Chair of Multiple-Member Bodies- The city council may require the chair of a city multiple-member body or a city department head to appear before the city council to give any information that the city council may require in relation to the municipal services, functions and powers or duties which are within the scope of responsibility of that person and not within the jurisdiction of the school committee.*
- (c) *Notice: The council shall give not less than fourteen (14) days advance notice to any person it may require to appear before it under this section. The notice shall include specific questions on which the council seeks information, and no person called to appear before the council under this section shall be required to respond to any question not relevant or related to those presented in advance and in writing. Notice shall be by [placeholder -- form of notice]. The mayor shall receive a copy of all such notices.*

SECTION 2-9: ORDINANCES AND OTHER MEASURES

- (a) *Emergency Ordinances - No ordinance shall be passed finally on the date it is introduced, except in cases of special emergency involving the health or safety of the people or their property. No ordinance shall be regarded as an emergency ordinance unless the emergency is defined and declared in a preamble to such ordinance, separately voted upon, and receiving the affirmative vote of the council president and 5 members of the city council. No ordinance making a grant, renewal, or extension, whatever its kind or nature, of any franchise or special privilege of any kind or nature, shall be passed as an emergency measure, and except as provided in General Laws Chapter 166, Sections 70 and 71, no such grant, renewal, or extension shall be made otherwise than by ordinance. An emergency measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify.*
- (b) *General Measures - Every adopted measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify. An ordinance shall not be amended or repealed except by another ordinance adopted in accordance with this charter.*
- (c) *Charter Objection - On the first occasion that the question on adoption of a measure is put to the city council, a single member present may object to the taking of the vote, and postpone the vote until the next regular or special meeting of the city council. If two or more present members object, the vote shall be postponed until the next regular meeting. This procedure shall not be used more than once for any specific matter regardless of whether it has been amended. A charter objection shall have privilege over all motions but shall be raised prior to or at the call for a vote by the presiding officer and all debate shall cease. The charter objection process shall not apply to emergency measures as defined in this section.*
- (d) *Publication - Every proposed ordinance or loan order, except emergency ordinances and revenue loan orders, shall be published once in full in at least one local newspaper, on the city website, and in any additional manner as may be provided by ordinance, at least ten days before its final passage. After final passage, the ordinance as amended and completed, shall again be published once in the aforesaid manner; provided that if any ordinance or proposed ordinance, or codification thereof, shall exceed in length eight pages of ordinary book print, then there shall be no requirement to advertise as aforesaid if the same is published by the city council in a municipal bulletin or printed pamphlet, but otherwise in conformity with said provisions, except for zoning ordinances or amendments thereto, a summary of which shall be published at least two times in a local newspaper. The publication of such zoning summaries shall include a statement indicating where copies of the ordinance may be examined and obtained and a statement that claims of invalidity by reason of any defect in the procedure of adoption*

may only be made within ninety days after the posting or the second publication. Emergency ordinances shall take effect on the date of their passage and shall be published at the earliest practicable moment.

SECTION 2-10 GOAL SETTING

- (a) At the beginning of each council term, within the first six months, the council shall develop council goals for the upcoming term, in consideration of previous council goals.**
- (b) The council shall seek input from the mayor, department heads, multi-member bodies and the public in the development of council goals.**
- (c) The council may develop both short- and long-term goals. To the extent practicable, goals shall be measurable, include timelines for implementation, and relevant budget requirements.**
- (d) The council shall establish a broad public engagement process to incorporate public input into the development of council goals. This shall include at least two public hearings at which public comment is accepted and such additional outreach efforts as the council deems appropriate. The goal-setting and public engagement process under this section shall be publicized via multiple media avenues available to the city, including on its website, social media pages, and through direct electronic communications. The council shall also review the results of any city-wide surveys or other public engagement tools undertaken in the prior term.**
- (e) The council shall publish its goals for the term in multiple media avenues available to the city, including on its website, social media pages, council newsletters and through direct electronic communications.**
- (f) The council shall establish a public method of tracking progress in meeting the established goals**

SECTION 2-11: FILLING OF VACANCIES

Except as provided in this section, a vacancy in any elective body shall be filled in the manner provided in section thirteen of chapter fifty-four A. If, under said section, no regularly nominated candidate of the city council or school committee remains, the vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the remaining members, except that if the remaining members fail to fill such vacancy within thirty days after they shall have been notified by the city clerk that such vacancy exists, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of any qualified voter of the city by the mayor, or, if there is no mayor, by the vice-chairman, or if there is no mayor or vice-chairman, by the member of the council or of the school committee, as the case may be, senior in length of service, or, if more than one have so served, then the member senior both in age and length of service.

ARTICLE 3: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

SECTION 3-1: MAYOR: ROLE; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY

- (a) **Role** – The chief executive officer of the city shall be a mayor, elected by the registered voters at large by ranked choice voting
- (b) **Term of Office** – The term of office for mayor shall be four years, beginning on the first business day in January following the municipal election, except when that first Monday falls on a legal holiday, then the term shall begin on the following day.
- (c) **Term Limit** - No person shall hold the office of Mayor for more than three terms in total.
- (d) **Eligibility** - Any registered municipal voter over the age of 18 shall be eligible to hold the office of mayor. If a mayor moves from the city during the mayor’s term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section 3-12. The city council shall determine whether a mayor has moved from the city.

SECTION 3-2: PROHIBITIONS

The mayor shall not hold another compensated city position or other elected public office. A former mayor shall not hold a compensated appointed city office or city employment for 1 year after termination of their service as mayor. Any former mayor shall not receive compensation for contracted work authorized during their tenure as the mayor, however, they may be compensated for limited hours advising the incoming mayor. This subsection shall not prevent a city officer or other city employee who has vacated a position to serve as the mayor from returning to the same office or other position of city employment held when the position was vacated. This prohibition shall not apply to persons covered by a leave of absence under section 37 of chapter 31 of the General Laws.

SECTION 3-3: COMPENSATION

The mayor shall receive compensation for the mayor’s services as set by the city council by ordinance. An ordinance increasing or reducing the compensation of the mayor shall not be enacted unless:

- (i) it is adopted by a 2/3 vote of the full city council;*
- (ii) it has been adopted on or before the 42nd month of the mayor’s term; and*
- (iii) it provides that any compensation increase or reduction is to take effect upon the organization of the city government following the next regular city election.*

SECTION 3-4: EXECUTIVE POWERS

- (a) *Executive Powers* - The executive powers of the city shall be vested solely in the mayor and may be exercised by the mayor either personally or through the city agencies under the general supervision and control of the office of the mayor. The mayor shall cause this charter, laws, ordinances, and other orders of the city government to be enforced and shall cause a record of all official acts of the executive branch of the city government to be kept. The mayor shall supervise, direct, and be responsible for the efficient administration of all city activities and functions placed under the control of the mayor by law or by this charter.
- (b) *Supervision of City Agencies* - The mayor shall exercise general supervision and direction over all city agencies, unless otherwise provided by law or by this charter. Each city agency shall furnish to the mayor, upon request, any information or materials the mayor may request and as the needs of the office of mayor and the interest of the city may require. The mayor shall be responsible for the efficient and effective coordination of the activities of all city agencies and may call together for consultation, conference, and discussion, at reasonable times, all persons serving the city.
- (c) *Multiple-Member Bodies* - The mayor shall be, by virtue of the office, an ex officio member of every appointed multiple-member body of the city. The mayor may, as an ex officio member, attend any

meeting of an appointed multiple-member body of the city, including executive sessions, to participate in the discussions of that body, but shall not have the right to vote.

SECTION 3-5: APPOINTMENTS BY THE MAYOR

- (a) Chief Administrative and Financial Officer (CAFO):** The mayor shall appoint a chief administrative and financial officer to coordinate and direct the operations and functions of the city government. The mayor shall notify the city council in writing of the appointment of the CAFO. The mayor’s appointment shall be considered final unless, with 30 days of the notice of appointment, the city council rejects the appointee by a two-thirds vote. The appointee shall be appointed on the basis of strong administrative and executive qualifications and a combination of education, training and/or municipal experience to perform the duties of the office. The CAFO shall devote full time to the duties of this position and shall not engage in any other business or occupation during their term.
- (b) Department Heads - The mayor shall appoint, subject to confirmation by the city council pursuant to Section 2.6, all department heads for whom no other method of appointment or selection is provided by this charter. Department heads serve at the discretion of the mayor subject to the limitations and requirements imposed by federal and state laws, rules, and/or regulations.*
- (c) City Solicitor: The mayor shall appoint the city solicitor to be the chief legal adviser of, and attorney for, the city and all divisions and offices thereof in matters relating to their official powers and duties. It shall be the city solicitor's duty, either personally or by such assistants as may be designated, to perform all services incident to the legal department, to give advice in writing when so requested to the mayor, to prosecute or defend, as the case may be, all suits or cases to which the municipality may be a party, and to provide other legal support as requested by the mayor or required by ordinance. The city solicitor shall be appointed on the basis of having strong legal qualifications and shall be especially fitted by education, training, and experience to perform the duties of the office.*
- (d) Multiple-Member Bodies – The mayor shall appoint, subject to the provisions of Section 2.6, all members of multiple-member bodies for whom no other method of appointment or selection is provided by ordinance, this charter, or General Laws. All members shall serve terms as defined by ordinance, this charter, or General Laws.*
- (e) The mayor may also appoint such ad hoc committees or working groups as the mayor deems appropriate to advise the mayor on matters affecting the city.*
- (f) Interference by City Council Prohibited – Except as provided in Section 2-7 and by this charter, neither the city council nor any of its committees or members shall direct or request the appointment of any person to, or their removal from, office by the city manager or any of their subordinates, or in any manner take part in the appointment or removal of officers and employees in that portion of the service of said city for whose administration the city manager is responsible. Except as otherwise provided by this charter, the city council and its members shall not give orders to any subordinate of the city manager either publicly or privately and shall direct all requests for service through the city manager. Nothing in this section shall prevent city council or its members from discussing matters generally with city staff, presuming the city manager is kept informed.*

SECTION 3-6: TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS TO CITY OFFICES

Whenever a temporary or permanent vacancy occurs in a city office that is appointed under Section 3-5, the mayor may designate a person to perform the duties of the office on a temporary basis for up to 150 days until the position can be filled as provided by law or by this charter. Persons serving as temporary officers under this section shall have only those powers indispensable and essential to the performance of the duties of the office during the period of temporary appointment and no others.

- (a) Filing of a Temporary Appointment - When the mayor designates a person under this section, the mayor shall file a certificate with the city clerk in substantially the following form:*

“I designate (name of person) to perform the duties of the office of (office in which vacancy exists) on a temporary basis until the office can be filled by (the regular procedure for filling the vacancy or when the incumbent shall return). I certify that this person is qualified to perform the duties which will be required and that I make this designation solely in the interests of the City of Cambridge.”

- (b) *Extension of Temporary Appointments - If an extension of a temporary appointment is necessary, the mayor may seek additional extensions in 60-day increments, which shall be authorized by a majority vote of the city council. If an extension is not approved, the position shall be deemed vacant.*

SECTION 3-7: TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS TO MULTIPLE-MEMBER BODIES

Whenever a temporary or permanent vacancy occurs on a multiple-member body that is appointed under Section 3.5, the mayor may designate a person to perform the duties of the office on a temporary basis for up to 150 days until the position can be filled as provided by law or by this charter. If an extension of a temporary appointment is necessary, the mayor may seek additional extensions in 60-day increments, which shall be authorized by a majority vote of the city council. If an extension is not approved, the position shall be deemed vacant, except on multiple-member bodies where such vacancy would prevent a quorum. In such instances, a temporary appointment shall be permitted to remain until a successor is qualified, however, the authority of the temporary appointment shall be limited to matters where failure to act by the multiple-member body may have adverse consequences to the city.

SECTION 3-8: APPROVAL OF MAYOR, VETO

Every order, ordinance, resolution, or vote adopted or passed by the city council, except any matters relating to the internal affairs of the city council, shall be presented to the mayor for approval within 3 days of such adoption or passage. If the mayor approves the measure, the mayor shall sign it; if the mayor disapproves the measure, the mayor shall return the measure with the specific reason for such disapproval attached to the measure in writing to the city council. The city council shall enter the objections of the mayor on its records and reconsider the same measure after 14 days but before 30 days from the date of its return to the city council. If the city council, regardless of the disapproval by the mayor, shall again pass the identical measure by a 2/3 vote of the full council, it shall then be deemed in force. If the mayor has neither signed a measure nor returned it to the city council within 10 days following the date it was presented to the mayor, the measure shall be deemed approved and in force.

The mayor shall be responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a public tracking tool to provide city residents with information about 1) proposed policy orders, 2) voting status of proposed policy orders, and 3) the status of actions taken by the executive branch to implement policy orders that have been approved by city council.

SECTION 3-9: COMMUNICATIONS; SPECIAL MEETINGS

- (a) *Communications to the City Council - The mayor shall, by written communication:*

- (i) *recommend to the city council for its consideration measures as the needs of the city require; and*
- (ii) *keep the city council fully informed of the financial and administrative condition of the city and shall specifically indicate any fiscal, financial, or administrative issues facing the city.*

- (b) *Special Meetings of the City Council - The mayor may call a special meeting of the city council for any purpose. Unless the mayor designates an emergency, notice of the meeting shall be delivered at least 2 business days in advance of the time set and shall specify the date, time and location of the meeting and the purpose for which the meeting is to be held. A copy of the notice shall be posted immediately.*

SECTION 3-10: TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF THE MAYOR

- (a) *Acting Mayor – Whenever the mayor is unable to perform the duties of the office, the city council president shall be the acting mayor. In the event that the city council president is unable to serve as acting mayor under this section, the city council shall elect a councillor to serve as acting mayor from among its membership. The city council, by the affirmative vote of six members, shall determine whether the mayor is unable to perform the duties of the office. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the vote shall be taken in public session by a roll call vote.*
- (b) *Powers of Acting Mayor – The acting mayor shall have only those powers of the mayor as are indispensable and essential to conduct the business of the city and on which action may not be delayed. The acting mayor shall have no authority to make a permanent appointment or removal from city service unless the absence of the mayor shall extend beyond 60 days, nor shall the acting mayor approve or disapprove of any measure adopted by the city council unless the time within which the mayor must act would expire before the return of the mayor. The city council president or another councillor serving as acting mayor shall not vote as a member of the city council.*

SECTION 3-11: DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY BY MAYOR

The mayor may authorize and subsequently remove authorization from a subordinate officer or employee of the city to exercise or perform a power, function, or duty of the office of the mayor, provided, however, that all acts performed under any such delegation of authority during the period of authorization shall be and remain the acts of the mayor. Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize the mayor to delegate the powers and duties of a school committee member, the power of appointment to city office or employment, or to sign or return measures approved by the city council unless the provisions of Section 3-11 (b) apply.

SECTION 3-12: FILLING OF VACANCY

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of mayor by death, removal, resignation, or any other reason, the process for filling of the vacancy shall be determined by the month of the mayoral term in which the vacancy occurs. Following an election to fill a mayoral vacancy, the winning candidate shall begin immediately and serve the remaining unexpired term.

- (a) *Whenever a vacancy occurs during:*
 - (i) *Months 1 through 39: The city council shall call a special election to be held within 90 days following the date of the vacancy.*
 - (ii) *Months 39 through 48: A special election need not be held, and the position shall be filled by vote at the upcoming regular city election.*
- (b) *The city council president shall serve as the acting mayor in all cases until the vacancy is filled. In the event that the city council president is unable to serve as the acting mayor under this section, the city council shall elect a councillor to serve as the acting mayor from among its membership. If the councillor serving as the acting mayor under this section chooses to run for mayor, they shall not be entitled to have the words “candidate for reelection” printed with that person’s name on the subsequent election ballot. Any person serving as the mayor under this section shall receive the compensation then in effect for the position of mayor and shall not vote as a member of the city council.*

ARTICLE 4: SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SECTION 4-1: COMPOSITION; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY

(a) *Composition* - There shall be a school committee that shall consist of six members¹ who shall be nominated and elected by the municipal voters of the city at large.

(b) *Term of Office* - The term of office for the elected school committee members shall be 2 years, beginning on the first Monday in January after the election, except when that first Monday falls on a legal holiday, then the term shall begin on the following day, and until the successors have been qualified.

(c) Eligibility - Any registered municipal voter over the age of 18 shall be eligible to hold the office of school committee member. If a school committee member moves from the city during the member's term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section 4-6. The school committee shall determine whether a member has moved from the city.

SECTION 4-2: SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR. VICE CHAIR.

(a) *Chair and Vice Chair*- As soon as practical after the school committee members-elect have been qualified following the regular city election, the school committee shall organize by electing one of the persons elected as a member of the school committee to serve as school committee chair and one member to serve as vice-chair.

(b) *Duties* - The school committee chair shall preside at all meetings of the school committee, regulate its proceedings, and shall decide all questions of order. The school committee chair shall appoint all members of all subcommittees of the school committee, whether special or standing. The school committee chair shall have the same powers to vote upon all measures coming before the school committee as any other member of the school committee. The school committee chair shall perform the duties consistent with the office and as provided by this charter or by vote of the school committee. The school committee vice-chair shall preside in the absence of the school committee chair.

SECTION 4-3: PROHIBITIONS

No member of the school committee shall hold any other compensated city position. No former member of the school committee shall hold any compensated appointed city office or city employment until 1 year following the date on which that member's service on the school committee terminated. This section shall not prevent a city officer or other city employee who has vacated a position in order to serve as a member of the school committee from returning to the same office or other position of city employment held at the time the position was vacated; provided, however, no such person shall be eligible for any other municipal position until at least 1 year following the termination of service as a member of the school committee.

SECTION 4-4: COMPENSATION; EXPENSES

(a) *Compensation* - The city council may, by ordinance, establish an annual salary for the elected members of the school committee. No ordinance increasing or reducing the salary of elected members of the school committee shall be effective unless it has been adopted by a two-thirds vote of the full city council. No ordinance increasing the salary of the elected members of the school committee shall be effective unless it has been adopted during the first 18 months of the term for which elected school committee members are elected and unless it provides that the salary increase is to take effect upon the organization of the city government following the next regular city election.

(b) *Expenses* - Subject to appropriation, the school committee members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses in the performance of their duties. The actual and necessary expenses shall be defined in the rules and regulations of the school committee

¹ The committee voted not to recommend the mayor be a member the school committee, so the council may want to consider increasing the school committee to seven elected members to maintain an odd number.

SECTION 4-5: SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The school committee shall have all powers which are conferred on school committees by the General Laws and the additional powers and duties provided by charter, ordinance, or otherwise and not inconsistent with the General Laws. The powers and duties of the school committee shall include:

- (a) selecting and removing a superintendent of the schools who shall be charged with the administration of the school system, subject only to policy guidelines and directives adopted by the school committee and, upon the recommendation of the superintendent, to establish and appoint assistant or associate superintendents as authorized by the General Laws;*
- (b) making all reasonable policies, rules and regulations for the management of the public school system and for conducting the business of the school committee as deemed necessary or desirable; and*
- (c) adopting and overseeing the administration of an annual operating budget for the school department, subject to appropriation by the city council; provided, however, that the school committee shall have general charge and superintendence of all school buildings and grounds and shall furnish all school buildings with proper fixtures, furniture and equipment; provided further, that the school committee shall provide ordinary maintenance of all school buildings and grounds, unless a central municipal maintenance department, which may include maintenance of school buildings and grounds, is established; provided further, that whenever the school committee shall determine that additional classrooms are necessary to meet the educational needs of the community, at least 1 member of the school committee, or a designee of the school committee, shall serve on the agency, board or committee for the planning or construction of the new, remodeled or renovated school building.*

SECTION 4-6: FILLING OF VACANCIES

In all occurrences of a vacancy, the city clerk shall notify the school committee and the chairperson of the election commission of the vacancy within 7 days. Within 7 days after notification, the chairperson of the election commission or a designee shall certify, in writing, to the city clerk the name of the defeated candidate for the office of school committee with the next highest number of votes at the municipal election at which school committee were elected for the term in which the vacancy occurs. If the person is eligible and willing to serve, the city clerk shall administer the oath of office to the person within 15 days after certification and the person shall serve. If the person who is eligible declines the office, is not eligible and willing to serve, or fails to take the oath of office within the time period set forth in this section, then the person with the next highest number of votes at the election who is eligible and willing to serve shall serve.

Where no defeated candidate is eligible and/or willing to serve, the process for filling the vacancy shall be determined by the number of days remaining until the next municipal election.

If a vacancy occurs:

- (i) more than 180 days until the next municipal election, there shall be a special election.*
- (ii) 180 days or less prior to any regular municipal election, then the seat remains vacant until the next regular municipal election.*

ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

SECTION 5-1: ORGANIZATION OF CITY AGENCIES

The organization of the city into operating agencies to provide services and administer the government may be accomplished only through an administrative order submitted to the city council by the mayor. No administrative order may originate with the city council.

The mayor may, subject only to express prohibitions in a general law or this charter, submit proposals to reorganize, consolidate or abolish a city agency, in whole or in part, or to establish a new city agency as is deemed necessary, but no function assigned by this charter to a particular city agency may be discontinued or assigned to any other city agency unless specified by this charter. The mayor may prepare and submit to the city council, administrative orders that establish operating divisions for the orderly, efficient or convenient conduct of the business of the city. These administrative orders shall be accompanied by a message from the mayor which explains the expected benefits and advises the city council if an administrative order shall require amendments, insertions, revisions, repeal or otherwise of existing ordinances.

Whenever the mayor proposes an administrative order, the city council shall hold 1 or more public hearings on the proposal giving notice by publication in a local newspaper, which notice shall describe the scope of the proposal and the time and place at which the public hearing will be held, not less than 7 nor more than 14 days following the publication. An organization or reorganization plan shall become effective at the expiration of 60 days following the date the proposal is submitted to the city council unless the city council shall, by a majority vote, within that 60-day period vote to disapprove the plan. The city council may vote only to approve or to disapprove the plan and may not vote to amend or to alter it.

SECTION 5-2: MERIT PRINCIPLES

All appointments and promotions of city officers and employees shall be made on the basis of merit and fitness demonstrated by examination, past performance, or by other evidence of competence and suitability. Each person appointed to fill an office or position shall be a person especially fitted by education, training, and/or previous work experience to perform the duties of the office or position.

ARTICLE 6: FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

SECTION 6-1: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the city shall begin on July 1 and shall end on June 30, unless another period is required by the General Laws.

SECTION 6-2: ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

At least 60 days before the end of the calendar year, the mayor shall call a joint meeting of the city council and school committee, including the superintendent of schools, to review the financial condition of the city, revenue, and expenditure forecasts for at least 3 years and other relevant information prepared by the mayor in order to develop a coordinated budget.

SECTION 6-3: BUDGETARY PRIORITIES

Prior to the end of the calendar year, the city council shall develop and submit to the Mayor budgetary priorities that take into consideration the council goals created pursuant to Section 2-11 with input from the community. There shall be broad public engagement in diverse formats with opportunities for the public to provide input, including at least one public hearing. The budget developed by the Mayor shall outline how the proposed budget reflects the council’s budgetary priorities.

SECTION 6-4: SUBMISSION OF OPERATING BUDGET; BUDGET MESSAGE

At least 60 days before the beginning of the fiscal year, the mayor shall submit to the city council a proposed operating budget for all city agencies, which shall include the school department, for the ensuing fiscal year with an accompanying budget message and supporting documents. *The budget message submitted by the mayor shall explain the operating budget in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs for all city agencies. It shall outline the proposed fiscal policies of the city for the ensuing fiscal year, describe important features of the proposed operating budget and include any major variations from the current operating budget, fiscal policies, revenues and expenditures together with reasons for these changes. The proposed operating budget shall provide a complete fiscal plan of all city funds and activities and shall be in the form the mayor deems desirable; provided, however, that the budget for elected officials shall identify the cost of compensation and the cost of benefits for those officials. The school budget, as adopted by the school committee shall be submitted to the mayor at least 30 days before the submission of the proposed operating budget to the city council. The mayor shall notify the school committee of the date by which the proposed budget of the school committee shall be submitted to the mayor. The mayor and the superintendent of schools shall coordinate the dates and times of the school committee's budget process under the General Laws.*

SECTION 6-5: ACTION ON THE OPERATING BUDGET

- (a) Public Hearing - The city council shall publish a notice of the proposed operating budget as submitted by the mayor. The notice shall state: (i) the times and places where copies of the entire proposed operating budget are available for inspection by the public; and (ii) the date, time and place when a public hearing on the proposed operating budget will be held by the city council, not less than 14 days after publication of the notice.**
- (b) Adoption of the Budget – No later than the end of the fiscal year the city council shall take definite action on the annual budget, by adopting, amending or rejecting it, provided that the amended version shall not be for a higher total budget than originally proposed, unless otherwise authorized by the General Laws. If the city council fails to act on an item in the proposed operating budget prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, that amount shall, without any action by the city council, become a part of the appropriations for the year and be available for the purposes specified. The mayor shall have [placeholder] days from the time of a budgetary vote of**

the council to approve or return said budget to the council, the budget shall be in effect as approved by the council. The mayor may modify a budget approved by the council by returning it to said council with amendments to any line item provides that that a vote of two-thirds of the council shall be sufficient to override any budgetary amendments, in whole or in part, or an overall budgetary veto by the mayor.

- (c) *Availability of the Operating Budget – In addition to any other posting requirements under law, immediately after the submission of the proposed budget to the city council, the mayor shall post the entire budget document on the city's website. Said proposed budget document shall remain posted during the city council review process contained in this article. After the enactment of the budget, the final adopted budget shall be posted on the city's website and shall remain there throughout the fiscal year for which it is in effect. The final budget document shall reflect any amendments made by the city council and approved by the mayor and shall indicate that it is the final budget of the city.*

SECTION 6-6: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- (a) **Submission - The mayor shall submit a capital improvement program to the city council at least 60 days before the start of each fiscal year. The capital improvement program shall include:**

- (i) *a general summary of its contents;*
- (ii) *a list of all capital improvements proposed to be undertaken during the next 5 years, with supporting information as to the need for each capital improvement;*
- (iii) *cost estimates, methods of financing and recommended time schedules for each improvement; and*
- (iv) *the estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining each facility and piece of major equipment involved.*

This information shall be annually revised by the mayor with regard to the capital improvements still pending or in the process of being acquired, improved or constructed.

- (b) **Public Hearing - The city council shall publish a notice stating: (i) the times and places where entire copies of the capital improvements program are available for inspection by the public; and, (ii) the date, time and place of a public hearing on the plan to be held by the city council not less than 14 days after publication of the notice.**

- (c) *Adoption - At any time after the public hearing but before the end of the current fiscal year, the city council shall by resolution adopt the capital improvements program, which may be amended, provided that each amendment shall be voted on separately and that an increase in the capital improvements program as submitted shall clearly identify the method of financing to accomplish the proposed increase.*

SECTION 6-7: INDEPENDENT AUDIT

The city council shall annually provide for an outside audit of the books and accounts of the city to be conducted by a certified public accountant or a firm of certified public accountants, which has no personal interest, direct or indirect, in the fiscal affairs of the city or any of its officers. The mayor shall annually provide to the city council a sum of money sufficient to satisfy the estimated cost of conducting the audit as presented to the mayor, in writing, by the city council. The award of a contract to audit shall be made by the city council on or before September 15 of each year. The report of the audit shall be filed in final form with the city council not later than March 1 in the year following its award. At least every 5 years, the city council shall conduct a competitive procurement process to retain these auditing services.

ARTICLE 7: ELECTIONS

SECTION 7-1: CITY ELECTION

The regular municipal election shall take place on the next Tuesday following the first Monday of November in every even-numbered year.

SECTION 7-2: ELIGIBILITY OF VOTERS

Every citizen and noncitizen who (i) is at least 16 years old, (ii) is not temporarily or permanently disqualified by law because of corrupt practices in respect to elections, (iii) is a resident of Cambridge at the time at the time they register, and (iv) has otherwise complied with the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 51 may have their name entered on the list of voters in Cambridge and may vote therein in any municipal election.

SECTION 7-3: PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AND RANKED CHOICE VOTING

- (a) The mayor shall be elected at large by ranked choice voting.**
- (b) All members of the city council and the school committee shall be elected at large by proportional representation.**

SECTION 7-4 METHODS OF COUNTING FIRST CHOICES (Revision of language in the repealed MGL Chapter 54A, which is followed by the City of Cambridge with respect to voting procedures.)

With respect to the election of city council and school committee members, any method of counting the voters' first choices and treating any such choices in excess of the quota may be substituted for the method of counting such choices set forth in this article, if the election commission determines that such substitution is advisable; provided, that they issue regulations embodying the method so substituted and provided, further, that such regulations shall not be effective with respect to any election unless at least thirty days prior thereto copies of such regulations are available for delivery to such of the voters as may request them.

SECTIONS 7-5 AND FOLLOWING

[The remaining procedural sections of the charter that have been adopted by Cambridge require updating by the Elections Commission and the Law Department in line with current best practices, modern language, the use of modern voting equipment, and current legal requirements.]

ARTICLE 8: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION, AND COMMUNICATION

[Sections 8-1 to 8-3 are adapted from the National Civic League’s 2021 Model City Charter, 9th Edition.]

SECTION 8-1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The city shall treat public engagement as an integral part of effective and trusted governance, not just as an occasional process or activity. The city shall treat engagement as a “multi-channel” endeavor that includes face-to-face meetings, virtual interactions, and other online communications. The departments of city government shall encourage collaboration in public engagement efforts with other government jurisdictions and authorities, anchor institutions, community-based organizations, civic groups, and individual residents.

SECTION 8-2 INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT AND COORDINATE ENGAGEMENT

The city shall establish new institutional structures or adapt existing structures to oversee, support, coordinate, track, and measure engagement on an ongoing basis. These structures may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Council committees that include residents and other stakeholders*
- (b) Departments or administrative positions*
- (c) Public engagement commissions*
- (d) Community advisory boards, including boards designated to address the concerns of specific populations*
- (e) Youth commissions*
- (f) Participatory budgeting processes and commissions*

SECTION 8-3 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

To ensure public engagement centers on the needs and goals of community members, the city shall uphold the following principles, using them as the basis of public engagement protocols and in the establishment of public engagement structures:

(a) Equity in engagement. Principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion should guide the design and execution of public engagement activities. When engaging community members, city officials should identify and proactively reach out to the community in its full diversity. To ensure that public engagement activities are not attended only by people already active in local government and politics, city officials should regularly recruit residents through face-to-face or personal written invitations, social media requests, and randomized selection methods. Materials should be written in plain, comprehensible English, and should also be translated into the other predominant languages that residents speak and read.

Traditionally excluded and marginalized individuals and communities should be included in ways they themselves identify as authentic and meaningful. City officials should co-design engagement processes with community members to meet the needs of the communities served. Processes should respect a range of values, interests, perspectives, experiences, cultures, and knowledge of those involved.

The city should expect local the organizations and networks it works with to engage their members in equitable and deliberative ways, so that the input received is representative of their constituents. The city should use an equity lens to evaluate data on impacts of engagement, including costs, benefits, and responsibilities.

(b) Accountability in engagement. There should be meaningful opportunities for community members to bring issues, concerns, and priorities to city officials to influence city policy, ordinances, and actions. Public engagement activities should be designed to appropriately fit the

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legal authority, scope, character, and potential impact of a policy, program, or project. There should be clarity about process sponsorship, purpose, design, and how the results will be used. The purpose and potential influence of each public engagement process should be known by all participants in advance but should be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions during implementation.

(c) Transparency in engagement. Communications about public issues and public engagement opportunities should ensure community members can engage effectively. Communications should be made in the predominant languages that residents understand. Participants should have the opportunity to bring and share their own experiences as well as information they have gathered about the issues at hand. Full and complete results should be shared in a manner accessible to the public, and explanations of how the results will be used or how they will influence decisions should be provided to process participants and the broader public.

(d) Accessibility in engagement. Public engagement activities should be broadly accessible in terms of schedule, location, facilities, and information and communication technologies. Schedules should accommodate a variety of participants. Locations should be nearby and reachable via affordable transit, and some engagement activities should be conducted in places where community members already gather regularly. Facilities should be welcoming public spaces and not present physical or cultural barriers to participation. Online engagement opportunities should use technologies that are freely available to residents and attend to barriers people may face, such as: no access to broadband, limited proficiency with technology, and challenges related to deaf-blind accessibility.

(e) Collaboration in engagement. Public engagement efforts should build on and help develop long-term, collaborative working relationships and mutual learning opportunities with residents of all ages, civic groups, organizational partners, and other governments. This may include project-specific or ongoing community engagement initiatives.

(f) Evaluation of engagement activities. Each public engagement activity and the state of engagement overall should be evaluated through participant feedback, analysis, and learning that is shared publicly and broadly. The ideas, preferences, and/or recommendations contributed by participants should be fully documented and be made available to participants and the broader public. Lessons learned should be applied to future public engagement activities and contribute to the city's overall engagement plan.

SECTION 8-4: RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

(a) Purpose: In order to expand access to city government generally and include voices not typically heard in decision making, the city council has the authority to establish and maintain one or more Resident Assemblies.

(b) Powers: Notwithstanding any other section of this charter, the city council may, by ordinance, delegate to the Resident Assembly:

- i. The power to issue recommendations on questions posed by the city council and to specify deadlines by which the city council or mayor must publicly respond to the recommendations by hearing or other means.**
- ii. The power to determine whether a resident initiative petition commenced under Section 8 should be submitted to the city council or voters as provided in Section 8 notwithstanding the petition's failure to meet that Section's procedural requirements.**
- iii. The power to issue endorsements or counter-endorsements referencing majority and/or minority opinions of the assembly, for initiatives submitted to the city council or voters, including initiatives that satisfy Section 8's procedural requirements.**
- iv. The power, on its own initiative, to make recommendations or propose draft legislation for review by the city council or voters.**

(c) Mandatory Specifications:

- i. The city council shall convene at least one Resident Assembly each council term.**

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- ii. **Any Resident Assembly created pursuant to this section must have the following characteristics:**
 - a) **The assembly shall be created via a sortition process to be provided by ordinance and shall be open to all citizen and non-citizen residents over the age of 16.**
 - b) **The procedures for selecting membership must include a random lottery such that the Resident Assembly is representative of the city’s population.**
 - c) **Membership on the Resident Assembly must be voluntary, and members must be permitted to resign for any reason.**
 - d) **No fewer than 30 people may serve on the Resident Assembly at any given time.**
 - e) **The Resident Assembly must receive sufficient resources to exercise its powers effectively, including financial resources, staff support, translation services and space for deliberation.**
 - f) **The city shall take steps to remove barriers to participation. To ensure that participation is not a financial burden, assembly members must be offered a stipend that is sufficient to compensate members for their time and for reasonable costs incurred by participation, including transportation to the meeting, dependent care, or similar expenses. The city shall provide interpretation and translation support and accessibility technology.**
 - g) **Subject to appropriation, the city shall provide resources for staff support to the resident assembly.**

(d) Discretionary Specifications: Subject to the other provisions of this section, the city council has discretion to define, by ordinance, other powers and specifications of a Resident Assembly, including:

- i. **The time and place of the Resident Assembly’s deliberation.**
- ii. **Issues or questions upon which the Resident Assembly must deliberate.**
- iii. **The procedures by which the Resident Assembly deliberates.**
- iv. **The length of term for members of the Resident Assembly.**
- v. **The method by which members of the Resident Assembly may be replaced.**

SECTION 8-5 FREE PETITION TO COUNCIL

The city council shall hold a public hearing and act with respect to every citizen petition which is addressed to it, which petition shall not be required to take any particular form, and is signed by at least [placeholder] voters, and which seeks the passage of a measure concerning matters other than action under section 8-7 . The hearing shall be held by the city council, and the action by the city council shall be taken not later than three months after the petition is filed with the clerk of the council or the secretary of the school committee, as may be appropriate. Hearings on two or more petitions filed under this section may be held at the same time and place. The clerk of the council shall provide notice of the hearing by mail and, if practicable, by phone or email, to the ten persons whose names appear first on the petition at least forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing. Notice, by publication, of all such hearings shall be at public expense.

SECTION 8-6 RESIDENT INITIATIVE MEASURES

- (a) Commencement: Initiative procedures shall be started by the filing with the clerk of the council of a proposed initiative petition on a form prepared by the city. The petition shall be addressed to the city council, shall contain a request for the passage of a particular measure which shall be set forth in full in the petition, and shall be physically signed by at least __ voters as certified by the election commission. The petition shall be accompanied by an affidavit signed by __ voters and containing their residential addresses stating they will constitute the petitioners committee and be responsible for circulating the petition and filing it in proper form. Signatures to an initiative petition need not all be on 1 paper but all papers pertaining to any 1 measure shall be fastened together and shall be filed as a single instrument, containing on the petition the number and street of the residence of each signer accompanied by the endorsement of the name and residence address of the person*

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designated as filing the petition. The election commission shall attach to the petition a certificate showing the results of the election commission's examination and shall return the petition to the clerk of the council. A copy of the election commission's certificate shall also be mailed to the petitioners committee.

- (b) Referral to solicitor: Immediately following certification of __ signatures, the clerk of the council shall deliver a copy of the petition to the city solicitor. Within 21 days after receipt of a copy of the petition, the city solicitor shall advise the council in writing whether the measure as proposed may lawfully utilize the initiative process and whether, in its present form, it may be lawfully adopted by the council. If the opinion of the city solicitor is that the measure is not in proper form, the reply shall state the reasons for this opinion in full, and a copy of the opinion of the city solicitor shall be mailed to the petitioners committee.*
- (c) Action on Petitions: If the opinion of the city solicitor is that the petition is in a proper form, within 60 days, the city solicitor shall act with respect to each initiative petition by passing it without change, by passing a measure which is stated to be in lieu of the initiative measure, or by rejecting it. The passage of a measure which is in lieu of an initiative measure shall be considered to be a rejection of the initiative measure. If the council fails to act with respect to any initiative measure that is presented to it within 60 days after the date it has been notified by the city solicitor that it is in proper form, the initiative measure shall be considered to have been approved on the 61st day. If an initiative measure is rejected, the clerk of the council shall promptly give notice to the petitioners committee, by certified mail.*
- (d) Supplementary Petitions: Thirty days (30) after the date an initiative petition has been rejected by the council, a supplemental initiative petition may be filed with the clerk of the council, but only by persons constituting the original petitioners committee. The supplemental initiative petition shall be physically signed by a number of additional voters which is equal to __% percent of the total number of registered voters as of the date of the most recent city election. If the number of signatures to the supplemental petition is found to be sufficient by the election commission, the council shall call a special election to be held on a date fixed by it, not less than 35 nor more than 90 days after the date the council votes to call for the special election, and shall submit the proposed measure, without alteration, to the voters for determination. But if any other city election is to be held within 120 days after the date of the certification, the council may omit the calling of the special election and cause the question to appear on the election ballot at the next city election for determination by the voters.*
- (e) Publication: The full text of any initiative measure which is submitted to the voters shall be published not less than 7 nor more than 21 days preceding the date of the election at which the question is to be voted upon. Additional copies of the full text shall be available for distribution to the public in the office of the city clerk and shall be published on the city bulletin board.*
- (f) Form of Question: The ballots used when voting on a measure proposed by the voters under this Section shall contain a question in substantially the following form:
Shall the following measure, which was proposed by an initiative petition as described in the city charter, take effect? (Here, insert a fair, concise summary prepared by the City Solicitor.)
YES _____ NO _____*
- (g) Required Voter Participation: For any measure to be effective under initiative petition, at least __ percent of the registered voters as of the date of the most recent city election shall vote at the election upon which an initiative is submitted to the voters.*
- (h) Time of Taking Effect: If a majority of the votes cast on the question, or other affirmative percent as required by general laws or this Charter, is in the affirmative and if the __ percent voter participation requirement is met, the measure shall be deemed to be effective immediately, unless a later date is specified in the measure.*

SECTION 8-7 INELIGIBLE MEASURES

None of the following shall be subject to the free petition or initiative procedures outlined in Section 8.6 and Section 8.7:

- (a) Proceedings relating to the internal organization or operation of any elected body*
- (b) An emergency measure adopted in conformity with the Charter*
- (c) The City budget as a whole*
- (d) Votes for the temporary borrowing of money in anticipation of revenue*
- (e) An appropriation of any sum of money, for any purpose, amounting to less than 1 percent of the total annual budget of the City*
- (f) Any appropriation for the payment of the City's debt or debt service*
- (g) An appropriation of funds to implement a contract or collective bargaining agreement*
- (h) Proceedings relating to election, appointment, removal, discharge, employment, promotion, transfer, or demotion of employees or appointed or elected officials or members of multiple-member bodies or any other personnel action*
- (i) Any proceedings providing for the submission or referral of a matter to the voters at an election*
- (k) Memorial resolutions*
- (l) Any zoning petition that is subject to the city's zoning petition process*

SECTION 8-8 SUBMISSION OF OTHER MATTERS TO VOTERS

The council may of its own motion, submit to the voters for adoption or rejection at any regular municipal election any measure with the same force and effect as is hereby provided for submission by petitions of voters. Such measures must originate within the council and pertain to affairs under said bodies' jurisdiction. Pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 53, Section 18A, non-binding public opinion advisory questions may be placed on the ballot at a regular municipal election.

SECTION 8-9: CONFLICTING PROVISIONS

If 2 or more measures passed at the same election contain conflicting provisions, only the 1 receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes shall take effect.

SECTION 8-10 MAYOR RECALL PROVISIONS

- (a) **Application. The mayor may be recalled from by the voters of the city in the manner provided in this section.** No recall petition shall be filed against the mayor within 6 months after taking office or within the last six months of the mayor's term.*
- (b) Recall Petition - A recall petition may be initiated by the filing of an affidavit containing the name of the mayor sought to be recalled and a statement of the grounds for recall; provided, however, that the affidavit shall be signed by not less than ___ registered voters. Each such affidavit shall be accompanied by a letter identifying the 10 lead petitioners who will be the petitioner's committee responsible for circulating and filing the petition. The city clerk shall forthwith, and not later than 5 business days following submittal, provide for the certification by the election commission of the signatures of such persons who are registered voters of the city and provide notice to the city council of the number of signatures so certified. The city clerk shall, not later than 5 business days following certification by the election commission, issue to those voters constituting the petitioner's committee, copies of petition blanks demanding such recall, copies of which printed forms the city clerk shall keep available. The blanks shall be issued by the city clerk, with signature and official seal attached thereto. The blanks shall be dated, shall be addressed to the city council and shall contain the names of the petitioner's committee, the number of blanks so issued, the name of the person whose recall is sought, the office from which removal is sought and the grounds of recall as stated in the affidavit. A copy of the petition shall be entered in a record book to be kept in the office of the city clerk. Said recall petition shall be returned and filed with the city 24 clerk not later than 28 days after the filing of the affidavit and shall be signed by not less than ___ percent of the registered voters of the city on the date of the last mayoral*

- election. The city clerk shall submit the petition to the election commission and the commission shall, within 5 days, certify thereon the number of signatures which are names of voters.*
- (c) *Recall Election - If the petition shall be found and certified by the election commission to be sufficient, the city clerk shall submit such certificate to the city council within 5 days and the city council shall give written notice of the receipt of the certificate to the officer sought to be recalled. If that officer does not resign within 5 days thereafter, the city council shall order an election to be held on a date fixed by it not less than 35 days from the date the council votes to place the question on the ballot and provides written notice thereof to the city clerk, nor more than 90 days after the date of the city clerk's certificate that a sufficient petition has been filed; provided, however, that if any other city election is to occur not later than 120 days after the date of the certificate, the city council shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of such other election. If a vacancy occurs in said office after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall not proceed as provided in this section, however, that if any other city election is to occur within 120 days after the date of the certificate, the City Council shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of such other election. If a vacancy occurs in said office after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall not proceed as provided in this section.*
- (d) *Office Holder - The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of the office until the recall election. If said incumbent is not recalled, the incumbent shall continue in office for the remainder of the unexpired term subject to recall as before. If recalled, the officer shall be deemed removed and the office vacant. The vacancy created thereby shall be filled under Section 3-13 of this charter. A person chosen to fill the vacancy caused by a recall shall hold office until the next regular city election. Should the person chosen to fill the vacancy be a candidate in the subsequent election, that person will not be allowed to have "candidate for re-election" appear on the ballot at such election.*
- (e) *Form of Question – The form of the question to be voted upon shall be substantially as follows:
"Shall [here insert the name and title of the mayor whose recall is sought] be recalled?"
___Yes ___No If a majority of the votes cast upon the question of recall is in the affirmative, such elected officer shall be recalled.*
- (f) *Time of Taking Effect - If a majority of the votes cast upon the question of recall is in the affirmative, such elected official shall be immediately recalled. No recall election shall be effective unless not less than ___ percent of the total number of voters of the city at the last regular city election shall have voted in such election.*
- (g) *Repeat of Recall - In the case of an elected official subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby, no recall petition shall be filed against such official until at least 270 days after the election at which the official's recall was submitted to the voters of the city.*
- (h) *Mayor Recalled - No mayor who has been recalled from office or who has resigned from office while recall proceedings were pending against such person, shall be appointed to any elective city office within 2 years after such recall or such resignation.*

ARTICLE 9: GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 9-1. CHARTER CHANGES

This charter may be replaced, revised or amended in accordance with any procedure made available under the state constitution or by statutes enacted in accordance with the state constitution.

SECTION 9-2. SEVERABILITY

This charter is severable. If any provision of this charter is held invalid, the other provisions shall not be affected by this holding. If the application of this charter to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the application of the charter to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected.

SECTION 9-3. SPECIFIC PROVISION TO PREVAIL

To the extent that a specific provision of this charter conflicts with any provision expressed in general terms, the specific provision of the charter shall prevail.

SECTION 9-4. RULES AND REGULATIONS

A copy of all rules and regulations adopted by a city agency shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk not later than the effective date of the rule or regulation and shall be available for review by any person who requests such information at any reasonable time. Unless an emergency exists as determined by the mayor, no rule or regulation adopted by a city agency shall become effective until at least 5 days following the date it is filed.

SECTION 9-5. PERIODIC REVIEW OF CHARTER

Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 2, the City Council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the special committee shall be voters of the city not holding elective office. The special committee shall file a report with the City Council within 1 year of its appointment recommending any changes to the city charter which it deems necessary or desirable, unless an extension is authorized by vote of the City Council. Action on any proposed charter changes shall be as authorized by the Massachusetts constitution or general laws.

SECTION 9-6. PERIODIC REVIEW OF ORDINANCES

Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 5 or in a zero, the mayor and city council shall provide for a review to be made of some or all of the ordinances of the city to prepare a proposed revision or recodification of them. This review shall be made by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the committee shall be voters of the city. The special committee shall file its report with the city clerk at a date specified by ordinance. The review of city ordinances shall be under the supervision of the city solicitor. Copies of any recommendations shall be made available to the public at a cost not to exceed the actual cost of the reproduction.

SECTION 9-7. UNIFORM PROCEDURES GOVERNING MULTIPLE-MEMBER BODIES

(a) Meetings - All appointed multiple-member bodies of the city shall meet regularly at the times and places that the multiple-member body, by the body's own rules, prescribe. Special meetings of any multiple-member body shall be held on the call of the chairman or by a majority of the members of the body. Notice of the meeting shall be posted as required by law. Except as may otherwise be authorized by law, all meetings of all multiple-member bodies shall at all times be open to the public.

(b) Meeting Documents and Submissions - Each appointed multiple-member body shall determine its own rules and order of business within the bounds of any applicable ordinance that created it. Each multiple-member body shall provide for the keeping of agendas, minutes and related submissions of its

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proceedings. All such documents shall be a public record and certified copies shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk within 15 days of approval.

(c) Voting - If requested by a member, a vote of an appointed multiple-member body shall be taken by a roll call vote and the vote of each member shall be recorded in the minutes, but if the vote is unanimous, only that fact need be recorded.

(d) Quorum - A majority of the members of an appointed multiple-member body shall constitute a quorum. Unless some other provision is made by the multiple-member body's own rules while a quorum is present, except on procedural matters, a majority of the full membership of the body shall be required to vote on a matter representing an exercise of the powers of the multiple-member body. General Laws related to a vote to meet in "executive session" shall always require a majority of members of the body.

(e) Residency - Unless otherwise allowed by law, regulation, ordinance or by this charter, all members of multiple-member bodies shall be residents of the city at all times during that members term of office. If a member of a multiple-member body removes from the city during the term for which appointed, such seat shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled under section 3-3.

SECTION 9-8. NUMBER

Words importing the singular number may extend and be applied to several persons or things; words importing the plural number may include the singular.

SECTION 9-9. REFERENCES TO GENERAL LAWS

All references to General Laws contained in the charter refer to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are intended to refer to and to include any amendments or revisions to such chapters or sections or to the corresponding chapters and sections of any rearrangement, revision or recodification of such statutes enacted or adopted subsequent to the adoption of this charter.

SECTION 9-10. COMPUTATION OF TIME

In computing time under this charter the day of the act or event after which the designated period of time begins to run shall not be included. The last day of the period shall be included, unless it is Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, in which event the period shall be extended to the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. When the period of time designated is fewer than 7 days, intermediate Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays shall not be included, when the period is 7 days or more, Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays shall be included.

SECTION 9-11. OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A mayor-elect, the city council members-elect, and the school committee members-elect shall, on the first Monday in the January of each even-numbered year, meet and take an oath or affirmation to the faithful discharge of the duties of their office by the city clerk. If the first Monday in January of any even-numbered year falls on a legal holiday, the oaths or affirmations shall be taken on the following day.

Upon receiving the oath or affirmation, each official shall document the same by signing an oath or affirmation that shall be kept in a bound book maintained by the city clerk. In the case of the absence of the mayor-elect or any member-elect of the city council or school committee on the day the oath is administered, the oath or affirmation may at any time thereafter be administered to that person by the city clerk, the assistant city clerk, a judge of a court of record, or a justice of the peace.

SECTION 9-12. CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT

Every person who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple-member body shall receive a certificate of that election or appointment from the city clerk. Except as otherwise provided by law, every person who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple-member body,

before performing any act under this election or appointment, shall take and subscribe to an oath or affirmation to qualify to enter upon the duties. A record of this oath shall be kept by the city clerk.

SECTION 9-13. LIMITATION ON OFFICE HOLDING

Unless otherwise allowed by law or this charter, no person shall simultaneously hold more than 1 city office or position of employment. This section may be waived by the mayor upon the appointment of a person to an additional office or position of employment by filing a notice of the waiver with an explanation and justification with the city clerk. Any hours worked in any part-time position shall not be the same or otherwise conflict with the hours worked in a full-time position.

SECTION 9-14. ENFORCEMENT OF CHARTER PROVISIONS

It shall be the duty of the mayor to see that the charter is faithfully followed and complied with by all city agencies and city employees. Whenever it appears to the mayor that a city agency or city employee is failing to follow this charter, the mayor shall, in writing, cause notice to be given to that agency or employee directing compliance with the charter. If it shall appear to the city council that the mayor personally is not following the charter, it shall, by resolution, direct the attention of the mayor to those areas in which it believes there is a failure to comply with the charter. The procedures made available in chapter 231A of the General Laws may be used to determine the rights, duties, status or other legal relations arising under this charter, including any question of construction or validity which may be involved in such determination.

ARTICLE 10: TRANSITION PROVISIONS

SECTION 10-1 CONTINUATION OF EXISTING LAWS

All ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, and votes of the city council, which are in force at the time this charter is adopted and are not inconsistent with the provisions of this charter, shall continue in full force until amended or repealed. Where provisions of this charter, as amended, conflict with city ordinances, rules, regulations, orders, special acts and acceptances of laws of the commonwealth, the provisions of this charter shall govern. All provisions of city ordinances, rules, regulations, orders and administrative actions not superseded by this charter shall remain in force.

SECTION 10-2 EXISTING OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

Any person holding a city office or employment under the city shall retain such office or employment and shall continue to perform the duties of the office until provision shall have been made in accordance with this charter for the performance of the said duties by another person or agency. No person in the permanent full-time service or employment of the city shall forfeit pay grade or time in service. Each such person shall be retained in a capacity as similar to the person's former capacity as is practical.

SECTION 10-3 CONTINUATION OF GOVERNMENT

All city officers, boards, commissions or agencies shall continue to perform their duties until reappointed or until successors to their respective positions are fully appointed or elected or until their duties have been transferred and assumed by another city office, board, commission or agency.

SECTION 10-4 CONTINUATION OF OBLIGATIONS

All official bonds, obligations, contracts, and other instruments entered into or executed by or to the city before the adoption of this charter and all taxes, special assessments, fines, penalties, and forfeitures incurred or imposed, due or owing to the city, shall be enforced and collected, and all writs, prosecutions, actions and causes of action, except as herein otherwise provided, shall continue and remain unaffected by this charter. No legal act done by or in favor of the city shall be rendered invalid by the adoption of this charter.

SECTION 10-5 TRANSFER OF RECORDS AND PROPERTY

All records, property and equipment whatsoever of any office, board, commission, committee or agency or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another city office, board, commission or agency, shall be transferred forthwith to such office, board, commission or agency.

SECTION 10-6 POLICY ORDER TRACKING

Within 18 months of the effective date of this charter, the Mayor will complete a study of the use of technology to categorize and track policy orders for the purpose of providing information to the public about the status of policy order votes and implementation of these policy orders by the executive branch pursuant to Section 3-9. The information shall be made available on the town website as soon as practicable.

SECTION 10-7 CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Within 6 months of the adoption of this charter, the city council shall create a Campaign Finance Committee to study public financing mechanisms and prepare recommendations with the goal of making running for office in Cambridge more accessible. The study committee shall consider a full range of options, including but not limited to voucher programs, campaign spending, and contribution limits. The committee shall provide an analysis of the potential benefits and barriers of each option. No action is necessary if the city council has already taken action consistent with this provision.

Committee Recommendations: **black bold**

Sample Text: *grey italic*

The committee shall issue recommendations to the city council and the next charter review committee within 12 months of creation. The city council shall take action on the recommendations and/or refer recommendations to next charter review committee within 90 days of receipt.

SECTION 10-8 RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

The establishment of a resident assembly is intended to create an inclusive and representative group of voices that are not traditionally heard in city government. The resident assembly shall be selected by sortition from the general population, with effort made to reach residents of all backgrounds and experiences. Within 12 months of the effective date of this charter, the city council, in consultation with the mayor, city clerk, and relevant experts in the field, will complete a study on the best method for implementing the resident assembly as provided in Section 8. Within 18 months of the effective date of this charter, the city council shall enact ordinances establishing the resident assembly and commence the process of selecting members.

SECTION 10-10 AND BEYOND: RESERVED FOR TECHNICAL TRANSITION SECTIONS

[reserved for technical sections]

SAMPLE DRAFT COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM CHARTER CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Last Revised: 1.26.2023

*The purpose of this “sample draft” council-manager form of government charter is to put in one place the recommendations of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee. These provisions are shown in **black bold typeface**.*

*In order to create the full picture of what a complete council-manager charter that incorporates these Committee decisions might look like in its entirety, the Collins Center has provided, for context only, standard/best practices text of a typical council-manager. These provisions are shown in *grey italic text*. Additionally, these sections of the text should not be considered to be recommendations by the Committee. The Committee did not vote on any draft language other than the provisions emphasized in **black bold typeface**.*

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ARTICLE 1: INCORPORATION; SHORT TITLE; ETC.

SECTION 1-1: INCORPORATION

The inhabitants of Cambridge, within the territorial limits established by law, shall continue to be a municipal corporation, a body corporate and politic, under the name “City of Cambridge”.

SECTION 1-2: SHORT TITLE

This document shall be known and may be cited as the “Cambridge Charter.”

SECTION 1-3: DIVISION OF POWERS

All legislative powers of the city shall be vested in a city council. The administration of all city fiscal, prudential, and municipal affairs shall be vested in an executive branch headed by a city manager appointed by the city council.

SECTION 1-4: POWERS OF THE CITY

Subject only to express limitations on the exercise of any power or function by a municipal government in the Massachusetts constitution or General Laws, it is the intention and the purpose of the voters of Cambridge, through the adoption of this charter, to secure for themselves and their government all of the powers it is possible to secure as fully and as completely as though each power were specifically and individually enumerated in this charter.

SECTION 1-5: CONSTRUCTION

The powers of Cambridge under this charter are to be construed liberally in favor of the city, and the specific mention of any particular power is not intended to limit the general powers of the city as stated in the Cambridge Charter. To the extent that any provision of this charter shall conflict with any special act or general law adopted by the city, the provision of this charter shall prevail.

SECTION 1-6: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Subject only to express limitations in the constitution or general laws of the Commonwealth, Cambridge may exercise any of its powers or perform any of its functions, and may participate in their financing, jointly or in cooperation, by contract or otherwise, with the Commonwealth or any agency or political subdivision of the Commonwealth, or with the United States government or any of its agencies. The City Council shall in the performance of their duties consider intergovernmental and regional relations.

SECTION 1-7: DEFINITIONS

[to be filled in]

ARTICLE 2: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

SECTION 2-1: COMPOSITION; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY

(a) **Composition** - There shall be a city council of nine members nominated and elected by the municipal voters at large by proportional representation as provided in Article 7. The city council shall exercise the legislative powers of the city.

(b) **Term of Office** - City councillors shall be elected for terms of two years each beginning on the first Monday of January in the year following their election, except when that first Monday falls on a legal holiday, then the term shall begin on the following day, and until successors have been qualified.

(c) **Eligibility** - Any registered municipal voter over the age of 18 shall be eligible to hold the office of councillor. If a councillor moves from the city during the councillor's term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section 2-14. The city council shall determine whether a councillor has moved from the city.

SECTION 2-2: GENERAL POWERS

Except as otherwise provided by law or by this charter, all powers of the city shall be vested in the city council that shall provide for their exercise and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed on the city by law.

SECTION 2-3: PRESIDENT/CHAIR/MAYOR AND VICE PRESIDENT/VICE CHAIR/MAYOR, ELECTION; TERM; POWERS

(a) *Election and Term* - As soon as practical after the councillors-elect have been qualified following each regular city election, as provided in Article 7, the members of the city council shall elect from among its members a president/chair/mayor and vice president/vice chair/vice mayor, who shall serve for a 2-year term. The method of election of the president/chair and vice-president/vice-chair shall be determined by City Council rules. The member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president/chair until members elect a president/chair/mayor.

- (b) *Powers and Duties* - The following shall be the powers and duties of the council president/chair/mayor:
- i. *Head of the city* - The council president/chair/mayor shall be recognized as the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes and shall be recognized by the courts for the purposes of serving civil process.
 - ii. *Presiding officer of the council* - The council president/chair/mayor shall be the presiding officer of the city council. The council president/chair/mayor shall have no power of veto but shall have the same powers as any other member of the city council to vote upon all measures before it.
 - iii. *Appointment of committees* - The council president/chair/mayor shall appoint members of, and oversee, all committees of the council, whether standing or ad hoc.
 - iv. **Goal-Setting** – **The council president/chair/mayor shall coordinate, with the council, the development and prioritization of both short- and long-term council goals to support a strategic vision for the city, as provided for in section 2-11 at the beginning of each council term.**
 - v. *State of the city* - The council president/chair/mayor shall annually, together with the city manager, address the city council, school committee, officers of the city, and the public on the state of affairs of the city.
 - vi. *Other duties* - The council president/chair/mayor shall perform such other duties consistent with the office as may be provided by charter, by ordinance, or by vote of the city council.

- vii. **Member of the school committee - The council president/chair/mayor shall serve as a member of the school committee and shall update the council regularly on school committee matters.**
- (c) *Temporary absence - During a temporary absence of the president/chair/mayor, the duties of president/chair/mayor shall be performed by the vice president/vice chair. If there shall be neither a president/chair/mayor nor a vice president/vice chair, the member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president/chair/mayor until there is no longer an absence.*
- (d) *Permanent Vacancy - If there is a permanent vacancy in the office of president/chair/mayor or vice president/vice chair, the city council shall elect by majority vote one of its members to fill such office for the unexpired term. The member of the city council senior in length of consecutive service shall perform the duties of president/chair/mayor until members elect a president/chair/mayor.*

SECTION 2-4: PROHIBITIONS

Except as otherwise provided by the charter and permitted by the Massachusetts General Laws, no member of the city council shall hold any other compensated city position. No former member of the city council shall hold any compensated appointed city position until 1 year following the date on which the former member's service on the city council has terminated unless such appointment is affirmed by six (6) members of the city council. This section shall not prevent a city employee who vacated a position to serve as a member of the city council from returning to the same position upon the expiration of the term for which that person was elected.

SECTION 2-5: COUNCIL SALARY; EXPENSES

- (a) *Salary - The president/chair/mayor and the members of the city council shall receive for their services such salary as the city council shall determine by ordinance, and they shall receive no other compensation from the city. No increase or reduction in the salaries of city councillors shall take effect during the year in which such increase or reduction is voted, and no change in such salaries shall be made between the election of a new council and the qualification of the new council.*
- (b) *Expenses - Subject to appropriation, the council members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.*

SECTION 2-6: EXERCISE OF POWERS; QUORUM; RULES

- (a) *Exercise of Powers - Except as otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter, the legislative powers of the city council may be exercised in a manner determined by the city council.*
- (b) *Quorum - A majority of all the members elected to the city council shall constitute a quorum. Except as otherwise provided by General Laws or by this charter, the affirmative vote, taken by a roll call vote, of a majority of members of the city council shall be required to adopt any ordinance, order, resolution, or vote, except that the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present shall be sufficient to adjourn any meeting of the city council.*
- (c) *Rules - Rules for operation of City Council shall be established by City Council at the beginning of each term.*

SECTION 2-7: APPOINTMENTS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

- (a) *City Manager - The city council shall appoint a city manager as provided for in Section 3-1.*
- (b) *City Auditor - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a city auditor for an indefinite term of office. The city auditor shall be appointed solely based on professional qualifications and experience. The city auditor shall keep and have charge of the accounts of the city and shall from time to time audit the books and accounts of all city agencies. The city auditor shall have such other powers and duties as provided for auditors and accountants by general laws and such*

SAMPLE DRAFT – COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM

additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or by any other vote of the city council.

- (c) *City Clerk - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a city clerk. The city clerk shall be appointed solely based on qualifications and experience. The city clerk shall have such powers and duties as provided for clerks by general laws and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the charter, by ordinance, or by any other vote of the city council.*
- (d) *Clerk of the Council - The city council, by the affirmative vote of a majority of members, shall appoint a clerk of the council, who may be the city clerk. The clerk of the council shall give notice of its meetings to its members and to the public, keep the journal of its proceedings, and perform such other duties as may be provided by ordinance or by other vote of the city council.*
- (e) *Salaries - The officers appointed under Section 2-7 shall receive such salaries as set by ordinance.*
- (f) *Supervision, discipline, and removal of city council employees - The council president/chair/mayor shall be responsible for supervision of any employee appointed by city council, including the city auditor and clerk of the council. The council president/chair/mayor shall be able to impose discipline up to and including an unpaid suspension of not more than five days. However, removing an employee appointed by city council shall require an affirmative vote of at least six council members.*

SECTION 2-8: CITY COUNCIL ROLE IN CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS

- (a) *Department heads – Prior to posting and beginning the search for a department head position, the city manager shall meet with the city council to discuss priorities for the department and desirable qualifications and qualities of candidates for the position.*
- (b) *Multiple-member bodies - The city manager shall refer to the city council and simultaneously file with the clerk the name of each person the city manager desires to appoint or reappoint as a member of a multiple-member body. Appointment of a member of a multiple-member body made by the city manager will be effective upon a majority vote of the city council, which vote shall occur within 45 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed with the city clerk. The appointment may be approved or rejected by a majority of the full city council before 45 days. An appointment or reappointment shall take effect if the city council fails to act within those 45 days.*

SECTION 2-9: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- (a) *In general - The city council may make inquiry into the affairs of the city and into the conduct and performance of any city agency.*
- (b) *Information requests:*
 - i. *City manager - The city council may, at any time, request from the city manager specific information on any municipal matter within its jurisdiction and may request the manager to be present to answer written questions relating thereto at a meeting to be held not earlier than seven (7) days from the date of receipt by the city manager of said questions. The city manager shall personally, or through the head of a department or a member of a board, attend such meeting and publicly answer all such questions. The person so attending shall not be obliged to answer questions relating to any other matter. The city manager may attend and address the city council in person or through the head of a department or a member of a board, on any subject and at any time.*
 - ii. *Department Heads, Chair of Multiple-Member Bodies - The city council may require the chair of a multiple-member body or a city department head, through the city manager, to appear before the city council to give any information that the city council may require in relation to the municipal services, functions and powers, or duties which are within the scope of responsibility of that person and not within the jurisdiction of the school committee. The city council shall give a minimum of seven (7) days' notice to a person it may require to appear before it under this section. Notice shall be in writing. The notice shall include specific questions on which the city council seeks information, and no person called to appear before*

Committee Recommendations: **black bold**

Sample Text: *grey italic*

SAMPLE DRAFT – COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM

the city council under this section shall be required to respond to any question not relevant or related to those questions presented in advance and in writing. The city manager shall receive a copy of any notice issued under this section at the same time as the person who is requested to appear before the council.

SECTION 2-10: ORDINANCES AND OTHER MEASURES

- (a) *Emergency Ordinances - No ordinance shall be passed finally on the date it is introduced, except in cases of special emergency involving the health or safety of the people or their property. No ordinance shall be regarded as an emergency ordinance unless the emergency is defined and declared in a preamble to such ordinance, separately voted upon, and receiving the affirmative vote of a majority of members present. No ordinance making a grant, renewal, or extension, whatever its kind or nature, of any franchise or special privilege of any kind or nature, shall be passed as an emergency measure, and except as provided in General Laws Chapter 166, Sections 70 and 71, no such grant, renewal or extension shall be made otherwise than by ordinance. An emergency measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify.*
- (b) *General Measures - Every adopted measure shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify. An ordinance shall not be amended or repealed except by the same process by which it was adopted.*
- (c) *Charter Objection - On the first occasion that the question on adoption of a measure is put to the city council, a single member present may object to the taking of the vote, and postpone the vote until the next regular or special meeting of the city council. If two or more present members object, the vote shall be postponed until the next regular meeting. This procedure shall not be used more than once for any specific matter regardless of whether it has been amended. A charter objection shall have privilege over all motions but shall be raised prior to or at the call for a vote by the presiding officer and all debate shall cease. The charter objection process shall not apply to emergency measures as defined in this section.*
- (d) *Publication - Every proposed ordinance, or loan order, except emergency ordinances and revenue loan orders, shall be published once in full in at least one local newspaper, on the city website, and in any additional manner as may be provided by ordinance, at least ten days before its final passage. After final passage, the ordinance as amended and completed, shall again be published once in the manner provided above, except as follows. If any ordinance or proposed ordinance, or codification thereof, shall exceed in length eight pages of ordinary book print, then there shall be no requirement to advertise as provided above if the same is published by the city council in a municipal bulletin or printed pamphlet or on the city website, but otherwise in conformity with said provisions, except for zoning ordinances or amendments thereto, a summary of which shall be published at least two times in a local newspaper and on the city website. The publication of such zoning summaries shall include a statement indicating where copies of the ordinance may be examined and obtained and a statement that claims of invalidity by reason of any defect in the procedure of adoption may only be made within ninety days after the posting or the second publication. Emergency ordinances shall be published at the earliest practicable moment.*

SECTION 2-11: GOAL SETTING

- (a) At the beginning of each council term, within the first six months, the council shall develop council goals for the upcoming term, in consideration of previous council goals and the strategic needs and vision of the city.**
- (b) The council shall seek input from the city manager, department heads, multi-member bodies, and the public in the development of council goals.**
- (c) The council shall consider intercity and regional issues in the development and prioritization of council goals and strategic vision.**

Committee Recommendations: **black bold**

Sample Text: *grey italic*

- (d) The council may develop both short- and long-term goals. To the extent practicable, goals shall be measurable, include timelines for implementation, and relevant budget requirements.**
- (e) The council shall establish a broad public engagement process to incorporate public input into development of council goals. This shall include at least two public hearings at which public comment is accepted and such additional outreach efforts as the councils deems appropriate. The goal-setting and public engagement process under this section shall be publicized via multiple media avenues available to the city, including on its website, social media pages, and through direct electronic communications. The council shall also review the results of any city-wide surveys or other public engagement tools undertaken in the prior term.**
- (f) The council shall publish its goals for the term in multiple media avenues available to the city, including on its website, social media pages, council newsletters and through direct electronic communications.**
- (g) The council shall establish a public method of tracking progress in meeting the established goals.**

SECTION 2-12: CITY MANAGER EVALUATION

The city council shall conduct an annual review of the city manager as provided in section 3-1(e).

SECTION 2-13: FILLING OF VACANCIES

Except as provided in this section, a vacancy in any elective body shall be filled in the manner provided in section thirteen of chapter fifty-four A. If, under said section, no regularly nominated candidate of the city council or school committee remains, the vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the remaining members, except that if the remaining members fail to fill such vacancy within thirty days after they shall have been notified by the city clerk that such vacancy exists, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of any qualified voter of the city by the mayor, or, if there is no mayor, by the vice-chairman, or if there is no mayor or vice-chairman, by the member of the council or of the school committee, as the case may be, senior in length of service, or, if more than one have so served, then the member senior both in age and length of service.

ARTICLE 3: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

SECTION 3-1: CITY MANAGER APPOINTMENT; QUALIFICATIONS AND ELIGIBILITY; TERM OF OFFICE; COMPENSATION; EVALUATION; GOAL-SETTING

- (a) Appointment - The city council shall appoint a city manager who shall be sworn to the faithful performance of the duties and who shall be the chief executive officer of the city and shall be responsible for the administration of all departments, multiple member bodies, commissions, boards, and officers of the city, except those employees appointed by city council, the school committee, and any official appointed by the governor or elected official.*
- (b) Qualifications and Eligibility - The city manager shall be appointed on the basis of administrative and executive qualifications only and need not be a resident of the city or commonwealth when appointed. No member of the city council shall, during their term of office, be chosen as city manager, and no person who has within two years been elected to or served in any elective office in the city shall be chosen as city manager.*
- (c) Term of Office - The city manager shall hold office at the pleasure of the city council. The city council shall enter into an employment agreement with the city manager for a term not to exceed five (5) years; the city manager may, however, serve consecutive successive terms upon a vote by city council to renew or extend the employment agreement. The terms of the employment agreement shall be consistent with the provisions of this charter.*
- (d) Compensation - The city manager shall receive such compensation as the city council shall fix by contract. The city manager shall not receive any other compensation from the city other than that fixed by city council.*
- (e) Evaluation – Annually the city council shall prepare and deliver to the city manager a written review of the city manager’s performance in a manner provided by ordinance. This review shall include specific metrics related to council goals outlined in Section 2-11. The council shall provide opportunities for public participation throughout the review process.**
- (f) Goal-setting – The city council and city manager shall collaboratively develop and prioritize goals for the city manager that shall be used to measure the city manager’s performance during the evaluation process and to provide guidance to the city manager. These city manager goals shall take into account the council’s goal set pursuant to Section 2-11.**

SECTION 3-2: POWERS AND DUTIES.

The city manager shall be the chief executive officer of the city and shall be responsible to the city council for the proper administration of all city affairs placed under the city manager’s charge by or under the charter. The city manager shall be responsible for implementation of policies established by the city council, as reflected in the city council’s votes and resolutions and in ordinances, appropriation orders, and loan authorizations.

The powers and duties of the city manager shall include, but are not intended to be limited to, the following:

General:

- a) Supervise, direct, and be responsible for the efficient administration of all city activities placed under the manager’s control by the charter, by ordinance, or otherwise, including all officers appointed by the manager and their respective agencies.*
- b) Be responsible for the coordination of the activities of all agencies under their control with the activities of all other city agencies, including those elected by the voters of Cambridge and those appointed by other elected officials.*
- c) Ensure that all the provisions of the General Laws, the city charter, city ordinances, and other votes of the city council that require enforcement by the manager or by officers or employees subject to the manager’s supervision are faithfully carried out and enforced.*

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d) Be responsible for the establishment and ongoing maintenance of a centralized public tracking tool to provide city residents with information about: 1) proposed and enacted council ordinances and council approved policy orders; 2) status of proposed council measures, including policy orders; and 3) the status of actions taken by the executive branch to implement measures that have been approved by city council.

e) Make such recommendations, from time to time, to the city council that, in the manager's judgment, are deemed necessary or desirable.

f) Determine the existence of a public emergency or danger and shall assume responsibility for the maintenance of public safety, public order, and enforcement of laws. The manager shall notify the council president as soon as practical, but within 24 hours, of such a public emergency or danger and of the actions taken. Should the public emergency continue more than 24 hours, the city council may meet to review, ratify, or terminate said public emergency.

g) Authorize any subordinate officer or employee to exercise any power or perform any function that the city manager is authorized to exercise or perform, provided, however, all acts performed under any such delegation shall be deemed to be the acts of the city manager.

h) Pursuant to section 3-3, appoint all members of multi-member bodies for whom no other method of appointment is provided by General Law, the charter, ordinance, or city council resolution. Appointments made by the city manager to multi-member bodies shall be subject to confirmation by the city council, as provided by ordinance.

Appointment, personnel, hiring, and bargaining

i) Pursuant to section 3-3, appoint, and may remove, subject to the civil service law and any collective bargaining agreements as may be applicable, all department heads, city officers, and employees of city agencies under the direction and supervision of the city manager. Prior to posting and beginning the search for a department head position, the city manager shall meet with the city council to discuss priorities for the department and desirable qualifications and qualities of candidates for the position.

j) Administer personnel related matters, including bargaining with municipal employees, and fix the compensation of all municipal employees appointed by the manager within the limits established by appropriation and any ordinance or collective bargaining agreement.

k) Inquire at any time into the conduct of office of any officer, employee, or department under the City Manager's supervision.

Financial:

l) Prepare and submit an annual operating budget under the policy guidance of, and taking into account the goals set by, the council.

m) Assure that a full and complete record of the financial and administrative activities of the city is kept and shall render a complete written report to the city council at the end of each fiscal year and at such times as the city council may reasonably require.

n) Execute contracts, subject to such prior city council approval as may be prescribed by ordinance.

Property, facilities, and procurement:

o) Have full jurisdiction over the rental and use of all city facilities, except school buildings and grounds. The City Manager shall be responsible for the maintenance and repair of all city-owned property, including, if authorized by an ordinance establishing a central city maintenance department, school buildings and grounds.

p) Ensure that a full and complete inventory of all property owned by the city, both real and personal, is kept.

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q) Execute all deeds conveying city real property, but that any such conveyance shall have been previously authorized by the vote of the city council pursuant to the applicable provisions of the General Laws.

Communication:

r) Publish an annual report comprising the complete statistical record of the operations of every city department, commission, and committee for the preceding year. Said report shall be published annually and made available for distribution to the public not later than four months after the end of the period on which the report is based.

s) Be responsible for city government communications, including, but not limited to, developing a timely and comprehensive communication strategy, coordinating the announcements and messages from department heads, communicating regularly, via all available media avenues, with residents, ensuring that all aspects of the city's website are kept up to date, and soliciting recommendations for greater communication from residents.

Additional duties:

u) Perform such other functions as necessary or as may be assigned to the office of city manager by the General Laws, by this charter, by ordinance or other vote of the city council, or otherwise.

SECTION 3-3: APPOINTMENTS AND REMOVALS

The city manager shall make all appointments and removals in the departments, multi-member bodies and offices of the city for whose administration the city manager is responsible, except as otherwise provided in this charter.

(a) Department Heads – the city manager shall appoint, and may remove, subject to the civil service law and any collective bargaining agreements as may be applicable, all department heads, city officers, and employees of city agencies under the direction and supervision of the city manager. Prior to posting and beginning the search for a department head position, the city manager shall meet with the city council to discuss priorities for the department and the desirable qualifications and qualities of candidates for the position.

(b) Multiple Member Bodies – the city manager shall appoint all members of multi-member bodies for whom no other method of appointment is provided by general law, the charter, ordinance, or city council resolution. Appointments made by the city manager to multi-member bodies shall be subject to confirmation by the city council, as provided by ordinance.

(c) Notification to city council - The city manager shall report every appointment and vacancy of department heads made to the city council at the next meeting thereof following such appointment or vacancy. The city manager may authorize the head of a city agency, for whose administration the city manager is responsible, to appoint and remove subordinates in such city agency, subject to the provisions of this charter.

(d) Interference by City Council Prohibited – Except as provided in Section 2-7 and by this charter, neither the city council nor any of its committees or members shall direct or request the appointment of any person to, or their removal from, office by the city manager or any of their subordinates, or in any manner take part in the appointment or removal of officers and employees in that portion of the service of said city for whose administration the city manager is responsible. Except as otherwise provided by this charter, the city council and its members shall not give orders to any subordinate of the city manager either publicly or privately and shall direct all requests for service through the city manager. Nothing in this section shall prevent city council or its members from discussing matters generally with city staff, presuming the city manager is kept informed.

SECTION 3-4. ACTING CITY MANAGER.

(a) Temporary absence - The city manager shall, by letter filed with the city council and a copy filed with the city clerk, designate a qualified city officer, department head or administrative employee to exercise

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the powers and perform the duties of the office during temporary absence. During the first ten working days of a temporary absence of the city manager, the city council may revoke such designation by a two-thirds vote and, after the expiration of ten working days, by a majority vote, whereupon it may appoint another qualified city officer, department head or employee to serve as acting city manager until the city manager shall return and resume the manager's duties.

- (b) Vacancy - Any vacancy in the office of city manager shall be filled as soon as possible by the city council, but pending such appointment the city council shall designate a qualified city officer, department head, administrative employee, or former city manager to exercise the powers and perform the duties of the city manager on an acting basis. The appointment of an acting city manager shall be for a term not to exceed four (4) months; provided, however, one renewal, not to exceed a second four (4) months, may be permitted.*
- (c) Powers and Duties -The powers of a temporary or acting city manager shall be limited to matters not admitting of delay; provided, however, no temporary city manager under (a) above shall have authority to make permanent appointments or removals to department head positions.*

SECTION 3-5: REMOVAL

Before the city manager may be removed prior to the end of the contract term, the city manager shall have the right to be heard publicly at a meeting of the city council prior to the final vote on the question of removal, but before and during such hearing the city council may suspend the city manager from office. The action of the city council in suspending or removing the city manager shall be final, it being the intention of this provision to vest all authority and fix all responsibility for such suspension or removal in the city council.

ARTICLE 4: SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SECTION 4-1: COMPOSITION; TERM OF OFFICE; ELIGIBILITY

(a) *Composition* - There shall be a school committee which shall consist of six members¹ who shall be nominated and elected by the municipal voters of the city at large.

(b) *Term of Office* - The term of office for the elected school committee members shall be 2 years, beginning on the first Monday in January after the election, except when that first Monday falls on a legal holiday, then the term shall begin on the following day and until the successors have been qualified.

(c) Eligibility - Any registered municipal voter over the age of 18 shall be eligible to hold the office of school committee member. If a school committee member moves from the city during the member's term, that office shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled in the manner provided in section 4-6. The school committee shall determine whether a member has moved from the city.

SECTION 4-2: SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR. VICE CHAIR.

(b) *Chair and Vice Chair*- As soon as practical after the school committee members-elect have been qualified following the regular city election, the school committee shall organize by electing one of the persons elected as a member of the school committee to serve as school committee chair and one member to serve as vice-chair.

(a) *Duties* - The school committee chair shall preside at all meetings of the school committee, regulate its proceedings, and shall decide all questions of order. The school committee chair shall appoint all members of all subcommittees of the school committee, whether special or standing. The school committee chair shall have the same powers to vote upon all measures coming before the school committee as any other member of the school committee. The school committee chair shall perform the duties consistent with the office and as provided by this charter or by vote of the school committee. The school committee vice-chair shall preside in the absence of the school committee chair.

SECTION 4-3: PROHIBITIONS

No member of the school committee shall hold any other compensated city position. No former member of the school committee shall hold any compensated appointed city office or city employment until 1 year following the date on which that member's service on the school committee terminated. This section shall not prevent a city officer or other city employee who has vacated a position in order to serve as a member of the school committee from returning to the same office or other position of city employment held at the time the position was vacated; provided, however, no such person shall be eligible for any other municipal position until at least 1 year following the termination of service as a member of the school committee.

SECTION 4-4: COMPENSATION; EXPENSES

(a) *Compensation* - The city council may, by ordinance, establish an annual salary for the elected members of the school committee. No ordinance increasing or reducing the salary of elected members of the school committee shall be effective unless it has been adopted by a two-thirds vote of the full city council. No ordinance increasing the salary of the elected members of the school committee shall be effective unless it has been adopted during the first 18 months of the term for which elected school committee members are elected and unless it provides that the salary increase is to take effect upon the organization of the city government following the next regular city election.

(b) *Expenses* - Subject to appropriation, the school committee members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses in the performance of their duties. The actual and necessary expenses shall be defined in the rules and regulations of the school committee

^{1 1} The committee voted not to recommend the mayor be a member the school committee, so the council may want to consider increasing the school committee to seven elected members to maintain an odd number.

SECTION 4-5: SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The school committee shall have all powers which are conferred on school committees by the General Laws and the additional powers and duties provided by charter, ordinance, or otherwise and not inconsistent with the General Laws. The powers and duties of the school committee shall include:

- (a) selecting and removing a superintendent of the schools who shall be charged with the administration of the school system, subject only to policy guidelines and directives adopted by the school committee and, upon the recommendation of the superintendent, to establish and appoint assistant or associate superintendents as authorized by the General Laws;*
- (b) making all reasonable policies, rules, and regulations for the management of the public school system and for conducting the business of the school committee as deemed necessary or desirable; and*
- (c) adopting and overseeing the administration of an annual operating budget for the school department, subject to appropriation by the city council; provided, however, that the school committee shall have general charge and superintendence of all school buildings and grounds and shall furnish all school buildings with proper fixtures, furniture and equipment; provided further, that the school committee shall provide ordinary maintenance of all school buildings and grounds, unless a central municipal maintenance department, which may include maintenance of school buildings and grounds, is established; provided further, that whenever the school committee shall determine that additional classrooms are necessary to meet the educational needs of the community, at least 1 member of the school committee, or a designee of the school committee, shall serve on the agency, board or committee for the planning or construction of the new, remodeled or renovated school building.*

SECTION 4-6: FILLING OF VACANCIES

In all occurrences of a vacancy, the city clerk shall notify the school committee and the chairperson of the election commission of the vacancy within 7 days. Within 7 days after notification, the chairperson of the election commission or a designee shall certify, in writing, to the city clerk the name of the defeated candidate for the office of school committee with the next highest number of votes at the municipal election at which school committee were elected for the term in which the vacancy occurs. If the person is eligible and willing to serve, the city clerk shall administer the oath of office to the person within 15 days after certification and the person shall serve. If the person who is eligible declines the office, is not eligible and willing to serve, or fails to take the oath of office within the time period set forth in this section, then the person with the next highest number of votes at the election who is eligible and willing to serve shall serve. Where no defeated candidate is eligible and/or willing to serve, the process for filling the vacancy shall be determined by the number of days remaining until the next municipal election.

If a vacancy occurs:

- (i) more than 180 days until the next municipal election, there shall be a special election.*
- (ii) 180 days or less prior to any regular municipal election, then the seat remains vacant until the next regular municipal election.*

ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

SECTION 5-1: ORGANIZATION OF CITY AGENCIES

The organization of the city into operating agencies to provide services and administer the government may be accomplished only through an administrative order submitted to the city council by the city manager. No administrative order may originate with the city council.

The city manager may, subject only to express prohibitions in a general law or this charter, submit proposals to reorganize, consolidate or abolish a city agency, in whole or in part, or to establish a new city agency as is deemed necessary, but no function assigned by this charter to a particular city agency may be discontinued or assigned to any other city agency unless specified by this charter. The city manager may prepare and submit to the city council, administrative orders that establish operating divisions for the orderly, efficient, or convenient conduct of the business of the city. These administrative orders shall be accompanied by a message from the city manager which explains the expected benefits and advises the city council if an administrative order shall require amendments, insertions, revisions, repeal or otherwise of existing ordinances.

Whenever the city manager proposes an administrative order, the city council shall hold 1 or more public hearings on the proposal giving notice by publication in a local newspaper, which notice shall describe the scope of the proposal and the time and place at which the public hearing will be held, not less than 7 nor more than 14 days following the publication. An organization or reorganization plan shall become effective at the expiration of 60 days following the date the proposal is submitted to the city council unless the city council shall, by a majority vote, within that 60-day period vote to disapprove the plan. The city council may vote only to approve or to disapprove the plan and may not vote to amend or to alter it.

SECTION 5-2: MERIT PRINCIPLES

All appointments and promotions of city officers and employees shall be made on the basis of merit and fitness demonstrated by examination, past performance, or by other evidence of competence and suitability. Each person appointed to fill an office or position shall be a person especially fitted by education, training, and previous work experience to perform the duties of the office or position.

ARTICLE 6 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

SECTION 6-1: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the city shall begin on July 1 and shall end on June 30, unless another period is required by the General Laws.

SECTION 6-2: ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

At least 60 days before the end of the or calendar year, the president/chair/mayor of the council shall call a meeting of the council prior to the commencement of the budget process, to review the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure forecasts, and other information relevant to the budget process. The president/chair/mayor also shall invite the city’s state legislative delegation, representatives of the school committee and other relevant stakeholders to attend this meeting.

SECTION 6-3: BUDGETARY PRIORITIES

Prior to the end of the calendar year, the city council shall develop and publish budgetary priorities that take into consideration the council goals created pursuant to Section 2-11, with input from the city manager and the community. There shall be broad public engagement in diverse formats with opportunities for the public to provide input, including at least one public hearing. The budget developed by the city manager will outline how the proposed budget is consistent with the council’s budgetary priorities

SECTION 6-4: SUBMISSION OF OPERATING BUDGET; BUDGET MESSAGE

At least 60 days before the beginning of the fiscal year, the city manager shall submit to the city council a proposed operating budget for all city agencies, which shall include the school department, for the ensuing fiscal year with an accompanying budget message and supporting documents. *The budget message submitted by the city manager shall explain the operating budget in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs for all city agencies. It shall outline the proposed fiscal policies of the city for the ensuing fiscal year, describe important features of the proposed operating budget and include any major variations from the current operating budget, fiscal policies, revenues and expenditures together with reasons for these changes. The proposed operating budget shall provide a complete fiscal plan of all city funds and activities and shall be in the form the city manager deems desirable; provided, however, that the budget for elected officials shall identify the cost of compensation and the cost of benefits for those officials. The school budget, as adopted by the school committee shall be submitted to the city manager at least 30 days before the submission of the proposed operating budget to the city council. The city manager shall notify the school committee of the date by which the proposed budget of the school committee shall be submitted to the city manager. The city manager and the superintendent of schools shall coordinate the dates and times of the school committee's budget process under the General Laws.*

SECTION 6-5: ACTION ON THE OPERATING BUDGET

(a) Public Hearing - The city council shall publish a notice of the proposed operating budget as submitted by the mayor. The notice shall state: (i) the times and places where copies of the entire proposed operating budget are available for inspection by the public; and (ii) the date, time and place when a public hearing on the proposed operating budget will be held by the city council, not less than 14 days after publication of the notice.

(b) Adoption of the Budget – No later than the end of the fiscal year the city council shall take definite action on the annual budget, by adopting, amending or rejecting it, provided that the amended version shall not be for a higher total budget than originally proposed, unless otherwise authorized by the General Laws. If the city council fails to act on an item in the proposed operating budget prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, that amount shall, without any action by the city council, become a part of the appropriations for the year and be available for the purposes specified.

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(c) Availability of the Operating Budget – In addition to any other posting requirements under law, immediately after the submission of the proposed budget to the city council, the city manager shall post the entire budget document on the city's website. Said proposed budget document shall remain posted during the city council review process contained in this article. After the enactment of the budget, the final adopted budget shall be posted on the city's website and shall remain there throughout the fiscal year for which it is in effect. The final budget document shall reflect any amendments made by the city council and approved by the city manager and shall indicate that it is the final budget of the city.

SECTION 6-6: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

(a) Submission - The city manager shall submit a capital improvement program to the city council at least 60 days before the start of each fiscal year. *The capital improvement program shall include:*

- (1) a general summary of its contents;*
- (2) a list of all capital improvements proposed to be undertaken during the next 5 years, with supporting information as to the need for each capital improvement;*
- (3) cost estimates, methods of financing and recommended time schedules for each improvement;*
and
- (4) the estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining each facility and piece of major equipment involved.*

This information shall be annually revised by the city manager with regard to the capital improvements still pending or in the process of being acquired, improved or constructed.

(b) Public Hearing - The city council shall publish a notice stating: (i) the times and places where entire copies of the capital improvements program are available for inspection by the public; and, (ii) the date, time and place of a public hearing on the plan to be held by the city council not less than 14 days after publication of the notice.

(c) Adoption - At any time after the public hearing but before the end of the current fiscal year, the city council shall by resolution adopt the capital improvements program, which may be amended, provided that each amendment shall be voted on separately and that an increase in the capital improvements program as submitted shall clearly identify the method of financing to accomplish the proposed increase.

SECTION 6-7: INDEPENDENT AUDIT

The city council shall annually provide for an outside audit of the books and accounts of the city to be conducted by a certified public accountant or a firm of certified public accountants, which has no personal interest, direct or indirect, in the fiscal affairs of the city or any of its officers. The city manager shall annually provide to the city council a sum of money sufficient to satisfy the estimated cost of conducting the audit as presented to the city manager, in writing, by the city council. The award of a contract to audit shall be made by the city council on or before September 15 of each year. The report of the audit shall be filed in final form with the city council not later than March 1 in the year following its award. At least every 5 years, the city council shall conduct a competitive procurement process to retain these auditing services.

ARTICLE 7: ELECTIONS

SECTION 7-1: CITY ELECTION

The regular municipal election shall take place on the Tuesday next following the first Monday of November in every even-numbered year.

SECTION 7-2: ELIGIBILITY OF VOTERS

Every citizen and noncitizen who (i) is at least 16 years old, (ii) is not temporarily or permanently disqualified by law because of corrupt practices in respect to elections, (iii) is a resident of Cambridge at the time at the time they register and (iv) has otherwise complied with the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 51 may have their name entered on the list of voters in Cambridge and may vote therein in any municipal election.

SECTION 7-3: PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

All members of the city council and the school committee shall be elected at large by proportional representation.

SECTION 7-4: METHODS OF COUNTING FIRST CHOICES (Revision of language in the repealed MGL Chapter 54A, which is followed by the City of Cambridge with respect to proportional representation voting procedures.)

Any method of counting the voters' first choices and treating any such choices in excess of the quota may be substituted for the method of counting such choices set forth in this article if the election commission determines that such substitution is advisable, provided that they issue regulations embodying the method so substituted and provided, further, that such regulations shall not be effective with respect to any election unless at least thirty days prior thereto copies of such regulations are available for delivery to such of the voters as may request them.

SECTIONS 7-5 and following

[The remaining procedural sections of the charter that have been adopted by Cambridge require updating by the Elections Commission and the Law Department in line with current best practices, modern language, the use of modern voting equipment, and current legal requirements.]

ARTICLE 8: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION, AND COMMUNICATION

[Sections 8-1 to 8-3 are adapted from the National Civic League’s 2021 Model City Charter, 9th Edition.]

SECTION 8-1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The city shall treat public engagement as an integral part of effective and trusted governance, not just as an occasional process or activity. The city shall treat engagement as a “multi-channel” endeavor that includes face-to-face meetings, virtual interactions, and other online communications. The departments of city government shall encourage collaboration in public engagement efforts with other government jurisdictions and authorities, anchor institutions, community-based organizations, civic groups, and individual residents.

SECTION 8-2 INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT AND COORDINATE ENGAGEMENT

The city shall establish new institutional structures or adapt existing structures to oversee, support, coordinate, track, and measure engagement on an ongoing basis. These structures may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Council committees that include residents and other stakeholders*
- (b) Departments or administrative positions*
- (c) Public engagement commissions*
- (d) Community advisory boards, including boards designated to address the concerns of specific populations*
- (e) Youth commissions*
- (f) Participatory budgeting processes and commissions*

SECTION 8-3 PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

To ensure public engagement centers on the needs and goals of community members, the city shall uphold the following principles, using them as the basis of public engagement protocols and in the establishment of public engagement structures:

(a) Equity in engagement. Principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion should guide the design and execution of public engagement activities. When engaging community members, city officials should identify and proactively reach out to the community in its full diversity. To ensure that public engagement activities are not attended only by people already active in local government and politics, city officials should regularly recruit residents through face-to-face or personal written invitations, social media requests, and randomized selection methods. Materials should be written in plain, comprehensible English, and should also be translated into the other predominant languages that residents speak and read.

Traditionally excluded and marginalized individuals and communities should be included in ways they themselves identify as authentic and meaningful. City officials should co-design engagement processes with community members to meet the needs of the communities served. Processes should respect a range of values, interests, perspectives, experiences, cultures, and knowledge of those involved.

The city should expect local the organizations and networks it works with to engage their members in equitable and deliberative ways, so that the input received is representative of their constituents. The city should use an equity lens to evaluate data on impacts of engagement, including costs, benefits, and responsibilities.

(b) Accountability in engagement. There should be meaningful opportunities for community members to bring issues, concerns, and priorities to city officials to influence city policy, ordinances, and actions. Public engagement activities should be designed to appropriately fit the

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legal authority, scope, character, and potential impact of a policy, program, or project. There should be clarity about process sponsorship, purpose, design, and how the results will be used. The purpose and potential influence of each public engagement process should be known by all participants in advance but should be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions during implementation.

(c) Transparency in engagement. Communications about public issues and public engagement opportunities should ensure community members can engage effectively. Communications should be made in the predominant languages that residents understand. Participants should have the opportunity to bring and share their own experiences as well as information they have gathered about the issues at hand. Full and complete results should be shared in a manner accessible to the public, and explanations of how the results will be used or how they will influence decisions should be provided to process participants and the broader public.

(d) Accessibility in engagement. Public engagement activities should be broadly accessible in terms of schedule, location, facilities, and information and communication technologies. Schedules should accommodate a variety of participants. Locations should be nearby and reachable via affordable transit, and some engagement activities should be conducted in places where community members already gather regularly. Facilities should be welcoming public spaces and not present physical or cultural barriers to participation. Online engagement opportunities should use technologies that are freely available to residents and attend to barriers people may face, such as: no access to broadband, limited proficiency with technology, and challenges related to deaf-blind accessibility.

(e) Collaboration in engagement. Public engagement efforts should build on and help develop long-term, collaborative working relationships and mutual learning opportunities with residents of all ages, civic groups, organizational partners, and other governments. This may include project-specific or ongoing community engagement initiatives.

(f) Evaluation of engagement activities. Each public engagement activity and the state of engagement overall should be evaluated through participant feedback, analysis, and learning that is shared publicly and broadly. The ideas, preferences, and/or recommendations contributed by participants should be fully documented and be made available to participants and the broader public. Lessons learned should be applied to future public engagement activities and contribute to the city's overall engagement plan.

SECTION 8.4: RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

(a) Purpose: In order to expand access to city government generally and include voices not typically heard in decision making, the city council has the authority to establish and maintain one or more Resident Assemblies.

(b) Powers: Notwithstanding any other section of this charter, the city council may, by ordinance, delegate to the Resident Assembly:

- (i) The power to issue recommendations on questions posed by the city council and to specify deadlines by which the city council or city manager must publicly respond to the recommendations by hearing or other means.**
- (ii) The power to determine whether a resident initiative petition commenced under Section 8 should be submitted to the city council or voters as provided in Section 8 notwithstanding the petition's failure to meet that Section's procedural requirements.**
- (iii) The power to issue endorsements or counter-endorsements referencing majority and/or minority opinions of the assembly, for initiatives submitted to the city council or voters, including initiatives that satisfy Section 8's procedural requirements.**
- (iv) The power, on its own initiative, to make recommendations or propose draft legislation for review by the city council or voters.**

(c) Mandatory Specifications:

- (i) The city council shall convene at least one Resident Assembly each council term.**

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- (ii) **Any Resident Assembly created pursuant to this section must have the following characteristics:**
 - a) **The assembly shall be created via a sortition process to be provided by ordinance and shall be open to all citizen and non-citizen residents over the age of 16.**
 - b) **The procedures for selecting membership must include a random lottery such that the Resident Assembly is representative of the city’s population.**
 - c) **Membership on the Resident Assembly must be voluntary, and members must be permitted to resign for any reason.**
 - d) **No fewer than 30 people may serve on the Resident Assembly at any given time.**
 - e) **The Resident Assembly must receive sufficient resources to exercise its powers effectively, including financial resources, staff support, translation services and space for deliberation.**
 - f) **The city shall take steps to remove barriers to participation. To ensure that participation is not a financial burden, assembly members must be offered a stipend that is sufficient to compensate members for their time and for reasonable costs incurred by participation, including transportation to the meeting, dependent care, or similar expenses. The city shall provide interpretation and translation support and accessibility technology.**
 - g) **The city shall provide resources for staff support to the resident assembly.**
- (d) **Discretionary Specifications: Subject to the other provisions of this section, the city council has discretion to define, by ordinance, other powers and specifications of a Resident Assembly, including:**
 - (i) **The time and place of the Resident Assembly’s deliberation.**
 - (ii) **Issues or questions upon which the Resident Assembly must deliberate.**
 - (iii) **The procedures by which the Resident Assembly deliberates.**
 - (iv) **The length of term for members of the Resident Assembly.**
 - (v) **The method by which members of the Resident Assembly may be replaced.**

SECTION 8-5 FREE PETITION TO COUNCIL

The city council shall hold a public hearing and act with respect to every citizen petition which is addressed to it, which petition shall not be required to take any particular form, and is signed by [placeholder] voters, or more, and which seeks the passage of a measure concerning matters other than action under section 8-7 . The hearing shall be held by the city council, and the action by the city council shall be taken not later than three months after the petition is filed with the clerk of the council or the secretary of the school committee, as may be appropriate. Hearings on two or more petitions filed under this section may be held at the same time and place. The clerk of the council shall provide notice of the hearing by mail and, if practicable, by phone or email, to the ten persons whose names appear first on the petition at least forty-eight (48) hours before the hearing. Notice, by publication, of all such hearings shall be at public expense.

SECTION 8-6 RESIDENT INITIATIVE MEASURES

- (a) *Commencement: Initiative procedures shall be started by the filing with the clerk of the council of a proposed initiative petition on a form prepared by the city. The petition shall be addressed to the city council, shall contain a request for the passage of a particular measure which shall be set forth in full in the petition, and shall be physically signed by at least __ voters as certified by the election commission. The petition shall be accompanied by an affidavit signed by 10 voters and containing their residential addresses stating they will constitute the petitioners committee and be responsible for circulating the petition and filing it in proper form. Signatures to an initiative petition need not all be on 1 paper but all papers pertaining to any 1 measure shall be fastened together and shall be filed as a single instrument, containing on*

- the petition the number and street of the residence of each signer accompanied by the endorsement of the name and residence address of the person designated as filing the petition. The board of registrars shall attach to the petition a certificate showing the results of the board of registrars' examination and shall return the petition to the clerk of the council. A copy of the board of registrars' certificate shall also be mailed to the petitioners committee.*
- (b) *Referral to solicitor: Immediately following certification of __ signatures, the clerk of the council shall deliver a copy of the petition to the city solicitor. Within 21 days after receipt of a copy of the petition, the city solicitor shall advise the council in writing whether the measure as proposed may lawfully utilize the initiative process and whether, in its present form, it may be lawfully adopted by the council. If the opinion of the city solicitor is that the measure is not in proper form, the reply shall state the reasons for this opinion in full, and a copy of the opinion of the city solicitor shall be mailed to the petitioners committee.*
- (c) *Action on Petitions: If the opinion of the city solicitor is that the petition is in a proper form, within 60 days, the city solicitor shall act with respect to each initiative petition by passing it without change, by passing a measure which is stated to be in lieu of the initiative measure, or by rejecting it. The passage of a measure which is in lieu of an initiative measure shall be considered to be a rejection of the initiative measure. If the council fails to act with respect to any initiative measure that is presented to it within 60 days after the date it has been notified by the city solicitor that it is in proper form, the initiative measure shall be considered to have been approved on the 61st day. If an initiative measure is rejected, the clerk of the council shall promptly give notice to the petitioners committee, by certified mail.*
- (d) *Supplementary Petitions: Thirty days (30) after the date an initiative petition has been rejected by the council, a supplemental initiative petition may be filed with the clerk of the council, but only by persons constituting the original petitioners committee. The supplemental initiative petition shall be physically signed by a number of additional voters which is equal to __% percent of the total number of registered voters as of the date of the most recent city election. If the number of signatures to the supplemental petition is found to be sufficient by the board of registrars, the council shall call a special election to be held on a date fixed by it, not less than 35 nor more than 90 days after the date the council votes to call for the special election, and shall submit the proposed measure, without alteration, to the voters for determination. But if any other city election is to be held within 120 days after the date of the certification, the council may omit the calling of the special election and cause the question to appear on the election ballot at the next city election for determination by the voters.*
- (e) *Publication: The full text of any initiative measure which is submitted to the voters shall be published not less than 7 nor more than 21 days preceding the date of the election at which the question is to be voted upon. Additional copies of the full text shall be available for distribution to the public in the office of the city clerk and shall be published on the city bulletin board.*
- (f) *Form of Question: The ballots used when voting on a measure proposed by the voters under this Section shall contain a question in substantially the following form:
Shall the following measure, which was proposed by an initiative petition as described in the city charter, take effect? (Here, insert a fair, concise summary prepared by the City Solicitor.)
YES _____ NO _____*
- (g) *Required Voter Participation: For any measure to be effective under initiative petition, at least __ percent of the registered voters as of the date of the most recent city election shall vote at the election upon which an initiative is submitted to the voters.*
- (h) *Time of Taking Effect: If a majority of the votes cast on the question, or other affirmative percent as required by general laws or this Charter, is in the affirmative and if the __ percent voter participation requirement is met, the measure shall be deemed to be effective immediately, unless a later date is specified in the measure.*

SECTION 8-7 INELIGIBLE MEASURES

None of the following shall be subject to the free petition or initiative procedures outlined in Section 8-5 and Section 8-6:

- (a) Proceedings relating to the internal organization or operation of any elected body*
- (b) An emergency measure adopted in conformity with the Charter*
- (c) The City budget as a whole*
- (d) Votes for the temporary borrowing of money in anticipation of revenue*
- (e) An appropriation of any sum of money, for any purpose, amounting to less than 1 percent of the total annual budget of the City*
- (f) Any appropriation for the payment of the City's debt or debt service*
- (g) An appropriation of funds to implement a contract or collective bargaining agreement*
- (h) Proceedings relating to election, appointment, removal, discharge, employment, promotion, transfer, or demotion of employees or appointed or elected officials or members of multiple-member bodies or any other personnel action*
- (i) Any proceedings providing for the submission or referral of a matter to the voters at an election*
- (k) Memorial resolutions*
- (l) Any zoning petition that is subject to the city's zoning petition process*

SECTION 8.8 SUBMISSION OF OTHER MATTERS TO VOTERS

The council may of its own motion, submit to the voters for adoption or rejection at any regular municipal election any measure with the same force and effect as is hereby provided for submission by petitions of voters. Such measures must originate within the council and pertain to affairs under said bodies' jurisdiction. Pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 53, Section 18A, non-binding public opinion advisory questions may be placed on the ballot at a regular municipal election.

SECTION 8.9: CONFLICTING PROVISIONS

If 2 or more measures passed at the same election contain conflicting provisions, only the 1 receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes shall take effect.

ARTICLE 9: GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 9-1. CHARTER CHANGES

This charter may be replaced, revised or amended in accordance with any procedure made available under the state constitution or by statutes enacted in accordance with the state constitution.

SECTION 9-2. SEVERABILITY

This charter is severable. If any provision of this charter is held invalid, the other provisions shall not be affected by this holding. If the application of this charter to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the application of the charter to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected.

SECTION 9-3. SPECIFIC PROVISION TO PREVAIL

To the extent that a specific provision of this charter conflicts with any provision expressed in general terms, the specific provision of the charter shall prevail.

SECTION 9-4. RULES AND REGULATIONS

A copy of all rules and regulations adopted by a city agency shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk not later than the effective date of the rule or regulation and shall be available for review by any person who requests such information at any reasonable time. Unless an emergency exists as determined by the city manager, no rule or regulation adopted by a city agency shall become effective until at least 5 days following the date it is filed.

SECTION 9-5. PERIODIC REVIEW OF CHARTER

Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 2, the City Council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the special committee shall be voters of the city not holding elective office. The special committee shall file a report with the City Council within 1 year of its appointment recommending any changes to the city charter which it deems necessary or desirable, unless an extension is authorized by vote of the City Council. Action on any proposed charter changes shall be as authorized by the Massachusetts constitution or general laws.

SECTION 9-6. PERIODIC REVIEW OF ORDINANCES

Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 5 or in a zero, the city council shall provide for a review to be made of some or all of the ordinances of the city to prepare a proposed revision or recodification of them. This review shall be made by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the committee shall be voters of the city. The special committee shall file its report with the city clerk at a date specified by ordinance. The review of city ordinances shall be under the supervision of the city solicitor. Copies of any recommendations shall be made available to the public at a cost not to exceed the actual cost of the reproduction.

SECTION 9-7. UNIFORM PROCEDURES GOVERNING MULTIPLE-MEMBER BODIES

(a) Meetings - All appointed multiple-member bodies of the city shall meet regularly at the times and places that the multiple-member body, by the body's own rules, prescribe. Special meetings of any multiple-member body shall be held on the call of the chairman or by a majority of the members of the body. Notice of the meeting shall be posted as required by law. Except as may otherwise be authorized by law, all meetings of all multiple-member bodies shall at all times be open to the public.

(b) Meeting Documents and Submissions - Each appointed multiple-member body shall determine its own rules and order of business within the bounds of any applicable ordinance that created it. Each multiple-member body shall provide for the keeping of agendas, minutes and related submissions of its proceedings.

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SAMPLE DRAFT – COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM

All such documents shall be a public record and certified copies shall be placed on file in the office of the city clerk within 15 days of approval.

(c) Voting - If requested by a member, a vote of an appointed multiple-member body shall be taken by a roll call vote and the vote of each member shall be recorded in the minutes, but if the vote is unanimous, only that fact need be recorded.

(d) Quorum - A majority of the members of an appointed multiple-member body shall constitute a quorum. Unless some other provision is made by the multiple-member body's own rules while a quorum is present, except on procedural matters, a majority of the full membership of the body shall be required to vote on a matter representing an exercise of the powers of the multiple-member body. General Laws related to a vote to meet in "executive session" shall always require a majority of members of the body.

(e) Residency - Unless otherwise allowed by law, regulation, ordinance or by this charter, all members of multiple-member bodies shall be residents of the city at all times during that members term of office. If a member of a multiple-member body removes from the city during the term for which appointed, such seat shall immediately be deemed vacant and filled under section 3-3.

SECTION 9-8. NUMBER

Words importing the singular number may extend and be applied to several persons or things; words importing the plural number may include the singular.

SECTION 9-9. REFERENCES TO GENERAL LAWS

All references to General Laws contained in the charter refer to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are intended to refer to and to include any amendments or revisions to such chapters or sections or to the corresponding chapters and sections of any rearrangement, revision or recodification of such statutes enacted or adopted subsequent to the adoption of this charter.

SECTION 9-10. COMPUTATION OF TIME

In computing time under this charter the day of the act or event after which the designated period of time begins to run shall not be included. The last day of the period shall be included, unless it is Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, in which event the period shall be extended to the next day which is not a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. When the period of time designated is fewer than 7 days, intermediate Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays shall not be included, when the period is 7 days or more, Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays shall be included.

SECTION 9-11. OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A the city council members-elect and the school committee members-elect shall, on the first Monday in the January of each even-numbered year, meet and take an oath or affirmation to the faithful discharge of the duties of their office by the city clerk. If the first Monday in January of any even-numbered year falls on a legal holiday, the oaths or affirmations shall be taken on the following day.

Upon receiving the oath or affirmation, each official shall document the same by signing an oath or affirmation that shall be kept in a bound book maintained by the city clerk. In the case of the absence of any member-elect of the city council or school committee on the day the oath is administered, the oath or affirmation may at any time thereafter be administered to that person by the city clerk, the assistant city clerk, a judge of a court of record, or a justice of the peace.

SECTION 9-12. CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT

Every person who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple-member body shall receive a certificate of that election or appointment from the city clerk. Except as otherwise provided by law, every person who is elected or appointed to an office or as a member of a multiple-member body,

Committee Recommendations: black bold

Sample Text: grey italic

SAMPLE DRAFT – COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM

before performing any act under this election or appointment, shall take and subscribe to an oath or affirmation to qualify to enter upon the duties. A record of this oath shall be kept by the city clerk.

SECTION 9-13. LIMITATION ON OFFICE HOLDING

Unless otherwise allowed by law or this charter, no person shall simultaneously hold more than 1 city office or position of employment. This section may be waived by the city manager upon the appointment of a person to an additional office or position of employment by filing a notice of the waiver with an explanation and justification with the city clerk and city council. Any hours worked in any part-time position shall not be the same or otherwise conflict with the hours worked in a full-time position

SECTION 9-14. ENFORCEMENT OF CHARTER PROVISIONS

It shall be the duty of the city manager to see that the charter is faithfully followed and complied with by all city agencies and city employees. Whenever it appears to the city manager that a city agency or city employee is failing to follow this charter, the city manager shall, in writing, cause notice to be given to that agency or employee directing compliance with the charter. If it shall appear to the city council that the city manager personally is not following the charter, it shall, by resolution, direct the attention of the city manager to those areas in which it believes there is a failure to comply with the charter. The procedures made available in chapter 231A of the General Laws may be used to determine the rights, duties, status or other legal relations arising under this charter, including any question of construction or validity which may be involved in such determination.

ARTICLE 10: TRANSITION PROVISIONS

SECTION 10-1 CONTINUATION OF EXISTING LAWS

All ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations and votes of the city council, which are in force at the time this charter is adopted and are not inconsistent with the provisions of this charter, shall continue in full force until amended or repealed. Where provisions of this charter, as amended, conflict with city ordinances, rules, regulations, orders, special acts and acceptances of laws of the commonwealth, the provisions of this charter shall govern. All provisions of city ordinances, rules, regulations, orders and administrative actions not superseded by this charter shall remain in force.

SECTION 10-2 EXISTING OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

Any person holding a city office or employment under the city shall retain such office or employment and shall continue to perform the duties of the office until provision shall have been made in accordance with this charter for the performance of the said duties by another person or agency. No person in the permanent full-time service or employment of the city shall forfeit pay grade or time in service. Each such person shall be retained in a capacity as similar to the person's former capacity as is practical.

SECTION 10-3 CONTINUATION OF GOVERNMENT

All city officers, boards, commissions or agencies shall continue to perform their duties until reappointed or until successors to their respective positions are fully appointed or elected or until their duties have been transferred and assumed by another city office, board, commission or agency.

SECTION 10-4 CONTINUATION OF OBLIGATIONS

All official bonds, obligations, contracts, and other instruments entered into or executed by or to the city before the adoption of this charter and all taxes, special assessments, fines, penalties, and forfeitures incurred or imposed, due or owing to the city, shall be enforced and collected, and all writs, prosecutions, actions and causes of action, except as herein otherwise provided, shall continue and remain unaffected by this charter. No legal act done by or in favor of the city shall be rendered invalid by the adoption of this charter.

SECTION 10-5 TRANSFER OF RECORDS AND PROPERTY

All records, property and equipment whatsoever of any office, board, commission, committee or agency or part thereof, the powers and duties of which are assigned in whole or in part to another city office, board, commission or agency, shall be transferred forthwith to such office, board, commission or agency.

SECTION 10-6 POLICY ORDER TRACKING

Within 18 months of the effective date of this charter, the City Manager will complete a study of the use of technology to categorize and track policy orders for the purpose of providing information to the public about the status of policy order votes and implementation of these policy orders by the executive branch pursuant to Section 3-9. The information shall be made available on the town website as soon as practicable.

SECTION 10-7 CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Within 6 months of the adoption of this charter, the city council shall create a Campaign Finance Committee to study public financing mechanisms and prepare recommendations with the goal of making running for office in Cambridge more accessible. The study committee shall consider a full range of options, including but not limited to voucher programs, campaign spending, and contribution limits. The committee shall provide an analysis of the potential benefits and barriers of each option. No action is necessary if the city council has already taken action consistent with this provision.

Committee Recommendations: **black bold**

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The committee shall issue recommendations to the city council and the next charter review committee within 12 months of creation. The city council shall take action on the recommendations and/or refer recommendations to next charter review committee within 90 days of receipt.

SECTION 10-8 RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

The establishment of a resident assembly is intended to create an inclusive and representative group of voices that are not traditionally heard in city government. The resident assembly shall be selected by sortition from the general population, with effort made to reach residents of all backgrounds and experiences. Within 12 months of the effective date of this charter, the city council, in consultation with the city manager, city clerk, and relevant experts in the field, will complete a study on the best method for implementing the resident assembly as provided in Section 8. Within 18 months of the effective date of this charter, the city council shall enact ordinances establishing the resident assembly and commence the process of selecting members.

SECTION 10-10 AND BEYOND: RESERVED FOR TECHNICAL TRANSITION SECTIONS

[reserved for technical sections]

VIII. Items for Future Charter Review Committee Consideration

This Charter Review was the first review since the adoption of the Charter 80 years ago. The Committee was tasked to make recommendations for changes to the Charter. The breadth of potential items for consideration was daunting, acknowledging the constraints of time and capacity, the Committee focused on addressing key aspects of the Charter. As we conclude this review, it becomes evident that numerous considerations remain for future charter review Committees. These topics could also be addressed by the city council prior to the next charter review. These considerations include but are not limited to:

1. Simplified, accessible and translated charter text
2. Modifications to Resident Assembly Structure, including additional powers and/or decision-making power
3. Campaign Finance Reform
4. Election Voting Method and Tabulation Updates
5. Elected Police Review Advisory Board
6. Appointment and Confirmation process for City Department Heads

IX. Community Engagement Summary

The Committee sought to engage with the people of Cambridge to understand their expectations of city government relating to equity, participation, accountability, transparency, justice, and democracy.

The Committee heard from residents, community organizations, youth, neighborhood associations, tenant organizations, political organizations, municipal stakeholders, service providers, educational institutions, and business owners. The Committee used diverse outreach strategies to engage people where they are, in the spaces where they are comfortable, and through the most accessible methods.

The Committee sought to inform the public about the charter review process, the Committee's goals, and how the charter is relevant to each person's everyday life. Not only was education central to the outreach efforts of the Committee, but the Committee prioritized gathering feedback, opinions, and new ideas, ensuring the incorporation of community input into all Committee discussions and deliberations. The Committee leveraged their existing networks and community leaders to involve all residents and community groups.

Inform and General Education

➤ Fact sheets / Flyers.

In Fall 2022, informational flyers were distributed across the city in high-traffic areas to raise awareness of the Charter Review Committee's formation and point residents to additional information. In addition to physical flyers, the Committee leveraged their networks and connections across Cambridge to distribute materials electronically - encouraging community and organization leaders to circulate.

➤ Information Sessions and Initial Public Meetings.

The Committee held two initial public meetings in early 2023, one in person at the Cambridge Main Library on January 24th and one the following weekend on February 4th, via Zoom. These meetings were intended to inform residents about the review process, the topics a city charter controls and to gather initial feedback and suggestions for the Committee.

➤ City Wide Mailer.

In June 2023, the Committee sent an informational postcard to all 69,100 Cambridge residential addresses to provide information on the Charter Review Committee, high-level details on what a charter is, and how residents can get involved.

➤ Newsletter.

A bi-weekly newsletter was sent to over 200 residents throughout the Committee's work to update them on Committee topics, share meeting dates, and encourage public comment at Committee meetings.

➤ Committee Members' Networks.

Throughout the 17 month review process, Committee members distributed materials and engaged with their personal and professional Cambridge connections to inform and spread awareness of the

charter review, as well as set up times for the Committee present on charter topics and hear from the public in organizational meetings in an effort to engage the public in familiar spaces.

Involve and Consult

➤ Public Comment.

At each bi-weekly charter review meeting, the Committee designated time for verbal public comment. The Committee heard 91 verbal public comments from a wide range of Cambridge residents during the review process. In addition, the Committee received 162 written comments to cambridgecharterreview@cambridgema.gov, which were distributed to the entire Committee before each meeting as part of the meeting materials.

➤ Public Community Meetings.

The Committee held two additional public gatherings on May 16th, 2023 at The Foundry and July 25th, 2023 at Tasty Burger Central. These informal community gatherings allowed community members to dialogue with each other and Committee members on charter-related topics, share their top priorities for Cambridge City Government and answer community questions. Over 40 community members attended, as well as candidates for public office.

➤ Community Groups and Cambridge Events.

The Committee attended community organization meetings. Many of these were at the request of the organizations. Others resulted from outreach. The goal was to engage the community in their familiar groups, present on the Committee process, inform on charter topics, document public feedback and answer community questions. The Committee also tabled at Cambridge community events, like Mayfair, to increase general awareness and engage community members where they work and play. The committee acknowledges that its community outreach efforts were only a beginning, only a sampling, of what must be a broader and more comprehensive outreach process before any Charter Reform proposals are put before the voters of Cambridge. Noted are any committee members present.

- January 11th, 2023 - DSA (Mosammat Faria Afreen)
- February 3rd, 2023 - Harvard Square Business Association (Kai Long, Patrick Magee, Susan Shell)
- February 16th, 2023 - Porter Square Neighborhood Association (Kathleen Born, Jim Stockard)
- February 21st, 2023 - Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) Resident Leaders (Kathleen Born, Jim Stockard)
- February 22st, 2023 - East Cambridge Planning Team (Patrick Magee)
- February 28th, 2023 - Cambridgeport Neighborhood Group (Max Clermont)
- March 2nd 2023 - A Better Cambridge (Kathleen Born, Jennifer Gilbert)
- March 9th, 2023 - Cambridge Democratic City Committee (Kai Long, Lisa Peterson, Susan Shell)
- March 14th, 2023 - School Committee Round Table (Mosammat Faria Afreen, Kathleen Born, Ellen Shachter)
- March 22nd, 2023 - City Council Round Table
- March 23rd, 2023 - Ward 1 and 2

- April 5th, 2023 - Breakfast Zoom - Lori Lander gathering (Max Clermont, Kai Long, Lisa Peterson)
 - April 12, 2023 - My Brothers Keeper
 - April 16th, 2023 - Cambridge Citizens Coalition (Kathleen Born)
 - April 23rd, 2023 - Harvard Square Neighborhood Association
 - April 23rd, 2023 - Avon Hill (Kathleen Born, Lisa Peterson)
 - May 7th, 2023 - Mayfair (Kai Long, Patrick Magee)
 - May 11th, 2023 - MIT Government Relations and Community Engagement Teams (Kaleb Abebe, Kathleen Born, Susan Shell)
 - June 12th, 2023 - Rivermark Apartments
 - July 26th, 2023 - North Cambridge Food Pantry
- Interviews with Previous Cambridge Elected Officials and City Employees. The Committee conducted 11 interviews with former city councilors, city managers, an assistant city solicitor, and a school superintendent during March and April 2023. These discussions, led by various Committee members, sought insights from the individuals working within the government and city charter. They shared the strengths and challenges of their roles and ideas for enhancing the city's foundational structures.
- coUrbanize. In Spring 2023, the Committee launched an online community engagement platform to provide an additional avenue for Cambridge residents to learn about the charter review, find resources, respond to Committee questions and dialogue with other members of the Cambridge community. Active through the end of Summer 2023, the site received 1392 unique visitors, 108 comments and 208 poll responses.

X. Appendix

Appendix A:	Committee Members
Appendix B:	Operations of the Committee and Acknowledgements
Appendix C:	Project History
Appendix D:	Cambridge Current Plan E Charter
Appendix E:	Meeting Minutes and Recordings
Appendix F:	Other Votes
Appendix G:	Public Comments
Appendix H:	coUrbanize Comments
Appendix I:	Former Elected Official and City Employee Interviews

Appendix A: Committee Members

The committee members with their personal statements from the Cambridge Charter Review webpage <https://www.cambridgema.gov/charterreview>

Kaleb Abebe

In 1999, my family and I moved from Ethiopia to Cambridge, marking the start of a new chapter in this city, which I now proudly call home. Throughout the years, living in various vibrant neighborhoods has deepened my connection to Cambridge. I'm a father to Kamen and Felicia and a dedicated husband to Charlene. Professionally, I've blended technology and education, impacting classrooms in Cambridge Public Schools and now at MIT. Additionally, I'm working towards a dual Bachelor's and Master's degree at Harvard Extension School.*

Jessica Dejesus Acevedo

Jessica De Jesus Acevedo, M.Ed., is the owner of Little Star of Ours family childcare in Cambridge, Massachusetts, established in 2016. She is a third-year doctoral student in the Early Childhood Education and Care Ph.D. program at the University of Massachusetts - Boston. Presently serving on the board of Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MAAEYC), committee member in Cambridge-Somerville Black Business Network (CSBBN), FuelEd Fellow, and City of Cambridge First Charter Review committee member.

Mosammat Faria Afreen

Mosammat Faria Afreen emigrated from Bangladesh when she was four to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she attended elementary and middle school. After attending high school in Boston, Afreen went to Brandeis University where she graduated with a dual BS/MS in Biology and a BS in Neuroscience in 2020. Outside of her work in science, Afreen is particularly interested in housing policy due to the exorbitant rental/housing costs making Cambridge an unsustainable place for its long-term residents to continue living in the city, her experience growing up in public housing, and volunteering with Project Right to Housing, a community organization focused on the needs of the unhoused community and creating social housing in Cambridge.

Kathleen Born (chair)

I am a retired architect with a parallel career in public service. I came to Cambridge in 1970 and I thought I had arrived in heaven. Friendly people from all over the world, history everywhere, a palpable civic commitment to equity and justice. My four children reaped the benefits of Cambridge Public Schools and athletic programs. I had the honor of being elected to four terms (1993-2001) on the City Council. Since 2012, I have served as Chair of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority.

Nikolas Bowie

My name is Niko Bowie, and I'm a professor at Harvard Law School. I'm a historian who teaches and writes about local government law, constitutional law, and democracy. I graduated from CRLS in 2005 and served on the Planning Board from 2018–21.

Kevin Chen

Kevin Chen grew up in Central Massachusetts and has lived in Cambridge since 2017. Kevin now works as an energy and environmental attorney at Foley Hoag LLP. He enjoys listening to and playing music, exploring cities by foot, and learning by eating.

Max Clermont

My name is Max Clermont and I live in the Cambridgeport neighborhood. I am a Senior Project Lead with Partners In Health - United States. I am an engagement strategist who uses community organizing skills and policy expertise to provide management to health programs, political campaigns and agencies in the public and private sectors. I have deep expertise in the social determinants of health, health inequities, public/private partnerships and the use of measurement and evidence based practices to drive KPIs in numerous sectors.

Jennifer Gilbert

Jennifer Gilbert is the Founder and Executive Director of Housing Navigator Massachusetts, Inc. Creating housing opportunities and easing housing access are the connecting threads in Jennifer's career--from her first job at a Philadelphia homeless shelter to 20 years developing affordable housing and community spaces. She lives in North Cambridge with her husband and senior dog Emmylou.

Kai Long

Originally from Baltimore, MD by way of Santa Barbara CA it's hard to believe that I have lived in Cambridge for 25 years. I have raised my daughter and have a Speech-language pathology private practice in Cambridge.

Patrick Magee

I am a Massachusetts native who commuted to Northeastern University to study Political Science. I have called Cambridge home since 2006, when I opened Atwood's Tavern, which I co-owned and operated with my brother until its closing in 2023. I am a founding member and am currently the President of the East Cambridge Business Association.*

Mina Makarious

I live outside of Porter Square with my wife and two kids. I am a local government and environmental lawyer by day.

Lisa Peterson

I have lived in Cambridge since the 1980's, currently in north Cambridge. I have two adult sons who were born and raised in Cambridge. I have recently retired, having worked for over 30 years for the City of Cambridge, most recently as Deputy City Manager and prior to that as Public Works Commissioner. During retirement I have enjoyed volunteering for a few Cambridge nonprofits: Food for Free, CEOC Food Pantry, and The Loop Lab.

Ellen Shachter

My name is Ellen Shachter. I have lived in Cambridge since 1985 and my husband is a public school teacher in Somerville and my two children attended Cambridge public schools. I am the founding Director

of the Somerville Office of Housing Stability which was opened in 2018. Prior to taking this position I was an attorney at Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services for twenty-eight years representing low income families in housing and public benefits matters.

Susan Shell

I am a thirty year plus resident of Cambridge who has lived many other places in the US and Canada as well. I am currently a professor of political science at Boston College. My husband and I have two grown children and one granddaughter.

Jim Stockard

Jim Stockard has lived near Porter Square in a cooperative, known as Common Place, which he and his wife Susan helped to found in 1973. He served for a number of years on the Board of the Cambridge Housing Authority and continues to serve as a Trustee of the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust Fund. He coached Little League Baseball in North Cambridge for 17 years. Trained as an urban planner, Jim is retired from directing the Loeb Fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he continues to teach courses about housing.

* as amended

Appendix B: Operations of the Committee and Acknowledgements

Our Committee of fifteen, fully engaged Cambridge residents convened remotely, typically twice a month from September 2022 to January 2024, for review, discussion, debate, and evaluation of city charter options. There were thirty-six public meetings of the full Committee, plus an even greater number of small working group sessions devoted to particular sections of the Charter, to planning the meeting agendas and to drafting the arguments for each form of government.

Our work was ably guided by the consultancy of the Collins Center of UMass Boston including Michael Ward, Patricia Lloyd, and Elizabeth Corbo. The Collins Center has provided similar services to more than thirty municipalities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Their deep experience with Charter Review efforts and their perspective on local government, both practical and idealist, has been invaluable.

Shortly after the Charter Review Committee was convened, it became apparent that the group needed dedicated and impartial staff to manage communications (including a dedicated city website), to initiate and manage public outreach and input, to facilitate civil discussion in our meetings and, in particular, to organize the often-complex choices within the decision-making process. Anna Corning, who had critical experience with the City of Somerville's charter review effort, was engaged to manage these tasks and she did so brilliantly. Thanks are due to the City Manager and the Personnel Department for recognizing the Committee's needs and in designating this position. Simply put, this report would not be possible without Anna Corning.

The City of Cambridge Law Department, in particular Elliott Veloso, faithfully attended each of our meetings to provide answers to legal questions as they arose and to be sure that we were abiding by every aspect of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and the ordinances of the City of Cambridge.

City Clerk Diane LeBlanc took office at about the time our Committee was constituted. She was helpful in determining the scheduling and posting protocols for the Committee meetings. Just as our effort accelerated, the City of Cambridge gained a new Clerk of Committees, Nicole Erwin. After a much appreciated initial contribution from Naomi Stephens of the City Council Office, it was our good fortune to have Ms. Erwin cover our regular meetings and compile the minutes. These minutes (attached) have been individually reviewed and approved by our Committee as an accurate record of our proceedings.

Finally, throughout the project, Patrick Hayes aide to City Councillor Nolan, facilitated connection to the City of Cambridge web presence, Zoom account and other liason services. Michael Scarlett, Chief of Staff to Mayor Suddiqui, was an important liason to the Mayor for trouble-shooting and operational issues as they arose.

Appendix C: Project History

In 2020, the City Council began a focused discussion about the possibility of a revised or new Cambridge City Charter.

The topic of the charter, in particular the form of government (Council/Manager vs Elected Mayor), as well as modernization of PR (Proportional Representation), had come up periodically in earlier Council terms. However, the complexity of the process for change or replacement of the charter, coupled with a generally perceived satisfaction with the current system and/or resident disinterest in the subject, had likely contributed to an apathy in the past.

With a nationwide focus on elections, as well as a local search process for a new City Manager outside the traditional line of succession, the Council may have sensed that it was an opportune time to take another look at the 80-year-old structure of the Cambridge city government. In addition, there were aspects of Proportional Election mechanics, especially vote tabulation (distribution of the surplus votes and the method of replacement of Council or School Committee members) which were out of step with new technology and could not be changed without a deeper dive into charter reform.

Collins Center Initial Engagements

Collins Center of UMass Boston was engaged in 2020 to provide the Council with a report and public presentation that gave background and context on City Charters in general and the various processes for their amendments or total replacements. A link to the report accompanying their presentation follows:

[Collins Center September 23, 2020 Presentation to City Council](#)

Collins Center of UMass Boston made a second report (memo) to the City Council detailing the legislative and electoral process available for making certain types of changes to the existing Charter or for replacing the entire Charter with a new one.

[Collins Center March 11, 2021 Memo to City Council \(1\)](#)

After meeting with individual City Councillors to receive questions and concerns, Collins Center of UMass Boston submitted a third report on April 28, 2021.

[Collins Center April 28, 2021 Memo to City Council \(2\)](#)

Charter Review Ballot Question

Following the Collins Center recommendations for Charter Review, the City Council voted to place on the 2021 municipal ballot three changes to the City Charter. One concerned the appointment process to some Boards and Commissions. One concerned mandated performance reviews of the City Manager. The final question required the City Council to make a formal review of the City Charter every ten years.

Section 116(b). Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 2, the City Council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the special committee shall be voters of the city not holding elective office. The special committee

shall file a report with the City Council within 1 year of its appointment recommending any changes to the city charter which it deems necessary or desirable, unless an extension is authorized by vote of the City Council. Action on any proposed charter changes shall be as authorized by the Massachusetts constitution or general laws

City Council Ordinance Regarding Charter Review

The City Council codified the provisions of the Charter Review ballot question in an Ordinance passed February 27, 2023.

Section 2.02.100 Special Committee to Review the City Charter Every Ten Years

A. As provided in G.L. c. 43, §116(b), no later than July 1 in each year ending in 2, beginning in 2022 and every 10 years thereafter, the City Council shall establish a special committee tasked with reviewing the City Charter and recommending any proposed changes the special committee deems necessary or desirable.

B. The special committee shall:

(i) be made up of 12-18 registered voters of the City, not currently holding any elective office;

(ii) be made up of members selected by an ad hoc committee of four councillors appointed by the Mayor;

(iii) hold all of its meetings in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law and keep written minutes of all meetings which shall be submitted to and approved by the special committee at its next meeting;

(iv) hold duly posted and advertised public meetings to seek input from members of the community on whether any changes to the City Charter should be made and the reasons why any proposed changes would be desirable, the beneficial effects that any such changes would have upon the electorate and the community in general, and the beneficial effects that any such changes would have upon the reasonable operation and effectiveness of City government;

(v) submit a written report to the City Council within one (1) year of its appointment, unless the special committee seeks an extension of the one-year period for enumerated reasons stated by the special committee and the City Council approves the requested extension of the one-year period by majority vote. The written report shall include any charter changes the special committee recommends as necessary or desirable by a two-thirds vote of the special committee, and shall include the reasons for the recommended changes to be made and the anticipated effects of the changes as set forth in subsection iv above; and

(vi) dissolve once it files its written report with the City Council.

C. Action on any proposed Charter changes shall be as authorized by law.

Appointment of the Charter Review Committee

The City Council, in Spring 2022, authorized an Ad Hoc Charter Review Committee of four City Councillors to design and organize the selection process for the Charter Committee members. The authorization noted the following instructions:

“...that the Charter Review Committee make a truly concerted effort to ensure that a diversity of voices, particularly from traditionally underrepresented and marginalized communities be represented...”

On July 27, 2022, Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui announced the 15 members of the Charter Review Committee:

“The Ad Hoc Selection Committee reviewed 122 highly qualified applicants and on July 1, 2022, announced 15 Charter Review Committee members who reflect the diversity of Cambridge: Kaleb Abebe, Jessica Dejesus Acevedo, Mosammat Faria Afreen, Kathleen Born, Nikolas Bowie, Kevin Chen, Max Clermont, Jennifer Gilbert, Kai Long, Patrick Magee, Mina Makarious, Lisa Peterson, Ellen Shachter, Susan Shell, and Jim Stockard. Kathleen Born will serve as Chair.”

Appendix D: Cambridge Current Plan E Charter

Plan E Charter*

*Please note that the full text of the Cambridge Plan E Charter, as amended by three amendments effective January 1, 2022 (one added a paragraph to Section 105, and the two others added two subsections to Section 116), appears in its entirety below. It exists without the three amendments of January 1, 2022 within separate sections of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 43, beginning with Section 93 and continuing in separate listings. See link immediately below:

<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter43>

PLAN E: Government by a city council including a mayor elected from its number, and a city manager, with all elected bodies elected at large by proportional representation (from Chapter 43 of the Massachusetts General Laws)

*Chapter 43:
Section 93. Plan
E; effective upon
adoption* **Section 93.** The method of city government provided for in the following twenty-three sections shall be known as Plan E. Upon the adoption by a city of Plan E, it shall become operative as provided in sections one to forty-five, inclusive, except as otherwise provided by the following sections.

*Chapter 43:
Section 94.
Definitions* **Section 94.** The terms “city clerk” and “registrars of voters” when used in sections ninety-three to one hundred and sixteen, inclusive, shall have the respective meanings given them by section one of chapter fifty.

*Chapter 43:
Section 95.
Governing
power of city
council, etc.* **Section 95.** The government of the city and the general management and control of all its affairs shall, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, be vested in a city council, which shall exercise its powers in the manner hereinafter set forth, but subject to sections one to forty-five, inclusive, insofar as not inconsistent; except that the city manager shall have the authority hereinafter specified, that the general management and conduct of the public schools of the city and of the property pertaining thereto shall be vested in the school committee, and that the city clerk, the city auditor, any official of the city appointed by the governor and any trustees or other officers whose election by the voters of the city is required by reason of the fact that the city has accepted any gift, devise or bequest shall have the powers and duties which may be conferred and imposed upon them by law.

*Chapter 43:
Section 96. City
council;
membership;
tenure* **Section 96.** The city council shall consist of seven or nine members, as provided in this section, all of whom shall, at each regular municipal election, be elected at large for terms of two years each by proportional representation as hereinafter provided and shall serve until their successors are qualified. The city council in any city having seven wards or less at the time of adoption of this plan shall be composed of seven members and the city council in any city having more than seven wards at the time of adoption thereof, nine members. Section eight of chapter thirty-nine shall apply to members of the city council. All trustees or other officers mentioned in section ninety-five shall at each regular municipal election be elected at large for terms of two years each by [proportional representation](#) as hereinafter provided.

*Chapter 43:
Section 97. City
council; powers
and duties;
organization* **Section 97.** The city council shall have and exercise all the legislative powers of the city, except as such powers are reserved by this chapter to the school committee and to the qualified voters of the city.

The city council, elected as aforesaid, shall meet at ten o'clock in the forenoon of the first Monday of January following the regular municipal election, and the members of the city council shall severally make oath, before the city clerk or a justice of the peace, to perform faithfully the duties of their respective offices, except that any member-elect not present shall so make oath at the first regular meeting of the city council thereafter which he attends. For the purposes of organization, the city clerk shall be temporary chairman until the mayor or vice-chairman has qualified.

Thereupon the city council shall, by a majority vote of all the members elected, elect a mayor and a vice-chairman from its own members and the persons elected as such shall likewise make oath to perform faithfully the duties of the respective offices to which they are so elected, and they may so make oath at the same meeting at which they are so elected. The organization of the city council shall take place as aforesaid, notwithstanding the absence, death, refusal to serve or non-election of one or more of the members; provided, that a majority of all the members elected to the city council are present and have qualified. If the office of mayor or vice-chairman becomes vacant, the city council shall in like manner elect one of its members to fill such office for the unexpired term; provided, that no such vacancy shall be filled so long as there is any vacancy in the council.

*Chapter 43:
Section 98.
Meetings of city
council*

Section 98. The city council shall fix suitable times for its regular meetings. The mayor, or the vice-chairman of the city council, or any four members thereof, or any three members thereof in the case of a city council composed of seven members, may at any time call a special meeting by causing written notices, stating the time of holding such meeting and signed by the person or persons calling the same, to be delivered in hand to each member of the city council, or left at his usual dwelling place, at least twelve hours before the time of such meeting. Meetings of the city council may also be held at any time when all the members of the city council are present and consent thereto. Except in the cases of executive sessions authorized by section twenty-three A of chapter thirty-nine, all meetings of the city council shall be open to the press and to the public, and the rules of the city council shall provide that citizens and employees of the city shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any such meeting in regard to any matter considered thereat.

*Chapter 43:
Section 99.
Quorum;
presiding officer;
duties of city
clerk; voting
procedure*

Section 99. A majority of all the members elected to the city council shall constitute a quorum. The mayor, if present, shall preside at the meetings and may vote. In the absence of the mayor, the vice-chairman of the city council shall preside and, in the absence of both, a temporary chairman shall be chosen, who shall serve during the absence of both the mayor and the vice-chairman. The city clerk shall be, ex-officio, clerk of the city council, and shall keep records of its proceedings; but, in case of his absence or disability or of a vacancy in the office, the city council shall elect a temporary clerk, who shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of his duties and shall act as clerk of the city council until the city clerk resumes his duties or a new city clerk is qualified. All final votes of the city council on questions involving the expenditure of fifty dollars or more, or upon the request of any member any vote of the city council, shall be by yeas and nays and shall be entered on the records. The affirmative vote of a majority of all the members elected to the city council shall be necessary for the passage of any order, ordinance, resolution or vote, except that the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present shall be sufficient to adjourn any meeting of the city council.

*Chapter 43:
Section 100.
Mayor; official
head of city;
powers and
duties; vice-
chairman*

Section 100. The mayor shall be recognized as the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes and shall be recognized by the courts for the purpose of serving civil process and by the governor for military purposes. In time of public danger or emergency, as determined by the city council, he may, with its consent, take command of the police, maintain order and enforce the laws; and he shall have all the authority and powers conferred upon mayors by sections eighteen and nineteen of chapter thirty-three. He shall be chairman of the city council and chairman of the school committee. He shall have no power to veto but shall have the same powers as any other member of either such body to vote upon all measures coming before it. He shall perform such other duties consistent with his office and with sections ninety-three to one hundred and sixteen, inclusive, as may be imposed upon him by the city council. During the absence or disability of the mayor, or during the time such office is vacant, his duties shall be performed by the vice-chairman. In case, at any time, there shall be neither a mayor nor a vice-chairman, the member of the council senior in length of service, or, if more than one have so served, then the member senior both in age and length of service shall perform the duties of mayor until a new mayor has qualified. The mayor shall have no power of appointment, except of the employees mentioned in section twenty-five and except as provided in section one hundred and two.

*Chapter 43:
Section 101.
Repealed, 1952,
259, Sec. 3*

*Chapter 43:
Section 102.
Vacancies in
elective bodies*

Section 102. Except as provided in this section, a vacancy in any elective body shall be filled in the manner provided in section thirteen of chapter fifty-four A. If, under said section, no regularly nominated candidate of the city council or school committee remains, the vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the remaining members, except that if the remaining members fail to fill such vacancy within thirty days after they shall have been notified by the city clerk that such vacancy exists, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of any qualified voter of the city by the mayor, or, if there is no mayor, by the vice-chairman, or if there is no mayor or vice-chairman, by the member of the council or of the school committee, as the case may be, senior in length of service, or, if more than one have so served, then the member senior both in age and length of service.

Chapter 43: **Section 103.** The city council shall appoint a city manager who shall be sworn to the faithful
Section 103. City performance of his duties and who shall be the chief administrative officer of the city and shall be
manager; responsible for the administration of all departments, commissions, boards and officers of the city,
appointment; whether established before its adoption of this plan or thereafter, except that of the city clerk, city
qualifications; auditor, any official appointed by the governor or any body elected by the voters of the city. He
compensation; shall be appointed on the basis of his administrative and executive qualifications only, and need not
removal be a resident of the city or commonwealth when appointed. He shall hold office during the pleasure
of the city council and shall receive such compensation as it shall fix by ordinance. No member of
the city council shall during his term of office be chosen as city manager, and no person who has
within two years been elected to or served in any elective office in the city or in the county in
which the city is located shall be chosen as city manager.

Before the city manager may be removed, if he so demand, he shall be given a written statement of
the reasons alleged for his removal and shall have the right to be heard publicly thereon at a
meeting of the city council prior to the final vote on the question of his removal, but pending and
during such hearing the city council may suspend him from office. The action of the city council
in suspending or removing the city manager shall be final, it being the intention of this provision to
vest all authority and fix all responsibility for such suspension or removal in the city council. In
case of the absence, disability or suspension of the city manager, the city council shall designate
the head of some department to perform the duties of city manager during such absence, disability
or suspension, and, in case the office of city manager becomes vacant, the city council shall
designate the head of some department to serve as acting city manager until a new city manager is
appointed.

Chapter 43: **Section 104.** Except as otherwise specifically provided in this chapter, it shall be the duty of the
Section 104. city manager to act as chief conservator of the peace within the city; to supervise the
Powers, rights administration of the affairs of the city; to see that within the city the laws of the commonwealth
and duties of city and the ordinances, resolutions and regulations of the city council are faithfully executed; and to
manager make such recommendations to the city council concerning the affairs of the city as may to him
seem desirable; to make reports to the city council from time to time upon the affairs of the city;
and to keep the city council fully advised of the city's financial condition and its future needs. He
shall prepare and submit to the city council budgets as required of the mayor by section thirty-two
of chapter forty-four and, in connection therewith, may, to the extent provided by said section
thirty-two in the case of a mayor, require the submission to him, by all departments, commissions,
boards and offices of the city, of estimates of the amounts necessary for their expenses. He shall
make all appointments and removals in the departments, commissions, boards and offices of the
city for whose administration he is responsible, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, and
shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by this chapter or be required of him by
ordinance or resolution of the city council. The city manager shall have and possess, and shall
exercise, all the powers, rights and duties, other than legislative, had, possessed or exercised,
immediately prior to the adoption of this plan, by the mayor, board of aldermen, common council
and all other boards, commissions and committees of the city and their members, severally or
collectively, except such as are by this chapter conferred upon the school committee or are
otherwise provided for thereby.

*Chapter 43:
Section 105. City
officers and
employees;
appointments
and removals*

Section 105. Such officers and employees as the city council, with the advice of the city manager, shall determine are necessary for the proper administration of the departments, commissions, boards and offices of the city for whose administration the city manager is responsible shall be appointed, and may be removed, by the city manager. The city manager shall report every appointment and removal made by him to the city council at the next meeting thereof following such appointment or removal. The city manager may authorize the head of a department, commission or board, or the holder of an office, for whose administration he is responsible, to appoint and remove subordinates in such department, commission, board or office. All appointments by, or under the authority of, the city manager, if subject to chapter thirty-one and the rules and regulations made under authority thereof, shall be made in accordance therewith, and all other appointments as aforesaid shall be on the basis of executive and administrative ability and training and experience in the work to be performed.

The City Manager shall refer to the City Council and simultaneously file with the Clerk the name of each person the City Manager desires to appoint or reappoint as a member of a board or commission. Appointment of a member of a board or commission made by the City Manager will be effective upon a majority vote of the city council, which vote shall occur within 60 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed with the City Clerk. The appointment may be approved or rejected by a majority of the full City Council before 60 days. An appointment or reappointment shall take effect if the City Council fails to act within those 60 days.

*Chapter 43:
Section 106.
Officers and
employees;
regulations;
penalty for
violations*

Section 106. Officers and employees of the city appointed by, or under the authority of, the city manager shall perform the duties required of them by the city manager, under general regulations of the city council. Any violation of this section shall constitute sufficient grounds for removal of any such officer or employee.

*Chapter 43:
Section 107.
Interference with
city manager by
council
forbidden;
penalty*

Section 107. Neither the city council nor any of its committees or members shall direct or request the appointment of any person to, or his removal from, office by the city manager or any of his subordinates, or in any manner take part in the appointment or removal of officers and employees in that portion of the service of said city for whose administration the city manager is responsible. Except for the purpose of inquiry, the city council and its members shall deal with that portion of the service of the city as aforesaid solely through the city manager, and neither the city council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinate of the city manager either publicly or privately. Any member of the city council who violates, or participates in the violation of, any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both, and upon final conviction thereof his office in the city council shall thereby be vacated and he shall never again be eligible for any office or position, elective or otherwise, in the service of the city.

*Chapter 43:
Section 108.
Solicitation of
political
contributions by
employees;
penalties*

Section 108. No employee of any department, board or commission of the city shall, directly or indirectly, solicit or receive, or in any manner be concerned in soliciting or receiving any assessment, subscription or contribution for any political party, for any candidate for city office or for any political committee organized on behalf of such candidate. This section shall not prevent such persons from being members of political organizations or committees. The soliciting or receiving of any gift, payment, contribution, assessment, subscription or promise of money or other thing of value by a non-elected political committee organized to promote the candidacy for city office of an employee of any department, board or commission of the city shall not be deemed to be a direct or indirect solicitation or receipt of such contribution by such person, provided, however, that no such gift, payment, contribution, assessment, subscription or promise of money or other thing of value may be solicited or received on behalf of such a person from any person or combination of persons if such person so employed knows or has reason to know that the person or combination of persons has an interest in any particular matter in which the person so employed participates or has participated in the course of such employment or which is the subject of his official responsibility. A person who violates any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both such fine and imprisonment, and upon final conviction thereof the office or position in the service of the city held by such person shall be vacated and such person shall not be eligible for an office or position, elective or otherwise, in the service of the city.

*Chapter 43:
Section 109.
Regular
municipal
election; date*

Section 109. The regular municipal election under this plan shall take place on the Tuesday next following the first Monday of November in every odd numbered year, and all members of the city council, the school committee and any board of trustees or other officers referred to in section ninety-five, and no others, shall be elected at each such election.

*Chapter 43:
Section 110.
Candidates;
statement and
petition*

Section 110. Any registered voter of the city who is eligible for election to any elective municipal body shall be entitled to have his name printed as a candidate therefor on the official ballot to be used at the regular municipal election; provided, that at least twenty-eight days prior to such election there shall be filed with the city clerk a statement in writing of his candidacy, signed by him, and with such statement the petition of not less than fifty nor more than one hundred registered voters of the city, whose signatures shall have been certified as required by law. Except as aforesaid, no person shall be entitled to have his name printed as a candidate on such ballot. Said statement and petition shall be in substantially the following form:

Statement of Candidate

I (), on oath declare that I reside at (number, if any) on (name of street) in the city of ; that I am a voter therein, qualified to vote for a candidate for the hereinafter mentioned office; that I am a candidate for the office of (name of office) to be voted for at the regular municipal election to be held on Tuesday, the day of , nineteen hundred and ; and I request that my name be printed as such candidate on the official ballot for use at said election.

(Signed) Commonwealth of
Massachusetts

ss.

Subscribed and sworn to at () on this day of , nineteen hundred and before me,

(Signed)

Justice of the Peace.

(or Notary Public).

Petition Accompanying Statement of Candidate

Whereas (name of candidate) is a candidate for the office of (state the office), we, the undersigned, voters of the city of , duly qualified to vote for a candidate for said office, do hereby request that the name of said (name of candidate) as a candidate for said office be printed on the official ballot to be used at the regular municipal election to be held on the Tuesday of , nineteen hundred and . The petition may be on one or more papers and need not be sworn to.

*Chapter 43:
Section 111.
Nomination
papers*

Section 111. Any nomination papers filed under section one hundred and ten bearing more than the maximum number of signatures permitted thereby shall be invalid. No voter may sign the nomination papers of more than one candidate for election as a member of any elective municipal body; and if a voter signs nomination papers of more than one such candidate his signature shall be invalid on all such papers except the one first acted upon by the registrars of voters.

*Chapter 43:
Section 112.
Ballots; form
and contents*

Section 112. There shall be a separate form of ballot for each body to be elected, and each such separate form of ballot shall be of a different and clearly distinguishable color from that of any other form of ballot prepared and furnished at the public expense for use at the same election. On such ballots for use in electing members of any elective body there shall be printed the following directions to voters, the first sentence under the heading to be printed in prominent bold faced type:

DIRECTIONS TO VOTERS

Do not use X marks.

Mark your choices with numbers only.

Put the figure 1 opposite your first choice; the figure 2 opposite your second choice; the figure 3 opposite your third choice; and so on. Mark as many choices as you please.

Do not put the same figure opposite more than one name.

If you spoil this ballot, tear it across once, return it to the election officer in charge of the ballots and get another from him.

No official ballot used at any regular municipal election shall have printed thereon any party or political designation or mark, and there shall not be appended to the name of any candidate any such party or political designation or mark, or anything showing how he was nominated or indicating his views or opinions.

*Chapter 43:
Section 113.
Preparing
ballots, etc.;
procedure*

Section 113. The provisions of sections five, six and seven of [chapter fifty-four A](#) and so much of section eight thereof as relates to the order of polling places by which ballots are to be counted shall apply with respect to municipal elections in a city adopting this plan.

*Chapter 43:
Section 114.
Counting of
ballots;
procedure*

Section 114. As soon as the polls have closed, the election officials at each polling place shall seal the ballot box without opening it, and in such manner that ballots cannot be removed therefrom or inserted therein without breaking the seal, and shall deliver such ballot box at once, as the city clerk may direct, to the central counting place, together with the voting lists, a record of the ballot box register, a record of the number of ballots given out, the ballots spoiled and returned, and the ballots not given out, all of which shall be enclosed in an envelope, and the election officials shall certify thereon as to the identity of the contents thereof. At the central counting place the ballot boxes shall be opened and the number of ballots found therein recorded and compared with the records sent from the polling places. Any discrepancies discovered shall be recorded and dealt with according to the principles laid down by the general election laws, so far as such principles may be applicable. The ballots for the city council shall be counted first and the ballots for the school committee shall be counted second. Ballots cast for other purposes than the election of members to elective bodies shall be counted at the central counting place in accordance with the laws otherwise applicable to the counting thereof. No information regarding the state of the balloting shall be disclosed before the close of the polls.

*Chapter 43:
Section 115.
Repealed, 1972,
596, Sec. 1*

*Chapter 43:
Section 116.
General election
laws;
applicability*

Section 116. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, all regular elections held under this plan shall be subject to all general laws relating to elections and corrupt practices, so far as applicable and not inconsistent with this chapter.

Section 116(a). Annually the City Council shall prepare and deliver to the City Manager a written review of the City Manager's performance in a manner provided by ordinance.

Section 116(b). Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 2, the City Council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the special committee shall be voters of the city not holding elective office. The special committee shall file a report with the City Council within 1 year of its appointment recommending any changes to the city charter which it deems necessary or desirable, unless an extension is authorized by vote of the City Council. Action on any proposed charter changes shall be as authorized by the Massachusetts constitution or general laws

Appendix E: Meeting Minutes and Recordings

Following are the meeting minutes for all committee meetings and the accompanying recordings.

- August 16, 2022
- September 13, 2022
- September 29, 2022
- October 25, 2022
- November 8, 2022
- November 22, 2022
- December 6, 2022
- December 20, 2022
- January 3, 2023
- January 17, 2023 - Cambridge Finance Department Presentation
- January 31, 2023 - Cambridge Election Commission Presentation
- February 7, 2023
- February 28, 2023 - Chief Executives Panel
- March 14, 2023 - Interview with Yi-An Huang, Current City Manager
- March 28, 2023
- April 11, 2023
- April 25, 2023
- May 9, 2023
- May 23, 2023
- June 6, 2023
- June 20, 2023
- June 27, 2023
- July 18, 2023
- August 1, 2023
- August 15, 2023
- September 5, 2023
- September 12, 2023
- September 26, 2023
- October 10, 2023
- October 24, 2023
- November 7, 2023
- November 14, 2023
- November 21, 2023
- December 5, 2023
- December 19, 2023

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 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, December 19, 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, Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

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

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

The Chair, Kathleen Born made a motion to amend the minutes from the December 5, 2023 meeting.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Absent
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
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 – 11, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born made a motion for the amendment of the minutes to read Mayor/CAFO/Council and Council/Manager form of government in place of Strong Mayor and Strong Manager on page 5 of the December 5, 2023 minutes.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Absent
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
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, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born made a motion to adopt the December 5, 2023 minutes as amended.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to accept communications received from the public and Committee members.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

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

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Jameson Quinn thanked the Committee for all their hard work and offered comments on elections and voting methods.

Dan Totten offered comments regarding the School Committee and the budget.

Anna Corning, Project Manager reviewed the decision points and deliberation information document that the Committee will be discussing throughout the meeting. The document was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Anna Corning noted that the goal was to take votes on all the matters that were presented in the decision point document to be able to include those decisions in the final report to the City Council. Anna Corning and the team from the Collins Center, Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd, were available to respond to any

questions or concerns that were brought forward by Committee members during discussion. Throughout the meeting, Committee members were recognized to offer their comments on each discussion point.

CITY COUNCIL COMPOSITIONS

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion that the Committee recommend maintaining two-year terms for the City Council.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – No

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion for the Committee to recommend Cambridge maintain an at-large City Council of nine members.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – No

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 11, No – 1, Present – 1, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S ROLE ON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mosammat Faria Afreen who made a motion for the Committee to recommend the Mayor serve on the School Committee. Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll under the Mayor/CAFO/Council form of government.

Kaleb Abebe – Present

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Present

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Present

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Present

Jim Stockard – No

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 1, Present – 4, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion that the Committee recommend the Mayor is automatically the Chair of the School Committee under the Mayor/CAFO/Council form of government.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – No

Mosammat Faria Afreen – No

Nikolas Bowie – Present

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Present

Kai Long – Bi

Patrick Magee – Present

Mina Makarios – No

Lisa Peterson – No

Ellen Shachter – No

Susan Shell – No

Jim Stockard – No

Kathleen Born – No

Yes – 0, No – 9, Present – 4, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion that the Committee recommend the City Council President serve on the School Committee under the Mayor/CAFO/Council form of government.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present

Nikolas Bowie – Present

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Present

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Present

Mina Makarios – No

Lisa Peterson – Present

Ellen Shachter – Present

Susan Shell – Present

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 1, Present – 8, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion that the Committee recommend the Mayor serve on the School Committee under the Council/Manager form of government.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Present

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – No

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Present

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 1, Present – 3, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mosammat Faria Afreen who made a motion that the Committee recommend the Mayor is automatically the Chair of the School Committee under the Manager/Council form of government.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – No
Mosammat Faria Afreen – No
Nikolos Bowie – No
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – No
Patrick Magee – No
Mina Makarios – No
Lisa Peterson – No
Ellen Shachter – No
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – No
Kathleen Born – No
Yes – 0, No – 11, Present – 2, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

FINANCE ARTICLE

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion for the Committee to approve recommending the draft finance article text and reflected timeline for Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 13, No – 0, Present – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mina Makarios who made a motion for the Committee to approve recommending the draft finance article text and reflected timeline for Council-Manager form of government.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
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 – 1, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion that the Committee recommend that the City Council be allowed to amend the City budget (adding funds or line items, but not increasing the overall budget) prior to approval and be allowed to override the Mayor’s budgetary amendments or veto under the Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

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

Yes – 11, No – 0, Present – 2, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mosammat Faria Afreen who made a motion that the Committee recommend that the City Council be allowed to amend the City budget (adding funds or line items, but not increasing the overall budget) prior to approval and be allowed to override the Mayor’s budgetary amendments or veto under the Manger-Council form of government.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarious – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – No
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 10, No – 1, Present – 2, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

FELONY CONVICTION

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mosammat Faria Afreen who made a motion that the Committee recommend adding the provision, “An elected official who has been convicted of a state or federal felony while holding office shall be deemed to have vacated the office.”

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – No
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarious – No
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – No
Kathleen Born – No
Yes – 7, No – 5, Present – 1, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

RESIDENT ASSEMBLY

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mosammat Faria Afreen who made that the Committee take on a new item of business that the Committee recommend that if a resident assembly reaches a 2/3 supermajority the question be put to the voters.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – No
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – No
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – No
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Yes – 2, No – 3, Present – 8, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to take a revote on a previous motion to adopt Section 2.11.2.a.iii of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: Powers that would otherwise be exercised under state or municipal law by a City Board or Commission, including the Planning Board. Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – No
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – No
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – No
Mina Makarios – No
Lisa Peterson – No
Ellen Shachter – No
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – No
Kathleen Born – No
Yes – 2, No – 9, Present – 2, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion that the Committee wish to make a recommendation for who under the Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government who convene a Resident Assembly. Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – No
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 11, No – 1, Present – 1, Absent – 2.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mosammat Faria Afreen who made a motion that the Committee recommend that under a Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government that the City Council shall convene the Resident Assembly.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 12, No – 0, Present – 1, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

MAYORAL RECALL

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion that the Committee recommends a recall provision for the Mayor under Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government, the thresholds shall be difficult but not impossible to recall a Mayor. The City Council shall collaborate with the Election Commission to determine the thresholds.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 13, No – 0, Present – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION PROVISION

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion that the Committee recommend adding the following provision to the Public Engagement Article, “The City shall provide for a system, in addition to minutes and recordings, that maintains and records public comment, of City Council meetings, that is publicly available.”

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – No
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – No
Kai Long – No
Patrick Magee – No
Mina Makarios – No
Lisa Peterson – No
Ellen Shachter – No
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – No
Kathleen Born – No
Yes – 3, No – 9, Present – 0, Absent – 3. Motion failed.

GROUP PETITION

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Patrick Magee who made a motion that the Committee recommends adding a group petition provision to the Charter, the thresholds shall be relatively low. The City Council shall collaborate with the Election Commission to determine the thresholds.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
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 – 11, No – 0, Present – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

CITIZEN INITIATIVE PROVISION

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Mosammat Faria Afreen who made a motion that the Committee recommends a Citizen Initiative Provision under both forms of government. The City Council shall collaborate with the Election Commission to determine the thresholds.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
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 – 11, No – 0, Present – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

Anna Corning thanked the Committee for their time and reviewed what the next steps are moving forward.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 8:45p.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/641?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=29f86a4fe11b3b2f310dee34ae9673a8

**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 Makarios
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 Makarios – 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 Makarios 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 Kanesh 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 strong Mayor.

Member Jennifer Gilbert asked for more information relative 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 among 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.

Member Ellen Shachter shared that they feel the ending of the Committee 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 committees 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

**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 Makarious
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 Makarious – 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 Makarious – 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

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 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 14, 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 – Absent
Nikolas Bowie – Absent
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent*
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 9, Absent – 6. Quorum established.

***Member Jennifer Gilbert was marked present at 6:09p.m.**

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kevin Chen who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from November 7, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent – 6. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the communication from City Councillor Quinton Zondervan.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent – 6. Motion passed.

Anna Corning shared that the meeting goal was to try and focus on foundational decision points around form of government. Committee members were recognized to share their thoughts and comments about the decision to move forward with a Strong Mayor form of government.

Anna Corning recognized Michael Ward from the Collins Center to review the Forms of Government with Example Options for Modifications Chart (Attached). Michael Ward noted that

the Chart was shared at previous meetings, but the focus would now be to discuss the examples provided of a Strong Mayor form of government. Anna Corning recognized Committee members for comments and questions relative to the chart and Michael Ward was available to provide feedback. Member Lisa Peterson noted the importance of using the next four meetings to work as effectively as possible by working together to create language for a Strong Mayor form of government that will best fit Cambridge.

Anna Corning shared with the Committee that she would like to move the discussion to focus on term lengths for Mayor. Anna Corning recognized Committee members who offered their suggestions on term limits and what language they would be in favor of using in the proposed draft language. Committee members who were recognized offered comments that were in support of term limits for Mayor.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion for the Mayor to have a four-year term length.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion for the Mayor to serve a maximum of three, four- year term limits, which do not have to be consecutive.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – No

Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 1, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

Committee members offered additional comments on the Strong Mayor form of government relative to Department Heads and the School Committee. Committee members discussed and offered suggestions on the position of CAFO (Chief Administrative and Financial Officer) under a Strong Mayor. Anna Corning, Michael Ward, and Patricia Lloyd were available to provide answers to clarifying questions that were brought forward as well as feedback to suggestions made by members.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to require a CAFO, who is appointed by the Mayor, in the Charter.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

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

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

Anna Corning recognized members of the Committee to offer additional remarks relative to having a CAFO. Committee members shared possible challenges that may arise with City Council involvement with regards to the CAFO and provided suggestions on the City Council being able to veto the CAFO.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kevin Chen who made a motion that the City Council can veto the CAFO appointment by the Mayor with a super majority vote.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent
Kevin Chen – Yes
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarious – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to focus the discussion on recall and noted that there are certain requirements and a process to issue a recall provision. Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd shared they would be able to provide example language at future meetings regarding thresholds to get recall on a ballot if it is something the Committee is interested in. Committee members were recognized for comments and questions on recall, Anna Corning, Michael Ward, and Patricia Lloyd were all available to respond.

Anna Corning asked Committee members to share what topics they would like to prioritize for the next meeting to work towards getting foundational votes done. Anna Corning noted that goal setting, budget priorities, and the Mayor’s role on the School Committee are already topics that planned to be discussed. Suggestions from members included resident assembly with a Strong Mayor, language in the Charter about future work of Charter Review Committees, elections concerning the Mayor, and if candidates would have the ability of running for both Council and Mayor.

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

Attachments:

Forms of Government with Example Options for Modifications Chart

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:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/615?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=1d98f5510b824daa65e2a58cc144271b

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 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 7, 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 – Absent
Kai Long – Absent
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Member Nikolas Bowie was marked present at 5:36p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from October 24, 2023.

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 – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Absent

Patrick Magee – Present

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Present – 1, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born noted that there were two communications received from Committee members. The Chair recognized member Susan Shell who offered additional comments relative to the communication they submitted.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt communications received 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 – Absent

Kai Long – Absent

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Stephen C shared their excitement for resident assemblies and even year elections and spoke in support of a Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government.

Anna Corning shared with Committee members that the beginning of the meeting was to reopen the discussion on Mayor-CAFO-Council versus City Manager-Mayor-Council form of government. Anna Corning recognized Committee members who offered comments and concerns. Anna Corning shared that Committee members Kai Long and Jennifer Gilbert, who were both absent, had submitted emails sharing they would be in favor of a strong Mayor form of government.

Anna Corning requested a straw poll be done on Mayor-CAFO-Council versus City Manager-Mayor-Council form of government. Seven members voted in favor of a Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government, five members voted in favor of City Manager-Mayor-Council form of government, and three members were recorded as absent.

Anna Corning recognized Committee members to share additional comments on form of government and the straw poll. Committee members shared concerns on what it would look like for the Committee during the remainder of the year based on the results of the straw poll. Michael Ward from the Collins Center and Anna Corning offered suggestions on how the Collins Center and the Committee could use their remaining time on the Committee to put together additional and new language with a Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government to submit to the Council. Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd from the Collins Center made themselves available to respond to questions brought forward by members of the Committee.

Anna Corning shared on her screen the proposed draft language for the Charter that the Committee has been working on over the past months. Anna Corning reviewed what changes in the language would have to be made due to the Committee being more in favor of a Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government. Committee members were recognized for questions and comments. The team from the Collins Center were available to provide feedback and suggestions.

Anna Corning noted shared that there will most likely be votes that will have to be retaken based on the straw poll decision that was made tonight. Anna Corning shared that she would review which votes would have to be retaken and introduce them at upcoming meetings and noted that there was one vote that could be retaken at tonight's meeting.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to adopt drafting new Charter text.

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 – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Absent
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarious – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:47p.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:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/610?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=126c4ae8044c93e0cc8e3c079b199289

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 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, October 24, 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 Committee 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 – Absent
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarious – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Absent*
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Member Nikolas Bowie was present at 5:43p.m.

*Member Susan Shell was present at 6:02p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from October 10, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Present

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Absent

Mina Makarios – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Present – 1, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Stephen C. spoke in support of measures that would give Cambridge the powers to determine who can vote and with that power expand the franchise to include 16-year-olds and non-citizens and for elections falling on even years. They also spoke about democratic elections for the Police Review Advisory Board.

Anna Corning, Project Manager shared with the Committee that she would like to continue the discussion on the draft language on Resident Assembly. Anna Corning recognized Committee members for comments and concerns relative to the proposed language.

Anna Corning requested Committee members conduct a straw poll on what language they would like to include regarding the selection process for Resident Assembly, Representative or Simple Random. Ten members voted in favor of Representative, three members voted in favor of Simple Random, and two members were recorded as absent.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion on whether the Committee wishes to specify a minimum number of participants for a Resident Assembly.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarious – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

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

Anna Corning recognized Committee members to offer suggestions on what they believe is a good minimum to be required for a resident assembly.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion for 30 to be the minimum number of participants to be required in a Resident Assembly.

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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarious – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion for the Committee to approve the Discretionary Specifications section of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly.

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 – Absent

Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to change the focus of the conversation to review and discuss the proposed draft language relative to Elections. Committee members were recognized for comments, suggestions, and concerns. Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd from the Collins Center were available to provide feedback.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion for the Committee to maintain a Proportional Representation system in Cambridge elections. 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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to enshrine 16- and 17-year-olds eligibility to vote in municipal elections. 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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 12, No – 1, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to enshrine non-citizen eligibility to vote in municipal elections.

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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to run for municipal elections.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – No
Jessican DeJesus Acevedo – No
Mosammart Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Yes
Max Clermont – Yes
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – No
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to allow non-citizens to run for municipal elections. 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 – Absent
Kai Long – No
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 11, No – 2, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to move municipal elections to even numbered years. 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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion to enshrine that the City Council or an appropriate body of the City have the ability to allow Campaign Finance reforms.

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 – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Absent

Mina Makarious – No

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion for the Committee to establish a Campaign Finance Study Committee in the Transition Provisions. 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 – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Absent

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Member Max Clermont shared concerns about a previous vote. The Chair, Kathleen Born made a motion for reconsideration on enshrining the City Council or appropriate body of the City the ability to all Campaign Finance Reforms.

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 – No
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarious – No
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – No

Yes – 10, No – 3, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to adopt the draft text of the Transition Provisions language as amended in Committee.

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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarious – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to recommend election procedure language be changed to authorize the City to use any tabulation methods.

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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent

Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion that the Committee recommend that the election procedure language be changed to authorize the City to use any voting method of Proportional Representation.

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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

That the Committee recommend the remaining election procedures and relevant laws be compiled, updated, and drafted by the City, Election Commission, and Law Department consistent with all Charter Review Committee recommendations.

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 – Absent
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning thanked everyone in attendance for their participation and reviewed what the plan is for future meeting discussions.

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

Attachments:

Attachment A – Clean version of Resident Assembly draft language.

Attachment B – Clean version of Election draft language.

Attachment C - Draft text of the Transition Provisions language as amended in Committee.

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:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/604?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=b91160d71cfb0394c602b5c235469faa

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 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, October 10, 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 – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent*
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Absent*
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 10, Absent – 5. Quorum established.

*Member Nikolas Bowie was marked present at 5:36p.m.
*Member Jennifer Gilbert was marked present at 5:39p.m.
*Member Mina Makarios was marked present at 6:36p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from September 12, 2023 and September 26, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 11, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt communications from Committee members.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Jameson Quinn shared that they strongly urge the Committee to consider the possibility of equal voting.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, opened the discussion to Committee members on the Resident Assembly Draft Decision Points. The Resident Assembly Draft Decision Points document, as well as the Resident Assembly draft language, were provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Patrick Magee who made a motion for the Committee to establish a Resident Assembly in the Charter.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to approve the Purpose section (section 1) language of the Resident Assembly draft to read: In order to expand access to City government generally and include voices not typically heard in decision making, the City Council has the authority to establish and maintain one or more Resident Assemblies.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – No

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – No

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 2, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to take a straw poll on whether the Committee would like to establish whether the resident assembly would proceed as an advisory body or have decision making power. There were nine members who voted in favor of the decision making power, three members in favor of an advisory body, one member who was marked as present, and two members that were absent.

Anna Corning recognized Committee members for comments regarding if they want to add requirements for City Council action with certain thresholds of resident assembly approval. Committee members shared their thoughts and concerns relative to including that language in the Charter. Michael Ward from the Collins Center was available to provide feedback on comments that were made by Committee members and noted that there is value to including specific language in the Charter. After discussion it was decided to not vote on this current topic and to continue to move forward to the next topic.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion for the City Council to establish one Resident Assembly per City Council term and to be added to the Mandatory Specifications Section (section 3) of the draft language.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – No

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

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 – 1, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning opened discussion to Committee members to continue the conversation related to the Powers section of the draft language of Resident Assembly. Committee members were invited to share their comments and suggestions on how they would like to move forward with the proposed language. Anna Corning and the team from the Collins Center were available to provide responses to any questions or concerns. Member Nikolas Bowie was also available to review and provide more detail on the proposed language that they submitted to be included in the draft language ahead of the meeting.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion to adopt the Power Section (section 2), section a.i. of the draft Resident Assembly, Section 2.a.i, to read: The power to issue recommendations on questions posed by the city council and to specify

deadlines by which the city council or city manager must publicly respond to the recommendations by hearing or other means.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – No
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – No
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 11, No – 2, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Nikolas Bowie who made a motion to allow the City Council to delegate its statutory powers to a resident assembly.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – No
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – No
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – No
Kai Long – No
Patrick Magee – No
Mina Makarios – No
Lisa Peterson – No
Ellen Shachter – No
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – No
Kathleen Born – No

Yes – 2, No – 11, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to allow the City Council to give power to a Resident Assembly that they can consider whether an initiative petition that met a certain threshold set by the City Council should go to the City Council for approval or go to the voters for approval.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – No

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – No
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – No
Mina Makarios – No
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 5, Absent 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning recognized Elliott Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor from the Law Department who shared concerns relative sections 2.a.iii and 2.a.iv, noting that there could be a conflict of laws with the proposed language due to State Law and reminded members that State Law supersedes Municipal Law. Elliot Veloso was available to respond to clarifying questions from Committee members.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt Section 2.i.2.a.ii of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: The power to issue endorsements or counter-endorsements for initiatives submitted to the City Council or voters, including initiatives that satisfy Section _'s procedural requirements.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

**Kaleb Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – No
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – No
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes**

Yes – 11, No – 2, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion to adopt Section 2.ii.2.a.iii of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: Powers that

would otherwise be exercised under state or municipal law by a city board or commission, including the Planning Board.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – No

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – No

Kai Long – Present

Patrick Magee – No

Mina Makarious – No

Lisa Peterson – No

Ellen Shachter – No

Susan Shell – No

Jim Stockard – No

Kathleen Born – No

Yes – 3, No – 9, Present – 1, Absent – 2. Motion failed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kaleb Abebe who made a motion to adopt Section 2.iii.2.a.iv of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: The power to dispense with requirements under state or municipal law for public hearings and public comment, provided that the Resident Assembly’s procedures comply with federal and state constitutional requirements of due process.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – No

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – No

Kai Long – Absent

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – No

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – No

Susan Shell – No

Jim Stockard – No

Kathleen Born – No

Yes – 5, No – 9, Absent 3. Motion failed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stocked who made a motion to adopt Section 2.iv.2.a.v of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: The power,

on its own initiative, to make recommendations or propose draft legislation for review by the City Council or voters.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Absent

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Absent

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – No

Jim Stockard – yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 11, No – 1, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

Anna Corning thanked Committee members for their time and reviewed what would be discussed at the next meeting.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:40p.m.

Attachments:

Attachment A – clean version of Resident Assembly draft language.

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:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/589?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=0219e4be40d17cd83ad2f4c9f905c572

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 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, September 26, 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 – Present
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Absent*
Mina Makarios – Absent*
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Member Patrick Magee was marked present at 5:35p.m.

* Member Mina Makarios was marked present at 6:15p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from September 5, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mossamat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

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

Mossamat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Jameson Quinn shared their excitement for the upcoming discussion on voting mechanisms.

John Hawkinson offered comments on fractional transfer and voting mechanisms.

Anna Corning, Project Manager shared that the focus of the discussion for the meeting was going to be on the proposed language for resident assemblies. Anna Corning recognized Committee members to offer comments and suggestions related to resident assemblies.

Anna Corning shared on the screen language from member Nikolas Bowie regarding resident assemblies. Member Bowie noted that this language, which was provided as a communication in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet, was created to help guide members to create draft language that everyone agrees on relative to resident assemblies. Committee members offered their concerns and comments on the proposed language and provided suggestions on how they believe the proposed language would best serve the City. Member Bowie was available to respond to questions and concerns brought forward by fellow Committee members. Michael Ward from the Collins Center shared that the language that has been provided is good and he believes the Committee is on track to make progress and positive change. Anna Corning added the suggested changes to the working document on the screen as Committee members made them during the discussion (Attachment A).

Anna Corning shared that she would like to change the focus of the meeting discussion to elections. She made note of the suggested changes towards elections that have been brought up in previous meetings, which included granting 16 and 17 years old as well as non-citizens the ability to vote in municipal elections and changing the municipal election year to line up with State and Presidential elections. Anna Corning recognized Committee members to provide additional topics they would like to discuss relative to elections at the next meeting.

Michael Ward reminded Committee members that the Secretary of States Office is usually opposed to municipalities moving to an even numbered year for elections and provided the reasoning as to why they are opposed, but encouraged the Committee to continue to try and move forward with the changes they best see fit. Member Stockard shared that it is important for Committee members to continue with the idea of even numbers to encourage residents to come out and vote and double the number of people who are showing up for municipal elections.

Member Mina Makarious shared that they believe it is important for the Committee to discuss how they would like the City Council to present the new Charter language to the Legislature. They noted that they believe the Legislature should not have the ability to take language out of the proposed Charter.

Member Nikolas Bowie shared that at a future meeting they would like to discuss campaign finance and noted how Cambridge currently has zero authority over elections under the State Constitution and would like to push for the City to have some authority of campaign finance laws. Member Bowie also shared that they would like to discuss the methods of proportional representation.

Member Patrick Magee shared concerns about making too many changes to elections which could potentially complicate the language moving forward in the State Legislature's Office. Member Magee did share he was in favor of 16 and 17 year olds and non-citizens having the ability to vote.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Attachment A – Working document on proposed draft language for resident assembly.

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/581?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=d86657c5ed3d9c6c397a499c3f345cf4

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 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, September 12, 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 – Absent
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent*
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent*
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Absent
Mina Makarios – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 9, Absent – 6. Quorum established.

*Jessica DeJesus Acevedo was marked present at 5:40p.m.

*Mosammat Faria Afreen was marked present at 6:05p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from August 15, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

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

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent 6. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Kevin Chen who made a motion to adopt communications that were received from Committee members, City Councillors, and the public.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

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

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent 6. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Heather Hoffman gave public comment.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, shared that she would like to take votes on the proposed draft language for City Council Goal Setting, City Council Budget Priorities, and the City Manager Annual Review.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion to adopt the proposed language for City Council Goal Setting. (See attached)

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

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

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent 5. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the proposed language for City Council Budget Priorities. (See attached)

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

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

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent 5. Motion passed.

**The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Susan Shell who made a motion to adopt the proposed language for the City Manager Annual Review. (See attached)
Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

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

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent 5. Motion passed.

Anna Corning recognized Member Max Clermont who gave an overview of a presentation (Attachment A) on Lottery-Selected Panels. The presentation reviewed the principles and benefits, types of lottery-selected panels, and the process design options. Member Clermont and Anna Corning were available to respond to comments and concerns from Committee members. Many Committee members offered comments that were in support of a resident assembly or citizen panel, and shared their excitement and suggestions on how the Charter and the City can move forward with one. In addition to Anna Corning and Member Clermont, representatives from the Collins Center, Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd, were available to provide information on the topic. Committee members shared that they would like to continue the discussion on resident assemblies and citizen panels to have the opportunity to create language that would be appropriate to bring to the City Council.

Anna Corning shared that when the Charter Review working group on resident/citizen assemblies met, the intention was to have a short-term resident/citizen group to be tasked with a specific topic or policy that may be related to a goal from the City Council. Anna Corning asked Committee members to consider whether that is the type of group they would be interested in creating language for, or would they be more interested in having a resident/citizen group that is created to meet on a long-term basis and tasked with more than one topic or policy throughout their term. Anna Corning shared on the screen a preliminary draft document from the Collins Center on Public Communication and Engagement, which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The document included two proposed options for potential language in the Charter. Member Nikolos Bowie offered a detailed explanation of the proposed option number two. Anna Corning opened the discussion to Committee members, with members offering their opinions and suggestions on the proposed language.

It was noted by Anna Corning that the Zoom recording only began halfway through the meeting, so only a portion of the meeting would be able to be viewed by the public.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Attachment A – Presentation on Lottery Selected Panels

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/573?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=73db1671a06847e72d376b376c4ff023

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 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 Makarios
Lisa Peterson
Ellen Shachter
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, September 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 – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 14, Absent – 1. Quorum established.**

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from August 1, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammart Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt communications from Committee members and communications from the public.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammart Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born introduced Anna Corning, Project Manager, who opened Public Comment.

Robert Winters offered comments on an article included in the Council Agenda titled “Beyond the Spoiler Effect”.

Julia Shephard offered comments on rank choice voting and the different methods within rank choice voting.

Anna Corning opened the discussion to Committee members on reviewing resident participation mechanisms. The four mechanisms include free petition, initiative, referendum, and recall. Anna Corning noted that the team from the Collins Center, Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd, shared a memo with the Committee titled “Discussion of Citizen Relief Mechanisms” which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Anna Corning recognized member Jim Stockard who asked the Collins Center representatives for clarification on language that was in Section I. Mass General Laws, referring to the City no longer being a Plan E city, which was in the memo provided by the Collins Center to the Charter Review. The Memo, Discussion of Citizen Relief Mechanisms, was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Michael Ward responded and was able to provide more information.

Anna Corning recognized Marilyn Contrevas from the Collins Center, Patricia Lloyd and Michael Ward, who gave an overview of their memo on Citizen Relief Mechanisms. Committee Members were recognized for comments and suggestions and the team from the Collins Center were available to respond and clarify any questions that came forward.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to take a straw poll on the resident participation mechanisms to see which topics Committee members would be interested in discussing further and including them in the City Charter.

Free Petitions were voted in favor unanimously by the fifteen Committee members that were present. Citizen Initiatives had twelve members voting in favor. Referendum had six members voting in favor, and Recall had four members voting in favor. Anna Corning noted that these were not official votes and that this was just a tool to help the Committee continue to move forward with discussions.

Anna Corning gave an overview of a memo that was submitted from the Collins Center regarding Tracking of Council Measures. The memo was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Anna Corning opened the discussion to Committee members. Many Committee members shared they were in favor of the language that was provided in the memo. Additionally, Committee members offered suggestions on how they believe the language could improve.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt Public Tracking Mechanism of Council Policy Orders and other measures, as amended in Committee (Attachment A).

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammart Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 14, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Anna Corning reviewed the proposed drafted language for City Council Goal Setting, Budget priorities provisions, and the City Manager annual review provision. The team from the Collins Center, as well as Anna Corning, were available to respond to Committee members. Anna Corning shared that past suggestions that have been brought forward by Committee members have been added into the proposed draft language. Committee members offered additional suggestions on the proposed language and raised questions where they saw concerns in the draft language.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Attachment A - Public Tracking Mechanism of Council Policy Orders and other measures, as amended in Committee.

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/565?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=37862a31da1059964dd49e7d37d543b7

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 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, August 15, 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 – Absent
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Absent
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from July 18, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Absent

Patrick Magee – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 11, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the communications received from the public.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Absent

Patrick Magee – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 11, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened public comment.

Suzanne Blier shared concerns about recent items that have passed within the Council and offered comments on ideological and politically driven decisions made by the Council and urged the Charter Review Committee to discuss these matters more.

Marilyn Frankenstein asked why there is no ward or district system where there could be At Large Councillors as well as Councillors for specific areas of the City and shared concerns about why Charter Review Committee members are not discussing this further.

Heather Hoffman offered comments and concerns related to people being selected for Boards and Commissions based on demographics and not expertise.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, reviewed the drafted language for City Council Goal Setting and Budget Priorities provisions, which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Anna Corning opened the discussion related to City Council Goal Setting and recognized Committee Members to share their comments and suggestions about the proposed language. Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd from the Collins Center were available to respond. Chair Born noted the importance of making goal setting practical and introducing measurable aspects to it.

Charter Review Committee members along with Anna Corning continued to review the drafted language and focus on the Budget Priorities provision section. Committee members offered suggestions and raised concerns during discussion. Staff from the Collins Center were available to respond and provide feedback.

Anna Corning introduced additional draft language related to the City Manager Review and recognized Committee members for comments, questions, and concerns. Anna Corning noted that language regarding the City Manager Review was just recently added to the Charter and could be found under Section 116(a). Anna Corning shared potential elements that could be added to the Charter and provided examples of language from other municipalities. Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd were available to respond to comments from Committee members.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to review Article 1 of the Charter with the possibility of approving the proposed language. Michael Ward offered an explanation of why Article 1 is included in modern Charters, noting that the language is there to help lay the foundation for the City and its powers.

Anna Corning recognized member Kevin Chen who offered the suggestion that in Section 1-5 to change ‘municipality’ to ‘city’. Michael Ward shared he does not see any issues with that change and will confirm with other members of the Collins Center.

Anna Corning recognized member Mina Makarious who shared they would like to add at the end of Section 1-3 ‘appointed by the City Council’. Member Makarious proposed additional language be added to Section 1-6 related to the City Manager and the City Council’s intergovernmental relationship.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt Article 1: Incorporation, Powers, Etc., as amended in Committee (Attachment A), as proposed new Charter language.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Absent
Kevin Chen – Yes
Max Clermont – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Absent
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarious – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 9, Absent – 6. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born reminded Committee members that due to the number of members that were absent, the previous vote on Article 1 was not a two-thirds vote, which is a requirement of the Charter Review Committee. The Chair noted that the Committee can continue with individual votes and plan to have a two-thirds acceptance vote with the final report.

Anna Corning opened discussion to Committee members on resident relief mechanisms and noted that there is the possibility of making several provisions within the relief mechanisms. Anna Corning shared that the possible provisions could be around free petitions, initiative, referendum, and recall.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Attachment A - Article 1: Incorporation, Powers, Etc., as amended in Committee.

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/559?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=98b8698751887a17df347dbd24c4b9e2

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 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, August 1, 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 – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont -Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Absent
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 13, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to place the written communications from the public on file.

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 – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Absent

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Heather Hoffman commented on communication within the City and on public records requests.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, Member Kai Long, and Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo offered comments on the Charter Review Committee meet and greet at Tasty Burger that was held on July 25, 2023. Members shared and reviewed topics that were discussed during the community gathering. Anna Corning also shared her experience at the North Cambridge location of the CEOC and the outreach that was done there.

Anna Corning shared on the screen the upcoming meeting dates and planned topics of discussion (Attachment A). Committee members offered suggestions on moving forward and including additional topics of interest related to the Charter to discuss. Anna Corning reminded Committee members that in all the Committee discussions, the goal is to come to an agreement on what new provisions or changes to provisions members want to make to the Charter as well as to provide additional context and supporting elements.

Anna Corning opened discussion to Committee members on an accountability memo (Attachment B) that was sent from the Collins Center to Charter Review Committee members. Michael Ward from the Collins Center offered a detailed review of the memo. Staff from the Collins Center and Anna Corning were available to respond and help clarify questions and concerns from Committee members.

Anna Corning shared that they wanted to change the focus of discussion to City Council setting strategic goals, City Council budget priorities, and the City Manager review process. Anna Corning shared and reviewed a draft chart on the screen reflecting a three-year general time

frame around budget priorities and the City Manager Evaluation Process (Attachment C). Anna Corning and Committee Members offered suggestions and comments on how the Charter Review Committee could potentially revise the time frame for the two topics in ways they believe would be the most successful for the City. Anna Corning shared on the screen proposed language for City Council Strategic Goals and City Council Budget Priorities (Attachment D) and asked Committee members to share what they think is important to include in the Charter.

Member Jim Stockard shared that he agreed with all the proposed elements in the City Council Strategic Goal section and noted that even though the City Council and the City Manager are two separate parts of the government, it would be important to look at them as a team working together to set goals and collaborate.

Member Kaleb Abebe shared concerns about the possibility of the City Council and City Manager not agreeing when it comes to goal settings. Anna Corning noted that the main goal right now is focusing on City Council goals with the possibility of bringing the City Manager into the process and seeing what is achievable.

Member Kai Long asked how these goals are relayed to the public. Anna Corning shared that at a future date, the Committee will be discussing City Manager responsiveness to Policy Orders and public awareness. Member Long suggested that in relation to budget priorities, the City Council within their budget is given funding to use towards specific goals of the Council.

Member Lisa Peterson noted that it is important that goals and priorities work together to be successful. Member Peterson suggested adding public tracking of the goals, meeting benchmarks, and the importance of having those available to the public.

Chair Born shared that these goals are here to help make the City Council, as a body, the policy making and governing body of the City.

Member Patrick Magee shared that having the goal setting start at the beginning of new City Council terms will help normalize the political culture of the City. He noted that City Council candidates can promote their elections with their proposed goals and policies, which can then be potentially adopted in the new term. Member Magee shared that by default it would make candidates and those elected more accountable.

Anna Corning shared that moving forward, she will take all the thoughts and comments on the draft City Council Strategic Goals and use them as provisions to add to the current Charter.

Member Jim Stockard offered concerns with some of the language in the potential elements within the City Council Budget Priorities and provided suggestions on how it could be revised. Member Ellen Shachter shared concerns about the Executive Branch and City Council having different budget priorities and how the two can work together to support Council budget priorities.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo suggested having a written report and a public meeting or forum related to Council budget priorities, and noted the importance of having more consistent engagement.

Member Lisa Peterson shared that Council goals should be tied to the budget priorities and vice versa.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Attachment A – Upcoming meeting dates and topics.

Attachment B – Memo from the Collins Center to the Charter Review Committee.

Attachment C – Draft three-year budget priorities and City Manager review.

Attachment D – Proposed language for City Council strategic goals, budget priorities, and City Manager review.

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/555?
view_id=1&redirect=true&h=82ca6380891b1b4ca27fe59349925321](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/555?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=82ca6380891b1b4ca27fe59349925321)

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JULY 18, 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, July 18, 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 – Absent
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Absent*
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent*
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarious – Absent*
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Absent*
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 10, Absent – 5. Quorum established.

***Members Nikolas Bowie and Jennifer Gilbert were marked present at 5:36p.m.**

***Member Mina Makarious was marked present at 5:48p.m.**

***Member Susan Shell was marked present at 6:31p.m.**

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Patrick Magee who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from June 6, 2023, June 20, 2023, and June 27, 2023.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

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 – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent – 3.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt the three communications received from the public, which were included in the Agenda Packet.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

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 – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent – 3.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Jameson Quinn shared that they read the current draft and noted that it was silent on the election methods. They shared that they look forward to the discussion around having an elected Mayor.

Committee members shared concerns and suggestions on how to organize and address comments and communications that come through the Charter Review website, highlighting the importance of responding to the residents that due submit comments.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, shared that the goal of the meeting today was to review and discuss the drafted language for Articles 1, 2, and 3. The draft language was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Member Kai Long shared concerns and frustrations about making sure that going forward there is more diversity as well as more democracy within government.

Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center reminded Committee members that there is plenty of opportunity going forward with the Charter to recognize and adjust the language involving citizen engagement and the change Committee members wish to see.

Member Lisa Peterson shared that she agreed with comments made by Kai Long and stressed that the Committee can make change, but to make sure they also identify what the purpose of that change is.

Member Ellen Shachter shared that it would be a good idea for the Committee to have more creative thinking moving forward and was open to suggestions on how the Committee can accomplish the goals they are setting.

Member Lisa Peterson asked The Collins Center if there was a campaign finance reform that could be put in place in the Charter. Elizabeth Corbo shared that this topic is something that is very difficult to address and would have to consult with the City Solicitor and the State regarding it. Lisa Peterson suggested that it is something that the Committee and Collins Center should investigate more to try and include in the Charter.

Member Mina Makarios offered comments and suggestions on Council turnover and shared they agreed with some of the comments made by previous members, but wants to be mindful in the language that is used as to not flood the candidate pool with an already confusing voting process and low voter turnout.

Member Jim Stockard asked for clarification on how much money can be donated by a person to a campaign and if there is a limitation on how much one person is able to donate. Patricia Llyod from the Collins Center shared that campaign financing is very heavily regulated by the State, making it difficult for municipalities to make policies that do not conflict with State law.

Member Jennifer Gilbert shared that they agree with comments made by Member Long and offered comments on government participation and leadership positions, noting that those in charge of decision making is an important discussion.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo shared that a section in the draft Articles that they have been focusing on is communication, and offered suggestions on how the Committee can reach out to

specific communities and age groups to achieve the goals that are being set by Committee members to have a progressive conversation on what needs to be changed.

Member Nikolas Bowie referenced and offered comments from the Massachusetts Constitution that describes the powers that local governments have.

Anna Corning asked Committee members to share topics they wish to have more information on for future meeting discussions.

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered comments on the challenges of being on the City Council and running a campaign while also working full-time and suggested that City go back to having City Councillors be part-time positions.

Member Kevin Chen shared that they would like to have conversations around how to make elections more understandable to the public and would like to see more expansion on the communication and engagement side of elections. Member Chen suggested using municipal local media as a tool for outreach.

Member Ellen Shachter noted the importance of having data to help with the decision-making process.

Member Kai Long shared that running for City Council is limited to a selected group based on resources and privileges. Member Long suggested using language in the Charter that would reflect having different demographics be a part of City politics and having a town hall that could be broadcast to residents.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen shared that she chose to be a part of the Charter Review Committee to represent the groups that they are a part of. Member Afreen shared concerns about the decision making and conversations within the Charter, noting that they feel some of the decisions that have been made are only making it easier for those already involved in government and not to help those who may want to pursue being involved. Member Afreen suggested that having a citizen's assembly could be beneficial for residents and noted that they would like to have Committee meetings that are not just through Zoom, but in person, to promote more engagement with the public.

Anna Corning reminded members that discussions have mostly been around the legislative and executive branches of the Charter and plans to have conversations about engagement and other Articles in the Charter have not been covered yet.

Member Patrick Magee offered suggestions and examples of ways to change the demographics of the government and promote more diversity.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo noted they would like to see more conversation and information on property, facilities, and procurement (Article 3, Section 3-2) and shared their frustration with the cost of living in the City of Cambridge.

Elizabeth Corbo shared that community engagement is a topic that the Collins Center has been working on to provide information to the Committee to help with draft language. Elizabeth

Corbo also noted a tool that can be used for residents is a class or seminar on how a specific local government is run.

Member Nikolas Bowie summarized the frustrations that they are hearing from fellow Committee members, which were representative government and the representation of marginalized communities, and offered suggestions on how the Committee can work towards changing them and achieving other goals.

Member Kai Long offered the suggestion of having City Councillors mentor and educate those who are interested in running for City Council.

Member Mina Makarious offered suggestions on ways the Charter can reflect public participation.

Member Ellen Shacter shared comments on creating legislation and noted some of the challenges that can be faced when creating and proposing language.

The Chair, Kathleen Born suggested that there be more conversation on citizen assemblies and agrees that it could be beneficial for the City.

Member Jim Stockard offered comments on creating legislation and questioned what the political piece would be on why the Committee would receive a no from the State when bringing language forward. Member Ellen Shachter responded by sharing their own experience.

Anna Corning shared that moving forward it the Committee will start to prioritize conversations around topics they wish to change and implement to be mindful with time while creating smart goals.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen asked for clarification on what the process would look like when discussing form of government again and making the final proposal to submit to the City Council. Anna Corning responded by sharing that there will be time before the Committee starts drafting the final proposal report, but noted that if anyone in the Committee is interested in revisiting the topic sooner rather than later, time can be made during a meeting for it. Anna Corning shared that they would create an updated timeline for future meeting discussions.

Member Max Clermont shared that they were in favor of having more conversations around citizen assemblies and what could be included in the Charter. Member Clermont suggested looking at town forms of government as a guide to help form town hall meetings and citizen assemblies.

Member Nikolas Bowie shared advantages of having a resident assembly.

Member Mina Makarious suggested Cambridge model the good things that come out of a citizen assembly and use language to stay away from things that would not benefit having an assembly.

Member Jennifer Gilbert shared that they agree with comments made by Committee members and noted she would be in favor of having more conversations around citizen assemblies and discussing representation.

Anna Corning thanked everyone for their participation and urged members to bring forward any information they would like to see in future discussions. Anna Corning also asked Committee members to provide any written feedback they may have regarding Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the drafted Charter language.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.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/547?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=19fedbcff01a6c472a317f6b537c4fa1

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 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, June 27, 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 – Absent
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Absent*
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Absent
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present**

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

***Member Kevin Chen was marked present at 6:04p.m.**

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Patrick Magee who made a motion to place the three communications from the public on file.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Absent
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Absent
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes
Yes – 11, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Valerie Bonds offered comments on anti-bullying policy for Councillors in Boston, two-year terms for Councillors, and the process of electing a Mayor.

Anna Corning, Charter Review Committee Project Manager, explained to the Committee that the Council adopted a City Manager Agenda item at the June 26, 2023 City Council meeting making Charter Review Committee members Special Municipal Employees.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to continue the discussion from the previous meeting on term limits for City Councillors. Member Ellen Shachter offered comments on their experience with participating in a Board with term limits and how to balance democracy and participation, noting that new people will bring in new ideas.

Anna Corning recognized Member Susan Shell, Chair Kathleen Born, Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo, Member Mina Makarios, Member Patrick Magee, Member Nikolas Bowie, Member Jim Stockard, Member Lisa Peterson, Member Mosammat Faria Afreen, Member Max Clermont, and Member Kevin Chen who offered comments on term limits. Discussion included Committee members sharing concerns and suggestions on term limits, with some members expressing that they would be in favor of staggered terms, while others were leaning towards not having term limits. Member Kevin Chen highlighted that the Committee should focus on what type of term limit would serve the public's interest the most. Committee members recognized the importance of encouraging younger residents to be more involved with government and noted how term limits could discourage them from pursuing their participation. It was also suggested that voting in a Cambridge election can be overwhelming, which can push residents away from going out to vote.

Anna Corning reminded members that the Committee took a straw poll at the previous meeting not to extend term limits for City Councillors and noted that it is always something the Committee can come back to in the future to see where everyone is standing.

Anna Corning brought forward that she would like to conduct a straw poll with Committee members sharing if they would like to continue the conversation on term limits or are content with ending the conversation. There were nine members who shared that they would no longer like to continue the discussion, three members that would like to continue discussion, and three members that were absent during the poll.

Anna Corning opened discussion to Committee members on the election and powers of the Mayor/Chair of the City Council. Committee members discussed whether the title of Mayor should be changed to Chair of the City Council, Head of the City Council, Speaker of the Council, or President of the City Council. Chair Born suggested that the Mayor should not be the Chair of the School Committee and that School Committee members should be able to elect their own Chair. Chair Born noted that she was in favor of having a member of the City Council participate as a member of the School Committee for the purposes of budgeting. Members of the Committee agreed that there should be a change of title as well as agreeing with comments about the School Committee. Member Lisa Peterson commented that the Charter should reflect having a goal setting process for every term regarding Councillors because it can have a positive effect towards the City.

Anna Corning recognized Michael Ward from the Collins Center who noted that President and Chair are titles that have been used in municipal bodies, but he was not familiar with Speaker being used in Massachusetts.

Committee members continued discussion on changing the title of the Mayor and what role the Mayor should play in the City.

Anna Corning shared with the Committee that she would like to take a straw poll on changing the title of Mayor to Chair of the City Council, Head of the City Council, or President of the City Council. There were eleven members that were in favor of changing the title, one member who shared they have no opinion, and three members that were absent during the poll.

Anna Corning opened discussion to Committee members on the appointment process for department heads and multi member bodies. Anna Corning noted that currently the City Council appoints the City Manager, the City Auditor, and the City Clerk and noted that the City has many multi member bodies, Boards and Commissions, and Committees. She noted that the City Manager is currently responsible for making those appointments and that some of the Boards and Commission require Council approval.

Anna Corning recognized member Jim Stockard who shared that he believes the City Manager should be able to pick their own team when it comes to the executive branch and department heads within the City. He noted that if the Council wants the City Manager to be effective, it is not unreasonable for them to pick the team which they trust will help make the City successful. Member Stockard also shared that the City Council approval of appointments to Boards and Commissions is reasonable because they are policy making bodies. Many members of the Committee shared that they agreed with the comments that were made by Member Stockard.

Anna Corning recognized Member Nikolas Bowie who suggested that the City Council should have the power to remove or discipline department heads and offered comments on appointments to Boards and Commissions and the importance of their role within the City. Member Ellen Schachter shared that she was not in favor of the City Council having the power to remove department heads. Member Max Clermont agreed. Member Kevin Chen offered suggestions on City Council removal of department heads.

Elliot Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor, offered clarifying remarks on Boards and Commissions and the role some department heads play in those Boards. Elliot Veloso was available to respond to questions and concerns from the Committee. Michael Ward shared examples of how the City Council is involved with the hiring process from other municipalities.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.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/543?
view_id=1&redirect=true&h=9d3379b83c55083602c2d44e69524cfd](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/543?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=9d3379b83c55083602c2d44e69524cfd)

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 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, June 20, 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 – Absent
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 12, Absent – 3. Quorum established.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from the May 23, 2023 Charter Review meeting.

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

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson - Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born, recognized Elliot Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor, who reviewed the memo that was included in the Agenda Packet from the Law Department to the Charter Review Committee regarding the response to Council Order No. O-4 of April 10, 2023, and made himself available to respond to questions and concerns from Committee members.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adopt the memo from the Law Department to the Charter Review Committee.

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

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson - Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

Anna Corning, Project Manager, opened public comment.

Valerie Bonds thanked Anna Corning for hosting an event in the community room at 808 Memorial Drive and making herself available to questions from residents and offered comments and suggestions on term limits for Councillors.

Anna Corning shared that she would like to conduct a straw poll to help focus meeting discussions on topics the Committee members are most interested in and use the poll as a tool moving forward.

The first straw poll was to determine if Committee members were interested in keeping an at-large City Council, or continuing the discussion about adding district Councillors. Nine Committee members were in favor of maintaining at-large Councillors, three Committee members were in favor of continuing the discussion, and three members were recorded as absent.

The second straw poll was to determine if Committee members are interested in continuing the conversation on term lengths for City Councillors or if they are interested in keeping the current term length. The Committee members who were present chose unanimously to keep the current term length for City Councillors.

The final straw poll was to determine if the Committee was interested in discussing the addition of term limits for the City Councillors. Four Committee members were in favor of continuing the discussion of adding term limits and eight were not in favor of continuing the discussion.

Anna Corning shared that Chair Born, Member Max Clermont, and Member Lisa Peterson have been discussing ideas on adding additional elements for public engagement into the Charter. Anna Corning gave an overview of the discussions between the Committee members around engagement. Anna Corning shared that one thing that she would like the Committee to focus on is citizen participation mechanisms, which include free petitions and group petitions, and offered examples of both. Member Max Clermont noted that a free petition gives residents the opportunity to bring issues forward on the City Council Agenda by submitting the petition as a communication. Anna Corning shared with the Committee that a group petition needs a threshold of anywhere between 150-300 resident signatures or a percentage of the voters from the last municipal election, which could be around 2%-5%, once the petition has collected signatures it would then and require the City Council to hold a public hearing on the matter being brought forward through the petition. Committee members were recognized for questions and concerns and team members from the Collins Center Michael Ward and Elizabeth Corbo were available to respond and provide further information on petitions and public engagement. It was noted that if more public engagement were to be proposed in the Charter, the Committee should focus on language that would include goal setting for City Councillors and how information should be more accessible to the public.

Anna Corning shared that Chair Born, Member Clermont, and Member Peterson discussed two other potential provisions. The first was a resident assembly, which would include a large group of random, diverse individuals who are given questions and topics that they are to address. Anna Corning offered suggestions and examples of how a resident assembly could be used in

Cambridge. Member Nikolas Bowie and Member Jim Stockard shared that they strongly support resident assemblies. Member Jennifer Gilbert and Member Susan Shell offered comments and shared concerns about resident assemblies only having a short time together to focus on important topics and how participants in resident assemblies are selected. Anna Corning shared additional information on resident assemblies and made suggestions on how the Charter Review Committee can move forward with the addition on resident assemblies in the Charter.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.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/545?
view_id=1&redirect=true&h=7de1dc90369dc33b646718a7c80375fa](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/545?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=7de1dc90369dc33b646718a7c80375fa)

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 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, June 6, 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 – Absent*
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
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 – 13, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Jessica DeJesus was marked present at 5:36p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from May 9, 2023 and place them on file.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent

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 – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Patrick Magee who made a motion to adopt communications received from Committee Members and the Public and place them on file.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

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 – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened public comment.

John Hawkinson thanked the Committee and Law Department staff for responding to his communication and referenced some of the response from the Law Department's memo.

Valerie Bonds thanked Committee Members for the important decision that they will have to make and shared that some of their concerns with government are about accountability.

James Williamson shared that they were in support of a city-wide survey for residents on topics discussed in Charter Review.

Heather Hoffman offered comments on the form of government and noted that whatever form of government the Committee decides, it needs to promote transparency.

The Chair, Kathleen Born reviewed the letter received from the Law Department (Attachment A) regarding a legal opinion on voting for Charter Review Committee deliberations. Anna Corning, Project Manager, and Kathleen Born were available to clarify questions from Committee Members.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Max Clermont who made a motion to move forward with the City Manager-Mayor-City Council form of government as part of the committee deliberation process.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – No

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – No

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – No

Susan Shell – No

Jim Stockard – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 4, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Anna Corning introduced Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center who opened discussion on the Legislative Branch of government to Committee Members. Anna Corning noted that there should be three main points that Committee Members should focus on during conversation, which were:

1. Does the Committee want to recommend a change to how City Councillors represent the City? Adding some or all district representation to the current all-at-large structure.

2. Does the Committee want to change the length of terms for City Councillors (or include staggered terms)? Does the Committee want to establish term limits for City Councillors?

3. Role of Mayor/Chair of City Council. How is the Mayor/Chair elected? What should the power and duties of the Mayor/Chair of City Council be?

Member Ellen Shachter offered comments on ward representation and at large Councillors and shared that they believed a key problem with the system is making sure minorities get the proper representation.

Member Susan Shell shared that she agreed with comments made by Member Ellen Shachter and noted it is important that areas of the City are not left out in decision making, which could happen by having neighborhood representation.

Member Lisa Peterson offered comments on the possibility of district Councillors and shared it could be beneficial to some residents in the City, but found the City being broken up into three districts would be problematic for effective representation.

Member Mina Makarios noted that they have similar thoughts to Member Lisa Peterson, and shared concerns about what does not work for the current system with low turnout rates and low representation.

Member Jessica Acevedo shared that district representation is important to have individuals represent the diverse population and noted that they were in favor of staggered terms for Councillors.

Member Patrick Magee shared frustrations with the current City government on both the administration and government side. Member Magee offered comments on district representation and goal setting.

Member Kevin Chen shared that they were leaning towards the at large representation and noted they would be interested in exploring where to direct attention on the legislative side of government.

Member Nikolas Bowie shared that they felt very strongly about having the Mayor be called the Chair of the City Council to reflect what they actually are and also felt strongly against district based representation.

Member Jennifer Gilbert shared the importance of accountability and having a city-wide perspective when it comes to major changes in the City. Member Gilbert noted that they were not in favor of switching to district representation at this time.

Member Kai Long offered the suggestion of each Councillor having different responsibilities in representation to help direct community members who have concerns and noted that there should be term limits for Councillors and possibly the City Manager.

The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that she believes that proportional representation already allows for neighborhood representation. She is not in favor of districts. The Chair offered comments on term limits, noting that she is not in favor of term limits, in particular eight or ten year term limits or shorter.

Members of the Charter Review Committee continued their discussion on government by offering concerns and suggestions on ways the Committee can continue to move forward with topics they wish to address while forming a new Charter to propose to the Council. Anna

Corning, Elizabeth Corbo, and Michael Ward from the Collins Center were available to respond to Committee members. Anna Corning shared that if Committee members were interested in learning more information on the roles and power of duties of the Chair of City Council/Mayor, she and the Collins Center would be available to provide material for future discussions.

Member Lisa Peterson shared concerns from residents on whether the Mayor should be the Chair of the School Committee or if it should be someone that is specifically elected to be on the School Committee. Member Peterson noted that she was in favor of having the Mayor being the Chair, but also offered suggestions on how the Chair could be elected. Chair Born responded to comments made by Member Peterson, sharing that if a Mayor were to be elected there should be a discussion on what the roles and duties of the Mayor should be.

Member Patrick Magee asked if the Chair could go through the process of how the Mayor is currently elected and share her experience while being on the Cambridge City Council. Chair Born was available to respond and was happy to give an overview of the process.

Anna Corning reviewed the major themes that were discussed throughout the meeting and recognized Committee Members for comments. Elizabeth Corbo offered comments on theories on why officials are challenged less in district representation versus at large. Anna Corning shared suggestions from the public on how the districts could potentially be divided.

Anna Corning suggested that if Members do not feel strongly about changing something, going forward there should be votes taken in order to move on from certain discussions and topics.

Members of the Charter Review, the Collins Center, and Anna Corning discussed the City having a “311” informational telephone number similar to Somerville to assist residents with reporting various concerns and incidents and receiving a response in a timely manner.

Member Ellen Shachter shared concerns about term limits. Anna Corning, Michael Ward, and Elizabeth Corbo were available to respond and provide examples of term limits in other municipalities in Massachusetts and other States. Michael Ward noted that term limits are very rare in Massachusetts. Anna Corning shared that she would get more information on Massachusetts municipalities to provide to the Committee. Member Jennifer Gilbert asked the Collins Center why Massachusetts is different from other States regarding term limits. Michael Ward shared that he would look into it further.

Member Kai Long offered comments on term limits and noted that they would be in favor of term limits for various reasons, including having more diversity.

Anna Corning reminded Committee members and the public of future meet and greets with residents and noted that there will be no meeting on July 4, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Attachment A – Legal opinion from the Law Department.

Clerk’s Note: This is a permanent record.

The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/522?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=12abd6eeef3d616d2cfd6f99744013e2

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MAY 23, 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, May 23, 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 – Absent*
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent
Nikolas Bowie – Absent*
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 10, Absent – 5. Quorum established.

*Member Nikolas Bowie was marked present at 5:41p.m.

*Member Kaleb Abebe was marked present at 6:00p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized Member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt and place on file written communications received from the public. The motion was seconded by Member Jim Stockard.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 10, No – 0, Absent – 5. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born noted that the meeting was for Committee Members to continue the discussion on forms of government and shared that Michael Ward and Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Centers were present at the meeting.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

James Williamson shared that he was supportive of Committee Members moving towards a more democratic government and offered comments and suggestions on different forms of government.

Member Kai Long offered comments on using the word “democracy” when discussing form of government and shared they would like to have a better understanding of how other Committee Members feel they are using the word “democracy” when they are offering comments during conversations. Member Nikolas Bowie responded by sharing their thoughts on democracy and offered comments on Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government, as well as the budget. Members Jim Stockard, Ellen Shachter, Susan Shell, Lisa Peterson, Kai Long, Max Clermont, and Patrick Magee responded to remarks made by Nikolas Bowie and offered comments on form of government, democracy in the community, and the budget. Member Nikolas Bowie stressed the importance of building up a democratic body. The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that based on discussions in the Committee, it feels that there is a universal support for budget process reform regardless of what form of government Committee Members are leaning towards. Michael Ward offered comments on voter turnout and Mayor and Manager forms of government.

Anna Corning recognized Elizabeth Corbo who shared a chart titled “Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch” (Attachment A), with the focus being on Mayor-CAFO-Council form of

government. The chart reviewed the potential decision areas which included qualifications, term of Office, compensation, prohibitions, evaluation, goal setting, powers/duties, appointments by Office, temporary appointments, temporary vacancy in Office, removal (City Manager), and Veto (Mayor). While reviewing the chart, comments and concerns that were brought forward by Committee members were added to the document (Attachment B). Members from the Collins Center and Anna Corning were available to respond to questions and concerns from Committee members.

Member Ellen Shachter shared concerns about the procedure for the Committee moving forward with decision making. Anna Corning noted that the plan was to try and finish up the form of government discussion at the current meeting with the goal of a vote being taken at the next meeting. Anna Corning shared that the majority vote on form of government would then be the focus moving forward and members who vote in the minority would have the opportunity to produce a minority section on that form of government to be submitted with the final report. Member Ellen Shachter suggested that if Members were not available to vote at the next meeting, they could possibly submit a vote by proxy. The Chair, Kathleen Born noted that the Law Department should be consulted on this issue.

Members Kai Long and Susan Shell offered comments on democracy and voter turnout. Member Nikolas Bowie shared that they agree with Kai Long and Susan Shell on voter turnout and noted that the low turnout in the City is not a good way to run the City. Nikolas Bowie noted that the Committee can make changes within their control to change voter turnout. Anna Corning and Michael Ward offered comments and suggestions about voter turnout and shared that the Committee can look at other ways to increase voter participation. The Chair, Kathleen Born asked for clarification on ways to increase participation in elections. Anna Corning and Member Nikolas Bowie, noted that under the State's Home Rule Amendment, municipalities are not allowed to change voting laws without State Legislative approval.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Attachment A – Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch

Attachment B – Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch with comments and questions

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/515?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=a9eb99a2717b74e1865b80f83ba5a5d9

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MAY 9, 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, May 9, 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 – Absent*
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 13, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Member Mina Makarios was marked present at 5:47p.m.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Patrick Magee who made a motion to adopt and place on file the Charter Review Committee meeting minutes from April 11, 2023 and April 25, 2023. The motion was seconded by member Lisa Peterson.

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 – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt and place on file communications received from the public. The motion was seconded by Kevin Chen.

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 – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Jameson Quinn shared that they have been watching the process and appreciate the work the Committee has been doing and suggested that when it comes to voting systems, start with a statement of values to fulfill those values.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, reviewed the goals for this meeting and the next meeting, with the intent to take a vote on form of government at the May 23, 2023 meeting with a majority vote. Anna Corning noted that the final report will require a 2/3 majority vote and can also include a minority report. Members of the Charter Review Committee offered questions and concerns on the plan moving forward.

Members Kai Long, Susan Shell, Ellen Shachter, Mosammat Faria Afreen, and Mina Makarios, shared concerns and offered comments about the form of government decision making process. Anna Corning and Michael Ward from the Collins Center were available to respond to questions and concerns that were raised. Anna Corning shared that she would like to do a straw poll to see which form of government members were leaning towards to begin discussion.

Anna Corning opened the discussion to Committee members on the City Manager-Council-Mayor and Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government. Anna Corning recognized Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center who shared a chart titled “Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch” (Attachment A). The chart reviewed the potential decision areas which included qualifications, term of Office, compensation, prohibitions, evaluation, goal setting, powers/duties, appointments by Office, temporary appointments, temporary vacancy in Office, removal (City Manager), and Veto (Mayor). While reviewing the Chart, notes and questions that were brought forward by Committee members were added to the document (Attachment B). Members from the Collins Center and Anna Corning were available to respond to questions and concerns from Committee members.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Attachment A – Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch

Attachment B – Decision Chart for Article 3: Executive Branch with comments and questions

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/499?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=04bab9598a2b86d0b810dd6a3260cf5a

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 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 Roundtable meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 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.

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

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

Present – 9, Absent – 6. Quorum established.

***Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo was marked present at 5:40p.m.**

***Member Jennifer Gilbert was marked present at 5:37p.m.**

Members of the Charter Review Committee held a roundtable meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, to continue their discussion on the form of government in Cambridge.

The Chair, Kathleen Born, reminded members of the Committee and the public that it was a roundtable meeting, noting that no public comment and no votes would be taken during the meeting. Present at the meeting were Michael Ward and Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center who made themselves available to respond to any questions or comments brought forward by Committee members.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, gave an overview of the agenda for the meeting and noted that the discussions would be on City Manager-Council-Mayor form of government and related changes and on Mayor-Chief Administrative and Finance Officer (CAFO)-Council form of government and related changes. Anna Corning shared that Committee members should be concentrating on the strengths and challenges of each during the discussion.

Anna Corning recognized member Jim Stockard who led a focused discussion on City Manager-Council-Mayor form of government. Jim Stockard gave an overview of the pros of having a City Manager, sharing that City Managers are not subject to political pressure and are able to choose a successful team to run the various City Departments. Jim Stockard shared that they feel with the many communications, public comment, and forums the Charter Review Committee has conducted, the public seem to be leaning towards keeping a City Manager. Jim Stockard shared a question that was brought forward by a member of the public which was, “What is the problem you are trying to fix?”. Jim Stockard shared that that question has stuck with him and believes that the City, for the most part, runs fairly well with the current form of government. Jim Stockard reviewed some of the cons that have been brought up during discussion regarding City Manager form of government, sharing the most noticeable concern with members is the City Manager not being an elected official and having too much power overseeing the budget. After Jim Stockard reviewed the pros and cons of the City Manager-Council-Mayor form of government, Committee members were able to offer comments and concerns, with many members sharing their opinion on this type of form of government.

Anna Corning recognized member Nikolas Bowie who led a focused discussion on Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government. Nikolas Bowie shared that no form of existing democracy is a guarantee that an elected leader will care about everybody in the community, but what democracy does well is create a strong incentive for elected officials to care what people think. Nickolas Bowie noted that as members of the Committee, they have many resources to ensure that City government is accountable. They noted that it is important, whether it is with electing a strong Mayor, or any type of form of government, that elections are as inclusive and as representative as possible. By stressing the importance of having representation in elections, voters will have the ability to make the government more accountable than it currently already is. Nikolas Bowie stressed that democratic accountability has been the biggest factor in those in favor of a strong Mayor. Nikolas Bowie shared that they were in favor of a suggestion made by the Collins Center, which would include a Resident Advisory Committee for strong Mayor form of government and suggested that having a citizen jury and/or having random people chosen to participate in decisions would be beneficial. Nikolas Bowie ended by noting that they believe

that the City will work better if everyone can equally participate in deciding how everything in the community can flourish. After Nikolas Bowier reviewed the pros and cons of the Mayor-CAFO- Council form of government, discussion was open to Committee members to offer their comments and concerns.

Anna Corning suggested that moving forward it could be a good idea for the Committee to start focusing on other aspects of the Charter and return to a form of government discussion after Committee members have thought about it more.

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered closing remarks about form of government and shared they agreed with Anna Corning on the idea of taking a break on form of government discussion and coming back to it later. The Chair shared that it is important to discuss other topics of the Charter so the Committee can continue moving forward.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:30p.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/491?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=c12c827141cb251ff084cfe8d4262b66

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 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, April 11, 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
Jessican 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 Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 15, Absent – 0. Quorum established.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from March 29, 2023. The motion was seconded by member Kevin Chen.

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 Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Present

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made motion to accept and place on file fifteen communications received from the public. The motion was seconded by member Mosammat Faria Afreen.

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 Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Present

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 15, No – 0. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened public comment.

Valerie Bonds shared that they do not believe the City Council is ready for a four-year term and noted that the City Manager is a public servant who is responsible and accountable to the people only, where the City Council is accountable to the voters.

Charles Henebry shared that they are in favor of at large districts and believes it is good for proportional representation.

Gleb Bahmutov spoke in support of keeping rank choice voting and at large City Councillors.

James Zall encouraged the Committee to keep the at large status of the Cambridge City Council.

Dazhong Xia shared that they support at large City Council because they make decisions that reflect the entire City rather than geographic areas.

James Williamson suggested ways the City could be better at allowing the public to participate in Charter Review Committee meetings on the website. They shared that they support an elected Mayor and shared their experience with a City Manager form of government.

Stephen C. shared they were in support of a strong Mayor form of government and believes that a Manager and a Mayor would be equally accountable or unaccountable.

Marie Saccoccio shared that they were in favor of keeping two-year terms for the City Council and would like to see the Plan E Charter retained.

Pio Szamel suggested that the Charter Review Committee review how votes are cast for at large seats.

Heather Hoffman offered comments on government and shared that it is hard to find people to run to be an elected official and the residents and voters need to remain involved, otherwise there would be no accountability.

Jameson Quinn offered comments around staggered Council terms and suggestions on rank choice ballot voting.

Kai Long shared that it would be important to create and collect the data that is being submitted from communications to help the Committee have a better understanding of what the residents are saying. Anna Corning, Project Manager, shared that she would be happy to start tallying and creating an overall summary of the opinions and information that is being received from the public.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, noted that they are in the process of creating an online survey with members Lisa Peterson and Jennifer Gilbert as well as Chair Born. Anna Corning shared that the survey could have polls or open-ended questions for residents to respond to. Chair Born noted that the idea of the survey came from the City Council at the Special City Council meeting on March 22nd.

Members of the Charter Review Committee discussed and shared concerns around conducting a survey within the community regarding the form of government and matters related to it. Anna Corning noted that it is important for Committee members to share their suggestions and ideas for surveying, so the Committee can execute the survey to get the best outcome possible. Anna shared that there can be more than one way a survey is done.

Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center noted that conducting this survey will not be the last opportunity to receive feedback from the public and reviewed what the process will look like in the future for the Committee moving forward and shared that there will be several more instances where input will be gathered from the public.

Anna Corning shared that they would like to transition the topic of discussion to form of government and have Committee members share their thoughts.

Member Ellen Shachter shared that they would like to see a system that has a combination of a Mayor and a Chief Administrative and Finance Officer (CAFO). They noted that in their experience, they have seen more accountability with a Mayor.

Kai Long shared that they worry about having a strong Mayor and the accountability between the Mayor and City Council that would be involved and how they would be able to work together.

Mina Makarious shared that they are leaning closer to a City Manager form of government and noted that a strong Mayor with a CAFO could work if the Mayor's position would not have complete power and the possibility of making decisions with the Council.

Nikolas Bowie shared they support a strong Mayor system and likes the idea of having a CAFO. They stressed the importance that whoever sets the budget for the City should be accountable to the voters.

Jim Stockard shared that they are in favor of City Manager form of government and he likes the idea that the City Manager can stay away from campaigning and elections. Jim Stockard noted that they would like the City Council to have a leader within the Council that is elected to advocate for good policies to benefit the City.

Lisa Peterson noted that they are in favor of the City Manager form of government, and shared that a good City Manager tries to balance the interests of people across the City. They shared that if the Committee went with a strong Mayor it would be important to have an elected CAFO and for the Council to have more authority around the budget.

Susan Shell shared that they were in favor of a strong Mayor with a CAFO and that the budget should be overseen by elected officials.

Mosammat Faria Afreen shared that they were leaning toward having a strong Mayor form of government due to the potential of increasing voter turnout and noted it was important to have a strong public figure in Cambridge in terms of infrastructure and having a larger say with the budget.

Kaleb Abebe offered comments around form of government and shared they were in favor of keeping the current form of government.

Kathleen Born noted that a strong elected official is the best way for the City to have a future. The Chair noted that the City is stuck right now and it would benefit the City to have someone come in with a vision for the future and provide answers on how to get there.

Kevin Chen offered comments around the budget and noted that with a strong Mayor system, decisions around the budget could be different. They shared that they agree with the Chair about lack of leadership in the City and would support a strong Mayor system with a CAFO role in place.

Jennifer Gilbert shared that they support a strong Mayor form of government because it is a way for the City to create leadership and prioritize the City. They shared that a Mayor is someone that would be more accountable to lead the City in the future.

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo shared that they believe the City is going towards the direction of change, but is concerned with having a strong Mayor form of government. They shared they would like to look more into how the City Council can be improved and noted it would be important to help increase the number of minorities who are represented in the City, and shared that with a strong Mayor it would not be a full representation of citizens.

Patrick Magee shared that they support a City Manager - Council form of government and offered comments on the budget, noting that the past City Managers have not been able to accomplish what they have with regards to the budget without the push from the City Council.

Max Clermont shared that they are leaning towards City Manager form of government and agrees with comments made by Jim Stockard.

The meeting was extended thirty minutes by the Chair, Kathleen Born. No vote was taken.

The Charter Review Committee continued their discussion on the form of government and members offered concerns and suggestions around strong Mayor versus City Manager. Anna Corning suggested that members go around and share what side they were leaning towards.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:57p.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/481?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=8db2b148ca769c0a979e9f579e4e1cab

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 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, March 28, 2023. 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, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent*

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present

Nikolas Bowie – Absent*

Kevin Chen – Present

Max Clermont – Present

Jennifer Gilbert – Present

Kai Long – Absent*

Patrick Magee – Present

Mina Makarious – Absent*

Lisa Peterson – Present

Ellen Shachter – Present

Susan Shell – Present

Jim Stockard – Present

Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

***Members Jessica DeJesus Acevedo and Kai Long were marked present at 5:37p.m.**

***Member Nikolas Bowie was marked present at 5:35p.m.**

***Member Mina Makarious was marked present at 6:30p.m.**

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Schachter who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from February 28, 2023, and March 14, 2023. The motion was seconded by member Lisa Peterson.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the role.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Absent

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt communications from Committee Members and the public. The motion was seconded by member Mosammat Faria Afreen.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the role.

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 Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened public comment.

Liz Speakman spoke in support of keeping the same form of government that the City has had with a strong City Manager and believes that a strong Mayor would be risky.

Marilee Meyer shared they do not want to see more power from the Council and asked that the current system stays in place.

Valerie Bonds supported the same comments made by previous speakers and shared the City Council is not ready for a four year term.

Stephen Cellucci thanked the Committee for taking time to discuss the future of the City and spoke in support of a strong Mayor.

Jesse Baer spoke in favor of a strong Mayor and shared that politics is democracy and politics is under a threat and this is not the time to be moving away from politics.

Suzanne Blier spoke in favor of keeping the City Manager for now to see how the new City Manager is in his new role. She offered suggestions around the possibility of residents voting for the Mayor during Council elections.

Robert Winters offered many suggestions on updating and reformatting the current Charter and shared that giving the Election Commission more flexibility in some of the ways things are done would be beneficial.

Heather Hoffman offered comments around proportional representation and shared that done correctly, politics is the art of getting somewhere by bringing people together.

James Williamson shared a quote from Niccolo Machiavelli and would like to see a shift of power where citizens have input in decisions that are made and participate in the decisions that effect their lives.

Ilan Levy shared it is important for residents to have a clear understanding of the actual consequences of the form of government that the City will be using and voices of the people need to be heard in the final decisions that are made.

Anna Corning, Project Manager, introduced Elizabeth Corbo and Michael Ward from the Collins Center who gave an overview of their chart titled “Menu of Forms of Government with Example Options for Modifications” (Attachment A). After their presentation they made themselves available to Committee Members to respond to any questions or concerns.

Member Kai Long offered comments around strong Mayor and Manager and shared that the possibility of modifying and working on what government the City already has could be beneficial.

Member Mina Makarios noted that they agree with comments that were made by Kai Long and if the Committee decides to keep the City Manager he would like to see the Council and the public be more involved with the approach of hiring a new City Manager.

Member Nikolas Bowie shared he was in favor of switching to a strong Mayor system and realizing how much Massachusetts State Law puts into the budgetary process is a key factor that helped him lean towards a strong Mayor.

Member Lisa Peterson shared that she believes that the current system works very well but could use some improvement. Lisa Peterson noted that a directly elected Mayor is putting a lot of power to one person versus having a City Council that would require a vote of five people to make decisions within the City. Member Peterson shared that mutually agreeable goals are needed between the Council and Manager to make progress.

Member Jim Stockard offered comments and shared that the Charter Review Committee should not want to change the Charter just for the sake of change, but there are improvements in the current Charter the Committee can make moving forward. He shared that he likes the idea of keeping the current government system, noting that the City Manager is held accountable by the City Council. Jim Stockard also agreed with statements made by member Nikolas Bowie around the budget process and shared that the City Council should have more input and accountability with the budget.

Member Susan Shell shared that they agreed with comments made by member Jim Stockard. She shared that she is reluctant to change things radically without more time to deliberate and noted that maybe this is not the best time to go with a strong Mayor but feels most of the changes that will happen will be at the level of the City Council.

Member Jennifer Gilbert encouraged all members to speak on the topic of form of government if they feel comfortable. They shared that they are leaning towards a strong Mayor government and offered comments on why they are leaning that way, noting that it is hard to have a nonelected official be the voice of the City in regards to the budget and representing the City regionally.

Member Kevin Chen shared that they appreciate hearing comments from fellow Committee members and from listening to the conversation at the meeting, they are leaning towards strong Mayor only if there is a Chief Administrative and Finance Officer (CAFO) role partnered with a Mayor. Kevin Chen noted that having a Mayor will help bring accountability and transparency to the City, which is what many residents and Committee members have voiced in their concerns, and a CAFO will allow a manager type role that can help the City go in the right direction.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen shared that if the Committee decides to keep the current form of government one thing they would like to see changed would be towards the budget, and noted giving the responsibility of the budget to the elected officials is important.

Member Patrick Magee agrees with comments made around the budget process and shared it would be helpful to look at past budgets and compare them to municipalities that have a strong Mayor to see where Cambridge's budget stands in comparison to those to see if members are happy with that, or what the difference would be under different circumstances. He shared that there could be the possibility of strong Mayor form of government not being progressive enough and noted there is a balance of having a collective group deciding who the City Manager is could be a good safety net.

Member Kaleb Abebe shared he had similar thoughts to Patrick Magee to compare budgetary spending with other municipalities and how it relates to Cambridge. Kaleb Abebe offered comments around the budget and noted that more input from elected officials and the City

Council, is more of a high priority for him while also maintaining the Council-Manager relationship.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo shared that she is apprehensive towards elected voting due to the lack of representation of minorities. She offered comments around the budget and the struggles of being a small business owner and resident in Cambridge, but noted she was in favor of a City Manager structure because she believes that role is more accountable. She shared suggestions around terms and noted that a four-year term would be more beneficial for the Council and the City to accomplish goals.

Member Max Clermont noted that he was in favor of a strong Manager and Council form of government and shared that there is more of a role that the Mayor could play as a member of the Council and with the City Manager.

The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that it has been very difficult to decide on the form of government and shared she is not ready to move away from a City Manager form of government. She agrees there could be changes made in the Charter and a more efficient way to elect a Mayor to Chair the City Council.

Member Kai Long shared that having nine elected leaders and helping them figure out how to work together would be extremely beneficial and a good goal for the Committee to work together towards.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen noted that the rise of costs in the City has played a role in how many people who identify as a minority vote in Cambridge and shared that the idea of having people who may not live in Cambridge, but work in Cambridge, vote as well, which could be a benefit regarding the increase of voter turnout.

Member Lisa Peterson had a clarifying question about how much input the Boston City Council recently got towards the budget and how they were able to make that change. Anna Corning noted that it was a ballot question that the State gave Boston to allow new power to the Council to allow them to amend, reject, or propose line items, as long as the overall budget number did not increase.

Member Nikolas Bowie stressed the importance that when the Committee goes to the State Legislature, they should approach the process from the perspective that the Charter is the vehicle to push through the legislature the changes the people of Cambridge want.

Member Susan Shell shared it is useful to think about the residents of Cambridge who will be here in twenty years, and noted that decisions made today may influence what the demographic of the city is in the future.

Anna Corning noted that at the next Charter Review Committee meeting she would like to finish the conversation and take a working consensus vote on the form of government.

The Chair, Kathleen Born extended the meeting by fifteen minutes, no vote was taken.

Member Jennifer Gilbert shared she looks forward to more conversation to help flush out and get a better consensus on form of government.

Member Mina Makarios offered comments regarding how the Committee will vote next week on the form of government.

Member Kai Long had a clarifying question on how the Charter can make the City Council and City Council- Manager relationship more accountable and if a Mayor-Council would be an easier relationship to build towards accountability. Anna Corning noted that with a Mayor system, they are less accountable to the City Council because they do not have to report to the City Council, whereas the City Manager does have to report to the City Council.

The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that she would like more information from the Collins Center regarding what a tight goal setting process would look like to tie goals to the budget. She also shared that understanding more about the State Legislative process and other Charters submitting Home Rule petitions would be helpful moving forward. Anna Corning and Elizabeth Corbo were available to respond and shared that there are many methods to use towards goal setting.

Member Kevin Chen had a clarifying question regarding the possibility of voters being able to appoint and remove a City Manager. Elizabeth Corbo provided answers, sharing that there is the possibility of having a form of a citizen free petition.

Member Jim Stockard shared it is important to communicate with State Representatives and Legislators sooner so they are on the same page and have an understanding of what the Committee is trying to address.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen thanked the Collins Center for their chart and shared a table that represents the roles of the Manager and CAFO with a column on how they could be kept accountable by the Council and the voters would be helpful. Anna Corning shared that a CAFO role is person who is working for the Mayor and acts as a department head.

Anna Corning thanked everyone for participating and believes it was a very productive meeting.

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/475?>

[view_id=1&redirect=true&h=0d98a607a0eedeef793a14b82fc98420](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/475?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=0d98a607a0eedeef793a14b82fc98420)

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 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, March 14, 2023. 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.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent
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 – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Absent
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 12, Absent – 3. Quorum established.

The Chair, Katleen Born recognized member Kevin Chen who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from February 7, 2023 and Subcommittee meeting minutes from January 27, 2023. The motion was seconded by member Kai Long.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

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 – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adopt and place on file one written communication received from the public (Attachment A). The motion was seconded by member Patrick Magee.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

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 – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

Anna Corning, Project Manager, shared that she would like to hear opinions on the proposed timeline (Attachment B) and adopt it at the meeting. She noted that she tried to incorporate the two main items she heard as feedback from members, which included dedicated time to review drafted charter text, and dedicated time slots for topic-specific public forums. Anna noted that the plan would be to propose this timeline to the Council at the meeting being held on March 22 with the understanding that the Charter Review Committee would ask for an extension through the end of the year. Anna opened discussion to members about edits and concerns around the proposed timeline.

Member Ellen Shachter had a clarifying question around summer meetings and the possibility of some members being away on vacation. She noted the importance of making sure there is a quorum for summer meetings so the Committee is able to meet. Anna Corning noted that there will be a summer break where meetings will not be held and shared she would be reaching out to members to confirm their availability.

Member Susan Shell had a clarifying question on how the timeline would be affected by an extension and what it looks like moving forward. Anna Corning noted that the timeline is the framework behind asking for the extension with the goal being to discuss the extension at the City Council Special meeting on March 22, and shared that the timeline currently goes to mid-November, and members should think about if they are able to continue to make a commitment to participate.

The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that it would be good to end in November because it is an election year and it would be good to have the current City Council members present when the new Charter Review language is complete and ready to be submitted. The Chair encouraged members to look at the proposed timeline so they have a good idea of what will be happening in the upcoming months and future meetings.

Member Kai Long offered comments and positive feedback around the proposed timeline and is in favor of moving forward with it, and believes November is a good end date.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt the proposed timeline. Member Patrick Magee seconded the motion.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

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 – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born reminded Committee members of the Special City Council meeting being held on March 22nd and encouraged some members to join in the meeting, but also stressed the importance that Charter Review Committee members that do attend have to be less than seven to stay away from a quorum.

Anna Corning introduced City Manager Yi-An Huang who thanked the Committee for inviting him to join the meeting. The City Manager offered opening remarks about his transition from his previous employment to his current role as City Manager, and shared his background on what led him to become a City Manager. He shared that he recognized the opportunity to come into the City to build off of things that are already strong, and work towards strengthening areas in the City where it was needed. The City Manager noted that he believes the conversation with the Charter Review Committee is very important, and he is excited and happy to share what he has learned, seen, and experienced since taking the role of City Manager.

Member Kevin Chen began by asking the City Manager if there were a Mayor position that had been opened with the City, is that something he would have applied for. The City Manager shared that he would not have applied for a political role like that, he does enjoy reading about politics, but does not see himself as a politician. The City Manager noted that what excites him about the role of City Manager is being able to build a strong organization and a culture where he is able get things done.

Member Ellen Shachter offered comments and asked the City Manager what he believes is the appropriate interface with the people in the community and the position of City Manager. The City Manager responded by sharing he believes that it is very important to have all levels of engagement within the community and noted that there is always room for improvement on how the City continues to be accessible, engaging, and receiving feedback.

Member Susan Shell had a question for the City Manager regarding his relationship with the City Council around legislation and also questioned how the City Manager, within his own office, sets up the various divisions and demands and prioritizes what needs get met with first. The City Manager began by noting that it is a unique governing structure. He shared that he believes the Councillors got into their roles because they wanted to make an impact and shape their community. He noted he believes his role when he is working with the Councillors is to try and come to a consensus and shape policy together through dialogue, even when everyone is coming from different perspectives, and achieve those positive impacts for the City together.

Organizationally within his Office he aspires to have short term plans where his team can see what they are working on currently and how it will impact decisions going forward to make long term investments. He noted that the Councillors exercise a great deal of power and influence on the City Manager, which is applied over time, and noted how affordable housing is a great example of that.

Member Kai Long questioned the City Manager on how much in his job description is engaging with the public or how much within the perimeter of the job would be with the public. The City Manager responded by sharing that it was the responsibility of the Council to hire someone who they believed would be beneficial towards the City in all aspects, including community engagement. He shared that when he came into the position, he had the desire of setting up structures that have not been in place, with an example being the City Manager annual review. He commented that he worked with the City Council to create the review, which had just been finalized, and it offers the opportunity to achieve goal setting and feedback from the community and other City Departments. Kai Long had a clarifying question regarding the review and was interested in knowing if the review were something that would continue to apply once City Manager Huang is no longer in the role of City Manager. The City Manager responded by sharing that it could be something that becomes permanent but should be flexible as time changes and the City evolves.

Member Lisa Peterson asked the City Manager if he was able to provide specific recommendations that members in the Committee could think about to try and change Charter language to accomplish more public participation. The City Manager noted that there are some larger challenges the City is trying to solve and recognized that more public representation, participation, and engagement is important.

Member Jennifer Gilbert offered questions around issues that are more regional and national, and asked how, with our current form of government, where does the City stand with other cities and towns, and how does Cambridge contribute to some of these major issues like climate change, housing, and transportation. The City Manager offered comments, noting that it is understood that regionally that these are issues that need to be collaborative on.

Member Patrick Magee had questions around the amount of Awaiting Reports that are on the weekly Council Agenda and suggested that when City Councillors are elected, they try to set their policy setting earlier in their term. Patrick Magee shared that by doing this it would help to set the stage and allow staff to know and focus on what the two year term would look like. He offered additional comments and asked for the City Manager's view on a suggestion like this. The City Manager shared that there should be a goal setting exercise between the City Council and the City, which has been missing. He shared that this year the City and the City Councillors will plan out what that goal setting looks like moving forward. The City Manager agreed with Patrick Magee and believes that there is a need to be clearer about overall direction, and where the staff time and efforts need to be focused.

Member Mina Makarios asked the City Manager from his perspective, or anything he has heard from the City Council, on what the Charter Review Committee should be working towards to help the Council function better as an advisory board. The City Manager noted that ultimately the Councillors are held accountable by the voters. He shared that having a more citizen base that are working with Councillors and paying attention to legislation could be beneficial moving forward. The City Manager offered additional comments and noted that he enjoys working with each Councillor and getting different perspectives from them when making decisions.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo submitted questions to the City Manager and was unable to speak during the meeting. Member Acevedo wanted to know what the City Manager's leadership style was, what is the most difficult part of your role, how are you ensuring policy and legislation based on social media, and how are we supporting the BPOC and small businesses in our city to remain in the city from your position and lens post-COVID and ARPA rollout. The City Manager shared that he focuses on trying to assemble a good team that will focus on tackling an issue, and he is trying to look at and build into the City a diverse group of people. The City Manager noted that when involving groups of people, he wants to make sure they feel free to speak and have input, and that they are listened to when they do speak.

Member Ellen Schachter had clarifying questions around decisions that come down to risk and the ability to take risks, noting that it is critical to take risks in order to go forward, and asked where does risk fit into the role of City Manager. The City Manager noted that there are many risks that come with his role, sharing that there are a lot of different risks and at the end of the day there should be an assessment of what type of risk you are taking and looking at the different scenarios with that risk, the impact, and the reward.

The Chair, Kathleen Born thanked the City Manager for taking time to be with the Charter Review Committee around a clearer mission for the Mayor, which is something the Charter Review might accomplish by deciding if they go with directly electing a Mayor through rank choice voting. The Chair, Kathleen Born asked for the City Manager's thoughts around the possibility of the Mayor having a different role with establishing priorities. The City Manager noted that there is some value in having a different role for the Mayor, sharing that it could be more attractive to voters.

Anna Corning thanked City Manager Huang for participating the Charter Review meeting and making himself available to answer questions and be open to discussion. The City Manager thanked all the Charter Review Committee members and thanked them for the important work they are doing.

Anna Corning reminded members that the goal is to meet a working consensus on the form of government topic by the end of the next meeting and asked members to submit any questions or concerns they had around the topic to help them reach the goal of getting to a consensus.

Member Jennifer Gilbert shared their concerns around the discussion about the form of government and noted it should be thorough and thought out on how members engage in discussion on the topic of form of government. Anna Corning suggested she can brainstorm with The Chair and the Collins Center to help break down the questions and frame them into building block questions that will help get to a decision in a thoughtful way.

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered her concerns around the decision of form of government and noted she had relistened to some of the interviews and meetings that were conducted throughout the last few months to help with her thought process.

Member Mina Makarious agreed with the Chair about her concerns. They shared that learning about the different leadership styles has been beneficial and wants to make sure that the

Committee is conscious of the option to not make any changes to the overall form of government in the decision making process.

Anna Corning introduced Elizabeth Corbo and Michael Ward from the Collins Center who gave a review of their memo (Attachment C) which was a menu of forms of government with example options for modifications. Members from the Committee shared their questions and concerns around the memo and the team from the Collins Center made themselves available to respond.

The Chair, Kathleen Born extended the meeting by fifteen minutes. Members of the Committee agreed to the extension. No roll call was taken.

Members of the Charter Review Committee, the team from the Collins Center, and Anna Corning continued their discussion around the memo. Many members of the Charter Review offered clarifying questions around the memo and the team from the Collins Center and Anna Corning were available to provide more detail and examples around the questions.

Anna Corning thanked members from the Charter Review for their thoughtful questions and discussions during the meeting.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:50p.m.

Attachment A – Written Communication from a member of the public.

Attachment B – Adopted Project Timeline

Attachment C – Memorandum from the Collins Center to the Charter Review Committee

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/462?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=92987b32666239a03ed7d617bcfad620

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 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, February 28, 2023. 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.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Absent
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 14, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes from the January 31, 2023 Charter Review Committee meeting. Member Jim Stockard made a motion to adopt the minutes, and the motion was seconded by member Ellen Shachter. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowier – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born noted that there were four written communications that were received from the public (Attachments A-D) and recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt the written communications and place them on file. The motion was seconded by member Kaleb Abebe.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowier – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Lee Farris shared that it would be nice as a user or resident that when the newsletter goes out there would be a link that would go straight to the documents that are being described in the newsletter, it would make it easier for the reader.

Patrick Hayes shared that he and Committee members went to a Harvard Square Business Association meeting recently to spread the word about the Charter Review Committee.

Member Jim Stockard shared discussions he has had with community members, some of whom voiced their concerns and noted that they were not in favor of having the option to allow older youth to vote.

Anna Corning asked for feedback on the draft proposed timeline (Attachment E) that was sent to Committee Members and shared that she would like to have it completed before the Special Meeting with the City Council on March 22, 2023. She noted that the proposed timeline is a way to set goals and have topics for future meetings.

Member Ellen Shachter had a clarifying question on the timeline around the drafting of language for the Charter. Anna Corning was able to provide more detail and feedback on what the proposed drafting language should look like as the Charter Review Committee continues to move forward.

Member Kevin Chen had a clarifying question regarding the proposed timeline would work around community engagement. Anna Corning shared that the way the Charter Review has been engaging is a good way to continue, but members should think about offering public forums or workshops that are more structured around specific topics.

Member Mina Makarious suggested that as the Charter Review moves forward with drafting new charter language, it may be beneficial for the City Solicitor's Office to review all of the proposed language.

Member Jim Stockard asked for clarity on when the Charter Review Committee should be requesting an extension from the City Council. Anna Corning noted that it's mostly up to the Committee if they want to continue to volunteer meeting and noted that it would be up to the members of the Charter Review Committee to determine a proposed timeline to bring to the City Council when asking for an extension. Anna Corning suggested that members should think about if they are comfortable extending the timeline and could ask for the extension at the Special City Council meeting in March.

Member Ellen Shachter suggested that the Charter Review Committee members use specific questions to bring to the community groups to target what the Charter Review is asking for feedback on.

Michael Ward from the Collins Center introduced the panelists that were invited to join the Charter Review Committee meeting. They included Alex Morse, current Manager of Provincetown and former Mayor of Holyoke, Joe Curtatone, former Mayor and Alderman of Somerville, and Eileen Donoghue, former Manager and Mayor of Lowell and former State

Senator. Panelists made themselves available to answer questions and concerns of Charter Review Committee members.

For the remainder of the meeting, Charter Review Committee members and the panelists went into discussion about strong mayor versus strong manager, with panelists offering their personal experiences in those roles. Charter Review members engaged with the panelists and spoke on topics that included risks and responsibilities that come with mayor and manager, the role of city councils in the two different forms of government, accountability, the leadership part of the position and the type of visibility that comes with it, community engagement and goals, limitations with community engagement specific to the type of role, the disconnect with diverse citizens and accessibility to information, lining the community needs with the budget, the budget process including more engagement from the Council or the community, and racial and social representation within government,

The Chair, Kathleen Born thanked the three panelists for attending the meeting and shared she was excited about the conversations that took place.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30p.m.

The Charter Review Committee received four written communications from the public, Attachments A-D.

Attachment E – Draft proposal timeline

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/456?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=ff06191c9981904379b832d74b03383a

MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 7, 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, February 7, 2023. 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, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Present

Kevin Chen – Present

Max Clermont – Present

Jennifer Gilbert – Present

Kai Long – Present

Patrick Magee – Absent*

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Scachter – Absent

Susan Shell – Absent*

Jim Stockard – Present

Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 10, Absent – 5. Quorum established.

***Patrick Magee was marked present at 6:44p.m.**

***Susan Shell was marked present at 5:43p.m.**

Chair Born noted that there were seven written communications that were received from the public (Attachments A-G). Chair Born recognized member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo who made a motion to adopt the written communications and place them on file, the motion was seconded by member Kevin Chen.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Absent

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard- Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 11, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened public comment.

Suzanne Blier thanked Committee members for holding the public forums and noted she looks forward to Committee members speaking on the differences on what is happening with relative proportionality in other municipalities.

Anna Corning began the meeting by introducing Michael Ward, Patricia Lloyd and Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center who did an overview of their memo (Attachment H). After the presentation members from the Collins Center made themselves available to Committee members who had any questions or concerns.

Members from the Charter Review Committee went into discussion about elections and their takeaway from the presentation made by the Election Commission from the previous meeting. Members offered comments and suggestions, with some of the topics focused on rank choice voting, reviewing Chapter 54A, its repeal and how it affected Cambridge, voting turnout numbers, the possibility of having four-year and/or alternating terms for Council members, and even and odd year elections.

Michael Ward from the Collins Center shared that there are significant challenges with even number year elections on the same day as State and Federal elections. He noted that there are both State law and Federal law challenges that would have to be thought through. He shared that the Collins Center would look more into it to try and get a better understanding and provide information as it comes.

Member Nikolas Bowie stressed the importance of the role Charter Review Committee members have.

Anna Corning noted that she will pull some data from other cities and towns that have elections that fall on even years to see what the voting turnout numbers are compared to odd years.

Members Jennifer Gilbert, Jessica DeJesus Acevedo, Kevin Chen, Kai Long, and Susan Shell shared their concerns and challenges they took away from the Election Commissions presentation. A suggestion that was made was to have more outreach with public housing to engage and educate to get more voters out. One concern that was brought up was around ward based elections and ward representations, and the challenges that could come with it.

The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that New York currently moved to non-citizen voting for their School Committee, which has been successful. She also noted that some communities have been looking into Universal Suffrage, for a larger expanded group to vote, including younger people. She shared that it is based off the premise that federal aid and representation is built out on a census basis, which includes non-citizens and children, who are people that should be included in the voting process.

Member Kai Long had a clarifying question regarding the possibility of having a digital option for elections. Elizabeth Corbo responded noting that she's not aware of any. Michael Ward shared it is something that the Collins Center can look in to.

Member Jim Stockard offered comments around how to make residents feel more comfortable coming out to vote and was open to suggestions on how the Charter Review Committee could make that possible. He also offered ideas on ballot questions that could potentially help to get more residents out to vote.

Member Patrick Magee shared thoughts on how the community can engage with university type cities and towns, where the turnover population is always changing, and focusing on those specific demographics.

Anna Corning asked members to share their thoughts on the Saturday, January 24, 2023, public forum that was held on Zoom. Member Jennifer Gilbert stressed the importance that if the Charter Review members were going to meet with one ward, it would be important to meet with all wards. The Chair, Kathleen Born agreed and shared that it is good to broaden the Charter Review outreach to as many groups and community members as possible.

Member Kai Long shared that she and member Patrick Magee had interviewed former Mayor and City Council member David Maher and offered comments on what was discussed during the interview. Kai Long noted that she had also interviewed former City Manager Robert Healy and urged other members of the Committee to watch the interview to get his perspective.

Anna Corning shared that she is working on a draft project timeline to help categorize and add goals to future meetings and did a brief overview of what Committee members can look forward to at the upcoming meetings. She asked for the members to start thinking about making a tentative decision on form of government so the Committee can start moving forward.

Members of the Committee offered comments on Mayor versus City Manager form of government and how moving forward the Committee could possibly look at other options besides Mayor versus City Manager. One suggestion was looking at structures within the executive branch and having a document that would be able to summarize the different concepts and would be able to provide pros and cons of different forms of government.

Member Nikolas Bowie noted that having a chart or document on how Councils in Massachusetts oversee their executives would be helpful.

Anna Corning shared that the next meeting will be held on February 28, 2023 and will include a group of Mayors and Managers from different municipalities to speak to the Charter Review Committee members.

Member Kai Long asked if the Committee could possibly get more information from Department Heads or other staff on how they feel about a City Manager form of government, to get a more honest point of view.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35p.m.

The Charter Review Committee received seven written communications, Attachments A-G Attachment H – Memorandum from the Collins Center to the Charter Review Committee

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/441?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=0e93353afbb7a0e6697b7df30b769404

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**
TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 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, January 31, 2023. 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, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent
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 – Absent*
Mina Makarios – Present
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 12, Absent – 3. Quorum established.

*Member Patrick Magee was marked present at 5:38p.m.

Chair Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes from the January 17, 2023 and November 22, 2022 Charter Review Committee meetings. Member Jim Stockard made a motion to adopt both minutes, and the motion was seconded by member Kevin Chen.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

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 – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Chair Born noted that there were nine written communications that were received from the public (Attachments A-I). Chair Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt the written communications and place them on file, the motion was seconded by member Jim Stockard.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

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 – Absent

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on ways the Charter Review Committee could help change the City government.

Robert Winters, shared that he would like to see in the Charter Review process a redress of grievances and offered to volunteer to the Charter whenever he is needed.

Lee Farris, shared they attended the public forum and asked if there would be a summary or discussion given to the Committee. She commented that she asked the forum to be more informative in the future.

Anna Corning introduced Elizabeth Corbo and Michael Ward from The Collins Center who did an overview of a memo (Attachment J) they submitted to the Charter Review Committee. After their presentation they made themselves available to Committee members for any questions or concerns.

Member Nikolas Bowie questioned if other cities have changed rules to allow City Council to increase certain aspects of the budget. Elizabeth Corbo responded by sharing that in many municipalities the executive branch is responsible for assembling the budget.

Member Ellen Shachter shared concerns about transparency and free cash and asked for clarity regarding budget discussions with Department Heads and City Manager. Michael Ward was able to provide a response, sharing that there could be ways the City break downs the budget when it comes to free cash.

Member Jim Stockard shared the importance of the City Council having goals when it comes to the budget and referenced the interviews he had done with two former City Managers regarding the budget and offered thoughts on how the process could improve.

Member Mina Makarious echoed comments made by member Jim Stockard about having goals. They shared concerns about the budget process regarding the City Council and public participation and how the Committee should be bold about what the Committee wants from the legislature.

Member Susan Shell noted that she agreed with all the comments made from Committee members who spoke before her.

The Chair, Kathy Born spoke on the importance of goal setting and structure, and how specific the charter could be structured.

Anna Corning introduced Charles Maquardt, Chair of the Election Commission, who was joined by his team member Assistant Director Lesley Waxman, and Commissioners Larry Ward, Ethridge King, and Victoria Harris. Lesley Waxman did a presentation titled "Presentation to the Charter Review Committee" (Attachment K). Members from the Election Commission made themselves available to Committee members for any questions or concerns.

After the Election Commissions presentation, members from the Charter Review Committee offered questions and concerns around the City of Cambridge elections. Topics that were brought up were statutory requirements regarding areas and wards, proportional representation, voter information that is provided through the City on candidates, odd and even number election years and the possibility of having an election during an even numbered year, how voters are informed about how the voting system works, and voter turnout.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes. The motion was seconded by member Susan Shell.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

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 – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The discussion continued with members offering questions and concerns regarding elections. Topics that were brought up were ways the City could get more voters out on election days, rank choice voting, accessibilities that Cambridge is providing for voters who need it at the polls, mail in voting, and having institutes be accountable for their students and registration.

Members from the Election Commission shared the importance of having youth being involved with the voting process, and had students helping at the polls at the last election. They plan on continuing to have youth be involved and stressed the importance of having voters start voting when they are eligible to do so. The team noted that they do student outreach with college students and stressed how it important it is to engage and support registration efforts across the City.

The Meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:47p.m.

The Charter Review Committee received nine written communications, Attachments A-I
Attachment J – Memorandum from The Collins Center Charter Project Team
Attachment K – Presentation titled, “Presentation to the Charter Review Committee”

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/431?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=689502f35cf7fb77ff48a2e9d91d60aa

MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Friday, January 27, 2023

Subcommittee Members

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo
Jennifer Gilbert
Kai Long
Lisa Peterson
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard
Kathleen Born, Chair

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Friday, January 27, 2023. The meeting was called to order at approximately 11:00a.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, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 6, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

Anna Corning began by noting that the meeting would be focusing on the Committee Work Plan and other major topics. She also reviewed the public forum at the Main Library that was held on January 24, 2023, and the turnout of residents.

Member Jennifer Gilbert had a clarifying question about the public forum and if the guests in attendance were people that were familiar with the Charter Review Committee or if people who were in attendance came to get information on the Charter Review. Anna Corning noted that about fifty percent of people were there to learn more about what the Charter Review Committee represented.

Member Jim Stockard shared that there should be more outreach for lower income residents, so they are aware of the Committee and to get more community awareness.

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered suggestions on locations on where the Committee could do more outreach, noting that the youth centers could be appealing to some residents.

Member Susan Shell suggested more transparency on the City website could be beneficial.

Member Kai Long shared that the meeting was very informative, and suggested meetings going forward be more targeted on specific matters.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo shared members from the community asked for more clarity on what the Charter is, and echoed comments made by Kai Long. They stressed the importance of reaching out to minorities and using City spaces that are comfortable for all demographics in the City.

Anna Corning agreed that the Committee does need to reach out to more to the community and offered the idea of informational mail using postcards that could have links, translated informational versions online, and direct residents to more information that is posted on the website.

Member Kai Long shared that the Committee should use more than words when reaching out to different demographics, using tools that are more accessible to those who need it. Break down the communication so it is accessible to a variety of people with different education levels.

Anna Corning stressed the importance of feedback from Committee members when it comes to doing community outreach.

Member Jennifer Gilbert agreed with having more education for the community and with comments made by Kai Long with using different tools to reach out to the different demographics of people.

Member Jim Stockard noted it would be important to have examples and scenario-based questions when speaking to the community about the Charter when it comes to Strong Mayor/Strong Manager and other forms of government. He also suggested reaching out to older students at CRLS who could relay Charter information to family members at home.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo offered ways the Committee could reach out to the school community.

Anna Corning noted that there is a meeting with the City Council in March where Committee members can come and talk with Council members and potentially request an extension.

Member Jennifer Gilbert offered ideas on outreach, suggesting using social media videos and possibly having a contest to help promote information, a way to create content that is about the Charter.

Anna Corning shared she could try and make a connection with staff at CRLS to brainstorm ways to get information out through students.

Member Kai Long stressed the importance of moving forward and asking big questions, answering them, and getting to decisions.

Member Jim Stockard suggested leaning more towards going out to other groups and committees in the City to get information out there to community members who may be hesitant to join forums and meetings that the Charter Review Committee hold.

Anna Corning noted that things are moving forward, and she has seen some feedback and communication from members from the CEOC and Ward 9.

Member Susan Shell shared that the more informed people are, the more informed opinion and point of view they will share.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo offered the idea of having a tentative schedule about when things should be done by to help keep Committee members focused and on track.

Anna Corning stressed the importance of having a work plan going forward to have targeted conversations and shared that a workplan is something she can draft up to bring forward to the full committee.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo who made a motion to create a draft of a work plan to guide Committee members going forward and to propose the workplan to the full Charter Review Committee. The motion was seconded by member Jim Stockard.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo who made a motion that was seconded by member Jim Stockard to create a draft of a workplan to guide Committee members going forward and propose the workplan to the full Charter Review Committee.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:05p.m.

The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/429?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=87892f06d2f559fd22f927d34862856b

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 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, January 17, 2023. 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 of Committees called the roll.

Kaleb 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 – Absent *
Mina Makarios – Absent *
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Ellen Schachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Patrick Magee was marked present at 5:35p.m

*Mina Makarios was marked present at 5:34p.m.

Chair Born opened with the Adoption of the Minutes from the January 3, 2023 Charter Review Committee meeting as amended to add Kaleb Abebe's name on the first page under Committee Members. Member Ellen Shachter made a motion to adopt the amended minutes, the motion was seconded by member Jim Stockard.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

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 – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Chair Born noted that there was one written communication received from the public (Attachment A). Chair Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the communication and place it on file, the motion was seconded by member Kevin Chen.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

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 – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning began the meeting by sharing with members that there have been four interviews completed so far with past City Employees, which included former Deputy City Solicitor Arthur

Goldberg, and the two most recent City Managers, Richard Rossi and Louis DePasquale, and former Mayor and City Council Member Henrietta Davis.

Member Jim Stockard summarized the interviews he had with Arthur Goldberg, Richard Rossi, and Louie DePasquale, who all shared they believed the City functions well with the current government system. Some concerns that came up was having the budget process start sooner and possibly having the City Council set a goal setting type meeting to help prepare for the budget. Some commented that the City Manager should be appointing Department heads, while the City Council appoints members to Boards and Commissions. One thing they were all in favor of was having as much public engagement as possible.

Anna Corning reminded members of the upcoming public engagement forums on and that she was trying to plan meetings with the School Committee and City Council in the future. After updates, Anna Corning introduced David Kale, Assistant City Manager for Finance, who was joined by his team, Michelle Kincaid, Assistant Finance Director, Taha Jennings, Budget Director, and Angela Pierre, Deputy Budget Director.

David Kale began the Finance team's presentation titled, "City of Cambridge Budget Presentation" (Attachment B), pointing out that the City of Cambridge's budget is a direct reflection of its priorities and values as a community and is shaped by many sources of input. Other members from the Finance team also spoke, sharing that the majority of Cambridge's revenue comes from real estate taxes, Massachusetts law dictate the annual budget's high-level timeline as well as the City Manager and the city Council's role in the process, and the budget process is a year-long, structured and collaborative effort by the City Council, department heads, and the budget team.

After the Finance presentation, many members from the Charter Review Committee offered questions and concerns about the City's budget. Some topics that were brought up were Harvard and MIT's contribution to the City as nonprofit, how decisions get made about where and how much funding goes towards a certain area, funding for schools, increasing funding towards other City departments, statutory laws on budget, the Council's power when it comes to denying an item on the budget, and the City's free cash. David Kale and his team were available to respond, noting that the budget is a tool to implement city programs and policies, it's not always the first step on the process of addressing an issue, other planning and steps must happen first and then the budget makes sure the resources are available to make it happen.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Patrick Magee who made a motion to extend the meeting fifteen minutes, the motion was seconded by member Kai Long. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

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 – Absent
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

John Hawkinson highlighted comments that were made during the January 3, 2023, meeting regarding free cash and read a paragraph from the tax rate letter regarding the FY23 budget.

Anna Corning read a Q&A that was submitted through the Zoom during the meeting from a member of the public:

I'm still a little confused about how exactly the public is participating in the free cash conversation. Maybe I missed it, but exactly at what meeting is public comment available to weigh on this in particular? Is it just on the one Council meeting where the Council approves how free cash is used in the budget to balance the budget, but not the specifics on how it's used? If I'm understanding correctly, there are no public meetings specifically about free cash usage, it's more like one small part in the budget that the council is voting on.

Members from the Finance team responded, noting that whenever the Finance team goes up to Council for approval to use free cash that would be an opportunity for the public to weigh in. Whenever free cash is looked to being used it must go before the Council and would be on the Council Agenda.

Elliot Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor for the Law Department, commented on a question member Ellen Shachter raised regarding the power of the City Council denying an item in the budget and whether they can raise one. Due to it being a legal question that the Finance team was unable to answer, Elliot noted that the Law Department can research this issue and bring it back to the Committee after their review analysis.

The Chair, Kathleen born thanked Committee members and the Finance team for participating in the meeting.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:45p.m.

Attachment A – Written Communication from John Hanratty
Attachment B – “City of Cambridge Budget Presentation”

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/400?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=8220c78dba0a14ff69347230a003e9d5

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**
TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kathleen Born, Chair
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, 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 – Absent*
Kevin Chen – Absent
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarios – Absent*
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born, Chair – Present

Present – 12 Absent – 3. Quorum established

*Nikolas Bowie and Mina Makarios were both marked present at 5:42p.m.

Chair Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes from the December 20, 2022, Charter Review meeting and the December 13, 2022 Charter Review Subcommittee meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born, Chair – Yes

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

The Chair noted that there was two Communications submitted from the Public (Attachment A and Attachment B).

Chair Born recognized a motion from member Jim Stockard and seconded by member Kaleb Abebe to place the two Communications on file.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarios – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born, Chair – Yes

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

Anna Corning began the meeting by reviewing the next steps of the Charter Review, which included an overview of the panel, upcoming city presentations from the Finance Department and Election Commission, interviews, and a community engagement update.

Member Ellen Shachter had clarifying questions about relaying the basic fundamentals of the charter to the public, Anna Corning responded by noting she has documents that members can use to help the public have a better understanding.

Elliot Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor for the Law Department, commented that because the Charter Review Committee may be starting to take official actions with scheduling community engagement and reaching out to the public, he advises that members should be taking formal votes because they are official acts being taken by the Committee, and by doing this there is an official record. He advised the members that any official action that the committee is taking, there should be a roll call vote so the Clerk can record it.

The Chair, Kathleen Born had a clarifying question about votes being taken at Planning Subcommittee meetings. Elliot Veloso responded by noting that if there were a decision by the Planning Subcommittee, the Subcommittee can take a vote, but that would be a vote to refer it to the Committee as a whole.

Anna Corning opened up conversation to members of the Committee for comments and concerns about the discussion notes from the December 20, 2022 meeting, titled “Summary of 12/20 Round Table Discussion” (Attachment C).

Member Ellen Shachter asked if Anna Corning would be able to add Ward versus At Large to the discussion notes, to which Anna Corning agreed to add.

Member Susan Shell had a clarifying question about rank choice voting. Anna Corning responded by noting rank choice voting was not a topic that was brought up in the previous discussion but would add it as a piece members would like to talk about.

Elizabeth Corbo, Human Resource Auditor an Employment Operations Analyst for the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, offered comments and suggestions to the members of the Committee about the discussion notes, stressing the importance of engagement with community by using a form of government to do that, increasing the transparency and accountability with voters, creating a balance of authority with the legislative and executive branches of authority, and making a change in government more accessible to voters.

Elliot Veloso advised the Chair, Kathleen Born, to entertain a motion to place the December 20, 2022 meeting notes on file.

Chair Born recognized a motion from member Jim Stockard and seconded by member Susan Shell to add the “Summary of 12/20 Round Tanle Discussion (Attachment C) to the record of the meeting minutes and place them on file.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Absent

Max Clermont – Yes
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarios – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born, Chair – Yes

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

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered comments about the December 20, 2022 discussion notes and suggested that members think about the Council making policy, how the Manager implements the policy, and how residents might be able to influence and communicate with the City Manager.

Members Susan Shell, Kai Long, Jim Stockard, Mina Makarios, Jennifer Gilbert, Ellen Shachter, Lisa Peterson, Nikolas Bowie, Kathleen Born voiced their concerns and shared opinions on legislative and executive branches forms of government, policy and administration, and the current government system in Cambridge. They also offered suggestions on ways members should be engaging with the public and how they want to see the government represented. Many members stressed the importance of citizen participation and involvement.

Chair Born recognized a motion from member Mina Markarios and seconded by member Kaleb Abebe, that the Committee will designate the Charter Review Committee staff to plan public engagement events on January 21, 2023 and February 2, 2023. The staff will use the prepared flier (Attachment D) and public information available on <https://www.cambridgema.gov/charterreview> in order to publicize engagement efforts. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

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

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

Elizabeth Corbo noted that she was accompanied by her colleagues Michael Ward and Patricia Lloyd, and they did an overview of their presentation titled “Example Baseline Cambridge Charter in Modern Format” (Attachment E).

Members of the Committee had clarifying questions and comments throughout the presentation to which Elizabeth Corbo and Michael Ward were able to respond respectively.

Member Ellen Shachter suggested that the Committee form smaller working groups to focus on specific parts of drafting new articles going forward.

Anna Corning opened public comment.

Public Comment

John Hawkinson spoke on comments made by members of the Committee, statutory deadlines, and the City’s budget.

Jameson Quinn spoke on participation as it relates to a voting system, moving elections to even years, filling vacancies, and campaign financing and democracy vouchers.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion that was seconded by member Patrick Magee to amend the previous motion to read “That the Committee will designate the Charter Review Committee staff to plan public engagement events on January 21, 2023 and ~~February 2, 2023~~ February 4, 2023. The staff will use the prepared flier (Attachment D) and public information available on <https://www.cambridgema.gov/charterreview> in order to publicize engagement efforts.”

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Absent

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 – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passes.

The Charter Review Committee was adjourned at approximately 7:30p.m.

Two written Communications were received from the public, Attachments A & B.

Attachment C - Summary of 12/20 Round Table Discussion

Attachment D – Your Guide to the Cambridge Charter Review Flier

Attachment E – Example Baseline Cambridge Charter in Modern Format

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/387?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=22e978a469c4e8a2261ec1d6b4f3c6e

**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 Makarios
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 Makarios – 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 Makarios – 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 Makarios – 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

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW
SUBCOMMITTEE**

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Subcommittee Members

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo
Jennifer Gilbert
Kai Long
Lisa Peterson
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard
Kathleen Born, Chair

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, December 13, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 11:00a.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, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Absent *
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 6, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

***Jessica DeJesus Acevedo was marked present at 11:30a.m.**

Also present at the meeting were Elliot Veloso, Assistant City Solicitor for the Law Department, and Elizabeth Corbo, Human Resource Auditor an Employment Operations Analyst for the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management.

Anna Corning gave opening remarks about what the purpose of the Subcommittee should be. That members in the subcommittee should be working towards creating an overall road map for the committee and a list of what topics the Committee might cover.

Member Lisa Peterson commented that it's important to think about the timeline and trying to create both the committee and subcommittee, so topics are discussed in a time appropriate manner.

Member Susan Shell shared concerns about the process of creating a new Plan E, and if the public would agree on topics discussed in meetings. They noted that the possibility of doing a survey to get feedback could help with these challenges.

Anna Corning noted that we could rely on Community groups to help document the broader themes to help the public figure out what is or is not working.

Elizabeth Corbo noted that the subcommittee will impact all the decisions that the Charter Review will ultimately make. They stressed that the Charter Review Committee is the representative government committee, the voice. Members should feel comfortable in what they are doing.

Kai Long noted that with government you want the thought process to be more thoughtful. Shared concerns about how the Committee can start this process with out the input of residents. They spoke against surveys and suggested the Committee find a better way to reach out to residents.

Member Jim Stockard commented on the power and assignment given to the Charter Review Committee and reiterated the importance of reaching out to residents in a form that is not a survey.

Elizabeth Corbo stressed concerns that the Charter Review Committee members may not understand the importance of their role as members.

Members went into discussion about questions and concerns they have about what is working and what is not working in Cambridge and noting they need time to be able to discuss the pros and cons, getting familiar with strong Mayor/strong Manager, talk about concerns, and encouraging conversation. Members noted the importance of focusing on Cambridge government more and to not be so abstract by looking at other cities and towns. Other concerns that were brought forward was a timeline and if the Charter Review would have enough time to accomplish their goals.

Elliot Veloso reviewed the timeline that was given to Chair Born from the Law Department and reiterated some of the language that is written in the Council Order and Charter language, and that there is a possibility for extension.

Anna Corning suggested putting together an interview structure to interview past and current employees to get feedback and noted she had sent out a list to members already.

Member Susan Shell suggested getting material ahead of time to make the time they have for these meetings more useful.

Member Jennifer Gilbert had questions and comments about the list of interviewees and encouraged that the Committee add as many voices as possible.

Member Jim Stockard noted that all residents should be represented fairly.

The Chair, Kathleen Born noted the importance of getting started so the Committee can get to the conversation that needs to happen to reach goals and questioned how often it would be useful for the subcommittee to continue meeting.

Members Susan Shell, Jessica DeJesus Acevedo, and Kai Long had suggestions, questions, and recommendations on how the Committee can go forward with interviewing people. Jessica DeJesus Acevedo stressed the importance of engaging with the community.

Anna Corning thanked members for giving their time for the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:04a.m.

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

[Dec 13, 2022 5:30 PM - Charter Review Committee - Committee Meeting \(granicus.com\)](#)

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, December 6, 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 Makarios – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born, Chair - Present

Present – 14 Absent – 1. Quorum established.

Chair Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes of the November 8, 2022, meeting and recognized a motion from member Jim Stockard and seconded by member Patrick Magee.

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 Makarios – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born, Chair - Yes

Yes – 14 No – 0 Absent – 1. Motion passes.

The Chair noted that there was one Communication from member Jessica Acevedo. The Chair recognized a motion from member Kevin Chen and seconded by member Kai Long to place the Communication on file.

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 Makarios – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born, Chair - Yes

Yes – 14 No – 0 Absent – 1. Motion passes.

Anna Corning introduced the Committee Values Statement Proposal that the writing team has been working on.

Members Lisa Peterson and Mosammat Faria Afreen thanked the writing team and had clarifying questions with some parts of the statement and suggestions for improvement. Discussion between members took place on small changes to be made to the Values Statement.

Anna Corning asked members to vote fist to five on voting to take action and accept the Committee Value Statement.

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

Fourteen members recorded voting five and one member recorded as absent.

Michael Ward from the Collins Center did an overview of the Plan E Charter. They also did a detailed review of an Exemplar Charter, which included preamble, incorporation; short title; definitions, legislative branch, executive branch, school committee, administrative organization, financial procedures, elections, citizen participation mechanisms, general provisions, and transition provisions. They noted that the legislative branch is where the Charter begins to define division of powers between the executive and legislative branch, which all depends on what the Committee decides on form of government.

Member Susan Shell questioned what the procedure is when a change in the Charter is put into effect and clarification on how the Charter Review Committee was set up. Michael Ward responded and provided information on what the process would be for the Charter Review Committee.

Member Kaleb Abebe had a clarifying question on amending current charter versus drafting new language. Michael Ward responded with pros and cons of doing each. Anna Corning also noted that the Committee would not be starting from scratch if new language was drafted and would be able to use existing text from other sources.

Member Jennifer Gilbert noted that Charter Committee’s focus is to have the government be more accessible. They noted it could be a good idea to start from scratch to reach common goals, create a more readable Charter, and the opportunity for all people to have power within the government.

There was discussion between members Mosammat Faria Afreen, Ellen Shachter, and Lisa Peterson on the positive effects of drafting new language and that change could be good, noting that this would be a good opportunity for the Charter.

Anna Corning asked members to vote fist to five on drafting new text for the Plan E Charter.

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

Fourteen members recorded voting five and one member recorded as absent.

The next topic that Anna Corning introduced was to review the forms of government.

Michael Ward did a quick overview of the basic forms of government in Massachusetts, which included examples from both City and Town governments. Noting that Cambridge uses City form of government that has the option to use a Mayoral form (elected Mayor leads executive branch) or Council- Manager form (appointed Manager leads executive branch). They opened it up to the Committee, looking for what questions members had and what information members need to know so the Committee can start moving forward.

Member Susan Shell asked if there was any general information, pros and cons, or any thought out research that members could look at to help with decision making. Michael Ward responded that it is something the Collins Center could provide. Anna Corning noted that they have also put resources on the Charter Review website about charter and charter review.

Member Ellen Shachter questioned if the City Council or department heads from the city in the Executive branches would be able to give feedback on their thoughts. They also questioned if a survey is possible, to which Michael Ward responded noting that surveys have been done in the past. Michael suggested that it could be possible to get a panel of Mayors, Managers, and Councillors from other cities to hear their perspectives. Anna Corning mentioned the possibility of getting a list of interviewees that could include previous mayors, managers, and department heads from the City of Cambridge, to gather their thoughts and feedback.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen noted that they would be interested in seeing how cities in other countries are run. They noted that they are interested in seeing the Charter create a form of government which welcomes community participation.

Member Jennifer Gilbert had comments on community participation and elections and how the Charter can focus on the good of both Mayor and Manager government.

Member Nikolas Bowie noted they would like to see what other forms of government look like besides the two presented and the importance of expanding government to look beyond the City of Cambridge and Massachusetts.

Member Kai Long noted they liked the idea of having both a Mayor and City Council and noted they agreed with the idea of looking at other forms of government in other countries to help make our politics not dependent on personality versus what they are going to do if elected.

Member Max Clermont made comments on a Town Manager and town meetings, and how the City could incorporate something similar to a town meeting in city government because of the positive benefits.

Member Lisa Peterson questioned what the accountability should look like for Mayors and City Managers, what form of resident involvement is best to hold them to their accountability and if there are any additional ways accountability can be built into the system.

Michael Ward offered final comments and answered some questions that were brought to their attention during discussion with members.

Member Jim Stockard asked for guidance from Michael Ward on good public bodies.

Chair Kathleen Born questioned how to further define the interactions between the City Council and City Manager and if the budgeting process would be able to tie policies together.

Kevin Chen noted members have made a lot of good points and have raised interesting questions. They brought up the possibility of using citizen juries.

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo asked for clarifying comments on what the writing process would look like for drafting a new Plan E. They asked for more data on cost of elections and campaigns, and how this reflects the representation and leadership in Cambridge.

Anna Corning opened Public Comment.

Public Comment

John Hawkinson spoke on the City Manager's 90 Day Report.

Jameson Quinn spoke on discussions from today's meeting.

Adjournment at approximately 7:53p.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/372?>

[view_id=1&redirect=true&h=200b9b78d477ea82d98b423e84188f77](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/372?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=200b9b78d477ea82d98b423e84188f77)

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
Tuesday, November 22, 2022

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, November 22, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 (joined at 5:40pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter(joined at 5:40 pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Shell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 brought forward the following Communications to the Committee to be placed on file:

- Communications from Committee Members
 - Communication from Member Susan Shell
- Communications from Council Members
 - N/A
- Communications from the Public
 - Communication from Alan Sadun
 - Communication from Josiah Someone
 - Communication from Robin Chen

Chair Born recognized a motion from Member Jim Stockard to place the Communications on file. The motion was seconded by Member Kai Long.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 place the Communications received by the Committee on file passed with 13 members voting in the affirmative and 2 members recorded as absent.

Chair Born invited Anna Corning, Patrick Hayes, Elizabeth Corbo, and Michael Ward to begin the discussion. Anna Corning started with an overview of the materials sent to members regarding selection of a decision-making process. She said that most members were interested in using the ‘Fist-to-Five’ method of voting and explained some details about the method. At Ms. Corning’s suggestion, the committee practiced a ‘Fist-to-Five’ vote and took a vote to approve the use of this decision-making process with the following results:

Fist-to-Five Vote to approve use of this decision-making process:

- 0/fist-none
- 1-none
- 2-none
- 3-none
- 4-Four
- 5-Nine

The practice vote to approve the ‘Fist-to-Five’ voting method for decision-making passed with 4 ‘Four’ votes and 5 ‘Five’ votes.

There was some clarifying conversation on when the ‘Fist-to-Five’ vote would be used. Elliot Veloso (Cambridge Law Dept.) explained that ‘Fist-to-Five’ would be used to gauge consensus during discussions, then when there is a final decision a roll call vote would be taken in accordance with Robert’s Rules. Ms. Corning further clarified that this method will be used for tentative matters/gauging consensus on matters. Ms. Corbo stated that anything requiring formal action or adoption could be decided by a formal vote. The discussion concluded with Ms. Corning stated the wish of the committee to use ‘Fist-to-Five’ as a discussion tool and retain the use of formal voting for procedural and formal decisions.

On a motion from Member Jim Stockard to adopt the ‘Fist-to-Five’ voting method (as amended) as a decision-making tool. The motion was seconded by Max Clermont.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 (joined at 5:40pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter(joined at 5:40 pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Shell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 adopt the ‘Fist-to-Five’ voting method (as amended) as a decision-making tool passed with 13 members voting in the affirmative and 2 members recorded as absent.

Ms. Corning stated that the amended proposal would be forwarded to members and posted online to the Charter Review webpage.

Member Kaleb Abebe suggested the Fist-to-Five vote for the adoption of the Committee Ground Rules. Ms. Corning called the vote as follows.

Fist to Five Vote to adopt the Committee Ground Rules:

- 0/fist-none
- 1-none
- 2-none
- 3-none

4-One

5-Twelve

(2 members absent)

Ms. Corning next led a review of the submission of values from members. Member Mina Markarious explained that the writing group attempted to capture sentiments that were broad and pertinent to the group goals specifically in its initial draft.

Members discussed the draft values document. Member Acevedo explained that the writing group used the headings from the collective key words received from members to create a concise vision statement. She asked members if there were sentences or words that were preferred, stating that the writing group would welcome that feedback on the draft. Ms. Corning explained that the writing team will use the conversation to prepare a second draft of the values to be voted on in the next meeting. Member Stockard asked if the group needed to acknowledge the statement sent by Member Susan Shell (and shared with the committee by Ms. Corning, as Ms. Shell was absent from the meeting). Member Max Clermont stated that Member Shell's statements should be considered in the same manner as other submitted thoughts. Chair Born stated her belief that there is a way to make statements about past wrongs while avoiding raising tensions without glossing over what has happened through word crafting. Member Peterson stated that without Member Shell in attendance, her statement should be referred to the next meeting when Member Shell is present and can articulate her concerns.

Ms. Corning moved the discussion on to the Community Engagement Working Document. The Committee discussed ideas for public engagement including a revised website, newsletter, virtual/in-person forums, and mailers to support public engagement. Chair Born stated that there is a 7-member planning committee and suggested that their first public meeting be to discuss a thought-out plan for community engagement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jameson Quinn commented that they are working on a piece regarding voting systems in Cambridge and other comparable cities and asked for help accessing raw ballot data from recent elections.

The meeting was adjourned at appx 7:35pm.

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/363?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=714ce8846f3959181b83fd22dd3f99ca

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, November 8, 2022

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, November 8, 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 (joined at 5:40pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter(joined at 5:40 pm)	<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 opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes of the October 25, 2022, meeting.

Chair Born recognized Member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the minutes from the October 25, 2022, meeting. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lisa Peterson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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	11	0	0	4
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

The motion to amend the minutes from the October 25, 2022, meeting passed with 11 in the affirmative and 4 members recorded as absent.

The Chair brought forward the following Communications to the Committee to be placed on file:

- Communications from Committee Members
 - Communication from Chair Kathy Born
- Communications from Council Members
 - Communication from Councillor Patricia Nolan
- Communications from the Public
 - Communication from Jameson Quinn
 - Communication from robin Chen

Member Max Clermont stated that they had received a communication from a member of the public via Twitter DM, Chair Born allowed Member Clermont to read the Communication into the record and asked that it also be sent via email to the Charter Committee email address.

Chair Born recognized a motion from Member Max Clermont to place the Communications on file. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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

The motion to place the Communications received by the Committee passed with 13 members voting in the affirmative and 2 members recorded as absent.

Chair Born introduced Elizabeth Corbo who presented the team from the Collin Center and their follow-up memo, the purpose of which is to align the themes and values discussed at the last meeting with the current Charter. Ms. Corbo identified emerging themes including enfranchising and equity, and how these tie in with the themes of participation and accessibility. Ms. Corbo stated that while some themes can't be addressed by the Charter, they were kept on the list. Ms. Corbo concluded the summary of the themes compiled in the memo with a question to the Committee of whether they would like to set a value statement where some of the emerging themes might be included. She then asked committee members for additional themes or questions.

Member Jessica Acevedo asked about stipends, specifically where does budget funding for these come from and who do stipends go to.

Member Ellen Schachter asked about incorporating technology and asked for clarification on how including this would not become obsolete quickly.

Member Susan Shell asked about deliberation beyond everyone getting a voice (good decision making) and whether the Charter has a role in changing the City's demographics (inclusive of working and middle class) and making it more people balanced.

Member Nikolas Bowie asked about how the committee will proceed, whether they will go through the charter section by section or start with key concepts and answer broader questions before narrowing down. He asked how concepts would be ordered (value statement) and what are the values that would be agreed upon. He asked what the method of decision making will be adopted by the committee. He also

asked for clarification on whether the value statement would be for the city (as in a preamble to the Charter), or values to guide decisions and operations of the committee

Chair Born asked about clarifying the process going forward and agreed that the committee might start by crafting a value statement.

Anna Corning presented a voting method called 'Fist to Five' as a method of gauging consensus among members to facilitate making decisions throughout the process, before making final votes.

Member Lisa Petersen asked if translation services should be required for the general operation of the city as a part of the theme of Enfranchising and Equity.

Member Jim Stockard stated that the committee should begin the discussion about the value statement saying that it's both important and limited and that he would look to the Collins Center to guide the committee through examples such as public financing of campaigning to increase diversity.

Elizabeth Corbo and **Michael Ward** engaged in conversation with the members, answering some of their questions and clarifying points in the memo. Ms. Corbo concluded the discussion of the memo by saying that once the committee decides how they want to proceed, the Collins Center will provide discussion memos, trend data, and research to inform discussions.

Member Susan Shell asked for clarification on what the value statement was particularly for (Committee or the preamble for the city overall). She stated that she would be uncomfortable making a value statement for the city overall.

Ms. Corbo stated that the only value statement being discussed was pertaining to the Charter Review Committee alone.

Chair Born recognized a motion from Member Nikolas Bowie to discuss a value statement for the ensuing 30 minutes, with a limit of 2 minutes per member. At the request of the Chair, the Clerk took a voice vote, all members voted in the affirmative to proceed as stated in the motion

The committee spent the next 30 minutes discussing ideas for creation of its value statement. The committee reviewed examples of value statements from other communities including Framingham and Somerville, with members suggesting ideas that they would like to have incorporated. Ms. Corbo guided the group by suggesting a 2-part solution of having a value statement and separate operating principles. Chair Born suggested that each member email values to Anna Corning and Patrick Hayes to compile and come up with an outline of values and principles for the writing committee to begin working off. Member Lisa Petersen stressed the importance of clarifying through the values the lens which the committee will define as critical in looking at the Charter. Member Nikolas Bowie made a motion to invite the Collins Center to craft a document that mirrors the City Council's division including the discussion of this and previous meetings. Anna Corning suggested that the committee members take this up, so that it is coming from the committee, with members Mina Markarious and Jessica Acevedo volunteering to work with the Collins Center to prepare such a document. Elliot Veloso (Cambridge Law Dept.) reminded the committee that there are minutes and notes to facilitate production of a committee-driven document. Member Patrick Magee suggested a friendly amendment to Member Bowie's motion that the volunteer members join with the Collins Center in a call to inform the work of the Collins Center on this document.

Chair Born recognized the motion from Nikolas Bowie that the Collins Center work with members of the Committee to draft a value statement. The motion was seconded by member Patrick Magee.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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

The motion that the Collins Center work with members of the Committee to draft a value statement passed with 13 members voting in the affirmative and 2 members recorded as absent.

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

A comment was read by Patrick Hayes that was received from Jameson Quinn

Member Nikolas Bowie made a motion to adopt the Collins Center recommendation to proceed by discussion of general topics, starting with the structure of government, rather than going line-by-line through the Charter.

Chair Born recognized Member Nikolas Bowie’s motion. The motion was seconded by Member Ellen Schachter

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

The motion to adopt the Collins Center recommendation to proceed by discussion of general topics, starting with the structure of government, rather than going line-by-line through the Charter passed with 13 members voting in the affirmative and 2 members voting absent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

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/353?](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/353?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=1093e8cf697dd91ed929d28042440cda)

[view_id=1&redirect=true&h=1093e8cf697dd91ed929d28042440cda](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/353?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=1093e8cf697dd91ed929d28042440cda)

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"/>
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

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"/>
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 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"/>
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	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"/>
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

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

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/350?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=6727bf9c59eb898b9371718dbbc555f2

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 29, 2022

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Thursday, September 29, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:38 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 - Absent
Nikolas Bowie - Absent
Kevin Chen - Present
Max Clermont - Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present (joined shortly after roll call at approximately 6:00pm)
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarious - Present
Lisa Peterson - Present
Ellen Shachter - Present
Susan Shell - Absent
Jim Stockard - Absent
Chair, Kathleen Born - Present

11 members recorded as present. Four members recorded as absent.

The Chair recognized Member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to accept the minutes from the meeting held on September 13, 2022. The motion was seconded by Member Patrick Magee.

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

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

Jim Stockard - Absent

Chair, Kathleen Born – Yes

The vote was 10 – Yes, and 5-Absent. The motion to accept the minutes from the meeting held on September 13, 2022, passed.

The Chair gave an overview of her idea for the forming of subcommittees. The two subcommittees described were for “Agenda Setting” and “Drafting/Writing”. The Chair clarified her goals for the subcommittees and took a question from Member Ellen Shachter regarding the details of subcommittees. Libby Corbo of the Collins Center answered some questions from the Chair on their role in drafting language. Member Mina Makarious directed several questions to the City Solicitor’s office regarding how subcommittee work relates to open meeting law. Elliot Veloso of the City Solicitor’s office indicated that their office had concerns about the role subcommittees could play. The Chair asked Libby Corbo how other cities across Massachusetts worked within subcommittees and broadly the role that other city law departments played within a review process. Libby Corbo indicated that they typically do not have much interaction with city law departments at all during their work, but said that she had spoken on the phone with City Solicitor Nancy Glowa who said that the City Solicitor’s Office should be involved throughout the process. Elliot Veloso further stated his concern about the adherence to open meeting law and questioned whether the subcommittees, as currently understood, would be feasible under the law. The Chair and Elliot Veloso began an extended conversation about open meeting law and subcommittee work. Lisa Peterson asked Elliot Veloso about forming less formal, non-decision making, subcommittee groups to assist in scheduling and agenda-setting. Elliot Veloso indicated his skepticism in the ability of the Committee to work in subcommittees without breaking the open meeting law. Elliot Veloso then began reciting the open meeting law briefing materials from the Massachusetts Attorney General’s website.

The Chair recognized a comment from a member of the public commenting on the subcommittee work. Member Jennifer Gilbert asked about other ways to overcome the logistical challenges of planning for meetings. Member Max Clermont asked about simply expanding the current planning process to make the subcommittee less formal. Elliot Veloso again recited from the Attorney General’s guidance on open meeting law. Member Kai Long indicated her concern about City support for the Committee if it would be able to live up to the City Solicitor’s expectations under the law. Other members indicated agreement with the pressures of adhering to open meeting law without communicating outside of meeting times. Elliot Veloso indicated the law department would need to look into the issue further. Committee staff, Patrick Hayes, indicated that the Committee should move onto other business because of time restraints. The Chair indicated that she preferred to come to a conclusion on the issue of subcommittee work. Libby Corbo suggested that the discussion continue between the Chair, the law department, and the Collins Center after the meeting, as the Committee is limited by time restraints. The Chair asked the law department whether she could call a vote to form a subcommittee to begin agenda-setting. Elliot Veloso indicated there were still concerns about open meeting law. The discussion continued until approximately 6:45pm.

The Chair recognized Member Patrick Magee who made a motion to enter into the public record the email communications from the Chair to the entire Committee from September 22, 2022 and September 29, 2022. The motion was seconded by Member Kevin Chen.

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

Kaleb Abebe - Yes

Jessica Dejesus Acevedo - Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen - Absent

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 - Absent

Jim Stockard - Absent

Chair, Kathleen Born – Yes

The vote was 11 – Yes, and 4-Absent. The motion to accept two email communications from the Chair to the Committee, passed. The two email communications are attached to these minutes.

The Chair recognized several comments from the public on the open meeting law and subcommittee discussion. The Chair introduced a memo from the Collins Center with discussion questions. A copy of the memo is attached to these minutes. The Chair recognized Member Max Clermont who brought up a discussion of how to engage with public discussion going forward. The Chair described in detail her ideas for public input and recognized several Members for their ideas as well. Members Chen, Long, Clermont, Gilbert, Acevedo, Abebe, Magee, and Peterson indicated their thoughts on public engagement.

Members Peterson and Long, and the Chair indicated their further frustrations with the law department's opinion on the Committee's agenda-setting ability. Elliot Veloso again warned members about discussing any matters of substance outside of formal meetings. The Chair noted that she had a discussion with the City Manager about providing further staff options to assist the Committee with its work. Elliot Veloso again recited directly from the Attorney General's website to assist the Committee in understanding open meeting law and their limitations.

The Chair recognized Libby Corbo to discuss the Collins Center's role in agenda setting and the broad timeline of their work. Members Abebe, Shachter, and Makarious added their thoughts on the timeline of the work.

Chair Born called for public comment at 7:15pm. Two members of the public announced themselves to speak, John Hawkinson and Jameson Quinn. John Hawkinson made a comment about public comment generally and a comment on the drafting subcommittee. Jameson Quinn asked about commenting in the Q&A zoom function and thanked the Committee for their discussions.

The Chair indicated at 7:20pm that they should begin discussing the Collins Center memo with discussion topics. Noting the time, Libby Corbo indicated that given the time it might be pertinent to hear from Committee members. Kai Long talked about the ability of the City to be responsive to the needs of the community. Mina Makarious talked about which City services can be addressed by the Charter and which services are outside of the Charter recommendations. Ellen Shachter spoke about how short terms for City Councillors can hamper the responsiveness of elected officials. Lisa Peterson spoke about language barriers for folks in the City and reiterated Ellen Shachter's thoughts on term length for elected officials. Jessica Acevedo spoke about working to commit as a City to business owners who are people of color and providing more opportunities for people of color to become business stakeholders in Cambridge. Patrick Magee brought up the pros and cons on geographical representation and at-large, elected officials. Libby Corbo talked about how all these different issues have solutions that can be found in the Charter review process.

The Chair recognized Member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm. The motion was seconded by Member Ellen Shachter.

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

Kaleb Abebe - Yes

Jessica Dejesus Acevedo - Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen - Absent

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 - Absent

Jim Stockard - Absent

Chair, Kathleen Born – Yes

The vote was 11 – Yes, and 4-Absent. The motion to adjourn passed.

Chair Born announced that the next meeting would be on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. and it would be via zoom.

There being no further business before the Committee, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.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/348?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=15b8ec179cd3fc9786e841b3d43bef80

Attachments: Communications to the Committee (not discussed)

Communications to the Committee from the Chair

Collins Center Memo – September 29, 2022

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 Makarios - 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 Makarios - 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 Marilynn 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, Makarios, 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.

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/323?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=6c3678bf1bfcc921f52aba8ce9f4d800

Attachments: Roberts Rules Cheat Sheet

Collins Center Presentation – September 13, 2022

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
Tuesday, August 16, 2022

The first meeting of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee was held on Tuesday, August 16, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 5:06 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.

Chair Born opened the meeting and stated the purpose of the meeting noting that it was introductory and informational. The Chair further noted there would be a presentation from the Collins Center but that there would not be a presentation from the City's Law Department.

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

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

Chair Born acknowledged Michael Ward from the Collins Center. He gave a brief introduction to the Collins Center noting its mission and specifically their Charter related work and that they are currently working with Beverly, Somerville and Plymouth. Michael Ward then turned it over to Elizabeth Carbo of the Collins Center who will be the Project Team Leader. Elizabeth Carbo introduced herself noting she has four years with the Collins Center and is an elected official. Patricia Lloyd from the Collins Center spoke next, noting her experience including 30 years as an attorney.

The Chair then acknowledged the City Solicitor, Nancy Glowa who was present along with Deputy City Solicitor, Megan Bayer and Assistant City Solicitor Elliott Veloso. Solicitor Glowa indicated that one of them would be at each meeting of the Charter Review Committee to answer any legal questions the Committee might have. Solicitor Glowa further stated that at this meeting, Deputy Solicitor Megan Bayer would be providing an overview of the three statues that applied to the Committee; the Open Meeting Law, the Public Records Law, and the Conflict of Interest Law. It was also noted that the Clerk's Office would provide members with the required Open Meeting Law materials and the Conflict of Interest materials.

Deputy Solicitor Megan Bayer provided the overview of the three statues. The Chair asked the Committee if they had questions. There being no questions, the Chair stated that the next order of business was Committee Member introductions.

The Chair noted how thrilled she was to be working with the individuals on the Committee who were selected from 122 applicants. The Chair also noted that she is committed to public input. The Chair asked each Committee member to say their name, where they live in the City, and a little about why they applied to serve on the Committee. The Chair acknowledged Patrick Hayes who was serving as the zoom facilitator to call upon members. Patrick Hayes called upon the following Committee members who introduced themselves; Kaleb Abebe, Jessica Dejesus Acevedo, Mosammat Faria Afreen, Nikolas Bowie, Kevin Chen, Max Clermont, Jennifer Gilbert, Patrick Magee, Kai Long, Mina Makarious, Lisa Peterson, Ellen Shachter, Susan Shell, Jim Stockard, and Chair, Kathleen Born. Patrick Hayes thanked everyone for their introductions and noted that going forward, he would be providing administrative support to the Committee. The Chair also thanked the Committee members for their inspiring introductions.

Chair Born raised the topic of scheduling meetings and noted the challenges of competing with other City entities. The Chair did an informal survey of the membership regarding what days of the week were best. The Chair noted that the Committee needed to do its work in time to make recommendations to the City Council to put on the ballot at the next November election. The Chair noted that working out the schedule would take more time and that she would be in touch with members.

The Chair then acknowledged that there were 35 participants for the meeting which included several members of the public. The Chair thanked everyone for being at the meeting.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/307?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=d16a3abf50e6f79f112a6ccd585a3dc7

The closed-captioned transcript is available online at:

<https://app.box.com/s/9qormcahynjt4pzpt1n5opixogl3q7k5>

Appendix E: Other Votes

Adopt Article 1: Incorporation, Powers, Etc., as amended

Yes - 9, No - 0, Present - 0, Absent - 6

A motion to allow the City Council to delegate its statutory powers to a resident assembly.

Yes - 2, No - 11, Present - 0, Absent - 2

A motion to allow the City Council to give power to a Resident Assembly that they can consider whether an initiative petition that met a certain threshold set by the City Council should go to the City Council for approval or go to the voters for approval.

Yes - 8, No - 5, Present - 0, Absent - 2

A motion to adopt Section 2.ii.2.a.iii of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: Powers that 7 would otherwise be exercised under state or municipal law by a city board or commission, including the Planning Board.

Yes - 3, No - 9, Present - 1, Absent - 2

A motion to adopt Section 2.iii.2.a.iv of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: The power to dispense with requirements under state or municipal law for public hearings and public comment, provided that the Resident Assembly's procedures comply with federal and state constitutional requirements of due process.

Yes - 5, No - 9, Present - 0, Absent - 3

A motion to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to run for municipal elections.

Yes - 9, No - 4, Present - 0, Absent - 2

A motion that the Committee recommend adding the provision, "An elected official who has been convicted of a state or federal felony while holding office shall be deemed to have vacated the office."

Yes - 7, No - 5, Present - 1, Absent - 2

A motion that the Committee take on a new item of business that the Committee recommend that if a resident assembly reaches a 2/3 supermajority the question be put to the voters.

Yes - 2, No - 3, Present - 8, Absent - 2

A motion to take a revote on a previous motion to adopt Section 2.11.2.a.iii of the proposed draft language of Resident Assembly to read: Powers that would otherwise be exercised under state or municipal law by a City Board or Commission, including the Planning Board.

Yes - 2, No - 9, Present - 2, Absent - 2

A motion that the Committee recommend adding the following provision to the Public Engagement Article, "The City shall provide for a system, in addition to minutes and recordings, that maintains and records public comment, of City Council meetings, that is publicly available."

Yes - 3, No - 9, Present - 0, Absent - 3

Appendix G: Public Comments

Date	Name	Method	Comment
11/14/2022	Robin Chen	Twitter	Hi, Max. Thanks for serving on Cambridge Charter Review Committee. I'd like to see under-18s empowered by our Charter to vote in local Elections. Robin Statement of John Pitkin on [redacted] Cambridge at the public meeting of the Charter Review Committee held on January 24, 2023 Our City Charter determines the structure of our local democracy but does not by itself determine how well or poorly it functions, whether it is weak or strong. These outcomes are determined also by the behavior of public officials, both elected and appointed, and by the actions of citizens within that structure -- in short on the norms, culture and the institutions that support democracy. If strong democracy is the ideal, and I believe that most Cambridgeans would agree that it is, then a logical component of a thorough Charter Review would be an evaluation of how well our local democracy is working, what its weaknesses are, and how these might be improved by a modified charter and structure. You might start by asking, by what standards should we evaluate the state of our local democracy? In the past, town government, by direct vote of the people, was considered the ideal form of government. This was the view of the Cambridge Chronicle looking back in 1921 on the 75th anniversary of Cambridge's original 1846 City Charter. "Government by representatives is far less desirable, but necessary when a municipality outgrows the other method." But "the town had become so large that it was not convenient to have the voters together in one hall to decide what the town should do." The aspirational ideal of direct democracy is not a practical standard for a modern city. The 5 Elements of a Strong Democracy published by the Center for High Impact Philanthropy at the University of Pennsylvania is more useful for this purpose. Among these elements are: 1. The right of citizens to be informed and for policymakers and fellow citizens to engage with them proactively in the democratic process. o We might ask if the "community meetings" held by city officials proactively engage citizens in the democratic process. Are they "of, by, and for the people?" o Are Proportional Representation elections and the requirement to evaluate multiple candidates a barrier to informed participation in municipal elections? 2. Accountability of policy-making institutions through checks and balances. o We might ask if accountability is possible without a local press serving as watchdog. o Do appointed boards, commissions and advisory committees provide checks and balances? o Are municipal employees accountable to citizens or only to the managers who hire them? 3. Policies that weigh all citizens' interests equally, provide for the common good, and support institutions including local neighborhood organizations that empower individuals to exercise their rights. o We might ask if City Councilors who depend on a relatively small fraction of voters for their re-election serve the common good. o How are neighborhood interests for parks, trees, ecosystems, streets and other local infrastructure supported without ward representation? 4. Information and communication that are representative, accurate and trusted -- to ensure fair and optimal processes. o The City met this standard with information about public health during the recent pandemic. o We might ask why relevant information about the tree canopy, bicycle safety, parking, and housing needs falls short of this standard if it is provided at all. Do the growing number of public information officials on City staff provide information and communication that are representative, accurate and trusted? If not, what purpose do they serve? 5. A shared sense of purpose and identity implicit in the phrase "We the people," recognition of all citizens' right to a voice in the political process, and a willingness to collaborate for common ends. o We might ask if our shared sense of purpose and identity is undermined when nonresidents regularly participate in public meetings on an equal basis with residents. o How can government bring citizens out of special-interest, social-media silos to collaborate for common ends? o Is a low tax rate our only common end or do we also have common goals for housing, public safety, climate, and the environment that affect us all? 6. A sixth element of democracy, in addition to those identified in the UPenn Center, is the rule of law, which is widely recognized, e.g., by the United Nations (https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/rule-law-and-democracy-addressing-gap-between-policies-and-practices) o We might ask how laws are enforced on our City government when the administration or City Council violate or ignore them. o Did the 28-year absence of a Board of Traffic and Parking, required by Chapter 455 of the Massachusetts Acts of 1961, effectively deprive residents of a check on the authority of the Director of Traffic and the possibility of appeal of his/her exclusive power to regulate traffic and parking? The charter review is rare occasion to improve democracy and government in Cambridge. I urge your committee to evaluate our local government as it has functioned under Plan E and, where there are structural flaws that can be addressed by the charter, to propose appropriate reforms.
1/24/2023	John Pitkin	Email	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.
10/25/2022	Lee Farris	Meeting	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.
10/25/2022	John Hawkinson	Meeting	Jameson Quinn stated their interest DQG 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.
10/25/2022	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	John Hawkinson spoke on the City Manager's 90 Day Report
12/6/2022	John Hawkinson	Meeting	John Hawkinson spoke on the City Manager's 90 Day Report
12/6/2022	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn spoke on discussions from today's meeting.
12/20/2022	John Hawkinson	Meeting	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.
1/31/2023	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	I support keeping at-large PR. But if we do have wards, I strongly suggest multi-seat wards (eg. 3 3-seat wards) and/or a hybrid (mixed-member) system that keeps some at-large seats. The presentation seemed to consider only single-seat wards as a possibility.
1/31/2023	Robert Winters	Meeting	It is worth noting that if a given constituency is spread over many wards, our PR elections enable those voters to essentially create their own "ward" that's not just based on geography.
1/31/2023	Young Kim	Meeting	Charter should include a mechanism where non-compliance - a way for resource and investigated properly, by outside individuals. City is ignoring state statute and ordinances. ??
1/3/2023	John Hawkinson	Meeting	John Hawkinson spoke on comments made by members of the Committee, statutory deadlines, and the City's budget.
1/3/2023	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn spoke on participation as it relates to a voting system, moving elections to even years, filling vacancies, and campaign financing and democracy vouchers.
10/25/2022	Lee Farris	Meeting	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.
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2/28/2023	Lee Farris	Meeting	Lee Farris shared that it would be nice as a user or resident that when the newsletter goes out there would be a link that would go straight to the documents that are being described in the newsletter, it would make it easier for the reader.
12/6/2022	John Hawkinson	Meeting	John Hawkinson spoke on the City Manager's 90 Day Report.
12/6/2022	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn spoke on discussions from today's meeting.
11/8/2022	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	A comment was read by Patrick Hayes that was received from Jameson Quinn
12/20/2022	John Hawkinson	Meeting	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.
1/17/2023	John Hawkinson	Meeting	John Hawkinson highlighted comments that were made during the January 3, 2023, meeting regarding fire cash and read a paragraph from the tax rate letter regarding the FY23 budget.
1/31/23	Young Kim	Meeting	Young Kim [redacted] offered comments on ways the Charter Review Committee could help change the City government.
1/31/23	Robert Winters	Meeting	Robert Winters, shared that he would like to see in the Charter Review process a redress of grievances and offered to volunteer to the Charter whenever he is needed.
1/31/23	Lee Farris	Meeting	Lee Farris, shared they attended the public forum and asked if there would be a summary or discussion given to the Committee. She commented that she asked the forum to be more informative in the future.
2/7/23	Suzanne Preston Blier	Meeting	Suzanne Blier thanked Committee members for holding the public forums and noted she looks forward to Committee members speaking on the differences on what is happening with relative proportionality in other municipalities.
3/28/23	Liz Speakman	Meeting	Liz Speakman spoke in support of keeping the same form of government that the City has had with a strong City Manager and believes that a strong Mayor would be risky.
3/28/23	Marilee Meyer	Meeting	Marilee Meyer shared they do not want to see more power from the Council and asked that the current system stays in place.
3/28/23	Valerie A. Bonds	Meeting	Valerie Bonds supported the same comments made by previous speakers and shared the City Council is not ready for a four year term.
3/28/23	Stephen Cellucci	Meeting	Stephen Cellucci thanked the Committee for taking time to discuss the future of the City and spoke in support of a strong Mayor.
3/28/23	Jesse Baer	Meeting	Jesse Baer spoke in favor of a strong Mayor and shared that politics is democracy and politics is under a threat and this is not the time to be moving away from politics.
3/28/23	Suzanne Preston Blier	Meeting	Suzanne Blier spoke in favor of keeping the City Manager for now to see how the new City Manager is in his new role. She offered suggestions around the possibility of residents voting for the Mayor during Council elections.
3/28/23	Robert Winters	Meeting	Robert Winters offered many suggestions on updating and reforming the current Charter and shared that giving the Election Commission more flexibility in some of the ways things are done would be beneficial.
3/28/23	Heather Hoffman	Meeting	Heather Hoffman offered comments around proportional representation and shared that done correctly, politics is the art of getting somewhere by bringing people together.
3/28/23	James Williamson	Meeting	James Williamson shared a quote from Niccolo Machiavelli and would like to see a shift of power where citizens have input in decisions that are made and participate in the decisions that effect their lives.
3/28/23	Ilan Levy	Meeting	Ilan Levy shared it is important for residents to have a clear understanding of the actual consequences of the form of government that the City will be using and voices of the people need to be heard in the final decisions that are made.
4/11/23	Valerie A. Bonds	Meeting	Valerie Bonds shared that they do not believe the City Council is ready for a four-year term and noted that the City Manager is a public servant who is responsible and accountable to the people only, where the City Council is accountable to the voters.
4/11/23	Charles Henebry	Meeting	Charles Henebry shared that they are in favor of large districts and believes it is good for proportional representation.
4/11/23	Gieb Bahmutov	Meeting	Gieb Bahmutov spoke in support of keeping rank choice voting and at large City Councilors.
4/11/23	James Zall	Meeting	James Zall encouraged the Committee to keep the at large status of the Cambridge City Council.
4/11/23	Dazhong Xia	Meeting	Dazhong Xia shared that they support at large City Council because they make decisions that reflect the entire City rather than geographic areas.
4/11/23	James Williamson	Meeting	James Williamson suggested ways the City could be better at allowing the public to participate in Charter Review Committee meetings on the website. They shared that they support an elected Mayor and shared their experience with a City Manager form of government.
4/11/23	Stephen Cellucci	Meeting	Stephen C. shared they were in support of a strong Mayor form of government and believes that a Manager and a Mayor would be equally accountable or unaccountable.
4/11/23	Marie Elena Saccoccio	Meeting	Marie Saccoccio shared that they were in favor of keeping two-year terms for the City Council and would like to see the Plan E Charter retained.
4/11/23	Pio Szamel	Meeting	Pio Szamel suggested that the Charter Review Committee review how votes are cast for at large seats.
4/11/23	Heather Hoffman	Meeting	Heather Hoffman offered comments on government and shared that it is hard to find people to run to be an elected official and the residents and voters need to remain involved, otherwise there would be no accountability.
4/11/23	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn offered comments around staggered Council terms and suggestions on rank choice ballot voting.
5/9/23	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn shared that they have been watching the process and appreciate the work the Committee has been doing and suggested that when it comes to voting systems, start with a statement of values to fulfill these values.
5/23/23	James Williamson	Meeting	James Williamson shared that he was supportive of Committee Members moving towards a more democratic government and offered comments and suggestions on different forms of government.
6/6/23	John Hawkinson	Meeting	John Hawkinson thanked the Committee and Law Department staff for responding to his communication and referenced some of the response from the Law Department's memo.
6/6/23	Valerie A. Bonds	Meeting	Valerie Bonds thanked Committee Members for the important decision that they will have to make and shared that some of their concerns with government are about accountability.
6/6/23	James Williamson	Meeting	James Williamson shared that they were in support of a city-wide survey for residents on topics discussed in Charter Review.
6/6/23	Heather Hoffman	Meeting	Heather Hoffman offered comments on the form of government and noted that whatever form of government the Committee decides, it needs to promote transparency.
6/20/23	Valerie A. Bonds	Meeting	Valerie Bonds thanked Anna Corning for hosting an event in the community room at 808 Memorial Drive and making herself available to questions from residents and offered comments and suggestions on term limits for Councilors.

6/27/23	Valerie A. Bonds	Meeting	Valerie Bonds offered comments on anti-bullying policy for Councillors in Boston, two-year terms for Councillors, and the process of electing a Mayor.
7/18/23	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn shared that they read the current draft and noted that it was silent on the election methods. They shared that they look forward to the discussion around having an elected Mayor.
8/1/23	Heather Hoffman	Meeting	Heather Hoffman commented on communication within the City and on public records requests.
8/15/23	Suzanne Preston Blier	Meeting	Suzanne Blier shared concerns about recent items that have passed within the Council and offered comments on ideological and politically driven decisions made by the Council and urged the Charter Review Committee to discuss these matters more.
8/15/23	Marilyn Frankenstein	Meeting	Marilyn Frankenstein asked why there is no ward or district system where there could be At Large Councillors as well as Councillors for specific areas of the City and shared concerns about why Charter Review Committee members are not discussing this further.
8/15/23	Heather Hoffman	Meeting	Heather Hoffman offered comments and concerns related to people being selected for Boards and Commissions based on demographics and not expertise.
9/5/23	Robert Winters	Meeting	Robert Winters offered comments on an article included in the Council Agenda titled "Beyond the Spoiler Effect".
9/5/23	Julia Shephard	Meeting	Julia Shephard offered comments on rank choice voting and the different methods within rank choice voting.
9/26/23	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn shared their excitement for the upcoming discussion on voting mechanisms.
9/26/23	John Hawkinson	Meeting	John Hawkinson offered comments on fractional transfer and voting mechanisms.
10/10/23	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn shared that they strongly urge the Committee to consider the possibility of equal voting.
10/24/23	Stephen Cellucci	Meeting	Stephen C. spoke in support of measures that would give Cambridge the powers to determine who can vote and with that power expand the franchise to include 16-year-olds and non-citizens and for elections falling on even years. They also spoke about democratic elections for the Police Review Advisory Board.
11/7/23	Stephen Cellucci	Meeting	Stephen C shared their excitement for resident assemblies and even year elections and spoke in support of a Mayor-CAFO-Council form of government.
11/21/23	Dan Totten	Meeting	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.
11/21/23	Kevin Hsu	Meeting	Kevin Hsu offered comments on municipal government and concerns with City Manager/Council form of government.
11/21/23	Heather Hoffman	Meeting	Heather Hoffman offered comments on the form of government and City Council meetings.
12/5/23	Councillor Simmons	Meeting	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.
12/5/23	Adriane Musgrave	Meeting	Adriane Musgrave offered comments that were in favor of the current system of form of government.
12/5/23	Matt LeMay	Meeting	Matt LeMay offered comments that were strongly opposed to a strong Mayor form of government.
12/5/23	Eugenia Schra	Meeting	Eugenia Schra offered comments that were in support of the current form of government system.
12/5/23	Susan Fleischmann	Meeting	Susan Fleischmann spoke in opposition to changing the Charter to a strong Mayor.
12/5/23	Rachel Liao	Meeting	Rachel Liao spoke in opposition to changing the current form of government.
12/5/23	Lynn Lee	Meeting	Lynn Lee shared they were in favor of the current system versus a strong Mayor system.
12/5/23	Liz Speakman	Meeting	Liz Speakman, City of Cambridge employee, strongly supports a City Manager form of government.
12/5/23	Joyce Majewski	Meeting	Joyce Majewski spoke in favor of keeping a City Manager form of government.
12/5/23	Caroline Zheng	Meeting	Caroline Zheng spoke in strong support of the current form of government.
12/5/23	Jesse Baer	Meeting	Jesse Baer offered comments on form of government, democracy, and elections.
12/5/23	Chris Cassa	Meeting	Chris Cassa shared that having a City Manager has provided stable leadership.
12/5/23	Jane Donohue	Meeting	Jane Donohue spoke in favor of a City Manager form of government.
12/5/23	Dan Totten	Meeting	Dan Totten spoke in favor of a strong Mayor form of government and shared concerns with the current form of government.
12/5/23	Payal	Meeting	Payal shared their support for a strong Mayor form of government.
12/5/23	Phil Rinehart	Meeting	Phil Rinehart spoke in favor of the current form of government system.
12/5/23	Jacqui Fahey Sandell	Meeting	Jacqui Fahey Sandell spoke in strong opposition to a strong Mayor form of government.
12/5/23	Robert Winters	Meeting	Robert Winters shared that they are strongly opposed to a strong Mayor form of government.
12/5/23	Kit Kanes	Meeting	Kit Kanes shared they were in support of a strong Mayor form of government.
12/5/23	Stephen C.	Meeting	Stephen C. offered comments and suggestions on forms of government.
12/5/23	Hayden B.	Meeting	Hayden B. noted the importance of accountability, inclusion, equity, and proportional representation.
12/19/23	Jameson Quinn	Meeting	Jameson Quinn thanked the Committee for all their hard work and offered comments on elections and voting methods.
12/19/23	Dan Totten	Meeting	Dan Totten offered comments regarding the School Committee and the budget.
11/1/2022	Robin Chen	Email	It seems like we share values around our youngest residents' perspectives having an impact on City government and vice versa. I'm a Mom who lives with my family on Franklin St in Cambridge, and I care about under-18s' voting rights. I've read much that's been written about voting rights and voting age, and I'd like to have the chance to share what I know with Jessica first, and then perhaps with the wider Committee. To please your interest, https://www.washingtonpost.com/policy/elections/2016/10/27/let-children-vote-even-13-year-olds/ This author is now working as Director of Speechwriting for the US Ambassador to the UN! see https://www.washingtonpost.com/policy/elections/2016/10/27/let-children-vote-even-13-year-olds/ Could our local voting age be lowered to 6th grader or 12 years old, in line with our participatory budgeting voting eligibility? I think that if the Committee recommended it, and if there were a coalition that campaigned about it over the next year, then the voters might approve this. Robin cell [REDACTED]
11/6/2022	Allan Sadun	Email	Dear members of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee: I was disappointed to read in the Cambridge Day that you are considering ward-based Councillors as a potential charter change. I believe this is a dead end and that there are many other changes much more deserving of your consideration. The strength of our at-large proportional representation system is that it allows any community of interest to be represented if they are sufficiently motivated to vote together, no matter what that community's geographic distribution is. A district-based system could disenfranchise racial / linguistic minorities, religious minorities, sexual minorities, seniors, affordable housing tenants, or any other voters who are most passionate about voting according to any non-geographic criterion. A district-based system would also require periodic, redistricting fights, which are nearly always game-able and fraught. Look no further than the recent sectarian fights in Boston's redistricting process to see just how theory it gets when politicians are in the business of picking their voters and deciding for us which communities of interest matter or don't matter. Any possible redistricting scheme is likely to favor one inequity or another - for instance, in New York City, their redistricting process is set to massively overrepresent Staten Island. Multi-member districts are a political science best practice - they work excellently in Ireland, and there's a reason Portland, Oregon is voting on moving to a multi-member STV PR system in just a few days. Cambridge's own American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Fair Representation Act currently in Congress suggest that US House elections move to a multi-member district system (read more here). The simple matter is that multi-winner elections allow for fair representation and single-member districts do not. I'm not saying our election system is perfect. The biggest thing I think may be worth exploring is whether elections could be moved to even years, in order to increase turnout and participation. Low-turnout municipal-only elections produce strong inequities. And this is a nit, but I have found it difficult to explain our pseudorandom surplus transfer rules, and even though they don't statistically matter, I've found they seem to increase voter discomfort. A fractional system would mean we get to use this cute MPR video to explain things instead. And I recognize the difficulty in running for election citywide in a big city, and I recognize the confusion in not knowing who to contact about issues. I urge you to find other ways to ameliorate those issues. For instance, in Somerville, there is a City Hall Community Meetings program which helps increase accountability and transparency on neighborhood-specific issues. It doesn't require a charter change, but maybe it's something our City Manager should look into. The big picture is: we should recognize the value in our at-large, PR, STV system, and seek to keep it. Thank you, Allan Sadun
11/6/2022	Allan Sadun	Email	P.S: I have written this letter on behalf of myself and no other individual or organization. Dear members of the charter commission, I understand you are at the beginning of your work. Even still, I would like to express my deep objection to the idea of a ward-based election system in Cambridge. It is an idea that sounds nice as a theoretical alternative to our current system. In practice, the immediate effect of this change would be to greatly exacerbate political division between neighbors. I see no obvious benefits to our community's political discourse. It would also create the possibility that nearly half of residents in any individual neighborhood would go without any representation whatsoever on the council. With our current system of 11 votes and transfers, this is virtually impossible. Our city is likely to become increasingly inequitable in the future, a ward-based system would increase the risk of concentrating power in the hands of wealthier residents who are able to affect the greatest investments of time and money toward their preferred political causes. If there is evidence Somerville, Boston, and other cities that use ward-based systems have better functioning councils than we do, or achieve better outcomes for residents than we do, then I'd like to see it, because I am skeptical this is true. Whatever the deficiencies of our current election system are, Cambridge is one of the rare cities that gives every resident an opportunity to actually be represented by a candidate who received their vote. It's one of our local traditions that I am most proud of, as a born-and-raised Cambridgean. I believe it's a true example of our political system living up to our community values. (How rare this is in American politics!) Our at-large election system is something the charter commission should protect. Whatever its annoyances, it aligns with principles of diversity and inclusion. A ward-based system, I fear, will never produce a genuine representation of this city's residents. I believe that what it would cost us would far outweigh its benefits to us, and that we would regret it. Thanks very much, and good luck. Josiah Bonsey
11/7/2022	Josiah Bonsey	Email	[REDACTED]
12/2/2022	Jameson Quinn	Email	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T5XuRWQIPateqtrW_aSuDjUVHrqr2_4ERotqyBLw/edit
12/16/2022	Andy Zucker	Email	Hello. I don't know to what extent, if any, discrimination policies relate to the Charter. I am aware that the Cambridge Human Rights Ordinance (Chapter 2.76.100) and also the Massachusetts Civil Rights Act enjoin people from discriminating on the basis of race, gender, color, etc. However, I was surprised to learn several years ago that the Cambridge Human Rights Commission does not accept discrimination complaints against city staff, agencies, or departments (Chapter 2.76.120). Therefore, citizens must use a more distant, time-consuming, impersonal bureaucracy in the event that there is evidence of discrimination by the city or its officials. It can take many months or more for complaints to be considered by Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, their rules are not the same as in Cambridge's ordinance, and no reasons are provided in cases where they find no violation. Are there clear rules in the Charter about preventing discrimination? Are there avenues within Cambridge to raise issues of discrimination? Generally, is this matter within the purview of the Charter Review Committee? Andy Zucker

			<p>Please share with the group and/or include in the records or distribute appropriately.</p> <p>I viewed your December 6 meeting video and am encouraged and excited about your mission to write a new city charter. I hope to attend future meetings live. This effort is essential. Our city government's lack of focus and a cohesive plan has escalated residents' dissatisfaction. We're continually surprised and confounded by City Council initiatives.</p> <p>Here are a few observations:</p> <p>I agree with the sentiments about the need for a more inclusive government. Currently, the City Council exists to represent the people but has no responsibility to do so. We elect Councilors "at large" so they do not represent a specific city neighborhood or group. Instead, they self-select causes or issues to champion, leaving many in Cambridge without representation. One solution is to have precincts vote for their own representative so that it's clear where loyalties lie.</p> <p>Some version of a town hall meeting might help, but my experience as a citizen is that participation is a full-time project, requiring more time than busy people have. Today, this endeavor requires monitoring all the new and often unexpected topics for City Council meetings every week. Many issues are mundane or low impact, but others have far-reaching consequences that require research and organization. One-topic special interests are well prepared, but citizens must organize on the spot. In my experience, public comment, letters, and petitions have little impact on swaying decisions already made. Regular people with jobs and families don't have the time to participate in this process. I don't have the answer, but my experience is that it is tough to participate in the Cambridge government.</p> <p>Last thought, what is the job description for city government? The first step before deciding on Mayor vs. City Manager vs. Town Hall is formulating the responsibilities and goals for the city government. Maybe, you did this in previous meetings, if so please refer me to your work. Diversity, equity, and justice are a given, but the following items are currently unclear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who does the government represent? Residents, property owners, businesses, visitors, employees, special-interest groups, self-selected ideals, ... What are the priorities? Quality of life, neighborhood/community, social-economic opportunity, cultural diversity, world citizenship... How we settle conflicts? What is the scope of city government? How should the government recognize and tackle local vs. regional vs. global problems? How does the government responsibly manage and spend tax-payer money? Are their checks and balances? Why should we incur debt to finance projects, given our huge tax base? We're missing a transparent project budgeting process and reporting. How to implement accountability? Do projects have clear goals that are measured? How do we identify and fix failed initiatives? How do we gather input and data to avoid unintended consequences? <p>The above is not a complete list, but it might spur some thought. I look forward to a new inclusive city government.</p> <p>John Hanratty Porter Square</p>
12/18/2023	John Hanratty	Email	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am a Cambridge resident at 197 Green St #4, and I am writing to express my opposition to switching to ward-based elections. My concerns include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ward-based elections are likely to lead to a focus on ward-level interests, rather than citywide interests. 2. Ward-based elections are less competitive, meaning less accountability and political engagement. Unlike ward-based and many state and national elections applicable to Cambridge, Cambridge City councilors must engage with and appeal to voters every election cycle, rather than running unopposed. 3. Arguing over ward boundaries, as has happened in Boston, detracts from democratic debate over policy and concerns relevant to our citizens. <p>Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for your continued engagement with Cambridge residents.</p> <p>Best regards, Jules Renner</p>
1/23/2023	Julia Renner	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review committee members,</p> <p>I understand the Charter Review committee is reviewing Cambridge's charter, the basic laws that structure how the city is governed, how elections happen, and so on. The Charter Review committee will make suggestions on what to change, potentially including Cambridge's election system.</p> <p>A council that represents residents city-wide has enabled measures where every neighborhood contributes and benefits. My concern is that the Charter Review committee might propose that Cambridge switch to neighborhood-based elections, also known as "wards". Instead of having Council members represent the entire City ("at-large") as is the case now.</p> <p>Here's why I think ward-based elections are a problem. Even if the council is a mixture of ward and at-large councilors, that still means most of the councilors will be elected, but we would risk creating a system that suffers from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less focus on city-wide benefits Ward-based councilors are more likely to focus on the narrow interests of a particular subset of their ward, which could come at the expense of city-wide programs. Short-term, local complaints could win out over broader support for long-term benefits that span many neighborhoods. Less competitive, leading to less democratic accountability and less political engagement. In Somerville, 4 out of 7 of the ward councilors ran unopposed. In state and national elections in our area, most candidates ran unopposed. In Cambridge's current system, in contrast, councilors are up for a real fight every election cycle, which forces them to keep in touch with voters. Ward boundaries are arbitrary, leading to fights over boundaries rather than policies: Gerrymandering is an issue across the US, as geographic boundaries are manipulated to get certain candidates elected. In neighboring Boston, the fight over ward boundaries became embarrassingly heated. Councilors should not be elected based on arbitrary ward boundaries: they should be elected based on how well they represent a particular segment of the city's residents, geographical or otherwise. In a ward system, many more perspectives would go unrepresented, since geographic dispersion means they would not be able to win in any individual ward. <p>Thank you for considering my views.</p> <p>Best wishes, Gloria</p>
1/23/2023	Gloria Korsman	Email	<p>Dear Committee Members:</p> <p>I'm a longtime Cambridge resident (I lived most of my childhood on Alpine Street, went to college in Cambridge, now own a house on Cedar Street, and sent both of my children to CRIS), and I am writing to urge you to keep our city council elections city-wide rather than moving to a ward-based system. City-wide elections are more fair and more democratic, and they tend to discourage local corruption and manipulation of ward boundaries. I am very happy to be able to vote for councilors who represent me well even if they live in a different neighborhood. We all use the whole city, there is no good reason I can see to elect representatives from particular neighborhoods.</p> <p>Thanks, Eric Colburn Cambridge, MA</p>
1/23/2023	Eric Colburn	Email	<p>Hello,</p> <p>Thank you for the important work your committee is doing to review and update Cambridge's charter. As part of that work, I encourage the committee to maintain Cambridge's existing system of at-large councilors rather than switching to a ward-based system.</p> <p>At-large councilors must be responsive to needs across the city of Cambridge, rather than fighting for the preferences of a narrow area. The problems that Cambridge faces right now -- housing shortages, improving non-car transportation options, etc -- require an approach that spans the whole city, so it's important to have city councilors who are responsible to stakeholders in all areas. In addition, our competitive, ranked-choice voting elections ensure that we elect the best people for the job.</p> <p>Thank you for your work and for taking this into consideration,</p> <p>Kathleen Francis</p>
1/23/2023	Kathleen Francis	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee Members,</p> <p>I applaud the Charter Review that is currently underway. Specifically, I appreciate the work to review what works and what doesn't work with our city's organizational structure. I'd like the comment on the idea of ward-based councilor seats vs our current and more effective at-large council arrangement.</p> <p>Nationally and even at the state level, our representative form of democratic government is dangerously on the precipice of falling apart. Gerrymandering and hyper-partisanship is making it next to impossible to work together to solve the big problems. At the local level, the ability to block necessary and effective change will mean nothing would get done. That's what would happen with a ward-based city, especially in a city without a mayor form of government.</p> <p>In effect, our city would fail to be unified and instead be a series of tiny fiefdoms, with the real possibility of being divided into haves and have-nots. If Cambridge had a strong mayor form of government, with the mayor elected citywide, perhaps ward-based councilors would be worth discussing. Even then, a combination of at-large and ward-based would be the only option. But barring changing to a strong mayor form of government, ward-based should not be on the table at all.</p> <p>Our city is small enough as it is, there is no need to further divide us and destroy our ability to tackle our shared problems, such as lack of housing and safe and efficient transportation.</p> <p>Thank you, Luis Mejias</p>
1/23/2023	Luis Mejias	Email	<p>Dear Committee members,</p> <p>I understand that you will review our city charter, which is good to do periodically, and I appreciate your donation of time to this effort.</p> <p>One issue to be considered is our election system and the alternative to make this ward-based. I would like to strongly support staying with our current system for many reasons. One important reason is that this helps to ensure that all groups have a voice at the table, and that the interests of our city as a whole take priority. There's been important building a sense of community that helps make Cambridge a special place to live. Our City election is the only one I can consistently enjoy because our system encourages voters to support the candidates they think are the best candidates rather than trying to hedge my bets on who would be most electable. Please, please don't push to change the special way we elect our representatives.</p> <p>Walter Willett MD, DrPH Cambridge, MA</p>
1/23/2023	Walter Willett	Email	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I was told by a member of the Cambridge Bikes group that there is some consideration to changing Cambridge's city government from an all at-large to a ward based system. Please keep the system as is. I greatly appreciate having 9 councilors who I can reach out to with problems and different people tend to have different specialties which make it easier for me to find multiple people to help on an issue. Furthermore as I experienced when I lived in Somerville, ward based positions are frequently uncontested while At-Large positions had competition every year.</p> <p>Thank you for listening</p> <p>Mike Copacino</p>
1/24/2023	Mike Copacino	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Hello, I'm emailing because I understand the Committee is considering proposing a new voting system for council members representing individual neighborhoods versus the city at large. I can't quite fathom why this is being considered. I think there's a lot of opportunity for the system to pit neighborhoods against each other and slow down the government's ability to get things done. I'll note the current system has yielded incredible results in terms of progress on infrastructure and responsiveness to resident concerns. I'd hate to see that progress slow down, and I can't quite understand what would suggest that changing a working strategy is a good idea. This seems like a massive restructuring and a step backward. Let's keep a good system in place and not experiment with dividing our community.</p> <p>Thanks, Ben</p>
1/24/2023	Benjamin Batorsky	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Nothing makes me prouder to live in Cambridge than the fact that we have proportional representation. Majoritarian rule is ... better than a dictatorship I suppose, but still a crappy system.</p> <p>Proportional representation means that any coalition that constitutes 10% of voters can get a seat at the table. Coalitions can be regional, without any fighting over ward boundaries. They can be based on issues. They can be based on race or class. They can be based on honor because of favorite color. It's up to the voters to decide! And that's awesome.</p> <p>In majoritarian rule, 51% of the voters get 100% of the seats at the table. That's democratic, but let's agree that it's not very democratic.</p> <p>Please don't do away with proportional rule.</p> <p>(I feel less strongly about wards, but if you are going to have proportional representation with wards, we'll need a city council with 5+ members for each ward, so probably 50 overall. That seems pretty unwieldy. And you have to fight over ward boundaries. Which is just extra, unnecessary fighting, when you could just have proportional representation at the city level.)</p> <p>Josh Hartshorne</p>
1/24/2023	Joshua Hartshorne	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am writing as a Cambridge resident and voter. I ask that the committee does not suggest revisions to the charter that remove our current system of ranked choice, at-large council members.</p> <p>Before I moved to Cambridge, I had not experienced ranked choice voting. Now I believe it works well and provides several significant benefits.</p> <p>Ranked Choice Voting gives you more say in who gets elected. Even if your top choice candidate does not win, you can still help choose who does.</p> <p>More civility and less negative campaigning. Candidates who are not your top choice still need your support. This encourages candidates to appeal to a city-wide audience. Candidates know this and both work and campaign together. It is great to see and great for Cambridge. Such a breath of fresh air.</p> <p>More diverse and representative candidates win elections. Cambridge has elected more women and more women of color. Our elected officials are more representative of our community.</p> <p>More focus on city-wide solutions and not hyper local issues. I watch Somerville and how wards fight for resources instead of work together for the city and do not want that for Cambridge.</p> <p>At-large council seats are more competitive than ward-based ones. In Somerville, 4 out of 7 of the ward councilors ran unopposed. I fear that my ward, North Cambridge, would become the fiefdom of one elected official and no longer have the attention of the other city council members.</p> <p>Please do not suggest removing part of what makes Cambridge elections so vital, invigorating, and important. The Balkanization of our politics should not be the direction that Cambridge moves. It would be a step backward.</p> <p>All the best, Tim Russell, North Cambridge</p>
1/25/2023	Tim Russell	Email	

			<p>Dear Cambridge Charter Review Commission,</p> <p>I am writing to express my appreciation for your review of the city charter and to offer my thoughts on a switch to a ward-based system.</p> <p>A ward-based system would lead to less focus on city-wide solutions. For example, housing, school, and transportation policies are all examples of issues that impact the entire city and should be considered at the city level. For example, housing policies such as affordable housing and rent control affect residents across the city, not just in specific wards. Similarly, school policies such as funding for school renovations and new programming (e.g. pre-K) have a city-wide impact and should be considered at the city level. Transportation considerations naturally affect many people throughout the city and optimal solutions rely on participation from every ward.</p> <p>Councilors should have a broad understanding of the benefits and impacts of these programs which affect the entire city, rather than being focused on the more narrow interests of a particular ward. Additionally, a ward-based system would likely lead to less democratic accountability and less political engagement. In our neighboring city, Somerville, 4 out of 7 of the ward councilors ran unopposed. This lack of competition would not force councilors to stay in touch with voters and be held accountable. This lack of competition also makes it harder for citizens to hold their elected officials accountable and decrease political engagement.</p> <p>Another important point is that a ward-based system could lead to fewer renters being represented in the city council. As many renters move more frequently than owners, it would make it much harder for councilors who needed to move, particularly if they moved to a different ward, to continue to be elected. This would likely lead to a council that is less representative of the city's population as a whole.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Best Regards, Christopher Cassa</p>
1/27/2023	Christopher Cassa	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Since the idea of wards has come up, I would like to strongly urge you to not pursue that path, and stick to our current ranked choice election system. Here's why:</p> <p>Wards discriminate against renters: Renters who are city council members may lose their seat simply because they have to find a new apartment. We recently saw one council member, Councilor Azeem, have a really difficult time finding a new place to live; if he had been forced into a different ward, he'd be out of a job with a ward system. Ward councilors basically can't be renters and keep the job for long given Cambridge's tough rental market. Since renters are the majority of the city, setting up an election system that is heavily biased against candidates from those 60% of residents is extremely undemocratic.</p> <p>Ward councilors are incentivized to pay less attention to renters. When I was a renter, I lived in 6 different apartments over 10 years, living in three different neighborhoods in Cambridge. Under the current system, a vote is a vote, regardless of when I live in Cambridge; from the councilors' perspective I wasn't that much different than a homeowner. With a ward system, however, my voice would have counted much less as a renter, because there'd be a decent chance I'd move into a new ward the next year. So however well-meaning councilors are, the electoral incentives push them towards paying more attention to homeowners who will stay in the same neighborhood for longer.</p> <p>If it's true the same effect applies to renters right now due to people moving across town boundaries, but it's a much weaker effect: I stayed in Cambridge the whole time, even as I kept moving. And insofar as it's a problem now, it'd be vastly worse with wards.</p> <p>As someone who is now a homeowner, it's very clear the city cares a lot about property owners (consider our tax policy's focus on low taxes). And that's fine for me, but it's less good for the majority who are renters. A ward system would likely make policies even more imbalanced.</p> <p>And, yes, you can have a few at-large councilors, but remember renters are the majority. A ward system that has a majority of council spots biased against the 60% of the population who are renters is bad, even if it's mitigated by at-large spots. Why have mitigation when we already have a better system?</p> <p>Wards are worse at geographic representation than our current system. One argument for wards is that people want someone from their neighborhood to represent them. The problem is that ward boundaries don't necessarily correspond well to what people consider their neighborhood. They are by their nature arbitrary, and tied to equalizing population counts, not local problems or concerns.</p> <p>With our current system, that's fine—a councilor who wants to represent some group of people in a specific geographic area can do so, and many of our councilors have core groups of support that are geographic, as Councilor Toomey did for many years. It's possible to get geographic support from multiple areas, however: my impression is Councilor Toner got a lot of support in both North and East Cambridge. Councilors don't need to stick to arbitrary ward boundaries.</p> <p>Minority groups only get ward representation if they live in the same area On a variety of dimensions (Black residents, public housing residents, immigrants, students) there are groups that may want representation but are not the majority in any particular ward. Do you really want a system that prevents them from getting representation? And yes, you can solve this by having some at-large councilors, because at-large councilors are a better system (at least with our voting system).</p> <p>Why switch to a system where only small of the seats are good at-large seats, and the rest are discriminatory in multiple dimensions? Non-competitive races If you get elected to the House or Senate in MA, you quite possibly have that job for as long as you want it, you're impossible to replace. In contrast, on the council we regularly have incumbent councilors lose their seats. This includes some that I supported, and some that I opposed—this isn't about my personal preferences. As a result, under our current system councilors are far more motivated to listen to constituents compared to state representatives, who know they merely have to be OK enough to keep getting re-elected.</p> <p>Our current system: superior on all dimensions to ward-based systems. Contrast all the above problems with wards to our current system: A ranked choice system doesn't waste votes like a majority-based system. When my #1 vote didn't make it in, that was sad but OK, my vote went to my #2 vote. You could do ranked choice for wards, which is better than nothing, but ward councilors often run unopposed, at which point ranked choice is irrelevant.</p> <p>Councilors can shape unique coalitions, which can be geographical, ideological, demographic, or more commonly a combination of many factors. Everyone's vote is worth pursuing, whether it's renters or homeowners (there are still biases towards homeowners, but much less so than wards). Councilors need to keep constituents in mind, and can't just coast once they're elected. It's not a perfect system, it still has flaws, it's still biased towards wealthier homeowners—but it's far superior to a ward-based system. How might we improve it? Here are some ideas, premised on the idea that the main problem not the council election method (which is really pretty good) but other barriers elsewhere: Remove money from election campaigns: city-funded campaigns might make for more equitable outcomes. Switch elections to even-numbered years, so we get more voter engagement in local elections. Allow non-citizens to vote. Separate city voter registration from state/federal voter registration, so more people register for municipal elections even if they want to preserve their state/federal votes for places elsewhere that are less lopsided.</p>
1/27/2023	Itamar Turner-Trauring	Email	<p>Dear members of the committee,</p> <p>I'm writing in support of the current Cambridge system for electing city councilors using ranked-choice voting for at-large councilors. It promotes healthy competition for seats, as opposed to ward-based systems where candidates are more likely to have little or no competition in their ward. It also forces councilors to consider the needs of the city as a whole rather than the narrow needs of their ward. This discourages NIMBYism and allows the city to enact broader, longer-term policies for the overall good of the city that would never be prioritized at the ward level.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Ryan Houlette</p>
1/28/2023	Ryan Houlette	Email	<p>I do not have to tell you, the members of the Finance Committee, that at the very basic level, City's budgeting process is no different than your household budgeting. You set up your goals and priorities and you set up a budget for daily living expenses and for long term goals such as college funds for your children.</p> <p>For the City's capital budget, the need for a capital budget item must be able to be traced to its authorizing source, each budget item must be fully transparent and each budget item must be fully accountable.</p> <p>The FY23 capital budget process failed on all three accounts, and I am here to ask you not to repeat the same mistakes in the FY24 process.</p> <p>Take a look at FY23 capital project budget item, Public Works: Streets - Mass Avenue - Harvard Sq To Alewife Brook Parkway (Partial Build). There are so many inconsistencies and confusing terms among the budget book, the Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO), the project website, MassAve4 - Mass Ave Partial Construction - City of Cambridge, MA (cambridgema.gov) and other CSO related websites.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project webpage is based on calendar years whereas the budget book on fiscal year. Then there is "separated bike lane year" (May 1 - April 30 of the following year) when construction began or the project was completed. 2. "The Amended Cycling Safety Ordinance "set ambitious requirements for the installation of approximately 25 miles of separated bike lanes within the next five to seven years." Yet, the full finding profile has not been included in FY23 and FY23 approved budget. 3. "In April 2022, the City Council approved the recommendation (of the City Manager) that MassAve4 Segments A and B undergo partial construction" at an estimated budget of \$40M. But more than that, CMA 2022 #74 adopted on 4/25/2022, also approved estimated budget of \$15M for Segments C and D to undergo full construction. The FY23 5-year appropriation plan shows only the \$40M bond proceeds for FY24 but did not include the \$15M for Segments C & D in the proposed FY23 budget the City Manager submitted the following week. 4. MassAve4 Project is mandated by CSO as amended in late 2020. It named the 4 segments of this project as Dudley St to Beech St (Segment A), Roseland St to Waterhouse St (Segment B), Garden St to Church St (Segment C), and Dunster St to Plympton St (Segment D). However, the approved FY23 budget changed the name of this project to Mass Avenue - Harvard Sq To Alewife Brook Parkway (Partial Build). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This seem to indicate that this budget item is for Segments A & B with the added scope of revisit of the quick-build installations of Porter Square and Mass Ave - Dudley St to Alewife Brook Parkway projects for the same budget as Segments A & B in CMA 2022 #74. b. There is a caveat "As the scope of work evolves, the cost estimates will be updated." Does this mean the budget book is a blank check and the budget of the revisit of quick-build installations will be added later, perhaps in FY24? c. When will capital budget for Segment C & D be added to the budget? 5. Projects - City of Cambridge, MA (cambridgema.gov) names River Street Reconstruction Project as one of the CSO projects currently undergoing public engagement. In project website states "The project will begin in November 2022 (Q1 FY23) with excavation of test pits throughout the project area to confirm utility locations. The project is scheduled to conclude in the Fall of 2025 (Q4 FY25) with final paving and landscaping." However, the FY23 budget book stated that "On March 2, 2022, the City sold \$92,300,000 in General Obligation Bonds to finance capital projects such as... River Street Reconstruction..." <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Capital funding for the River Street Reconstruction is integrated into that of Public Works: Streets - Central Square so its budget is hidden in the budget book. b. Project improvements will include among others separated bike lanes so the budget for CSO implementation is unknown. c. 5-Year Appropriation Plan only shows FY23 and FY24 plans instead of more detailed breakdown for the duration of the project in line with Project timeline. 6. True cost of CSO implementation is difficult if not impossible to account for <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cost of quick-build installation is aggregated as the performing department's Operating Budget b. No way to generate a report on all the contracts related to a project per Public Record Request response c. Based on a project page's timeline and 5-year appropriation plan indicates the engineering support for a capital project is not included in the appropriation plan d. Some CSO implementation budget is integrated into a larger umbrella project e. When the city needed additional operating fund, then City Manager DePaesquale simply submitted an agenda item requesting the fund from the Free Cash (March 7, 2022 City Council City Manager's Agenda Item #11) <p>Please ensure traceability, transparency and accountability not only in the capital budgeting process but in all City processes.</p> <p>Thank you, Respectfully yours, Young Kim</p>
1/31/2023	Young Kim	Email	<p>Dear Chairwoman Bom and Members of the Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I apologize for not voicing my comments on the Charter reforms until now even though I have been calling for reforms in the way the City is governed. And I also apologize if this subject has already been discussed.</p> <p>Time after time, I brought up cases of City's non-compliance: not following State statute's (Chapter 40B Guideline, Has City submitted Action Plan to in accordance to MBTA Communities law?) not following City's Ordinance (Changing scope and timeline of Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) without proper procedure); procedures (ISD doesn't have procedure for accepting Comprehensive Permit application); not following up on its own initiatives (no final report for Cambridge's ambitious 2020 goal of reducing the ratio of cars owned by Cambridgeans) lack of accountability of cost of projects (no way to generate a report of all contracts related to CSO implementation, City Managers estimate of the cost of MassAve4 Project approved on 4/25/22 is inconsistent with proposed budget he submitted at the following week's City Council meeting; the scope of MassAve4 as defined in the CSO that he reported had added scope of two segments of Mass Ave previously implemented) lack of transparency (many requests for explanations/clarifications on the CSO implementation have gone unanswered) lack of traceability (contract management, measuring effectiveness of SeeStickFix and correcting deficiencies) I do not know what the solution is to bring about the reforms to address the above and I hope you can incorporate the solution in your final report to the City Council. I am more than happy and willing to discuss these issue in detail.</p> <p>Respectfully, Young Kim Norris Street</p>
1/31/2023	Young Kim	Email	<p>City Councilors should work together for the whole city. There's nothing good to come of pitting the various wards and neighborhoods against each other.</p> <p>Please keep the current system.</p> <p>Becky Sarah</p>
2/1/2023	Becky Sarah	Email	<p>Hi,</p> <p>Please do not take a step back in Cambridge's democracy. Stick to our current system of elections using ranked choice, at-large council members. No ward-based nonsense. One person, one vote.</p> <p>Guillaume Bouchard</p>
2/12/2023	Guillaume Bouchard	Email	<p>Hi,</p> <p>Please do not take a step back in Cambridge's democracy. Stick to our current system of elections using ranked choice, at-large council members. No ward-based nonsense. One person, one vote.</p> <p>Guillaume Bouchard</p>

2/24/2023	James Mahoney	Email	<p>Dear Committee,</p> <p>As you know (and probably the rest of the universe does, too), Cambridge has a very vocal, highly visible, very progressive cohort, which is well-represented on the City Council. But despite their thinking so, that cohort does not represent the entire spectrum of city residents, and may not actually even represent the majority of the citizenry beyond the core that votes in city elections. Many of the progressive policies and ideas are laudable, but the vigorous pursuit of them is very often not clearly thought-through. The result is that unintended consequences seem to frequently crop up as these policies are implemented. It is also not unusual for proponents to dismiss or disregard known downsides of some substantial initiatives because of their view that the ends justify any means. Separately, but related, the two-year term for Councillors means that the Council make-up changes frequently. So though there is relative consistency over multiple terms, single-issue groups are able to disproportionately influence and staff the Council.</p> <p>For these reasons, and because the Manager typically serves over many election cycles, I believe we need a pragmatic, middle-of-the-road Manager who can keep her/his eye on the overall picture and trends, and can temper some of the more aggressive initiatives while advancing City and Council objectives. To put it another way, we need the Manager to be a voice of reason, balancing desires and goals with practical realities and the overall health of the city.</p> <p>I believe that the City has been fortunate in this regard over at least the past four City Managers, and with the current Manager.</p> <p>For these reasons, I strongly believe that the current balance between the Council and the Manager is best for the City, and should be retained in the revised Charter that you are working on. Additionally, I think the two-year Councillor term also benefits the City in that the voters have regular opportunity to register their support or lack of it for members of the Council. While reasonable arguments can be made for four-year terms, including staggered incumbencies, that is a long time for the City to endure special-interest packing of the Council, or ineffectual members.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration, and also for the work you are doing on the Charter review.</p> <p>James Mahoney [REDACTED]</p>
3/13/2023	Valerie A. Bonds	Email	<p>Good evening Members of the Charter Review Committee:</p> <p>I hope you are doing well.</p> <p>I hope the Charter Committee is aware of the history of Cambridge City Council and the reason for separating politicians from city management. Given the monetary transactions that exclude city employees from accepting certain "gifts". That exclusion does not apply to politicians and or those seeking election or re-election from individuals, developers and corporations, all within the law, however, when I donate \$100, I am contributing to creating flyers and other costs. I am not seeking accommodations that are favoring a specific agenda.</p> <p>Is the Charter Review Committee representative (as much as possible) of the diversity in age, education, landlord, renter and income of members of our community?</p> <p>Below is an email I sent to some of our Neighborhood Associations, our City Council and our City Manager. I was asked to share my comments with you.</p> <p>Best to all.</p> <p>Respectfully, Ms. Bonds / Valerie Valerie A. Bonds Retired Educator [REDACTED]</p> <p>Cambridge, MA 02139 Good afternoon Everyone.</p> <p>I hope you are doing well.</p> <p>The failure to support a community's desire to keep Starlight is another reason we need to as a community carefully review changes suggested in Charter E, who and what qualifies someone(s) to be recommended and later appointed to a board determine exactly how campaign contributions influence decisions.</p> <p>Also, removing the mural from the Middle East is also opposite the desire of a large segment of the Cambridgeport community and Residents throughout Cambridge.</p> <p>Respecting the inevitability of change does not mean removing connections to our culture and our community.</p> <p>There must be more input into decisions that go against the grain and who really decides what is best for our community.</p> <p>It is my belief that Elected officials and those seeking election or reelection do their due diligence to the wards known for voter turnout.</p> <p>Ms. Bonds Retired Educator</p>
3/14/2023	Young Kim	Email	<p>Dear Chairwoman Bom and Members of the Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Recent Policy Orders (POs) of City Council points to a broken process in City Governance. I hope you can address this issue in your review of the Charter.</p> <p>There needs to be a clear delineation of responsibilities of City Council (CC) and City Manager (CM). CC should be the policy makers, CM the executor. For example, CC should not introduce POs such as the AHO Amendment or the recently passed Accessory Parking amendment. CC should ask the CM to report back the effectiveness of the Affordable Housing Overlay zoning ordinance (AHO) and ways to improve it. The CM should confer with the Zoning staff and if amendments to AHO are needed, the Zoning staff should draft the necessary language to be included in CM's report.</p> <p>There should be rules for a CC member to recuse himself/herself on voting on a CM report.</p> <p>Once a PO is introduced, there needs to be a procedure to track their execution in timely manner.</p> <p>Policy Order to study the economic impact of the Cycling Safety Ordinance implementation has not been completed, yet the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Dept is continuing their quick-build projects.</p> <p>Status of the Advisory Board for CSO implementation ordered by a PO is still unknown.</p> <p>Policy Order PCR 2023 #11 is still awaiting report from the City Manager as of the last regular City Council meeting on 3/6/2023 and the next regular City Council meeting is on 3/20. Yet the family of Mr. Valentine announced reaching an agreement to sell the property to Just A Start for affordable housing.</p> <p>(AR.23-3: Report on determining the feasibility of purchasing the property located at 37 Brookline Street, former home of Peter Valentine, with the intent of utilizing this as a community arts space.</p> <p>Councillor Simmons, Councillor Zondervan, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Azeem (0-4) from 1/23/2023)</p> <p>Some Policy Orders awaiting CM report are removed from the waiting list at the start of the new City Council term without any voice from the community.</p> <p>I am more than willing and happy to discuss this issue further. Please acknowledge receipt of this email.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Respectfully yours, Young Kim</p>
3/14/2023	Marie Elena Saccoccio	Email	<p>Dear Committee Members:</p> <p>I must admit, given the number of meetings for various issues in the city, I have not been able to attend many of these meetings. In fact, I intended to at least view the one at the main library but then discovered the meeting was not available via zoom. I really did not see much discussion about the meetings so nothing drew my attention to the issues. I state this since I attended an ECPPT presentation and two of these meetings and it seems to be a fair complaint that our Plan E was born out of a need to remedy rampant corruption in the city.</p> <p>I have attached quite a fascinating article with an extraordinarily different idea about the birth of Plan E. Rather than viewing it as a remedy to rampant corruption, it can also be viewed as a way of controlling the vote since some of the neighborhoods were overwhelmingly and densely populated with immigrant workers and minority groups who could easily have controlled much of the city via their sheer vote numbers. There was corruption before and after Plan E. Plan E does not protect from that.</p> <p>Please consider the attached article. To be sure, the landed gentry and academicians feared control by a bunch of factory workers, mostly immigrant and minority. I would love to hear Prof. Bowie's read on this.</p> <p>Marie Elena Saccoccio, Esquire [REDACTED]</p> <p>Cambridge, MA 02141 BBO#552864 4th Generation East Cambridge</p>
3/24/2023	Itamar Turner-Trauring	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee members,</p> <p>Boston's redistricting process continues to show how broken ward-based councilors are, and how much better Cambridge's current system is.</p> <p>As a Cambridge resident, I do not really know what ward I'm in. If it changes, that's fine, the election commission will tell me—and it still won't make any difference to who I can vote for. And it won't make any difference to the results of the election.</p> <p>Meanwhile, in Boston, we have a city councilor, Frank Baker, who worries he is going to lose the next election because some ward lines were redrawn on the map. So now he's bankrolling a lawsuit: https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/03/23/metro/boston-city-councilor-frustrated-with-redistricting-is-bankrolling-litigation-against-it/. This quote gives the gist of the issue, and explains very well why ward-based councilor elections are such a bad idea:</p> <p>Supporters said the map would strengthen political opportunities for people of color in a city long run by white voters and white elected officials. But critics objected to the domino effects those efforts had in other parts of the city. The new map, for example, splits between two council districts the Anne Lynch Homes at Old Colony, a Southie housing development named after US Representative Stephen Lynch's mother — a move critics argue could muffle the political voice of its residents.</p> <p>And the map carved up Baker's current constituencies, severing a cluster of majority-white, high-turnout precincts in the southern tip of Dorchester that he argued was the "core" of his district.</p> <p>"That's the most glaring thing," Baker said recently. "Everyone is talking about the core of their district. Adams Corner is my core and they split it right up the middle."</p> <p>The argument for redistricting makes sense—but the fact this redistricting was needed at all is a symptom of a broken election system. Hopefully representation for people of color improves going forward, but it clearly was a problem for many years—because of ward-based councilor elections. Under Cambridge's system this wouldn't have been an issue. Plus, it's quite possible that the Boston redistricting will both improve the situation and disenfranchise some people at the same time, because given a fundamentally broken system there's only so much you can fix by redrawing lines.</p> <p>Any demographic change can result in the ward districts making less sense, they're only redrawn rarely, and it clearly can be a contentious process where personal ambitions and fair representation can be very hard to disentangle. Is this the sort of political fight you want Cambridge to have in the future?</p> <p>Representation shouldn't be based on where arbitrary lines are drawn on a map. This is no way to run a political system, and no way to elect people. Fair and equal representation should be a built-in property of the election system, and ward-based councilors fail that minimal requirement.</p>
3/24/2023	Susan Fleischmann	Email	<p>Itamar Turner-Trauring</p> <p>Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>First, thank you so much for all of your hard work on the City's Charter. You have spent many hours and much brain power, and it is most appreciated!</p> <p>I am writing in opposition to introducing strong mayor governance in Cambridge. My concerns lie in two areas: management and politics.</p> <p>Management is a professional skill that is often taken for granted. Experience in project management, human resources, budgeting and fiscal oversight are not skills inherent to anything other than... managing.</p> <p>The skills required to be a successful elected official have very little overlap with the ability to be a successful manager, in my opinion. A strong mayor might be challenged when weighing the needs of the City-at-large with the particular interests of their most vocal constituents. Attention to those who reliably vote may take precedence over those who may not. Whether consciously or not, actions will be taken with the next election in mind.</p> <p>The current system enables the City to seek a skilled, experienced manager, who is by design disengaged from electoral politics. It provides continuity that does not fluctuate based on the electoral calendar.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your deliberations.</p> <p>Sincerely, Susan Fleischmann</p>
3/27/2023	Mark Kon	Email	<p>Dear Committee Members,</p> <p>I would like to add my voice strongly to support the position of the Cambridge Citizens Coalition on the current rethinking of the government structure in Cambridge. I want to say that decisions often have many unanticipated consequences, and should be made with the highest gravity. With this among other reasons in mind, we support the following measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeping the current 2 year terms for City Council. We want to keep the Council responsive and accountable to the Citizens of Cambridge - given the current votes on radical changes to permanently change Cambridge, there needs to be a year-to-year level of accountability for votes taken within the City Council. 2. Keep the City Manager System. This system should only be changed if there are serious deficiencies exposed. 3. Create a more diverse Combination District with a City-Wide-Based council: two Councilors from each of the 3 precinct-defined areas, and three Councilors chosen city-wide. 4. Maintain a council-elected mayor for the present, to be changed only if there are any deficiencies exposed. <p>Please feel free to get in touch with me (by email or by phone number below) if you would like to go over any of these issues with me. Thank you very much -</p> <p>Mark Kon</p>
3/27/2023	Shelagh Hadley	Email	<p>Please keep current 2 yr. City Council terms, NOT 4 yr. terms which would be far too long. We citizens need to maintain accountability from our elected council.</p> <p>Please keep the current City Manager system, to allow our new C.M. time to prove himself.</p> <p>Please create a new combination of district-based and city-wide-based council - 6 district councilors (2 from each of 3 Precinct-defined areas) and 3 citywide Councilors. The current system results in some areas (such as my own) being woefully under-represented, and seems unfair. We all need adequate representation!</p> <p>Please retain the current Governance structure, with the council electing its own mayor.</p> <p>Thanks for all your work!</p> <p>Shelagh Hadley, longtime Cambridge resident owner and taxpayer</p>
3/27/2023	John Trever	Email	<p>Dear Committee Members,</p> <p>I favor the following charter revisions:</p> <p>KEEP CURRENT 3-year CITY COUNCIL TERMS (No to 4-year terms).</p> <p>KEEP CITY MANAGER SYSTEM (Give our new City Manager enough time to prove himself).</p> <p>CREATE A COMBINATION DISTRICT-BASED AND CITY-WIDE-BASED COUNCIL - 6 district Councilors (2 from each of 3 Precinct-defined areas) plus 3 citywide Councilors.</p> <p>GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE: Keep the current Council-Elected mayor.</p> <p>Kind regards, John Trever</p>

3/28/2023	Phyllis Simpkins	Email	<p>I am writing to express my support for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -confirming 2 year city council terms; this is enough time for residents to evaluate their effectiveness -confirming the city manager system to ensure a system of checks and balances -confirming the council elected mayor system <p>With a relatively new city manager, the city should allow him time to do the job for which he was hired, rather than the urgency to "change the rules." I look forward to following this committee's process moving forward. Thank you.</p> <p>Phyllis Simpkins</p>
3/28/2023	Hope Turner	Email	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Hope Turner, and I'm a Cambridge resident. I will not be able to attend the Carter Review Committee Meeting on 3/28/23, but I would like my comments below to be included in the meeting please.</p> <p>I strongly believe that the city manager should be elected by the people of Cambridge. Direct accountability to voters is vital for a healthy democracy. I don't believe we can call ourselves a progressive city until we democratically elect the person who ultimately makes the decisions. Although our current City Manager has been more responsive to the City Council, this may not be true for the next City Manager. Residents deserve protection against abuses of power that inevitably happen in a government that does not directly elect its chief executive.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Hope</p>
3/28/2023	Robert Camacho	Email	<p>To: Cambridge City Council, City Manager, City Clerk Re: Cambridge Council and Governance Changes</p> <p>I urge the City Council to retain the current 2-year City Council term and to reject the proposed 4-year term for the Council. It is my opinion that too many members of this Council are already far too unresponsive to current citizens and residents and a change from a 2-year term to a 4-year term will make this unacceptable situation even worse.</p> <p>I also urge the City Council to retain the current City Manager system because we finally have an outsider City Manager not beholden to the same decades-old system and outdated considerations that has strangled City Government for far too many years. It is not surprising that some current members of the Council want to change their approach to keep matters out of balance.</p> <p>Also, now that we have a new City Manager, I support keeping the current Council-Elected mayor, to keep the current system as is.</p> <p>Believe me, no one is more surprised than I am that I now think the current structure of government in Cambridge might actually begin to work for residents and citizens.</p> <p>Robert Camacho Cambridge, MA 02138</p>
3/28/2023	Suzanne Preston Blier	Email	<p>Dear Ms. Born and Members of the Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Thank you for the great work that you are undertaking and the thought with which you are addressing these important issues. I have attended when I can.</p> <p>Today's meeting seeks to have a working consensus on the question: Should the head of the executive branch be an elected official (strong mayor) or remain an appointed position by the city council (city manager)?</p> <p>I work with a group of civic-minded volunteers across the city. We have spent some time studying this and other issues. I support the views of our group for:</p> <p>Keeping the current City Manager system for the present (Giving our new City Manager enough time to prove himself), RATIONALES:</p> <p>We are making already a number of changes with the city manager system that should be allowed to play out for a few years at last.</p> <p>We should give our new manager a chance to show what he can do in meeting the new Council goals and demands.</p> <p>If at some point we do move to a strong Mayor system (an elected Mayor), we would need to prepare the way and likely set up a system like Boston where the mayor could not also run for Council.</p> <p>We feel that the City Manager system offers more checks and balances.</p> <p>1. This allows key oversight on financing and achieving Council policy changes.</p> <p>2. This helps limit political intervention in the functioning of the city.</p> <p>Most of us support keeping the current Council-Elected mayor. OTHER VIEWS:</p> <p>A minority of us (myself included) favor an elected mayor within the city-manager structure.</p> <p>Those of us who would like to have the voters elect our mayor within the current city manager system would like the elected mayor to set the term's agenda both with Council and with the city manager. One concern raised with this approach is that it might promote conflict between the mayor and the city manager, but if both agree on the goals for the term at the outset for that term, my view is that this is unlikely to be a problem.</p> <p>Another minority supports a Strong Mayor system (without an appointed City Manager) to make the mayor more accountable to the voters.</p> <p>Important Note: Any mayor vote should be a separate vote from the Councilor vote (not on the same ballot), thereby allowing voters to select their #1 (and other choice) candidates independently, but also be able to vote separately for mayor, through the current proportional voting system, keeping the same number of 9 Councilors (including the mayor). The reason is that voters here often base their choice of #1 vote on the person they most feel needs their votes to get elected. The choice of mayor is different, and each councilor who seeks to also run as mayor, should be encouraged to set out their proposed agenda and goals for the term, allowing voters to compare them.</p> <p>Cordially,</p> <p>Suzanne Preston Blier</p>
3/28/2023	Marilee Meyer	Email	<p>While ideally I would like to vote for a mayor, given the atmosphere of the current council, I feel we need checks and balances which could be ignored with a direct vote. A mayor being chosen from the 7 councilors lessens the chance of council manipulation at large. We can already anticipate the campaigning for Mayor and the potential agenda supported by special interest groups. If those lobbyists also gain a 4-year term in their preferred candidate, we will be facing a stacked court and Cambridge as a whole municipality loses. It will be hard to bounce back from ideology dominating practical, feasible and sustainable decisions for EVERYONE. We have a hard time with that now. Please maintain the current system.</p> <p>Thank you for your hard work on this. I hope you get your extension for something this fundamental.</p> <p>Marilee Meyer</p>
3/28/2023	Maritza Soto	Email	<p>Thank you, Council Members,</p> <p>I would like to express my belief that Cambridge needs a democratically elected chief executive and/or a mayor with more power. Although we elect our Council, it is the unelected City Manager who has total fiscal control. We need someone who will be accountable to the voters. How can we call ourselves a progressive city and not have the person who has ultimate say on all decisions be democratically elected? Direct accountability to the voters is fundamental for a healthy democracy. Having a "CEO" type who supposedly isn't distracted by "politics" is wholly unfair to the people of this city.</p> <p>Our last Manager was an example of why our current system is fundamentally broken. He would often completely ignore policy orders advanced by the council, even ones that had advanced 9-0 with broad community consensus. That approach led to strained relations between the council and manager, and it also unnecessarily misdirected tensions throughout the community. In general, an elected executive would have to publicly own their decisions by choosing to veto items advanced by the council if they feel that is the right decision. The voters can respond accordingly. But the "pocket veto" option is too easy a choice for someone who does not have to respond to the voters. Additionally, the temperament of an individual shouldn't have so much impact on whether the Council's policy orders get implemented.</p> <p>There's been a lot of talk in committee meetings about what real accountability means. Sometimes "community outreach" (e.g. public forums, events), which amounts to essentially a glorified suggestion box, is named as an accountability mechanism. But real accountability means giving voters the ability to directly elect the city's primary decision maker.</p> <p>The process for determining commission recommendations on this issue has been rushed and done without much public input. Given that the commission is seeking an extension of their work until December 2023, it makes sense to keep this question open and seek more public input instead of making a final decision on 3/28/23.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Yours,</p> <p>Maritza Soto</p>
3/28/2023	Ellen Mei	Email	<p>Hello Charter review committee,</p> <p>I am a Cambridge resident at [redacted] and I am submitting this public comment to advocate for the city to move towards a mayor-council system. While the current city manager is amenable to the council's demands and takes up policy orders that are set forth, that is not always the case. With the city manager model, and the lack of a strong review system and mechanism to replace an insubordinate city manager, the will of the people, as enacted through the democratically elected councilors, can be ignored. The lack of movement or enactment of municipal broadbonds is a prime example of the pitfalls of a city manager system. Though the city council had passed this policy order, it was ignored for years. The city council did not invoke their city manager review right and allowed the city manager to ignore their and the people's demands.</p> <p>Moving to a mayoral system, where the executive can be changed when they do not regard the resident's demands, will make Cambridge residents feel that their voices are heard.</p>
3/28/2023	Ellen Mei	Email	<p>Thank you, Ellen Mei</p>
4/7/2023	Mary Jane Komacki	Email	<p>Chairperson Born, committee members and staff -</p> <p>I'm writing to share thoughts on the decisions you will be making regarding the head of the executive branch.</p> <p>In all your deliberations, I urge you to keep front and center the GOAL you are working toward. At one meeting I attended, someone summed up the aim as "to have more transparent, inclusive government." Is that still your mission...the "why" of this charter review effort? Reviewing what you hope to accomplish should be your first agenda item. Only after agreement on that does any discussion make sense. "If we do x...will that help achieve our stated aim and what we believe our remit to be?" Everything needs to be decided in light of the consensus aim.</p> <p>After 15 minutes listening to Mayor Michelle Wu on WBUR, recently I turned towards a strong mayor form of government. She is exceptional in her personal qualities of leadership, persistence, communication, etc. BUT mostly I took away...there is a natural-born leader in an important POSITION." That position is lacking here. We would benefit from having one publicly-elected person who embodies our aspirations and speaks to our challenges, who is visible in a crisis to stem fear and encourage hope.</p> <p>The city council is too amorphous. The mayor voted in by the council is honorific...chairing meetings. I don't know anyone (among citizens, not employees) who considers Sumbal Siddiqui our leader. The city would benefit from a form of government that - like Boston and Somerville - has a distinct and highly visible leader voted in by and accountable to the public.</p> <p>Currently the city manager reports to the council. He or she is there as the administrator. Yi-An Huang appears to be competent. Some hesitate to move away from the status quo because they believe Mr. Huang should have time to prove himself. I urge you NOT to think in those terms, i.e., the real and potential qualities of an individual (after all a city manager may leave for a better position or not have his contract renewed). It is the POSITION that is under consideration. Please don't confute the person with the role.</p> <p>I urge you to consider how much could be gained in the case of transparent, inclusive, accountable government by supporting a strong mayor as head of the executive branch. I for one believe it is the better alternative to the "mushy" and amorphous sort of leadership under our current system.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Mary Jane Komacki</p>
4/9/2023	Dan Sprague	Email	<p>Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am a resident of North Cambridge and strongly oppose any ward based form of representation. A ward based system will fragment the city, for what benefit?</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>Dan Sprague</p>
4/9/2023	Rachel Leicher	Email	<p>Cambridge Sent from my iPhone</p> <p>Hello,</p> <p>I would like to voice my opinion on how councilors are selected for the City of Cambridge. It has been brought to my attention that there is talk of switching to a ward based system. I would like to oppose this switch as having councilors that represent all of Cambridge give us a more democratic system with less gerrymandering. Citizens of Cambridge do not just exist inside of their ward, but enjoy the entire city. Therefore, it makes more sense for any public benefits, to benefit all.</p> <p>Best, Rachel Leicher</p>
4/9/2023	Eric Colburn	Email	<p>Dear Committee:</p> <p>Our current system of city-wide ranked-choice voting for city council is working well and seems to me to be way, way more democratic than a ward-based system, which would be less competitive and less representative. Please don't switch!</p> <p>Yours, Eric Colburn</p>

			<p>Hello Charter Review Committee Members:</p> <p>As a now 22 year resident of Cambridge and a previous resident of other municipalities with a strong mayor and strong city manager government, I've experienced both, and believe there are multiple benefits of an appointed strong city manager municipal government as opposed to an elected strong mayor system.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional Expertise: A city manager is typically a professional with experience in management best practices, while a strong mayor may not have the same level of expertise. They are appointed based on their qualifications and experience, and are typically better equipped to manage complex issues than an elected official. This means that a city manager is better equipped to handle the day-to-day operations of a city, as well as to provide appropriate guidance and recommendations to the city council. 2. Apolitical consistency: A city manager is a non-partisan professional who is less likely to be swayed by political considerations than an elected official. This can lead to more consistent and stable policies and practices over the long term, as the city manager is more clearly focused on the long-term interests of the city rather than short-term political considerations. 3. Accountability: A city manager remains accountable to the city council, which represents the interests of the citizens. The council can hire and fire the city manager if necessary, which provides a greater level of accountability than an elected mayor who may be less responsive to the needs and concerns of the citizens. 4. Stability and continuity: City managers often serve for longer periods than elected officials, which can provide stability and continuity in city administration. This can be particularly important when dealing with long-term issues and projects. 5. Efficient decision-making: With a city manager, decision-making is often faster and more efficient because there is a clear chain of command, and the manager can make decisions without having to navigate political rivalries or approval from a governing body. <p>Overall, a strong city manager system typically provides greater stability, efficiency, and professionalism, while a strong mayor system may be more susceptible to political pressures and less able to provide consistent and effective leadership over the long term.</p> <p>Regarding the legislative branch issues, I would strongly favor keeping the city council term as it currently stands at 2 years; this is the branch of local government that should be most directly and frequently subject to the considerations of its citizenry.</p> <p>I am also OK with the council electing the mayor, since they will hopefully elect someone who is likely to minimize unnecessary conflict and resultant inefficiency. In a city with the limited geographic size of Cambridge, I don't believe a ward-based system is necessary; the ranked choice election system in place should help make the council more representative to various constituencies.</p> <p>Thank you for the work you are doing on our behalf!</p> <p>John Patrick</p>
4/9/2023	John Patrick	Email	
4/10/2023	Mike Copacino	Email	<p>To the Charter Committee,</p> <p>I was told by a member of the Cambridge Bikes group that there is some consideration to changing Cambridge's city government from an all at-large to a ward based system. Please keep the system as is. I greatly appreciate having 9 councilors who I can reach out to with problems and different people tend to have different specialties which make it easier for me to find multiple people to help on an issue. Furthermore as I experienced when I lived in Somerville, ward based positions are frequently uncontested while At-Large positions had competition every year.</p> <p>Thank you for listening</p> <p>Mike Copacino</p>
4/10/2023	Jan Devereux	Email	<p>Dear Chair Born and Charter Review Committee Members,</p> <p>As a former councillor and vice mayor, I urge you to maintain the existing electoral system of at-large representation and not to add ward councillors.</p> <p>One of the challenges all councillors face is staying focused on the big picture goals for the city and region when some constituents (often their neighbors) demand they prioritize narrow neighborhood interests. There is a longstanding tendency among some Cambridgeans to define themselves by their neighborhood. Neighborhood identity politics already impedes policymaking on issues that transcend neighborhood boundaries like climate, transportation, and housing. Creating seats for ward councillors is likely to create even more division in the city and among councillors that stands in gridlock decision making on major citywide issues, while potentially introducing a spate of policy orders for changes that mostly benefit small groups of constituents. If the total number of council members increases to accommodate ward councillors, council meetings will be even longer if each member feels the need to speak on every issue before the body. Believe me, longer and more contentious meetings will not make running for council a more appealing proposition for more people.</p> <p>The Cambridge election process is already confusing enough. It's hard enough to explain the mechanics and benefits of ranked choice voting to residents, without adding the element of explaining ward boundaries and who is running at-large or by ward. Voters who already feel overwhelmed with all the campaign flyers littering their stoops and requests for donations and yard signs would get even more appeals since each resident would have two votes to campaign for... every two years.</p> <p>The guiding principle of the charter review committee should be "first do no harm." Adding ward councillors would do serious harm to civic unity, government operations, and forward-thinking policymaking.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Jan Devereux</p>
4/10/2023	Matt Goldstein	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>The last thing Cambridge needs in the face of a massive housing crisis is ward-based election of city council members. The city is a small enough political unit right now (perhaps too small) and letting NIMBY's on Brattle St. gain outside power to prevent the city from building more housing is a terrible idea that will result in the continuing decline of our regions population and power (in favor of places like Texas, Arizona and Florida). Why on earth are we doing this?</p> <p>Matt Matt Goldstein 52 Clarendon Ave</p>
4/10/2023	Amanda Sindel-Keswick	Email	<p>Dear Charter Committee,</p> <p>I urge you not to switch our election system to a ward-based one. The current at-large system allows citizens to vote for a slate of councilors who will work together for the benefit of our city. Furthermore, it enhances the competitiveness of the elections, making them more democratic. The current system is working for Cambridge, and there is no reason to change it.</p> <p>Thank you, Amanda</p> <p>Amanda Sindel-Keswick (she/her) JD Candidate 2024 Boston University School of Law</p>
4/10/2023	Michael Whelan	Email	<p>Dear Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly support retaining Cambridge's current system of at-large, ranked-choice Council elections. In any city, but especially a geographically compact one like Cambridge, it is critical for council members to be responsible to the entire city and to prioritize the public good of the city as a whole. Ward-based elections would diminish that responsibility and also reduce healthy political competition, since the wards would need to be quite small given Cambridge's size. It is easy to imagine only one or two candidates signing up to run and incumbents facing no competition. Over time, I am worried this would create a system beholden to parochial groups, special interests, or even dark money. Please keep Cambridge politics clean, responsible, and responsive. At-large, ranked-choice is the way to go!</p> <p>Thank you, Michael Whelan</p>
4/10/2023	Wyatt Berlinic	Email	<p>Good evening,</p> <p>I'm a resident of Cambridge living near Inman square.</p> <p>I'd like to register my objection to a ward based representation system. Wards are less representative of the population as a whole and will bias a system that is already biased against renters to favor home owners even more.</p> <p>Thanks, Wyatt</p>
4/10/2023	Vivek Sikri	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>We live in a time when our nation is divided on knife edge due to gerrymandered voting districts. We are one country, and we are one Cambridge. We deserve City Councilors who want to serve the city as a whole, not a select group of constituents in one part of the city.</p> <p>Setting up ward based elections would mean drawing somewhat arbitrary boundaries and slicing up our community into a multitude of pieces. Should the line go down one street or the next? Neither. It should go around our city.</p> <p>Cambridge isn't that big that we need to slice it up into little bits to govern it. We all need a functional and efficient public transit system. We all need roads that make sense.</p> <p>We do not need more division. We do not need little fiefdoms establishing themselves across our town.</p> <p>Please vote against ward based elections for the City Council. We are one city and we should vote as such.</p> <p>Thanks, Vivek Sikri</p>
4/10/2023	Christopher Cassa	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee Members,</p> <p>Thank you for your passion and dedication to evaluating our unique form of city government and for your thoughtful consideration of issues such as at-large vs. ward-based councilors. While I appreciate the concept of increased local representation, I urge you to maintain the existing at-large representation and not to switch to a partial or fully ward-based system.</p> <p>A ward-based system would reduce our focus on city-wide policies and solutions. For example, housing, school, and transportation policies are all examples of issues that impact the entire city and should be considered at the city level. For example, housing policies such as affordable housing and rent control affect residents across the city, not just in specific wards. Similarly, school policies such as funding for school renovations and new programming (e.g. pre-K) have a city-wide impact and should be considered at the city level. Transportation considerations naturally affect many people throughout the city and optimal solutions rely on participation from every ward.</p> <p>Councilors should have a broad understanding of the benefits and impacts of these programs which affect the entire city, rather than being focused on the more narrow interests of a particular ward.</p> <p>Additionally, a ward-based system would likely lead to less democratic accountability and less political engagement. In our neighboring city, Somerville, 4 out of 7 of the ward councilors ran unopposed. This lack of competition would not force councilors to stay in touch with voters and be held accountable. This lack of competition also makes it harder for citizens to hold their elected officials accountable and decreases political engagement.</p> <p>Another important point is that a ward-based system could lead to fewer renters being represented in the city council. As many renters move more frequently than owners, it would make it much harder for councilors who needed to move, particularly if they moved to a different ward, to continue to be elected. This would likely lead to a council that is less representative of the city's population as a whole. Councilors already face immense pressure to prioritize concerns of a narrow few, often friends or neighbors, over the broader interests and goals of the city. If we were to switch to a ward-based system, some councilors would be further committed to that narrow few, and might even be 'fully insulated' from helping with problems that serve the important interests of the entire community.</p> <p>A ward-based system would also find challenges in the rapid changes in population density and lack of clarity on where everyone in our city lives. If ward councilors were assigned based on voter registration data, we would likely disenfranchise those who are not US citizens, or those who are already underrepresented in government, such as those on the margins. Lower density neighborhoods could also end up having fewer ward councilors in a system with proportional representation based on population density, obtaining the goals of those who may want a ward for each "small neighborhood". How would large populations such as MIT and Harvard University be handled? They would almost certainly be entitled to a ward councilor each by any reasonable population based system. At least that would be an interesting twist.</p> <p>We already have a lot of 'culture wars' going on in the city, and I worry that separating our neighborhoods even more into fiefdoms will enhance these cultural narratives and will serve to further divide the city. We already over-serve the loudest voices in the room, and this could define and entrench this into policy with smaller constituencies. We also have nine councilors which is... plenty, and any system would almost certainly need to expand the number of councilors, making meetings longer and more contentious.</p> <p>Finally, having been at the whims of a ward councilor in Somerville for a renovation project which was approved and successful was still nonetheless very stressful and frustrating. I saw firsthand how a neighbor's project was set back for over a year and it is still not complete because of the whims of one councilor. Every single time that resident had to come back to the board, he had to pay an architect for new plans, waste tons of time and money, and ultimately his lot has not been redeveloped. Any one person who can control your fate with the city, and effectively slow your process down until they are available or satisfied that 'the community has been heard' can be enormously frustrating and is undemocratic. We already have systems in place for community engagement which are already overreaching staff, giving even more veto power to a capricious person can really damage the community and also frustrate the efforts of staff to apply policies consistently and fairly. It is also an invitation for graft, favoritism, and deep prioritization.</p> <p>I believe that a ward-based system (in whole or in part) would do enormous harm to achieving the long-term goals of the city and would have many damaging effects to the unity, operations, and developing the smart and fair policies we need.</p> <p>Very best regards, Chris</p> <p>Christopher Cassa</p>

	4/10/2023 ABC	Email	<p>Dear Members of the Cambridge Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>A Better Cambridge (ABC) recognizes that the charter review is an important opportunity for Cambridge to reassess its system of government. We would first like to express our thanks to the Charter Review Committee (Committee) for its work to identify any shortcomings in how our fellow citizens are represented and how effective our government is in creating real, positive change for our City. Given that housing costs have long been identified as the most important issue to Cambridge residents, we at ABC hope the Committee prioritizes effective representation, because the same people who bear the brunt of the housing crisis tend to have the hardest time getting their voice heard. For new Cambridge residents, lower-income households, folks who are too busy with school, work, multiple jobs, caring for family, etc., it can be challenging to engage deeply in our political process. We appreciate the Committee's focus on making politics more accessible for more people. To match our city's values, we urge the Committee to ensure that any changes to the charter serve to promote democracy, not constrict it. We are therefore concerned that the Committee is considering shifting the city council from at-large proportional representation to either a "ward" based system or a hybrid system with some ward and some at-large councillors. We also want to highlight the importance of leadership in resolving the housing crisis.</p> <p>ABC strongly opposes transitioning from at-large proportional representation to any ward-based system because of the negative effects on political representation and housing production. First, a ward-based or hybrid system will disproportionately amplify the voices of homeowners and disempower renters who already have an undersized impact on how the city government is run, despite making up a majority of the city's population. Renters move more, and would much more frequently transfer between wards, severing the link between them and their existing ward councillor. This would present a larger barrier to renters building strong relationships with their representatives. Furthermore, councillors would be less focused on addressing renters' needs because they would become a less vocal, less reliable constituency. It is already challenging for renters to run for City Council, and our persistent housing shortage could force prospective candidates to leave their ward and disrupt their candidacy if they could not find housing within their budget. A lack of renter representation on the City Council is a gap in representation that we hope is addressed during the charter reform process.</p> <p>Second, a councillor representing a ward has an incentive to "protect" their turf over prioritizing citywide needs. Many politicians see affordable housing and apartments as undesirable, and while they may acknowledge a need for it, will push for it to go outside of their district. With more than 21,000 people on the CHA's waitlist and rents climbing, it is urgent that we accelerate housing and affordable housing production. Yet, a recent study has shown that shifting to a ward-based system harms housing production. Cambridge can't afford for political lagging over where new homes will go to delay housing production.</p> <p>Third, wards undermine proportional representation's ability to make every vote count. Even without an intent to gerrymander, there is no way to draw ward lines without breaking up constituencies, so councillors would lose the ability to unite geographically diverse coalitions. We hope the Committee can improve our current system of proportional representation rather than adopt a new, less representative system. Under the current system, a councillor appealing to voters in a particular neighborhood that reaches the threshold purely on that basis can already be elected that way. By moving to wards, we would be imposing the importance of arbitrary neighborhood boundaries on voters in a way they don't seem to be expressing in their voting patterns. Cambridge may be geographically small, but it has a lot of big ideas, and proportional representation is far better at giving everyone a chance to be heard through their vote and elected representatives.</p> <p>Lastly, ABC understands the Committee is considering other charter changes as well, such as having an elected mayor instead of a city manager. Although ABC is not taking a stance at this time, we would like to express the importance of executive leadership and accountability. Housing has been the number one issue for years, but Cambridge hasn't seen the kind of bold action that our elections show voters want.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>
	4/10/2023 Camilla Elvis	Email	<p>A Better Cambridge</p> <p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to Ward councillors in Cambridge.</p> <p>More counselors limit politicians ability to represent us along only the lines of where we live. I want my representatives to be able to get elected based by representing interests I share with other cambridgians that go beyond geography.</p> <p>At large Councillors in Proportional representation have the freedom to represent city wide interests and the competition to incentives them to do so.</p> <p>While geography may not be explicitly represented through our city counselors, neighborhoods have vast number of opportunities to make their voice heard on city issues occurring near them through community meetings and boards and commissions. Citywide interests go deeply under representatives in those meetings. It is critical to have our elective representatives speak for all of Cambridge.</p> <p>Thank you for working on this important process.</p> <p>Camilla Elvis</p>
	4/10/2023 David Sullivan	Email	<p>Dear committee members,</p> <p>Thank you for your service in this important effort.</p> <p>As you may know from my interview with several committee members, I support a strong mayor - elected by RCV for a four-year term. If we want to change the status quo - for example around housing policy - I think it is essential to exert leadership with clear political and electoral support. My own experience in both city and state government convinces me of this. Especially given the constraints of the Open Meeting Law, the present structure makes it very difficult to organize significant policy change. (I am open to a professional chief operating officer appointed by and reporting to the mayor, but perhaps confirmed by the Council.)</p> <p>I also strongly oppose moving away from PR citywide Council elections to any kind of ward- or district-based elections. That would increase parochialism, enable opposition to new housing, hurt tenant candidates who need to move often (as I once did as a Councillor), and disfranchise some voters who care about citywide issues than who care about their neighborhood. I agree with ABC's statement on this issue. I am happy to discuss further with anyone. Thank you for your consideration!</p> <p>David Sullivan Former City Councillor</p>
	4/10/2023 Steven E. Miller	Email	<p>Dear Committee</p> <p>I am writing in support of moving to a directly elected Mayor with executive power AND the continuation of the current city-wide election of Councillors using the current PR system.</p> <p>My reasoning is that (1) we need to make the exercise of executive power more publicly accountable than the current City Manager system allows; (2) the current method of city-wide Council elections both ensure that most demographic and issue-related subgroups in the city have the ability to mobilize around a candidate who will give them voice at the same time that it forces candidates to take a city-wide perspective in order to aggregate enough votes to make the cut; (3) the PR system, for all its confusing details, means that nearly every voter ends up playing a role in the election of at least one and usually several people, thereby increasing voters' sense of connection and ability to speak to the Council; (4) and if there is a separately elected Mayor, the confusing nuances of the PR system become much less significant; (5) changing to a ward-based system would further balkanize Cambridge's already fractious politics with councillors stuck in narrow self-interest based on what usually turns out to be a very small group of very vocal neighbors.</p> <p>Thanks for all the effort you are putting into this!</p> <p>Sincerely, Steven E. Miller</p>
	4/10/2023 Esther Hanig	Email	<p>To members of the Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am writing to express my strong support of a strong mayor system of government and my strong opposition to switching to a ward system for councillors.</p> <p>While a decade ago, I would have opposed a strong mayor system, I now think it is what is needed for our times. Over the past decades, our world, our nation and our city are increasingly in the midst of vast changes and critical challenges unlike those we have faced for a long time - whether it is climate change, housing and worker shortages or rapidly changing technology, among others. These changes are magnified by the presence of Harvard, MIT, and our booming industries in Kendall Square and the Alewife area which bring both opportunity, but also challenges and threats to the very essence of who we are as a community.</p> <p>I believe that this reality requires a governmental system that provides strong leadership and vision to harness those opportunities and to address the challenges, both for today and also, perhaps even more importantly, for the years ahead and future generations. I feel that our system, where there is no real helm of leadership, is not adequate to the task. Having worked with the business community and the neighborhood of Union Square in Somerville during an intensive process of planning and citizen involvement led by Mayor Curatone, I have seen firsthand how effective good strong strategic leadership can be. I am also watching what Mayor Wu is accomplishing with great admiration and respect. Both Mayor Curatone and Mayor Wu have demonstrated strong leadership, strategic vision, and effective implementation, deeply grounded in the ideals of social justice and equity.</p> <p>I also feel that, in the interest of true democracy and equitable representation, switching to a ward system would be a grave error. Not only would it disenfranchise renters, who often have to switch neighborhoods in search of housing they can afford (if they are lucky enough to be able to stay in the city), I think this system would be detrimental to our efforts to build a city not just for today and today's residents, but also to provide for future residents. We already see the effects of provincialism, as well as all too often, selfish myopia, in our zoning efforts, and a ward system would only intensify that while making it exponentially harder to create measures that benefit the whole city and future generations.</p> <p>If you choose not to endorse a strong mayor system, I cannot urge you strongly enough to change the terms of the Councillors. With our current system of elections every two years, it is very hard to make some of the difficult, but necessary, changes that the times demand. In the second year of their terms, Councillors are hesitant to introduce or support anything controversial, lest it lead to losing their reelection campaign. I would suggest that the Council terms either be longer or stagger terms so that not every Councillor is up for reelection every two years.</p> <p>Finally, I urge you to strongly support that we continue our voting system of proportional representation which is a model for democracy and equity.</p> <p>Thank you for all your hard work and for your consideration of my views.</p> <p>Esther Hanig</p>
	4/10/2023 Ben Simon	Email	<p>Dear Review Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to express my support for Cambridge moving away from the anti-democratic City Manager Model towards a Strong Mayor model. I do think it's unfortunate that we are faced with this binary choice, as though those are the only two options, but certainly an executive that is elected by the people is more democratic than an executive who is not.</p> <p>I would like to provide some contextual history for Plan E that it's possible you may not be aware of. Although the common narrative surrounding Plan E is that it emerged as a means of curbing political corruption, a closer look at its history shows that there is another side to this story. My source for this is local scholar Bill Cunningham's excellent book, <i>Belonging</i>, which he has given me permission to share and which I have attached to this email. This thoroughly researched book provides a detailed account of the history of Plan E which I cannot fully do justice to briefly, but a simplified account of his research could read as follows: Plan E was crafted by Harvard and other business interests in Cambridge as a reaction against militant pro-labor governments that were getting elected, and that were governing in the interests of the working class Irish immigrants they represented and in so doing alienating the interests of local businesses including Harvard. Rather than removing corruption, Plan E's actual intent was to take take power away from the voting populace and put it in the hands of an unelected and unaccountable city manager who would preserve the status quo and govern in the interests of the business community. The book reveals that the appropriately named Plan E Association that drafted our city charter was chaired by Harvard Dean James M. Landis and the actual charter language was drafted by Professor Chandler W. Johnson.</p> <p>The homelessness and housing crises facing this city will never be solved while democracy is inert to protect the interests of a powerful and wealthy minority whose interests would be harmed by their solution. Please vote to overturn this deliberately anti-democratic City Manager Model that has no place in a country founded on the principles of democracy.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and service.</p> <p>Ben Simon</p>
	4/11/2023 Susan Fleischmann	Email	<p>Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Let's use our experience to fix what we have, and keep a professional City Manager who is not beholden to the loudest voices in the room.</p> <p>For decades, I worked in Cambridge as a nonprofit executive director, and had the opportunity to interact extensively with both elected officials and with the City administration. For the most part, I felt that those relationships were respectful and constructive. However, I also worked on both the C2 committee and the Broadband Task Force, and experienced the frustration when City officials ignored the countless hours and very thoughtful work that had been put in by committed and concerned residents. For many years, I tried to work with the City to re-imagine the structure of public, educational, and government cable tv access in Cambridge, and remain profoundly disappointed that, despite a depth of knowledge and experience, I was unable to prevail.</p> <p>The point is, I understand the frustrations of those who seek a more responsive City. Some believe that this can be achieved by instituting a strong mayor form of government. But as I said in my previous letter (paste in below), I still believe in professional management, removed from politics, afforded by the current Plan E system. I believe in the way this system does not consolidate power with one person or one body. We now have the opportunity, after over 80 years of experience, to address the ways that Plan E fails to support the kind of community we seek.</p> <p>We can look around to neighboring communities and see extremely effective elected mayors. We also do not have to look far to find corruption and mismanagement. We have the opportunity before us to reconfigure the job descriptions and functions of the City Manager, the Mayor, and the City Council. Why not keep our system and address its weaknesses in a more targeted way?</p> <p>What is within the current structure that keeps the City Council from using its power to direct funding to constituents' priorities through the annual budget process? Why doesn't the Council fully exercise its responsibilities to oversee the work of the City Manager? Why aren't the Council's priorities voted upon? What are the functional stumbling blocks that can be removed in order to make our existing system work to its fullest potential? Why not reorganize areas of responsibility and authority to make this work? This committee can get into the weeds to address these questions and more. This is how we "do the work of democracy." We do not need to wholesale discard the current system because we CAN find enduring solutions for the next 80 years.</p> <p>Sincerely, Susan Fleischmann</p>

4/15/2023	Barbara Anthony	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee: I submit the following recommendations for your consideration.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminate the proportional voting system for electing councilors. Few people understand this system as it is very complex. And a very small percent of eligible voters participate. While few understand it, it is used by those who do understand it to elect special interest candidates beholden to the small percent of voters who elected them. While originally conceived to benefit racial and ethnic minorities so that all would have some representation, it has become perverted and manipulated over the years to insure that narrow, ideological interests control the city council. The result is the current control of council members not by ethnic or racial minorities but by narrow interests such as cyclists, certain development interests, and no compromise climate zealots. This will only continue in the future unless the system is changed to elect councilors by simple majorities of voters. 2. Councilors should be elected on a district basis not city wide. Under the current system it is almost impossible to vote out councilors. They are not accountable to any particular geographic area of the city. Because of the complexities of proportional voting, which I still do not understand after voting here for almost 40 years, councilors cannot be held accountable to local residents who are harmed by their policies. The same people are elected over and over and over again until they get tired and move on of their own volition. It seldom happens that someone is defeated and then it is because they have offended the narrow interests which elected them and they are targeted for elimination. 3. Cambridge should have a strong mayor like other cities such as Boston and Somerville. The current system gives enormous power to unelected officials who are not accountable to voters. So we have councilors who are elected by small special interest groups of voters and a city manager and staff not elected at all with enormous power over policy and implementation. There is far, far too little accountability to voters. <p>Under the current system of government, Cambridge has become a very divided city. There is enormous frustration and anger too because many feel powerless to make changes under the current system. While originally intended to provide fairness and more equity, the current system is now the captive of small groups of single interest voters manipulated by incumbents to retain power and shut down dissenting views.</p> <p>Cambridge is a very wealthy city in terms of its finances thanks to our enormous commercial base. That base was built over many decades by savvy city managers and state officials who understood economics and finance. It was not built by the city council. For decades city councilors had the luxury of inheriting sound finances while they pursue their narrow policy interests. Until recently it was hard for the council to inflict economic or financial harm on the city by their decisions but that has changed. Their infrastructure, housing, and environmental decisions are threatening to undermine a balance that has taken decades to achieve and there is little that voters can do to change that course.</p> <p>For all these reasons, the structure of Cambridge government must be changed and this commission is the city's only hope.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my views, Barbara Anthony</p>
4/16/2023	Young Kim	Email	<p>Dear Chairwoman Bom and Members of the Charter Review Committee, Very unfortunately, due to family commitment, I will not be able to join Cambridge Citizens' Coalition's Q&A and discussion of the City's Charter Review with you. As you know, I have been emailing you with my observations of ongoing city government problems so that you can see the extent of the problem and develop charter reforms to make Cambridge more responsive, transparent and accountable. To this end, I am attaching examples of the broken Policy Order/City Manager Report process for your review. What we desperately need is an independent governance oversight office - something like Inspector General, ombudsman or office of compliance.</p> <p>The City Charter must make it clear that the role of the City Council is to issue Policy Order for the City Manager and his staff to investigate an issue in the PO and report back recommended solutions to the issue, and not for CM to execute City Council's recommended solution.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration, Young Kim</p>
4/18/2023	Young Kim	Email	<p>Dear City Officials, I am submitting my Letter to the Editor of Cambridge Day. City Manager Yi-An Huang to be an impartial, transparent chief executive accountable to Cantabrigians for your consideration. This was just one specific issue needing accountability but, in fact, accountability, transparency and traceability (of city's action to its authorization/responsible staff) are needed on all issues in Cambridge.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention and consideration to this matter. Respectfully yours, Young Kim Norris Street</p>
5/10/2023	Kelly Dolan	Email	<p>I've been following the Charter Reform Review discussions and was glad to hear the committee finally engage in some substantial topics during recent meetings. But it was a bit frustrating to hear accusations that our current form of government isn't democratic enough nor is it accountable or addressing the needs of its people without specific examples and evidence. That made the discussions for a strong mayor vs a city manager too theoretical to effectively address such allegations.</p> <p>There are over 50 boards and committees made up of residents involved with working with the city on various issues such as zoning, climate, justice and safety issues. Just recently the City's Health and Environment Committee held a working group meeting with the City's DPW, Urban Forestry, and the Department of Public Planning, with citizen lead groups Green Cambridge, and Cambridge 4Trees to discuss our urban forest. Similar city/resident groups created the recommendations for Envision Cambridge, Central Square CJKJ and Alewife Planning. Recently the City Council was granted more influence in who actually gets assigned to these boards and commissions.</p> <p>According to the city's website there are currently 14 neighborhood groups in various forms of activity. One is the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association, a great example of a citizen lead organization that has worked effectively with the city and DCR to maintain and improve local parks and Magazine Beach, as well as host an amazing array of educational and information programs.</p> <p>The City Council's Ordinance Committee reviews and addresses at least 8 to 10 citizen lead zoning proposals every year for issues such as affordable housing, multi-family housing, climate resiliency, transportation solutions and even Central Square Straight entertainment permits. Anyone who can get 10 resident signatures can propose zoning changes to the city's codes.</p> <p>How the city establishes the budget is another confusing issue for the Committee. It's the City Council's responsibility to begin every Council with agreed upon goals and priorities for the city so that the city manager can address them through the budget. Sadly, there have been too many years when Councilors don't even bother to update and define their priorities, even as they complain about its complexity, or blame the city manager for not giving enough funding for one of their pet projects. Given the size of our budget, the numerous projects we support and the incredible detail the budget office provides, the budget book is rather large, but is clearly presented if anyone bothers to read it. Cambridge has been actively soliciting residents' input for the budget since 1996 under Healy, and good Councilors know how budgets work and how to get more funding to their programs.</p> <p>There are many local city groups that work with City Councilors to successfully influence budget appropriations and new programming and services. In 2019 the City Council voted down the city's budget for Technology until the city manager agreed to review investment in broadband, leading to an outside consultant and current proposals under consideration. The Blue Safety Committee helped enact an Ordinance that will force the city to spend many millions on bike lanes. Safety advocates have successfully lobbied the city to invest in an Alternative Police response.</p> <p>Over the past few years there has been a focused effort from Councilors and citizens groups to shift more money into affordable housing, along with voters choosing to also include our Community Preservation Funds. So this year we have one of the highest rates of affordable housing funding in the state with \$44 million dollars, double the amount from just a few short years ago. We will be spending \$39k per public school student in Cambridge vs the state's average of \$19k. The new proposed budget for FY24 has \$59 million more in new programs like Universal Pre K, bike lanes and a new Alternative Community Safety program.</p> <p>In 2015 the city created the Participatory Budget program which allows residents to submit and vote to spend over \$1million of the city's budget for including trees, bike lanes and assorted neighborhood amenities to get more residents, especially young residents 12 and up involved with their governmental process. This is a wildly successful project that gets \$700 residents voting and has spent \$7.5 million dollars of the city's budget.</p> <p>All of this citizen input and involvement does create a lot of complexity and adds enormous time to decision making. It's difficult to follow through on all the various ways issues are proposed, debated and finally decided. And because our system is so democratic and complex it's difficult to point to one person or one period of time where a decision was made. A good example of this has been the issue for our police department to use body cams. An issue weighed down so much by the need to balance privacy rights with public safety that no decision was made until an unfortunate accident highlighted the lack of a final action plan.</p> <p>So perhaps it's time to move on from the executive branch and examine the role of our legislative branch which has direct accountability to voters, is elected by a relatively small minority and selects a mayor and vice mayor based on horse trading and friendships instead of votes and expertise. 9 Councilors means there is one for every 13,000 people in this city, or one for every 5,372 households as the city continues to grow. Over the past 10 years the Councilor role grew from part time to full time, with the addition of aides and huge funding increases. I can't recall ever hearing about a review for the previous 3 City Managers, even though it's listed in one of the duties of the City Council. Some Councilors don't bother to hold Committee meetings or publicize meeting notes. Yet there has been less and less direct responses from almost all of them, as well as from city staff. While there are many more options for one way public comment, especially since zoom, two way interactions and dialogues have decreased, leaving more residents with the frustrating feeling of not being heard, and not having enough information about how their city operates. Clearly the accountability of this branch of our government needs some attention.</p> <p>Looking forward to more in depth conversations on these very important topics, and thank you all for the amount of work and personal time you have put into this effort.</p> <p>Sincerely Kelly Dolan</p>
5/11/2023	Valerie A. Bonds	Email	<p>Good afternoon Members of the Charter E Committee: I hope you are doing well. I continue to believe, at this time, members of the City Council should remain with a two year term. Other than the recently elected Councilors, terms of service of some sitting Councilors are from 3 terms to five terms.</p> <p>Because Councilors have a two year term, they make an attempt to engage in outreach, direct contact with Residents during the second year of their term. They are more likely to attend community meetings, participate in hybrid events and yes, even knock on our doors to make in-person, individual connections.</p> <p>City Councilors have the ability to receive funds through donation, response to constituents with wealth, organizational power, and influence often at the expense of the underserved, underrepresented and marginalized members of our community.</p> <p>There are many who are not voting constituents who live in Cambridge and require the service of our City Councilors. Our Children, visiting Students, undocumented individuals, homeless individuals and those who have neither the wealth or the organizing power to get the attention of the City Councilors.</p> <p>In a very recent Council meeting, in my opinion, our Mayor was more of a referee than a facilitator between members of the City Council.</p> <p>Given the influx of large sums of money to political candidates and incumbents, the leaning toward policies that favor accumulation of votes to remain and sustain political presence, and the ever growing concerns related to ethics, moral compass, accountability and veracity among police figures at all levels of government, we must be very careful aligning political politicians with those who choose public service.</p> <p>Unlike the members of the City Council, the City Manager must have specific education, knowledge, expertise and experience and I believe a skill set, that can be applied to the role, responsibility and function of the office of City Manager. A business acumen, financial expenditure knowledge and selfless service commitment is essential.</p> <p>As a public servant, the City Manager's only obligation, level of accountability and purpose in office is the public good and welfare of all who reside in our community. The City Manager does not have to rely on donations to a campaign, consideration to large donors or how many constituents must be convinced to keep him or her in office. The City Manager cannot accept gifts or engage in any activity that may pose a conflict of interest. The need to keep corruption at bay must continue. The City Council must stay in their lane.</p> <p>I am not sure about electing a Mayor. Having the Mayor appointed by the Council has concerns. Having a Mayor elected can lead to decisions based on the constituency than the community.</p> <p>I have so much respect for this Committee. In many ways, the future of Cambridge rests in what you present to a Council that is looking for more power and authority instead of more accountability, consensus and commitment to all who reside in our community.</p> <p>Best to you, M. Bonds / Valerie Valerie A. Bonds</p>
5/12/2023	Aram Harrow	Email	<p>Dear CRC, Thank you for your important work on these hard questions!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From your election data it is clear that odd-year elections significantly depress turnout. I hope you will recommend that Cambridge move its local elections to even years. 2. I am much less confident about this second point, but I think the city manager is too powerful. If we could move to a system where the elected officials set the policy priorities and the appointed officials implement them, that would be more democratic. Our city manager seems great but questions like whether Cambridge makes afterschool universal should really be decided by city council or an elected mayor, and not the city manager. <p>Thanks for taking the time to read this, Aram Harrow (Cambridge resident)</p>
6/6/2023	Nathan Fillmore	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee: I wanted to write briefly with an example from the news yesterday from our neighbor to the north of the negative effect wards have on the competitiveness of council races.</p> <p>An article in Cambridge Day yesterday relates that a ward councilor in Somerville, Beatriz Gomez Moukad, decided not to run for re-election. She was running unopposed. Then her former aide, Jack Perenick, made a "snap-of-the-moment decision" to run. Unless someone else files today, Mr Perenick will also run unopposed and will be newly elected as a Somerville ward councilor with no competition and having never been chosen in any meaningful sense by the voters.</p> <p>I happen to like the positions Mr Perenick espouses in the article, at least on my favorite topic, multimodal transportation. But not everyone likes those positions, and I'm sure there are differences of opinion on these topics within the ward. It's a bad thing for democracy for there to be only one person running for an election. Ward seats reduce competition and thus reduce accountability of elected officials to the people.</p> <p>Sincerely, Nate</p> <p>The president of the Massachusetts Young Democrats and a former campaign adviser for Gomez Moukad, Jack Perenick, filed papers to enter the Ward 5 on Friday after her emailed announcement. It was not intended to go into the Ward 5 race or any race until Beatriz decided to withdraw. Perenick said, "It was a snap-of-the-moment decision. I've been involved in city politics for a while. I've worked with councilors, the mayor and on Beatriz's campaign. I've seen the good work she has done, specifically on bikes and wage theft. I didn't want all of that work to end." Barring another candidate filing before the Wednesday deadline, Perenick is running unopposed in Ward 5 and is all but certain to take Gomez Moukad's seat.</p>

			<p>I want to thank Anna for attending the Charter E Committee Outreach at our housing complex. Despite the fact that there was no early notification and the 6 or 7 Tenants who attended, asked many questions, offered many suggestions and added a few asides along the way. I believe the meeting was productive.</p> <p>Anna answered our questions, explained the purpose of the Charter E Committee and treated our small group as if we were a group of many. We are hoping Anna can return at a later date when adequate notification will be in place to provide a much more respectable turnout from the 300 households that reside in the Rivermark, 808-812 Memorial Drive Housing Complex.</p> <p>Again, thank you for the Charter E Committee Outreach.</p> <p>Regards, M. Bonds/Valerie Tenant</p>
6/15/2023	Valerie A. Bonds	Email	
6/27/2023	Annette LaMond	Email	<p>Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Thank you for the time that you have committed to studying the City's charter. I have been following your discussions and appreciate your outreach efforts. I want to share my thoughts.</p> <p>Consider where the current city councilors live by zip codes: 02138 - 1 councilor 02139 - 5 councilors 02140 - 2 councilors 02141 - 1 councilor 02142 - 0 councilors</p> <p>The 02138 and 02139 zip codes are the largest by far in terms of population. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the two zip codes were nearly equal in population (approximately 36,000 each). But 02138 has only 1 city councilor while 02139 has 5 councilors.</p> <p>Why the disparity? It isn't that the residents of 02138 are not civic-minded. Residents of the 02138 zip code serve on City committees. Many are leaders of Cambridge nonprofit organizations, not just the ones based in 02138. Judged against other parts of the city, voter turnout rate in the 02138 wards is high.</p> <p>So if residents of 02138 aren't running for City Council, why? The answer may be that the job of a city councilor precludes holding a full-time job. Being a city councilor involves attending long Monday evening meetings and weeks full of committee meetings. Many people are in the midst of careers that prevent such a time commitment. To be a councilor, you need a job that has flexible schedules, minimal travel requirements, and few hard deadlines. I realize that city councilors are compensated, but income considerations aside, service on the council should not require stepping off a career path - teaching, medicine, nursing, law - that required years of preparation.</p> <p>The fact that people with full-time jobs (a large portion of the adult population in the city) would find it difficult to serve as a city councilor suggests that the position should be re-thought. The city needs a council that brings a wide range of experience to deliberations. Effective oversight of the city manager (under the current plan) requires no less.</p> <p>Further, the current system does not produce a city council that is representative of the city as a whole, especially given the limited number of votes needed to win a seat. (In the 2021 election, the turnout was 22,074 out of 67,681 registered voters. The nine councilors elected received the following first choice votes: 4,124; 1,971; 1,764; 1,703; 1,539; 1,493; 1,579; 1,295; 1,220.) Campaigns are based on distributing flyers and knocking on doors. Candidates do not go through the rigors of debate with other candidates. As a result, elections do not clarify issues. Nor can the city manager draw effective guidance from a council elected by such a small number of voters. Would a change in the ranked choice voting system be helpful? I urge the committee to recommend a study.</p> <p>We live in a city of 118,403 (2020 U.S. Census), nestled in a metropolitan region of nearly 5 million people. I don't think that the city council system (and ceremonial mayor) with an unelected city manager serves Cambridge well in the 21st century. It is time to move to a plan with an elected mayor who manages departments directly and a city council (some councilors at-large and some district-based) that can advise the mayor and give attention to constituent issues.</p> <p>Sincerely, Annette LaMond</p>
6/28/2023	Jim D	Email	<p>Thank all of you for volunteering your time. I think the city manager model as it is now is a good one because it helps keep the day to day administration of the city somewhat above the political fray. While an annual review of their performance isn't a bad idea, I think they deserve the necessary independence to perform the job without having to be looking over their shoulder all the time.</p> <p>Thank you, Jim Dunn</p>
6/29/2023	Paul Rinehart	Email	<p>One more:</p> <p>5. If a council vote is tied owing to an absence or a vote of "present", the Mayor or current Acting Mayor shall be granted an additional tiebreaking vote.</p> <p>On Jun 28, 2023, at 20:10, Phil Rinehart wrote:</p> <p>I just received your postcard (thank you - nice touch), and I'm finally realized your meetings have been proceeding for so long and are open for public comment. I will attend the in-person event in Central Square on July 25, but ahead of that, some thoughts:</p> <p>1. I believe the existing charter requires the newly-elected council to be sworn in on the first Monday in the January following the election. But this day may fall on January 1 (as it will in 2024; after that, the next occurrence is 2046). Please fix this by including a clause delaying the swearing-in by one day or one week in years when the first Monday is a holiday.</p> <p>2. There was discussion in your March meeting (when you interviewed CM Huang) about making the city manager somewhat more directly accountable to the citizenry. There is a simple fix for this without requiring a comprehensive change in the mayor/council/manager structure. It is to require the CM to be voted into office each 2 years by the new council at or before March 31 of the even-numbered year. Specifically, the existing process allowing negotiated-term CM contracts is abolished, and the elected CM can only serve till March 31 two years hence. The council may renew the CM for successive 2 year terms (no limit - one term at a time) but a failure to garner 5 votes for a CM by March 31 will trigger the following in sequence: (At any date up to March 31 of the even year) The council may appoint an acting manager for a 2 year term (till March 31) NON-RENEWABLE (At any date up to March 31 of the even year) if no affirmative (5) vote margin is achieved for an ACM, the following officials in sequence will be offered the acting CM position for 2 years (till March 31) NON-RENEWABLE: The current deputy CM Heads of various city departments in an order to be agreed upon by your committee (somewhat analogous to the Federal Government's presidential succession sequence) The council may at any time when an Acting CM is in office vote to appoint a permanent CM who may serve until March 31 two years beyond the next even numbered year (ie, if an acting CM is appointed by 5+ votes on March 2 2026, and a permanent CM is then elected on November 2 2026, that person may serve until March 31 2030). (The purpose of this whole procedure is to allow a voter to ask a candidate for council directly: "will you vote to reappoint the current CM in January?"). It is also to allow straightforward reappointments every 2 years to ease the burden of each new council having to conduct a time-consuming search as was done in 2022)</p> <p>3. Is there a current process to dismiss a councilor from office? I hope and expect it's never needed, but if there is none we should formalize the rules: One-third of the council may present to the City Clerk a petition to dismiss The clerk must schedule this for the council to discuss and vote within one of the next two council meetings An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the full council will result in a dismissal effective immediately</p> <p>4. Mayoral election: Kathy Born will from her time on the council remember some contentious mayoral elections - I think the 2000 one lasted weeks. UGH! She may perhaps defend this open democratic process (something about sausage-making?) but I assuredly DO NOT! Remember that without a mayor, no council business can be transacted. While it's been unanimous recently, I suggest tightening up the process just in case.</p> <p>A councilor is only eligible to serve as Mayor or VM if they have previously served one or more complete terms on the council The council deserves a chance to elect a Mayor and ViceMayor (subject to above eligibility) from among their ranks, as now But if no majority vote (of the full membership - no quorum tricks please) is achieved after 2 formal votes in the first one or two council meetings, the following will be triggered The highest number-one vote-getter will be appointed mayor. Then a single vote for Vice will take place. If no majority is achieved, the second highest #1 vote-getter will be appointed If neither of those councilors wishes to serve, the sequence will proceed in descending order of #1 votes If there is a tie between more than one #1 vote-getter (vanishingly unlikely), those candidates will be voted by the full council. If no majority ensues after a single ballot, one name will be drawn from a hat for Mayor, then a second for VM. In the case where a #1 vote-getter becomes mayor (ie, the initial 2 council votes fail), the council may via a majority at any time during its term vote for reconsideration. This will trigger the above mayoral election process again, starting with the two allowed council votes. Thank you for all your hard work and for this opportunity to weigh in! Phil Rinehart</p>
7/2/2023	Raul Mauricio Ripoll	Email	<p>Good morning</p> <p>I would like to bring one issue to your attention and that is the inability to vote or run at local elections for Cambridge residents who are non-US citizens. I'll put myself as an example but I know there are more like me in the City with the same problem.</p> <p>I arrived in Cambridge 6 years ago with my family from South America. At the beginning it was a one-year project but some opportunities came up and we were able to stay and we decided to do so because we think Cambridge is a great place to raise our children.</p> <p>To put it briefly, I'm a non-US citizen but I'm allowed to work. During this time I was able to buy a car and a house in Cambridge, and I pay taxes to the City for both assets like any other resident. Nonetheless, I'm not allowed to vote at local elections or run for local public office positions.</p> <p>I firmly believe this is completely unfair on so many levels and should be addressed by the City.</p> <p>On this particular date I would like to remember that this same problem sparked the American Revolution ("No taxation without representation").</p> <p>I know there are other ways to help democracy even if I can't vote, but I truly think Cambridge could do better in this sense, especially considering what I'm bringing up to your attention is already a practice in many countries and in other US Cities like New York.</p> <p>Sincerely, -Raul Ripoll Vera</p>
7/18/2023	Dan Totten	Email	<p>To the members of the Charter Review Committee:</p> <p>I'm writing ahead of tonight's meeting to strongly oppose the establishment of ward representation in Cambridge. I am sure that those who propose this are doing so with nothing but the best of intentions, but it seems clear to me that such a system would further entrench the current inequities that we face. The beauty of our current proportional representation system is that it allows for ward representation but it also demands that those councilors who are elected on the back of a single neighborhood must represent the entire city when they take office. Imagine a councilor from West Cambridge or Baldwin with no official obligation to care about the plight of anyone living in the eastern half of the city. That's what you would be moving to with ward seats. The current system challenges all nine councilors to represent everybody. Not all of them do that, but why should we absolve them of the paper responsibility to do so?</p> <p>PR itself is working effectively at our equity goals as evidenced by the mountain of progress made over the last several years including the Affordable Housing Overlay. The problem is not the council - it's the city manager. The fact that this commission has failed to see that fact probably means that whatever ballot question you end up advancing will be a bitter fight. I will certainly urge my friends to vote NO on any proposal which does not confront the fundamental injustice of the city's unelected executive and the unreasonable concentration of power that they currently enjoy. We may need an entirely new process and a commission that is democratically elected by the people in order to get at this root cause of injustice. Who cares what the leader of the legislative branch is called when our city manager is unaccountable to the people? If we aren't thinking radically about how to improve the lives of the most vulnerable residents of our city, what are we even doing?</p> <p>All the best, Dan Totten</p>
7/18/2023	Valerie A. Bonds	Email	<p>Good afternoon,</p> <p>Since city councilors are at large in representing the entire city, why do I not see candidates who live do not live in Cambridgeport reaching out during their candidacy on this side of Cambridge?</p> <p>Hope to see you later this afternoon.</p>

			<p>Hello, I have long felt that there should be consecutive term limits for both City Council members and School Committee members. I think a limit of two consecutive terms before the candidate has to sit out a term would encourage others to run (and make it possible for them to win.) Governing bodies will benefit from fresh perspectives, and no candidate should be enabled to sit on a governing body for decades just because they have an entrenched voter base (and particularly when that base has very little current stake in the matters at hand.) Perhaps Cambridge could institute a program similar to Running Start, except that, instead of focusing only on young women, it could be for any community member (especially from traditionally underrepresented and under-resourced populations) who would like to explore the idea of getting involved with city government. Additionally, compensation should be reviewed to make sure it is in line with the compensation received by peers in city government in comparable communities. There should be no positions that are essentially sinecures, because that also contributes to candidates who have come to rely on that income and hold tightly to their offices. Which leads me to ask: What transparency or accountability is there in terms of work product or numbers of hours worked? I know attendance at meetings and city events, as well as participation on working committees, is expected, but beyond that, it seems a little murky. Some office-holders send out progress reports to their supporters voluntarily, but is there any rule that compels them to account for what they actually do to earn their salary? To be clear: I have no doubt that most elected officials work hard (and may even put in more hours than would be expected), but it would be helpful to know that there are mechanisms to ensure that taxpayer money is being responsibly spent. Thank you for your time. Heather Kelly Resident of North Cambridge for 20+ years CPSD parent Board member, Friends of the Center for Families Parent Liaison, Friends of Cambridge Athletics (FOCA) P.S. The postcard you sent out a while back has an incorrect email address on it.</p>
7/21/2023	Heather Kelly	Email	
7/26/2023	Matthew Boyes-Watson	Email	<p>Hello, Thank you for the opportunity to join the discussion about the charter review. It was lovely to meet so many of you! We wanted to reiterate our main concerns as residents, voters, collaborators: - We believe the Mayor should be directly elected. - We believe there needs to be stronger mechanisms to keep the City Manager accountable to the Council, the elected representatives of the people. Specifically, we are curious how the policy order and response mechanism, as well as the budgetary process, might be changed or supplemented to allow greater accountability. We look forward to following the process! Cheers, Matt and Nina</p>
7/31/2023	Marilyn Frankenstein	Email	<p>To the Charter Review Committee members: I have lived in Cambridge for almost 40 years. I grew up and went to public schools in Brooklyn, NY including Brooklyn College, which at that time was also totally public (i.e., tax-payer supported). I am a retired Professor from the University of Massachusetts/Boston, a "public" university with unaffordably high tuition. I developed and taught curricula in Quantitative Reasoning in Arguments, and Media Literacy. I own a home in Cambridge and love living here. I care about my adopted city. I am interested in helping make Cambridge a more inclusive, democratic city. I am concerned about our city's system of representation and was distressed to read recently in Cambridge Day that we will still have all at-large city Councillors, elected by proportional representation, and still have a weak unelected Mayor and a powerful unelected City Manager. (https://www.cambridgeday.com/2023/07/25/charter-reviewers-present-first-draft-changes-with-some-members-protesting-small-scope/) To me, this situation is completely anti-democratic. Having 20-30 candidates running for 9 City Council seats precludes healthy democratic debate. No one can really run against anyone, because with a large number of candidates that would not be productive, each candidate must focus on their ideas. It is quite a heavy lift to ask each citizen to familiarize themselves with that many candidates ideas and positions. That means that we cannot more deeply examine most of the candidates ideas and positions. Most importantly, having that many candidates means that there are no productive debates about the issues. That means we cannot vote against candidates whose policies we oppose. Debating different ideas, and choosing among conflicting ideas, is at the heart of any democracy and at the heart of progress in any society. Voting to oppose policies is also an important part of a democracy. How can we do that if candidates cannot realistically debate those ideas? Further, distributing the power to enact policy away from the elected officials to an appointed official obviously runs counter to democracy. Finally, because of the at-large voting, I am never sure of the order in which I should vote for the candidates I do support. Sometimes I vote #1 for a new candidate who I hope will win, guessing that the incumbents I support have more name recognition, so I can vote for them sometime in my top choices. This, to me, is also anti-democratic as I am never sure exactly how to vote for the candidates I support. I hope what the article in Cambridge Day described as a "current draft" means that the committee can revisit this current anti-democratic system of voting. Sincerely, Marilyn Frankenstein</p>
8/1/2023	Heather Hoffman	Email	<p>I am tired of hearing people say that there's only one renter on the City Council and not get corrected. There are three currently, Dennis Simmons, Dennis Carlone and Burhan Assem. I would also point out that given the mania for building big apartment buildings over the past several years and the apparent desire to build even bigger apartment buildings over the next several years, I'd like to know how we wouldn't have renters continue to be more numerous than owner-occupants. We will not have more owners if we do nothing to plan for that. I understand that's not within this Committee's purview, but it gets brought up often enough that I felt the need to say something. Heather Hoffman</p>
8/4/2023	Jameson Quinn	Email	<p>I want to be a little bit more explicit about my offer, in my previous email, to "talk with" the elections subcommittee. * I'd like to be notified about any meetings they have, and to get any correspondence they have that's covered by open records rules. * As a Cambridge voter with relevant expertise, I'd love to be able to speak in order to answer any questions they have about voting systems. This applies whether or not they are interested in my own suggestions. * When/if they do resolve the basic outlines of the voting system they want, I'd be happy to help draft language that covers edge cases. Any of the above apply separately or together. Dr. Jameson Quinn On Wed, 2 Aug 2023 at 16:43, Jameson Quinn <jameson.quinn@gmail.com> wrote: In my previous written comments, I suggested certain changes to Cambridge's voting system. I realize now, however, that those comments got too deep in the technical weeds too quickly. So now I've written another document on the same idea, starting from WHY it's needed. Here's the new link. I'd also love to talk with the elections subcommittee that was discussed in the last meeting. Let me know anything I can do to help. Sincerely, Dr. Jameson Quinn Cambridge voter</p>
8/7/2023	Lauren Gibbs	Email	<p>Dear City Council, School Committee, and I cc: City Manager Haang as well. My first point is that the City Mayor should be elected rather than selected by the reigning councilors and the vice chair of the School Committee should be done by who has the most votes. I don't want people telling me who to select as Mayor or as Chair or Vice Chair of the School Committee. There have been a number of times when I have not liked who was selected as mayor by other councilors or vice chair by other school committee members. I think Sunbil Siddiqui is a fine mayor and could be re-elected mayor multiple times as she was this session, but there have been mayors in the past who should not have been mayor in my opinion, and vice chairs of School Committee who should NOT in my opinion have been vice chair. In 2015 and 2017, on School Committee, Patty Nolan got the most votes, but the School Committee gave the job to Fred Fautin, Manikka Bowman, and Kathleen Kelly. Don't let the City Council - OR the School Committee - do that again! Let the people - NOT the Councilors or the School Committee members - make the decision! My second point: There should be election by district of Cambridge with some at-large members, whether there are 5 or 6 by district (East, West, North, The Port, Central and maybe Kendall) or by library (Main, Boudreau, Central Square, Collins, O'Neill, O'Connor, Valente) with 4, 3, or 2 elected at-large - or some other configuration of members determined by the City Council in advance of a vote. The concerns of one neighborhood are not necessarily the concerns of another neighborhood. My third point: The Mayor should be a member of School Committee but NOT necessarily the Chair of School Committee. The education of students is NOT NECESSARILY the perspective of the City Council, which, in my perspective, is WAY too DEVELOPER-oriented for my taste. Let people decide for themselves what they want - don't decide FOR people! Lauren Gibbs</p>
8/12/2023	Phil Rinehart	Email	<p>Thanks for a very interesting session 3 weeks ago Tuesday. I learnt a lot about the power (im)balance between the Council and City Manager. Followup charter proposals: The council should be explicitly granted full control over the city budget (in consultation with city staff), including the ability to grant supplementary rescissions and appropriations during the fiscal year after an initial budget has passed. The council shall explicitly be granted power to set (or revoke) a two-year budget cycle. To address the problem of a previous City Manager not responding to a Policy Order (on a Municipal Broadband Study), let us create a "Manager Directive" which will legally require actions from the city government. Specifically: The council may pass a Manager Directive which will specify actions required of the City Government by specific dates A Manager Directive's deliverables shall be legally binding. The terms of a Manager Directive shall be consistent with all Federal, State and City laws, regulations and ordinances, and discovery of any inconsistency will invalidate the Directive A Manager Directive will not come into legal effect until the City Manager (or designee) accepts the directive verbally following a council vote as recorded in the council meeting minutes, and additionally in writing or electronically within 7 days of its adoption (the initial and followup acceptances are to allow the manager to negotiate deliverables and dates with the council, preventing them imposing an unreasonable workload on city government) Any employment contract for a City Manager must permit the council to terminate the manager (for a failure to respond to a Manager Directive) at any date and without any additional compensation otherwise specified in the contract [note the key word "permit", not "require"] Such a dismissal may be appealed in the State's court system The terms of a Manager Directive may be modified over the course of its effect, with Council and Manager acquiescence [some reasoning as in the third sub-bullet above] Your suggestion to rename the Mayor to "Chair" or "President" is a bad idea. It's confusing, serves no useful purpose, and may become a high-visibility distraction when residents vote on the charter (people may accept or reject all your substantive work just based on this superficial but visible proposal). What's wrong with "Mayor"? Also imagine comments to (or behind the back of) our city leader attending a far-off Mayor's conference some years hence: You're the Chair? How come they didn't send the Mayor? "President" - are you serious? How superior does Cambridge think it is? ["Council president" is a little more benevolent - Boston has one consistent with its strong-mayor structure - but still...] PS: UK and Australian cities have a "Lord Mayor" - no thank you! The above proposals are in addition to my earlier 5 items repeated below (guardrails around council votes for Mayor, a required two-year vote for manager, removal of a councillor, tie-breaking council vote, and forbidding council-swearing-in on public holidays).</p>
8/14/2023	Sarah Figge Hussain	Email	<p>Hello, My family and I attended the public meeting in July and learned a lot. At the meeting an idea was raised about expanding voting rights to all adult residents (and maybe some teens). This idea came up recently on the CPS parents listserve. Sharing the article shared about it... think it is really worth considering in this review. https://sfstandard.com/2023/08/09/honcitizen-voting-school-board-san-francisco/ Thank you for your consideration. Sarah</p>
8/14/2023	Carl Wunsch	Email	<p>With everyone running at-large, it is impossible to know and understand 15 or 16 individual candidates. Some kind of districting would make it far more possible to distinguish the individuals on the enormous list. Carl Wunsch</p>
8/15/2023	Marilyn Frankenstein	Email	<p>I had to leave early for another meeting. Anna So I am not sure if the main question I asked was discussed, but I would really like to know the answer, or rather, I hope the committee will at least consider the question and provide some answer: WHY IS THE COMMITTEE SUPPORTING THE SYSTEM OF ELECTING AN ENTIRE CITY COUNCIL WITH AT-LARGE COUNCILLORS? WHY IS THE COMMITTEE REJECTING THE IDEA OF ELECTORAL WARDS OR DISTRICTS? Thanks, Marilyn</p>

			<p>I'm becoming increasingly concerned that leaving consideration of voting systems to the last minute is unhealthy. I have (twice) submitted suggestions for updates to the voting system (the first time, last year). Of course, I think that my ideas are good. But while some of them are merely technical fixes that should be uncontroversial, the key suggestion of including optional delegation is something that should have time for public discussion "beyond" just the charter committee before adoption. The current schedule barely leaves time for the committee itself to properly consider this idea, and seems to leave no time for airing it to the public and getting feedback. I don't know how to deal with this timing issue, but I think you should be open to considering all possibilities, including creating a subcommittee or new committee with the capacity to devote more focused time to voting systems, changing the overall schedule and/or adding public meetings (after the committee has clearly laid out options). Again, thanks for your dedicated work. Jameson Quinn</p>
8/18/2023	Jameson Quinn	Email	<p>Thanks, Patty, for directing me to the Cambridge Charter Review Committee, which I had not been thinking about before you recommended it to me. To the Cambridge Charter Review Committee, please take my 3 remarks to City Council, School Committee, and City Manager under Patty Nolan's email as well as a 4th point in the next paragraph into consideration in your review of the Cambridge City Charter by December 31st. I think the City Manager should be elected as well as the Mayor, Councilors, and School Committee Chair and Vice Chair! So I am sending this message to you too, City Manager Huang, and cc'ing City Council just on this point of election rather than selection of the Cambridge City Manager in the future. If we are having a City Manager who actually runs Cambridge, that person should be elected, not selected, from my perspective. The first 3 remarks are in this email as well as in the previous email to City Council, School Committee, and City Manager copied below Patty Nolan's email to me - but with the fact that it might be 11 wards or 13 school districts and it might be City Charter rather than City Council deciding the number of districts and at-large members of the City Council and in point #2 and with titles capitalized throughout the email. I have placed highlighting on the new parts of point #2.</p> <p>I've realized that my earlier suggestion of adding an optionally-delegated element to Cambridge's STV system is too ambitious to fit into the committee's current schedule. So I'm writing this to focus on my other two (simpler and less-controversial) suggestions: fractional transfers and allowing tied rankings.</p> <p>Fractional Transfers There's really not that much to say here. Pretty much any relevant expert would agree that, given today's technology, fractional transfers are a better system than Cambridge's current practice of randomly choosing an offset for each precinct. Yes, it would require software updates to the tallying software, but not to the voting hardware; and since open-source software would almost certainly be usable with only minor adjustments, the cost would be trivial.</p> <p>Allowing Tied (and Skipped) Rankings The suggestion here is to allow voters to give the same ranking to more than one candidate. For instance, I might give candidates A, B, and C all a "1", candidate D a "2", and candidates E and F a "4" (skipping "3", perhaps by mistake). When tallying such a ballot, it would be split equally among all the candidates at the best (lowest-numbered) rank which has any non-eliminated candidates. So my ballot in the example above would start out giving 1/3 of a vote each to A, B, and C. If A were eliminated, their portion would transfer to B and C, leaving each with 1/2 of my vote. If B, C, and D were eliminated, my vote would go past the skipped rank "3", so would count 1/2 each for E and F. Note that this rule would "not" change how any currently-valid ballot would be counted, so a voter who was unaware of or confused about the new rule could still vote in the old way and get exactly the same voting power as before.</p> <p>Advantages This would simplify the task of voting, because voters wouldn't always have to choose between candidates they view as similar. It's far easier to group candidates into "good, better, best" than to sort them strictly into order. As a result, it's possible that this would increase turnout/engagement. This would make it easier and more effective for candidates to campaign as a group. It's possible that doing so would help them more clearly articulate a common platform, helping to clarify voter choices.</p> <p>Disadvantages/Costs This would require voter education, to make voters understand that they can give tied rankings. This level of update has been done before with the current machines, but it's more than the ordinary year-to-year updates. This would require software updates both for vote-tallying and for electronic voting machines. This level of update has been done before with the current machines, but it's more than the ordinary year-to-year updates. This rule might differ from some hypothetical future statewide ranked choice voting (RCV) law, which could lead to voter confusion. (Of course, this would turn from a disadvantage into an advantage if Cambridge showed the way and caused this hypothetical statewide system to allow ties as well. Note that this tie rule is equally applicable to any form of RCV — not just multi-winner STV as in Cambridge, but single-winner IRV as might be used in a statewide system.)</p>
8/28/2023	Lauren Gibbs	Email	
8/30/2023	Jameson Quinn	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee Members, I hope you're doing well. I am eighteen years old, so this will be my first election voting in Cambridge. I am excited! I have lived here for six years and am just starting my second year as an undergraduate at Harvard. I was grateful to be able to make public comments at your meeting on September 5th and wanted to follow up on the comments that I made. I mainly argued that now is a good time to modify the proportional representation algorithm that we currently use. I learned the following when I was looking into how to vote in the municipal elections this November: At the moment, Cambridge identifies a "quota" or number of votes that an elected candidate can maintain, based on the number of candidates for school board/city council and the number of ballots cast. If a candidate reaches that quota in any round of voting, they are automatically elected. It would be unfair to subsequently discard all ballots cast for that candidate, especially if they won a much larger fraction of the vote than needed to win. Because of this, Cambridge counts the number of "surplus" ballots cast for that candidate, the number of votes cast minus the quota. Like almost all ranked-choice voting systems, we then "transfer" that number of surplus ballots to the second choices of the voter for their first choice. However, Cambridge is unique in randomly selecting ballots from the surplus to transfer, rather than attempting to take into account all of the views of the constituents whose candidate won. This method is called the Cincinnati Method. In the vast majority of situations, employing it means that we drop almost all of the preferences of the voters whose candidate won and overweight a select few preferences enormously. A toy (but realistic, given quotas in Cambridge) example: if a candidate is elected in the first round with 2,000 votes but needs only 1,800 to receive election, 200 of their supporters are selected to move on. This means that we completely exhaust the ballots of 90% of this candidate's voters. At the same time, we have arbitrarily chosen a lucky 10% to get an extra vote, where their second-choice preference counts as much as another candidate's supporter's first vote. The Law of Large Numbers indicates that this random selection should represent the mean opinion of voters who voted for this candidate, though we should remember that the number of ballots transferred is low. But even if the outcome will be similar with high probability each time, this seems to effectively discount votes for no good reason. Luckily, a much more sensible alternative is in use in other cities (e.g. Amherst). It gets rid of this problem while maintaining all the other properties of the system we currently use, and it's already programmed into our election machines, entailing a frictionless switch. This alternative is known as the Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method, a fractional transfer system. In the above example, rather than choosing 10% of voters to move to the second round, we would take every ballot cast for the winning candidate and multiply the weight of its vote by 0.10. Now all of these voters will be represented equally, but the total number of votes moving forward remains the same. It seems to me that this method maintains the spirit of ranked choice voting while executing it much more fairly. Since we are actively looking into revising the charter, this seems like a particularly good time to update our methodology. I can understand why we might have used the Cincinnati Method in 1938, when it was first adopted—this was before the invention of the pocket calculator, and in a time of much greater reliance on integers—but I don't see a compelling reason to continue it now, besides perhaps tradition. And I haven't met anyone wedded to the principle of picking votes randomly; indeed, the details of how we randomly transfer the surplus appear to be footnoted in Cambridge's description of election processes. Most importantly, however, a move to the Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method improves the case to Cambridge voters that their votes count equally. I was disappointed, when reading up before my first election, to realize that mine might not. Thank you for your hard work this commission is doing, and all the best, Julia Shephard</p> <p>A few sources I found useful on WIGM and our current rules: http://rwinters.com/elections/supplement.htm https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/electioncommission/cambridgemunicipalelections https://norhampshirema.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/ArchivedAgenda/01122022-5064?packet=true (final page, comparison chart)</p> <p>Dear Charter Review Committee, I was intrigued by your discussion regarding a potential Residents Assembly as suggested by Niko Bowie. I've long felt this to be an important and missing component of our municipal democracy. In a sense, when we abandoned the Town Meeting form of government for a representative City Council, we lost a lot of public participation. With 9 Councilors representing ~120,000 residents, compared to e.g. 255 elected Town Meeting members in Brookline with a population of ~60,000, that is a 57 times greater level of representation in Brookline's legislative body compared to Cambridge. While it may be considered impractical to now revert to a legislative body of say 500 members in Cambridge, meeting only once or twice a year, it's not unthinkable to have 100 or more residents come together to discuss important topics and make formal recommendations to the City Council once or twice a year. In fact, I've twice been part of exactly such an effort, namely the 2009/2010 and the 2016 Cambridge Climate Emergency Congresses. Of note to the Committee is that such assemblies can be created without changes to the Charter or action by the City Council. Of course formalizing them in the Charter or by Ordinance may be of value. But as long as they are merely making recommendations to the City Council, as opposed to acting as the Legislative Body of the city, it doesn't seem to me that a change to the charter is required to establish such an assembly. Of course an interesting question is how membership would be established. For both Climate Congresses we went through a laborious but rewarding process through the Mayor's Office (Councilor Simmons happened to be Mayor both times) to recruit and appoint members to the Congress, establishing as much diversity of perspective as possible. For a more standing body, as opposed to an ad-hoc body like the Climate Congress, it would make sense to have members elected in a similar way that we elect e.g. Ward Committee members currently (which is not, to my knowledge, enshrined in the charter either?). The drawback to that approach however is that only registered voters can participate in such elections, whereas one potential benefit of a Residents Assembly is that both membership and appointment power can be made available to non-citizen residents of Cambridge, as well as citizens who are not otherwise eligible to vote, including young people below the age of 18. It seems possible, though perhaps challenging, to have a special kind of election for this that is otherwise run through our regular electoral system overseen by the Election Commission. The Council has at various times explored allowing e.g. Green Card holders to vote in municipal elections, but one of the many obstacles that has been presented (assuming state approval were granted) is that the voter roles would now be different for municipal vs state elections. Not an insurmountable obstacle, but clearly a challenge. One potential solution for a Residents Assembly would be that citizen members are elected during a regular election, with a separate additional appointment/selection mechanism for a certain number of seats to ensure immigrant & youth participation; we have e.g. (non-voting) youth members on the School Committee even now, who are elected/selected outside the municipal election. Additional opportunities for equitable representation of course would be available to such a body, which could be enshrined in its rules/regulations.</p>
9/6/2023	Julia Shephard	Email	
9/6/2023	Quinton Zondervan	Email	<p>I offer these thoughts for your consideration and thank you for your work and wish you well in your deliberations.</p> <p>Good evening Members of the Charter E Committee, I hope you are doing well. I apologize for my recent absences. I have a few thoughts. To share with you. I question the At Large concept of City Council members. We have had three incumbents visit our complex who live in Cambridgeport. I have yet to see or recall any incumbent candidates or new candidates involved in direct and personal outreach outside the community in which they reside. An exception to that would be the different neighborhood associations candidate forum yay Mamu incumbents and new candidates attend throughout the city. At the same time, I believe that the At -Large concept encourages all the City Councilors to be committed and accountable to our city, our neighborhoods, our residents, as well as those who work, study and visit. Our system that requires, in this election, twenty-four individuals competing for the number one vote for nine seats often resulting with contentious gatherings to select a mayor and a need to deflate from the polarization occurring during campaign rhetoric directly or indirectly leveled at opponents during their campaigns. I believe the Mayor should be directly elected by the residents of Cambridge. This would eliminate an unconscious need to placate those who supported the mayor's selection and would establish the mayor's allegiance to our community. The City Manager is someone who must have specific qualifications, expertise and a resume that prepares for financial administration of a city. All members of the city council may not have the skill set. The City Manager is public servant who does not make decisions based on the number of constituents; the City Manager make decisions based on a belief of what is best for the city. The relationship between the City Manager and the city council should remain the same similar to a CFO with a Board of Directors contributing and the City Manager making the best decision for all. Regards, Valerie M. Valerie A. Bonds</p>
9/14/2023	Valerie A. Bonds	Email	

	10/9/2023 Marlee Meyer	Email	<p>CHARTER REVIEW QUESTION ON COUNCIL INTERFERENCE WITH SUBORDINATE COMMITTEES</p> <p>Dear Chairman Born,</p> <p>While I admit I haven't been following the CHARTER REVIEW PROGRESS to date, I do have some concerns I would like to be addressed. That is, the repeated interference of City Councilors in the function and deliberation of subordinate committees. Most of the cases would GO before the City Council for ratification anyway, so why pressure and intimidate subordinate committees to support their agendas?</p> <p>There have been three cases which were called out over the last 3 years to no avail.</p> <p>1) PLANNING BOARD: (2020) During hearings for the original AHO, a councilor identifying himself as such as well as a previous Mayor, presented why the AHO was important BUT proceeded to declare that City Council "already has the votes", insinuating "so don't bother wasting time on deliberation." Sitting in attendance, I read that as pure INTIMIDATION and MISUSE OF POWER.</p> <p>2) HISTORICAL COMMISSION: The Historical Commission, bound by a public petition by 10 voters enacted a Neighborhood Conservation District STUDY for East Cambridge. A "study" is not the final vote. It then goes to the CHC to decide if it is worthy -- then to the Council for final vote. There was extreme conflict instigated by a particular faction, who toxically campaigned on TWITTER, and was "liked" by two sitting councilors and who contributed to the thread. One Councilor who is now leaving, actually asked the Executive Director to ignore his purview, drop the study altogether, violating Plan E interference of a subordinate Commission by Council.</p> <p>The East Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Study morphed into "amendments for the NCDs" which removed certain jurisdiction- where the NCDs shall NOT dictate height, setbacks, designs of new projects in NCDs- thus diminishing its guidelines or function. Despite evidence that NCDs do not interfere with new building, those amendments were pushed through by the original 2 councilors doing the work of the original author of the NCD amendments. (ORDAINED OCT 2)</p> <p>3) HISTORICAL COMMISSION: (OCT 5TH) Buckingham Browne and Nichols (BBN) is looking to demolish three historic houses to expand space for their residential-locked LOWER SCHOOL. There was great deliberation, continuance, re-consideration and planning, but no compromise. The last CHC meeting opened with heavy-handed BBN administrators and lawyer stating they have 100s of letters from alumni and parents "and letter from three councilors" saying to dismiss the case. The CHC executive director mentioned several other Councilors were added to dismissing any landmark consideration. Commissioners were stunned at the full-court press and disregard of procedure, protocol and respect for subordinate commissions. They also had case packages DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO THEIR RESIDENCES INSTEAD OF THROUGH THE CHC MAKING THEM FEEL PRESSURED. Further, THE COMMISSION WAS ADVISED NOT TO SEND ANY DELIBERATION OR REPORT FORWARD-- as moot "because they already have the votes". The Council "didn't want any paperwork". The compromise was to landmark one building and demolish the other two. It was an arrogant power play by both BBN and Councilors looking to intimidate the CHC into submission. This is unconscionable.</p> <p>COUNCILORS WERE INTERFERING WITH A SUBORDINATE COMMISSION, BEFORE THE CHC FULLFILLED THEIR PURVIEW. Ironically, the COUNCIL has the final designation, so why is it necessary to STRONG-ARM?</p> <p>WHY IS CITY COUNCIL ALLOWED TO WEIGH IN ON PLANNING BOARD, HISTORIC COMMISSION AND NO DOUBT, BZA before process has been completed? Council shows no respect for procedure!</p> <p>I DO NOT WANT TO SEE CITY COUNCIL IGNORING PUBLIC PROCESS, INTERFERING WITH CASES UNDER DELIBERATION AND STUDY. THIS IS NOT DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE AND SMACKS OF MANIPULATION AND FAVORITISM.</p> <p>IS THIS THE RELEVANT PASSAGE IN THE CHARTER REVIEW?--AND DOES IT NEED TO BE RE-VISITED?</p> <p>Section 107. ... Except for the purpose of inquiry, the city council and its members shall deal with that portion of the service of the city as aforesaid solely through the city manager, and neither the city council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinate of the city manager either publicly or privately. Any member of the city council who violates, or participates in the violation of, any provision of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both,</p> <p>If this procedural question hasn't been considered before, could it be re-visited?</p> <p>Is Council allowed to interrupt deliberation on an issue before the proper commission has finished proper review per their jurisdiction?</p> <p>Thank you for considering this issue.</p> <p>Sincerely, Marlee Meyer - [REDACTED]</p>
	10/9/2023 Andy Zucker	Email	<p>Notes for the City Council and the School Committee use Ranked Choice Voting. I understand how that system works.</p> <p>To elect someone to an office with a single vacancy (e.g., to become Governor), I like ranked choice voting. It's great. However, to elect a group of people I do not like it, for various reasons. For one thing, it pits every candidate against everyone else, and in the end any vote counts for at most one person. In contrast, votes for a Board of Trustees or many other slates allows voters to choose more than one candidate. That is desirable in a city where cooperation is essential.</p> <p>Two questions about this RCV system are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is this ranked choice system part of the charter? - If so, is any consideration being given to changing the system? <p>Andy Zucker [REDACTED]</p>

		<p>My name is Dr. Jameson Quinn, a Cambridge resident and voter. You on the charter review committee know me, as I've been attending most of your meetings, and have taken the opportunity to give public comment many times. But I'd like to briefly reiterate my expertise and interest in this matter.</p> <p>I've long been interested in voting reform; for instance, I've spearheaded the reform to the nomination voting system for the Hugo Awards, co-organized the British Columbia Symposium on Proportional Representation which was influential in the design of the 2018 electoral reform referendum there. In fact, my interest in this field was a big part of what spurred me to get a PhD in statistics.</p> <p>When I talk to my fellow Cambridge voters about our voting system, I often hear two things (assuming they even vote in municipal election years). On the one hand, they are proud of a system that gives them a deeper and clearer voice than most ballots. On the other hand, they find having so many candidates to rank to be too complex, a burden. Often, they feel both of these things at once.</p> <p>I believe that allowing voters to use equal rankings is a simple, feasible change that would preserve and even strengthen that source of pride, while helping to ease that burden of complexity. In this article, I will make that argument. But I also want you, the committee, to understand this issue fully, so I'll also do my best to lay out all the serious counterarguments that might be made, and to share both the strengths and the weaknesses of the evidence behind these arguments.</p> <p>The Single Transferable Voting (STV) system that Cambridge uses was invented in the 19th century. At the time, it was designed to be counted by putting ballots into piles. Thus, at each step in the process, all candidates' vote tallies had to be integers.</p> <p>This necessity led to two compromises. First, when transferring overvotes, random votes had to be chosen. For instance, if the quota was one thousand votes, and a candidate got 1,100, one hundred of those votes had to be chosen by some random process. Today, experts agree that fractional transfer methods, such as the Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (WIGM), are fairer.</p> <p>The other way that STV's original design was compromised is that equal rankings were forbidden. If my ballot ranks candidate A as first place, candidates B and C tied for second place, and candidate D in third place, it will be thrown away as soon as A is eliminated. Even if B and C are eliminated too, so that my vote unequivocally belongs with D, it will never count for D. This is a limitation on voter freedom, and a risk of accidental loss of voting power, that is completely unnecessary with modern counting methods.</p> <p>As part of the Charter Review Committee's work, you are now looking at Cambridge's voting system. From attending the meetings so far, I think it's likely that you'll want to allow election officials to use the WIGM, after all, this is merely a technical change, invisible to the voters. But allowing equal rankings would be a small but meaningful change to how voters use the ballot, and as such, is something that you should consider as a committee, not just leave up to election officials.</p> <p>In the following, I'll lay out arguments in favor of and against this change; followed by a bibliography; and then an appendix with proposed statutory language.</p> <p>Arguments in favor</p> <p>The simplest, and most general, argument in favor is that if allowing equal rankings were the status quo, essentially nobody would want to forbid them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voters would not want to reduce their freedom to vote as they wished, or to risk having their vote thrown away if they mis-marked it. • I believe most politicians, both incumbents and challengers, would value the less-divisive campaign environment fostered by equal rankings, and would not want to gamble on the unpredictable individual effects of a change. • Election administrators would not want to increase the risk of voting paradoxes (see below). <p>But here are some more-specific arguments in favor.</p> <p>1. Allowing equal rankings makes voting easier, possibly increasing turnout / participation.</p> <p>The typical Cambridge city council election includes over two dozen candidates. Giving preferences over all of these — or even several — is already a difficult voting task. This difficulty is a hurdle for any attempt to increase turnout, and minimizing this hurdle is an important goal.</p> <p>It's clearly easier for a voter to class these candidates into broad groups ("I like these two a lot; these four seem fine; these three seem acceptable; and the rest I dislike") than to put each of them into a strict ranked order ("I know these four will get ranks 3 through 6, but which is which? How can I find some arbitrary distinction so that I can put them in order?"). Consider the following graph, taken from Maloy and Ward 2021, in a study of a hypothetical cross-party Ranked Choice ballot for the 2020 Presidential primary in super-Tuesday states. This shows the probability of "mismarked" ballots for various scenarios. The y axis runs from a probability of .05 (5%) to .25 (25%). Note that it might be still possible to tally some "mismarked" ballots in some cases, but that any "mismarking" they were looking at carries some risk that the voter will be unintentionally disenfranchised.</p> <p>Unlike the hypothetical single-winner election Maloy and Ward studied, Cambridge's STV system is multi-winner. But currently, the basic ballot format and rules for the voter are similar to the "Rank Ballot" option above. If equal rankings were allowed, that would bring it closer to the "Grade Ballot" option. In their experiment, such a change would substantially reduce the risk of a mismarked ballot — which could leave the voter effectively disenfranchised.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Cambridge ballot typically has dozens of candidates. The experiment above shows that even moving just from 6 to 8 candidates increases the downside of a pure ranked ballot, and thus the relative advantage of a graded ballot that allows equal rankings. This experiment can not directly be generalized to the Cambridge case. But I believe it does show that the complexity of a voting system can be a serious problem, and that allowing equal rankings could ease that problem.</p> <p>2. Simplifying voting could particularly help underrepresented groups</p> <p>Consider the following quote from Neely and McDaniel 2015, in a study of voting patterns in San Francisco's single-winner Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) system:</p> <p>"Consistently, precincts where more African-Americans reside are more likely to collect overvoted, voided ballots. And this often occurs where more Latino, elderly, foreign-born, and less wealthy folks live. The additional years of data show no meaningful increase or decline in these tendencies but rather bolster the earlier study's findings." (Neely and McDaniel, 2015, p. 21)</p> <p>As with the experimental study above, this observational study shows that a ranked system which disallows equal rankings, comes with risks of mismarked ballots that could disenfranchise voters. In this case, the voters thus disenfranchised would come disproportionately from certain groups, in many cases ones that are already disadvantaged in our political system.</p> <p>(I believe these findings are relevant and convincing, but I am nevertheless obligated to share certain caveats. First off, they are based on ecological regression, and thus rely on unverifiable assumptions to impute from precinct-level variation to individual-level variation. Second, "African-Americans" are not a monolithic group, and a finding in San Francisco may not apply to Cambridge. Third, this same paper found similar issues with a "vote for up to four" race that did not require strict rankings; though an equal-rankings-allowed ballot is harder to spoil than "vote for up to four", this suggests that simply moving away from strict rankings is not necessarily enough to fix the problem. And fourth, the overall magnitude of the effect, while enough to swing a close election, is not huge. For instance, extrapolating their results to a precinct with 100% over-65 voters would give up to around 9% excess spoiled ballots, while a precinct with 100% African-American voters would give 4% excess spoiled ballots.)</p> <p>Allowing equal rankings could lead to healthier campaigns</p> <p>By disallowing equal rankings, the current system forces all voters to pick favorites at every step. That forces candidates to campaign almost exclusively for first-choice votes. Voting slates and cooperative campaigns such as A Better Cambridge do exist, but candidates are pushed to set themselves apart more than they are to stand together.</p> <p>Allowing equal rankings would moderate these incentives. I believe it would lead to less negativity and more cooperation in campaigning. I do not pretend that it's a panacea, politics will always be politics. But improving the incentives can still make an important difference. And such more-cooperative campaigns could also be more issue-based, giving voters more a real choices of direction for the city; and less-expensive, allowing for more diversity of candidates.</p> <p>And such an improvement would not have end after campaign season. Candidates who campaign together more-cooperatively might also govern so once they are elected.</p> <p>More-robust representation of Cambridge's diversity</p> <p>From a voter's perspective, allowing equal rankings makes it easier to seek both descriptive and ideological representation. If there is more than one candidate from the group and/or with the platform you want to see represented, you can vote for all of them as #1, or choose your favorite and then vote the rest as #2.</p> <p>And an equal-rankings-allowed STV tallying process would do better at respecting those joint votes. Without equal rankings, there is an increased possibility that the candidate who could best represent you is eliminated before your vote transfers to them, meaning your support for them has no impact on the process. If that happens to enough voters, it could be that the eliminated candidate actually could have won. This kind of premature elimination can lead to voting paradoxes, such as the "participation paradox", where a voter could get an outcome they like more by not voting at all than by voting their true preferences.</p> <p>Allowing equal rankings reduces this chance, because as long as there is more than one serious candidate at your current top rank, your vote is divided equally between them.</p>
10/23/2023	Jameson Quinn	Email

			<p>Good morning Charter E Review Committee Members:</p> <p>I hope you are doing well.</p> <p>Have you attended the Candidate Forums that have been presented throughout the months?</p> <p>I hear what candidates plan to bring to the council but very few mentions what skills, expertise and knowledge they have that will prepare them for an important position of power and authority in our city.</p> <p>I have been following the comments of Councillor Flynn in Boston and his concerns regarding the Boston City Council.</p> <p>I am concerned for our council and the description some council members and candidates spoke of a council that at times is dysfunctional and contentious.</p> <p>We have to do better. Our city deserves better, especially given the very concerning climate of politics, politicians and government at the local, state, and federal levels.</p> <p>Electing a mayor will connect the mayor directly with our community.</p> <p>Keeping the council with two terms; at this time the council is not ready for four years.</p> <p>The City Manager must have some background in fiscal management and be distant from receiving monies and gratuities that in one way or another may lead to questionable decisions or outcomes.</p> <p>I am grateful that members of our community believed the need to keep corruption, nepotism and patronage out of our city government years ago and hopefully that belief will continue now and into the future of our city government, agencies and boards.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Valerie A. Bonds Rivermark</p>
10/26/2023	Valerie A. Bonds	Email	
11/3/2023	Quinton Zondervan	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee Members,</p> <p>I'm really excited by the Resident Assemblies proposal and seeing it move forward. Some questions and suggestions for your consideration:</p> <p>1. The sortition process can be open ended in the charter but will have to be nailed down in implementation. It might be helpful to give a guidance document separate from the charter language to assist the Council/Manager in future implementation. Questions that would need guidance include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How are eligible residents added to the pool (presumably the city census data)? What algorithms would be used to ensure diversity among those who are selected by the sortition process? Which department would be in charge of the sortition process? Election Commission? Someone else? How are selectees notified (U.S. mail)? How long would they have to respond before their seat is passed on to the next eligible selectee? I think a lower bound of 30 is good, is there a suggested upper bound? 100? 1% of the city's population (~120)? 200? 1% (~1,200) Something else? Should there be alternate members (I think yes because some turnover is likely during the course of a 2-year session). <p>2. Meeting process guidance would be good. Is there a chair? A facilitator? Roberts Rules of Order? Consensus Decision making (imho the best option but I understand not everybody is there yet). Is there Public Comment/other ways for non-members of the public to participate?</p> <p>3. What are reasonable expectations for time commitment? Is it 2 hours a month (not enough imho)? 2 hours a week (might be the upper bound)? The city should provide on location childcare options. Will remote participation be allowed?</p> <p>Again, I'm really excited about this. Thank you for your work on it and I hope it ends up moving forward.</p> <p>Best, Q</p>
11/19/2023	Bjorn Poonen	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee:</p> <p>I understand the appeal of having a strong mayor elected directly, but I would worry that that process would produce city leaders without the experience running large organizations that the city managers usually have, and therefore I worry that Cambridge would suffer because of this. For this reason, I favor the current city manager model, or at least a model in which much of the organizational and financial management is handled by some experienced expert other than the elected mayor.</p> <p>Best, Bjorn Poonen (homeowner at 303 3rd St., Cambridge)</p>
11/21/2023	Kevin Hsu	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am writing to provide feedback on multiple elements of the Cambridge charter and our government structure, with a particular lens of civil rights law. Given Cambridge's demographics and history, it is unconscionable that we have a system that does not have at its core a commitment to ensuring that voters have a voice in how the city is run. This is a historical legacy of segregation and intentional disenfranchisement of communities of color. You have a historic opportunity to make recommendations that will help change that, and I urge you to do so.</p> <p>My comments are below. Please let me know if I can be of any additional help in your work.</p> <p>Thank you for your service and consideration,</p> <p>Kevin Hsu</p> <p>Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Strong Mayor vs. City Manager: It is essential that the Committee consider the history of city managers. Prior to the 20th century (specifically prior to the end of Reconstruction and the two Great Migrations of African Americans to Midwestern and Northern cities, first after the advent of Jim Crow and second after WWII), U.S. cities primarily utilized a strong mayor system. The move to the "innovation" of the city manager system was a direct response by segregationist and anti-immigrant white politicians who feared that Black and other minority voters would be able to elect mayors friendly and responsive to their interests. That a move from an elected mayor to an appointed city manager often has the intent and frequently has the effect of diminishing the voting power of Black and other "minorities" is well-documented.[1] In fact, in 1923 in Portland, Maine, it was the Ku Klux Klan who supported and won a change from a strong mayor system to a city manager system.[2] Specifically, the KKK bragged that the change was to ensure that "hereafter, no n*****s, Catholics, nor Jews will ever hold office in Portland." [3] A similar movement happened across the country. For example, in 1910 and 1931, Oakland, CA experienced a similar KKK-supported charter amendment [4] Ward-Based vs. At-Large City Council Members: The discriminatory effect of at-large city council elections is even more well-documented and studied than that of the city manager system. Studies as far back as the late 1970s showed that at-large city councils significantly underrepresented Black city residents. [5] A 1990 study confirmed the earlier research [6] City-wide, at-large elections increase campaign costs for candidates seeking to represent communities whose voting strength tends to be concentrated in specific neighborhoods.[7] often but not always due to the effects of both segregation and gentrification. As a practical matter, 20th century research shows that cities with ward-based city councils are more than twice as likely to fairly represent its Black residents as compared to at-large city councils. [5] This has been so clearly demonstrated that the U.S. Supreme Court has had several cases related how at-large city councils may violate the Voting Rights Act [5] Our Cambridge city government currently is NOT "accountable". One of the most frequent complaints about our city's government structure is that it is not accountable or responsive to city residents. This was observed just yesterday at the 11/20/23 City Council meeting: in a perhaps record-breaking public comment period, hundreds of primarily Black and Brown Cambridge residents turned up to ask that the City Council pass a non-binding resolution on an issue of great personal significance to those residents. For some residents, this resolution related to life or death. The resolution failed, however, with only 2 "yes" votes and 7 "present" votes; of the five incumbent members who recently won reelection, only one voted "yes." <p>This shameful episode should be a clarion call to the Charter Review Committee that our current system is not responsive to Cambridge residents. If we instead had a ward-based city council, as our neighboring Somerville does, there would be much greater pressure on each city council member to be accountable to their voters on the back end, and on the front end there would be a much higher likelihood that elected officials would represent their constituents.</p> <p>I urge the Charter Review Committee to consider the civil rights and equity implications of our city charter, and to strongly recommend that Cambridge move to a strong mayor and ward-based city council model.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/ngos/kr2.pdf https://www.nytimes.com/1923/09/11/archives/ku-klan-wins-victory-at-portland-polls-organization-puts-through-new.html https://downcast.com/issues-politics/who-wields-power-in-portland/ https://oaklandside.org/2020/09/29/district-elections-the-surprising-history-explaining-how-we-vote-in-oakland/ https://ir.law.fsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1978&context=lr https://www.jstor.org/stable/2131682 https://docs.house.gov/meetings/JU/JU10/20210727/113962/HHRG-117-JU10-Wstate-FrazerL-20210727-SD001.pdf
11/21/2023	Katie Ng-Mak	Email	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Katie Ng-Mak, and I am a Cambridge resident and the parent of two children in Cambridge Public Schools.</p> <p>I am writing because I saw the recent Cambridge Day article that said that the Review Committee is leaning toward moving away from the current City Manager form of government to a Strong Mayor system.</p> <p>I was surprised by this news – it's the first I've heard about it – and am very concerned about the process that is being used to arrive at this decision.</p> <p>I would want to testify at tonight's meeting, but the fact that the meeting is scheduled on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving is preventing me from being able to speak in person. This timing is not conducive to hearing from members of the public on this important topic.</p> <p>As the Cambridge Day article shared, it appears that the Review Committee is trying to draft an entirely new form of government – a Strong Mayor system – in a matter of weeks and during the holiday season.</p> <p>I am concerned that this is neither transparent nor accessible to Cambridge Residents and that the rushed process will not give sufficient time for thoughtful consideration of such a significant change.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the recommendation itself.</p> <p>I am worried that moving to a Strong Mayor form of government would concentrate power in one person and would actually reduce democracy. In the current system, the City Manager meets every week with nine city councilors and the Council is empowered to direct the executive branch. In the proposed Strong Mayor system, the City Manager would report to a Mayor and deliberate in private without any Council input. This will result in less voices being heard in city government!</p> <p>Ultimately, I ask that the Charter Review Committee ask the City Council for more time and that you reconsider the direction of moving to a Strong Mayor system.</p> <p>Thank you, Katie</p>
11/21/2023	Rachel Daricek	Email	<p>My name is Rachel Daricek. I have lived in Cambridge for 13 years and am the mother of two children in Cambridge Public Schools. I'm actively involved in our school, and our family is actively involved in the community.</p> <p>I am writing to express my deep concern that this Committee wants to go away from our current system of government to a strong mayor system.</p> <p>Cambridge has been a leader in Massachusetts and across the country on a number of topics, whether it was our COVID response or in becoming the first city to pilot a universal basic income program for families, through the Rise Up program. For these reasons and many more, Fortune Magazine recently named Cambridge the #1 city in the United States for families to live.</p> <p>My family and many others experience these benefits every day and are deeply grateful for how Cambridge's city government functions well. That's why I am confused why the Committee would want to make such a major change to our system of government.</p> <p>I understand that a strong mayor system would concentrate power in the hands of one individual and, under the current proposal, that individual would only be accountable to voters once every four years. You could imagine an individual winning a mayoral election with 50 or 60% of the vote.</p> <p>In the current city manager system, the city manager is accountable to 9 city councilors who meet weekly. Collectively, these 9 city councilors receive 90%+ of the overall vote – a much higher share than any mayor would receive. This makes the current system more democratic – and ensures that the city manager is responsive to the broadest cross section of voters possible.</p> <p>I am also concerned that the strong mayor system would reduce opportunities for public input and for public deliberation of policy changes by taking policy decisions that are currently made in public meetings and instead having them be made in private deliberations with the mayor.</p> <p>Finally, I am concerned about process and timing. I am currently traveling to visit family for Thanksgiving and am concerned that you are having discussions of such an important topic on one of the peak travel days of the year. This makes it harder for many, including myself, to participate in tonight's meeting.</p> <p>I ask this Committee to request more time from the City Council. If we have a rushed process, it will lead to low public confidence in your final report. I also ask this Committee to move away from the proposed direction of a strong mayor system. What we have is working and is a model for other communities. We shouldn't be trying to radically change it.</p> <p>Thank you for your work on the Committee and for your consideration.</p> <p>Best, Rachel</p>

11/21/2023	Susan Fleischmann	Email	<p>Hi, Marc, I hope you're well. Thanks so much for the amazing work you are doing. I feel VERY strongly that we should be maintaining the weak mayor system in Plan E. Below are the three letters I've written to the Charter Review Committee. If you have any way to use them, please do, or if you want me to put them in some other form, I will. I do feel like we are suddenly at the 11th hour and the fact that tonight, during the week of Thanksgiving, is a critical moment, is seriously upsetting.</p> <p>----- Forwarded message -----</p> <p>From: Susan Fleischmann [mailto: [REDACTED]] Date: Tue, Nov 21, 2023 at 3:58 PM Subject: letter #3 to the Charter Review Committee To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee [mailto: charterreviewcommittee@cambridgema.gov]; [REDACTED] Cc: [REDACTED] 11-21-2023</p> <p>Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee, I am writing again to implore you to not recommend radical change to the current Plan E government, but to address its weaknesses in a more targeted way. The job of elected officials is to govern. The job of an administrator is to manage. The City Council, under the current system, has the power to hire AND fire the City Manager. The Council should be directing the work of the City Manager and rigorously and frequently evaluating them to ensure that the directives of the Council, and, indirectly, the voters, are being successfully addressed. In the absence of a constructive relationship with the Council, past City Managers have acted in what they have considered the best interests of the city at large. Whether those actions have been most representative of what the voters want is debatable. But it is the elected Council that must be more engaged in determining the City's direction, and then ensuring that the City Manager acts accordingly. The Charter Review Committee has made a great deal of progress identifying the weaknesses in Plan E. Instead of making a wholesale change to the system and hoping that the outcome changes as well, why not take the time, in this committee or another, with more community input, to strengthen our form of government and ensure more accountability and transparency throughout? Why not codify a rigorous methodology for evaluating the City Manager and holding them accountable? Sound management is not the problem; oversight and accountability is. Let's put our energies into addressing where the system is broken.</p> <p>Sincerely, Susan Fleischmann</p>
11/21/2023	Rachel Liao	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee, My name is Rachel Liao. I have lived and worked in Cambridge for the past 14+ years, and am the mom of two children who attend the MLK, Jr elementary school in the Cambridge Public School system, and who were also born in Cambridge at Mt Auburn Hospital. I have loved living, working, and raising my family in Cambridge, and hope to continue doing so for years to come. I am deeply dedicated to my community's well-being, and for this reason, I am writing: (i) to express my surprise and concern to see the recent news that the Charter Review Commission is recommending a move to a strong mayor system for Cambridge, and (ii) to request you consider deferring this decision until a more thorough and community-inclusive process can be pursued to assess impact on and benefit for our community. Briefly, I see this change as hindering our vibrant and participatory local government processes, which have benefited many important community discussions, including related to the quality of the schools, basic city services, the diversity of the city, and the use of parks and open space. Under the current model, our city manager meets with the entire City Council in open, public meetings, where public policies are discussed and debated, with regular input from residents who would be directly impacted by policies under discussion. Ultimately, in public meetings, the council provides direction to the city manager that shapes the work the city does on behalf of its residents. I am concerned that under a strong mayor system, our city will lose this participatory and democratic ethos, because the decision-making process will move behind closed doors and could therefore be increasingly politicized. Decision-making power would be concentrated in one person, and would not require public comment on policy issues in open meetings. The mayor could simply meet with other administrators in private and make decisions individually, without needing to consider the diverse viewpoints and needs of members of our community. Given the rushed nature of this decision-making process, and its placement during Thanksgiving week, I am especially concerned that the public has not sufficiently been given the opportunity to participate in the conversation about this significant change. I therefore ask: (i) that the Commission ask the City Council to give this important and complex topic enough time to engage the residents it will impact, and (ii) that you retain the current city manager form of government, which I believe to be more open, inclusive, and democratic, and the best system to serve the needs and interests of our diverse and engaged community. I greatly appreciate your public service in this process, and for your consideration of my comments. With thanks and best wishes for the Thanksgiving holiday, Rachel Liao</p>
11/21/2023	Ginny B.	Email	<p>To the Charter Review Committee - I am writing as I understand you plan to vote tonight on the portion of our city charter regarding a strong mayor versus a City Manager hired by the City Council. I urge you to keep our form of governance as is with a City Manager that we can choose based on their managerial skills and experience. In direct contrast, an elected official will naturally need to respond to the loudest and most persistent voters, in order to ensure re-election. As a 45 year resident of the City of Cambridge and former CPSD employee, I feel very strongly that this is in the best interest of the City that I have seen grow and flourish as a result of the consistent and measured responsiveness of a team led by an independent, skilled manager.</p> <p>Thank you, Ginny Berkowitz</p>
11/21/2023	Caleb Hurst-Hiller	Email	<p>My name is Caleb Hurst-Hiller. I am a Cambridge resident and have been part of the fabric of the Cambridge community for years. I was very surprised to see the latest Cambridge Day article saying that this group is looking to move toward a strong mayor form of government. As a Cambridge resident for many years, I believe the current form of government is working quite well. It has enabled Cambridge to be a leader on affordable housing, climate change, municipal finances, and more. It has made Cambridge a diverse and inclusive place, in short, a place where I am happy to live, work, and raise my family. If it's not broken, I don't understand why the Committee is proposing such a dramatic change. The process for making this change feels rushed and not inclusive - trying to create and refine a proposal on a massive change in government over a short period of time. Having these meetings over the holiday season makes it much harder for people to participate. I'm also concerned that the proposed plan would actually make Cambridge government less democratic. In the current system, the city manager meets weekly with nine city councilors and the Council is empowered to enact policies that direct the executive branch. In the proposed strong mayor plan, the city manager would report to a mayor. They would meet and discuss policies in private, without required public or Council input. This will result in less voice being heard in city government! Ultimately, I ask that the Charter Review Committee ask the City Council for more time and that you reconsider the direction of moving to a strong mayor system. The current form of government has worked well, and we should be reluctant to make such a major change absent a very compelling reason to do so.</p> <p>Regards, Caleb</p>
11/21/2023	Dave Toniatti	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee, My name is Dave Toniatti. My wife and I live in Cambridge, and our two children go to Cambridge Public Schools. We are grateful to live in such a vibrant community. I am writing to share my surprise and concern about the direction that the Charter Review Committee is taking - moving to a strong mayor governance system and away from our current city manager system. I support Cambridge's model as a leader on affordable housing, multiple modes of transportation, climate change, and creating a livable, diverse, and inclusive city. I am worried that the Committee's proposal takes for granted how high functioning Cambridge's city government currently is and assumes that it will continue to deliver services at such high quality - even with a radical move to a strong mayor system. I believe the current success the City has had is not accidental or incidental to the current form of government but is actually a hallmark of the city manager system. Having a high quality, professional city manager who is trained in leadership and management enables the City to deliver high quality services to its residents through effective administration and management. There is no guarantee that this would continue under a strong mayor system. Instead, it appears that the proposal would create less opportunities for the public and for the city council to provide input into key policies and decision making. I am concerned that this would make our city government less democratic. I am also concerned about the process. I consider myself civically engaged and informed and feel like the Charter Review Committee's communication with the general public about this new potential direction has not been very good. I had no idea of this new potential direction until very recently. In addition, having a meeting of such significance two days before Thanksgiving makes it hard for Cambridge residents to participate. Please lengthen your process so residents can weigh in on key decisions at times that are not major holidays and please keep the current form of government.</p> <p>Thank you, Dave Toniatti</p>
11/21/2023	Danny Park	Email	<p>Good evening, My name is Danny Park, and I live, work, and go to church in Cambridge. I am the father of two kids in CPS. Our family loves and is grateful to live here, including the quality services the city government provides. In full disclosure, I am a friend of the current city manager, Yi-An Huang. That said, I offer these comments thinking through the generalized case of anyone working in that role (former and future) and hope to be as impartial as I can. As an infectious disease scientist who advises governments in the U.S. and around the world on response to viral epidemics, I was deeply impressed by Cambridge's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed Cambridge students to return to in person schooling before many other communities across the Commonwealth. The City government's leadership, thoughtfulness, openness to partnership and collaboration, and responsiveness were critical factors that enabled this to be possible. I am concerned that moving away from the city manager form of government and to a strong mayor system would make major decision-making more politically motivated and less deliberate. It would remove the weekly opportunities for public input through public comment at city council meetings and open public deliberation on policy decisions at those same meetings that are a hallmark of the current form of government. I am even more concerned by the examples we see from cities with strong mayor systems (Boston being the most notable and proximal, but DC and NY as well) which demonstrate the extreme advantage to incumbent mayors who rarely face electoral accountability for their performance over decades-long tenures. By contrast, the city manager form of government - with the recent updates Cambridge has enacted such as the annual public review that the council conducts of the manager - can create a higher degree of professionalism and accountability. In its most recent form, the Cambridge city council can simply replace poorly performing managers. Many of the historical issues around the city manager role in Cambridge predated current accountability rules. In short, I ask the Charter Review Committee to retain and/or iteratively improve the current city manager form of government in Cambridge, rather than considering drastically different forms of governance to replace it.</p> <p>Thanks for your consideration, Danny Park</p>
11/21/2023	George Metzger	Email	<p>Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee, I respectfully ask you to pause your process to actively solicit public input before issuing draft recommendations. In particular, we need to know what weaknesses exist in our current system and how alternative forms will address and improve governance.</p> <p>Respectfully, George Metzger</p>

			<p>The Charter Review Committee has been meeting since August last year to discuss potential changes to municipal government in Cambridge. Recently, the committee has shifted toward eliminating the City Manager in favor of an elected Mayor as the chief executive. A final vote is likely on Tuesday, December 5 at the second to last meeting of the committee prior to sending a final report to the City Council by December 31.</p> <p>I started in the role of City Manager at the same time the Charter Review Committee began meeting. I am the first City Manager in sixty years to be hired from outside the city and the first person of color to serve in this role. Trust in institutions is at an all-time low across the country, and one of the reasons I was excited about this job was the opportunity to strengthen our democracy, create a more inclusive local government, and find a path toward more transparency and accountability. While I recognize that as the City Manager, I'm not an impartial third-party, I want to share my perspective from the last year as the committee is preparing to make major decisions.</p> <p>First, a lot is going well in the current form of government! Cambridge has done more than any neighboring community on affordable housing including tripling funding for the Affordable Housing Trust over the last decade, raising the inclusionary requirement to 20%, eliminating parking minimums, and passing two affordable housing overlays. We have established the most aggressive climate goals for building emissions in the state. We host more adult emergency shelter beds for the unhoused relative to population than any community. And we have the strongest municipal financials in the Commonwealth. Further, our community is really engaged. Voters recently elected one of the most diverse and representative City Councils in our history in a competitive election with 24 candidates knocking on tens of thousands of doors. In our 2023 representative resident survey, 90% of residents rated Cambridge as an Excellent/Good place to live, 89% would recommend living in Cambridge to someone who asks, and 45% of residents had watched a City Council meeting. Additionally, 40% of people said they had contacted a City Councillor in the last year, which put us #2 out of 300 cities and towns across the country! There are challenges that we need to solve, but voices are being heard in public discussions, people are involved in local politics, and things are getting done.</p> <p>While an elected mayor as the chief executive is the most well-known practice of local democracy, I have come to appreciate how our current form puts a nine-person City Council at the center of our city government. This is less direct – there isn't just one person who makes executive decisions – but it is more inclusive. I'm excited about shared goal setting in January with the new Council, a process that makes less sense with a directly elected Mayor. Instead, on each major decision, nine Councillors have a voice and a vote, and so do all their constituents. In 2023, I prepared for and attended almost 40 City Council meetings with public comment on every issue confronting Cambridge. Meanwhile, strong mayors rarely attend Council meetings. While I recognize the emotional resonance and simplicity of winner-take-all, concentrating political power isn't necessarily more inclusive, representative, or transparent.</p> <p>Finally, one of my goals has been to build greater accountability into this form of government. I have worked hard to develop a strong and collaborative relationship with the Council and to follow their direction. We have established a rigorous and transparent City Manager performance review process and I recently submitted a 2023 review of goals and performance to the Council. If the executive branch is where power concentrates, there is a reasonable case for professional appointment and close oversight. With no poison pills in my contract, an empowered City Council can act quicker if there is mismanagement or misconduct. Regular elections are seldom as responsive – while a City Manager would have been placed on leave immediately then fired, elected officials like George Santos and Robert Menendez have continued to serve for months or years in positions of power and privilege.</p> <p>It will be up to the Charter Review Committee, the incoming City Council, and ultimately the voters of Cambridge to make these important decisions. But perhaps my view is that this is not a debate between more or less democracy, but rather what kind of democracy we want as a community. Proportional Ranked Choice Voting is more complex and harder to understand but offers unique benefits over more traditional Choose One voting. Similarly, there are benefits to the Council-Manager form of government and I believe it can live up to our best democratic ideals: representation, inclusivity, transparency, and accountability.</p> <p>I will always love this amazing community and I will be committed to making our path forward the best that it can be, whichever journey we ultimately choose.</p> <p>Yi-An Huang</p> <p>Yi-An Huang City Manager City of Cambridge 795 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge, MA 02139</p>
11/28/2023	Yi-An Huang City Manager	Email	<p>To the Charter Review Committee members,</p> <p>We have owned our home at 8 Clinton Street for the past 17 years, and am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposal to strengthen the role of the mayor and weaken the role of the City Manager. The City Manager has an essential role in securing community in the running of the city rather than being prone to political changes every two years. A strong City Manager is essential to ensure that the city runs well. The charter committee describes that the strengths of the city should be maintained. I agree with the committee that we should feel very proud of our city and how well this city is run. It is clean, green and safe. The new City Manager Yi-An Huang is doing an excellent job so far, and his predecessor did as well. I feel like the City Manager's newsletter provides a lot of information to residents and updates on the city priorities; this is welcome transparency and availability of information.</p> <p>I feel strongly that the political winds should not govern the running of a city of the size of Cambridge. Being a lawyer myself, I do not agree with the assertion during November 21 public comment that the Cambridge system purportedly produces at large city disenfranchisement as alleged by a lawyer during public comment. As for the goal of promotion of community involvement and engagement, I agree with the committee that there could be improvements in the drafting of the council and committee agendas. I find them very tough to follow, but feel that is a task for the city council's office to tackle. Perhaps an aide to a councillor could dedicate some of their time to assist with this goal. Anyone interested in attendance at or participation in Cambridge city politics has ample opportunity to do so via zoom or attendance at City Hall.</p> <p>That a proposed change to the role of the City Manager/Mayor would come through the charter review committee process as a recommendation frankly astonished me. I had seen the charter review committee advertised and had not understood that this committee would be reviewing this role. This is a fundamental shift that is not well publicized and is occurring in a surprising forum not available on the open meeting portal website. Also the mayor is chosen by the council, not the voters. As such a change to our city government, this matter of mayor election if a strong mayor and the role of the city manager should go to the voters to decide.</p> <p>Furthermore, I do not support the 4 year term within the strong mayor model if that were to pass. I do agree with the charter committee that the 2 year term for the council keeps the council close to the voters, and I do not see a reason to change the term from 2 years. I also strongly believe that in the strong mayor model that the mayor should have a veto power. Again, this proposal is a fundamental shift that is not well publicized and the discussion is occurring in a surprising forum. Again, I think it should go to the voters to decide.</p> <p>I respectfully ask that you do not support a recommendation in favor of moving to a strong mayor vs. city manager. I thank you for the time you have dedicated to this committee.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jacquelyn Fahy Sandell, Esq. Mason Sandell</p>
11/28/2023	Jacquelyn Fahy Sandell	Email	<p>A follow-up thought: I'm spiraling here, but perhaps a compromise mechanism could be a "vote of no confidence" to remove the mayor with a two-thirds Council majority. By not calling it "impeachment", you would make it clear that they can be removed for political reasons and not just for malfeasance. But by making it a two-thirds majority and by the fact that the Council can't pick the replacement, you still give the mayor strength.</p> <p>On Tue, Nov 28, 2023 at 2:17 PM Allan Sadun wrote: Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I want to see Cambridge's electoral system result in leadership on the priorities of Cambridge residents. I have come to decide that I do not support a strong mayor system, because I believe that a multi-member City Council elected by PR is more representative of the priorities of Cambridge residents than a single person, and a manager accountable at all times to the Council is therefore more accountable to resident priorities than a mayor elected only once every four years. (Also because in the short term, I like our current city manager.)</p> <p>But if you're going to have a strong mayor system, you should not have the mayor be recallable. Recall elections are inherently low-turnout and have a different electorate than the election for mayor in the first place. Recall elections are not a way to hold the mayor accountable to the people, they are a way to hold mayoral leadership hostage to a highly engaged minority.</p> <p>If the goal is to remove the mayor in the event of severe malfeasance, an impeachment vote by the independently-elected City Council would be a more effective way and less disruptive way to accomplish that.</p> <p>If the goal is to make sure the mayoral priorities reflect the priorities of the people... then maybe you should allow the Council to hire and fire the mayor, and therefore perhaps we shouldn't have a strong mayor system after all.</p> <p>But in no event should we have a recall system, in my opinion.</p> <p>Best, Allan Sadun</p>
11/28/2023	Allan Sadun	Email	<p>I'm concerned that given your reversal on the strong-mayor system vote, that whatever conclusion you come to will seem hasty and ill-considered. If we're going to have a strong mayor system, I hope it will be strongly motivated, rather than justified with "a majority of us briefly thought it might be better".</p> <p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I'm writing to urge you to recommend a mayor-council form of government in your final report.</p> <p>As someone who worked for the City's Office of Equity and Inclusion, I know first hand the obstacle the City Manager plays in the administration of democracy, and many of these points illustrate what I mean.</p> <p>The chief executive of our city should be elected by the people. Cambridge is one of only two remaining MA cities with a Plan E Charter (the other is Lowell). Cambridge has had this charter since it was adopted in 1940. It's been long overdue to dispense with Plan E. Here are some examples of cities that already have: Medford operated under Plan E until 1988, Gloucester operated under Plan E until adoption of a home rule charter in 1974, and Revere adopted Plan B in 1965 after operating under Plan E.</p> <p>Please consider the anti-civil rights history behind the City Manager form of government presented by Kevin Hsu in his public comment. I was surprised to learn that multiple cities' transitions from mayor to city manager forms of government were supported by the KKK. But it makes sense that racist groups would want a system that takes voting power away from Black and other marginalized citizens.</p> <p>I've noticed many commenters who favor a manager-council system saying that the committee should take more time to study the issue and that we shouldn't make such a big change without having a more inclusive process. But they must be simply unaware that this committee was created exactly for that purpose through a long and painstaking process. You've all spent countless volunteer hours already and created numerous opportunities for public feedback - if people are frustrated they're only hearing about it now. I don't think that's a reason to scrap all your work and start from scratch!</p> <p>I'm frustrated that the city manager hasn't acted on finding HEART despite a clear order from the council, which is supposed to be the people's representative body. The other day, he skipped a hearing on the issue. I'm sure he had a good reason, but it's been two years now and he hasn't acted. The same thing happened with municipal broadband under our last manager. And there's nothing I can do to hold him accountable. I don't think an elected mayor would be able to hide from people's disapproval in the same way.</p> <p>None of the pro-mayor supporters have criticized this particular city manager. They have all had thoughtful systematic critiques of the city manager position itself. If the people of Cambridge like this city manager then I'm happy to tell you the Chief Administrator and Financial officer (CAFO) positions will be hiring in 2026. And our current city manager could apply.</p> <p>Legally, the City Council is not allowed to tell any city employees what to do. All requests have to go through the City Manager. Because the City Manager controls the staff and resources, the City Council can't do much at all in terms of the operations of the city. Even for simple requests like fixing potholes. The City Council has to contact the City Manager to beg to get the problem fixed. Violations of s. 107 of MGL, c. 43: The Council may not interfere with manager's duties and responsibilities in matters of appointments and removals and may not give orders to any subordinate of the city manager... punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. Also subject to removal from office and loss of eligibility to "ever again" seek any elective city office.</p> <p>Legally, the city manager can say no to the policy orders. They can just ignore them (aka the "pocket veto"). Sure, sometimes, a policy order can evolve into an ordinance, which is law. (After the city manager failed to adequately respond to policy orders around bike lanes, the city council eventually passed an ordinance.) However, City Councillors are often squeamish about actually passing an ordinance, so they'll pass a policy order instead. Passing an ordinance is a multi-month process taking multiple city council meetings. If for every ask the city has to make it an ordinance, does it really sound like the city manager works for the city council?</p> <p>What's stopping the City Manager (supposedly an apolitical position) after leaving office to work to lobby for the special interests that they were tasked to reign in as the executive with control of nearly a BILLION dollar budget? The city manager seems like the radical option to me! The compromise position is the creation of the Chief Administrator & Financial officer positions under the mayor so that the city benefits from professional skills of these two positions while the mayor directs the vision for the city.</p> <p>The pro-Manager side seems to hold on to this notion that collaborative goal setting is not possible without a city manager. Why not add into the charter that the mayor and/or their staff is required to attend every city council meeting? If the mayor understands what the council's decision making process is, tensions are less likely to flare up. The council should provide the mayor a quarterly performance review, and the end-of-year performance review of the mayor should be made public to the voters. I am looking forward to a mayor who takes this city into the next phase of growth by 2026.</p> <p>All my very best, Haden</p>
12/3/2023	Haden Smiley	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am a resident of Cambridge, living at 9 Florence Street, and I am writing you in support of a mayor-council form of government. I want to live in a democratically run city, where the actually elected officials have the final say on city decisions. There is a space for managerial expertise in our city, but administrative decisions in our city should be subordinate to democratic processes, and not the other way around. I hope that in your final report, you will recommend a mayor-council form of government, as part of our shared, continuing effort to build a democratic Cambridge.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Benjamin Gammage</p>
12/3/2023	Benjamin Gammage	Email	<p>Benjamin Gammage</p>

12/3/2023	David Sullivan	Email	<p>Dear Committee members, As you approach your final recommendations, I want to reiterate my support for a strong mayor form of government (with a CAFO, elected by RCV to a four-year term, removable only for misconduct). Please consider these points: Democracy requires that the most powerful official in the City be directly elected by voters. Indirect accountability is simply inadequate. In my experience as a former Councillor, it is very difficult for Councillors to disagree publicly with the City Manager, at the risk of losing clout on numerous issues and projects under his control. In practice, the City Manager cannot be fired (despite the Charter) because of the "buyout clause" in his contract -- which I always voted against as a Councillor. The City needs political leadership that the apolitical City Manager model cannot provide. As a senior lawyer in his administration for eight years, I helped Governor Deval Patrick use his significant clout to assemble legislative support for key priorities -- like successfully closing corporate tax loopholes and defending same-sex marriage. No one has the political tools to do this under our present charter, since individual councillors and citizen groups lack the necessary bargaining power. For this reason among many others, we thankfully do not have a "state manager" or "national manager" form of government. Similarly, it is critical that a strong mayor harness city departments to carry out the voters' policy priorities. The current "apolitical" model makes it very hard to do that -- in fact, some city managers have forbidden departments from engaging in policy planning entirely, and from discussing such issues with Councillors. This is no way to accomplish progressive change in our city. The City Manager form is mostly defended for "stable" fiscal and managerial competence. Yet many municipalities with strong mayors also display these virtues, and an expert CAFO would certainly help here. For those of us who want to change city policy for the better rather than simply preserve the status quo, competence is necessary but not sufficient. Yes, it is possible to have a "bad" mayor, but also a "bad" city manager -- Cambridge history has seen both. Better to use the tools of democracy to improve those failings. (None of this argument should reflect on our present Manager -- or other recent Managers whom I served with -- who all did a fine job within the limits of their defined duties.) Thank you all for your service to our City as volunteers, and for considering these important issues. I'd be happy to discuss them further with any of you. David Sullivan Former City Councillor</p>
12/4/2023	Rachel Weinstein and Caroline Hunter	Email	<p>December 4, 2023 Dear Charter Review Committee Members, Thank you for your commitment and service to our city. We appreciate that you have dedicated your time and energy to the important matter of our form of government. We write today urging you to reconsider two topics we have strong opinions about, namely continuing with the strong city manager form of government and extending the length of elected officials' terms. Our review of recent meeting summaries suggests that you are heading toward recommending a strong mayor model. We add our voices to the many who have expressed concerns about this direction. Just as we would not suggest a School Committee Member run the Cambridge Public Schools, we think it is unwise to have a Mayor run the City. It is no accident that Cambridge is a better-run, better-resourced city than many of our neighbors -- the stability and professional management a manager brings allows the people running the city to rise above whichever way the political winds are blowing and move critical work forward. We worry that a strong mayor would insert themselves into the daily functioning of the city in a way that would not serve our collective interests in the long run. We also have been pleased to see additional accountability measures implemented with our current City Manager. Regarding elected terms, as individuals who have both run multiple campaigns and served on the School Committee, we know that the amount of time and energy that goes into campaigning every other year would be better spent focused on the matters at hand in the Cambridge Public Schools. With our current terms, Members have a year, or 18 months tops, to establish the norms of the Committee, assess needs, articulate priorities, and begin the process of making policy changes before they have to pivot to campaigning. We believe that there are (at least) two options that would provide Cambridge voters with the ability to continue frequent accountability at the polls: Terms could be extended to four years, but staggered so that half of the seats would be up for election every two years. This would ensure some institutional memory and continuity of efforts on the Committee. Alternatively, making terms three years for all Members would allow the Committee to be more productive each term. We appreciate your consideration and welcome any questions or conversation that may be helpful. Sincerely Rachel Weinstein and Caroline Hunter Cambridge School Committee Members</p>
12/4/2023	Alex Gourevitch	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee, I am writing to support switching to a mayor-council form of government. I have nothing against this particular City Manager, but it is wrong not to have a properly democratic form of city government. We are one of the last remaining cities in MA that has not moved away from the Plan E form of government. A democratic form of government doesn't just make sure that key decisions are in the hands of the people's elected representatives. It also ensures that those representatives have to take responsibility for their decisions. Things are different when there is a City Manager. City Manager's allow councillors and mayors to pass the buck. They can explain away their failure to learn about an issue by saying it's the City Manager's purview. They can explain away their decision not to do what they were elected to do, by saying the City Manager was opposed. Again, I am not supporting the mayor-council form of government because I am unhappy about a specific policy choice the current Manager has made. I disagree with some, agree with others. I just think we should have a more democratic form of city government and join the rest of the cities who have made that pivot. sincerely, Alex Gourevitch Cambridge, MA, 02139</p>
12/4/2023	Kimberlee Gonsalves	Email	<p>Dear members of the Charter Review Committee, I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining the current City Manager form of government. Shifting to a strong mayor system would jeopardize the selection of the City's main executive based on managerial talent, as opposed to the current democratic process facilitated by our elected Council. Our current City Manager, Mr. Huang, serves as a testament to the success of the existing system. His dedicated efforts have resulted in significant progress on vital resident-centric issues, such as the expansion of afterschool programs. It is my belief that he is the most qualified individual to sustain this positive momentum. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Sincerely, Kimberlee Gonsalves</p>
12/4/2023	Eugenia Schraa	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee, I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. Some reasons include: It's more democratic -- a mayor would be elected with a small proportion of the vote -- then, given the power of incumbency, would likely stay in power for a long time. By contrast, choosing the City Manager requires a 5/9 vote from City Council. City Council is currently diverse and representative of the City, so that's a good thing. It's more professional -- the City Manager can be an experienced and technically proficient manager (as ours is today), leaving "politics" to the politicians. It's working -- for example: Yi-An Huang has made afterschool reform a priority + he is committed to a 3-yr plan to get it solved. (Other accomplishments.) I worry the momentum won't survive under a strong mayor. Note on accountability -- Because of incumbency preference, it's hard for voters to get rid of an incumbent mayor who's subpar. By contrast, it's not that hard for City Council to buy out/decline to renew the contract of a subpar City Manager. Thank you, Eugenia Schraa</p>
12/4/2023	Emilio Sauri	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee, I am writing to support switching to a mayor-council form of government. We are one of the last remaining cities in MA that has not moved away from the Plan E form of government. A democratic form of government doesn't just make sure that key decisions are in the hands of the people's elected representatives. It also ensures that those representatives have to take responsibility for their decisions. Things are different when there is a City Manager: it allows councillors and mayors to pass the buck. They can explain away their failure to learn about an issue by saying it's the City Manager's purview. They can explain away their decision not to do what they were elected to do by saying the City Manager was opposed. Again, I am not supporting the mayor-council form of government because I am unhappy about a specific policy choice the current Manager has made. I just think we should have a more democratic form of city government and join the rest of the cities who have made that pivot. All best, Emilio Sauri Cambridge, MA 02139</p>
12/4/2023	Patrick McNeal	Email	<p>Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee, I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Cambridge to express my strong support for maintaining our current form of government, which has been very effective and beneficial for our city. I firmly believe that the current system, with a City Manager and City Council, works well and aligns with the principles of democracy and professionalism that our community values. First and foremost, the existing structure is more democratic. Under this system, our City Manager is appointed by a 5/9 vote from the City Council, ensuring a collective decision representing our city's diverse perspectives. This arrangement ensures that the choice of our City Manager is made through a well-considered and representative process. In contrast, electing a mayor with a smaller proportion of the vote could lead to the consolidation of power in the hands of one individual for an extended period, given the power of incumbency. This may not truly reflect the people's will and can undermine the inclusivity and diversity that our City Council currently embodies. Secondly, the existing system promotes professionalism and effective governance. Our City Manager can be highly experienced and technically proficient, as demonstrated by the current officeholder who previously ran Boston Medical Center. By having a professional manager responsible for the city's day-to-day operations, we can ensure that decisions are made based on expertise and efficiency rather than being subject to the fluctuations of political dynamics. This allows our elected officials to focus on policymaking and representing the interests of our constituents, leaving administrative matters to the capable hands of the City Manager. Maintaining our current form of government, with a City Manager and City Council, is a testament to the thoughtful governance Cambridge residents have come to appreciate. It upholds the principles of democracy, diversity, and professionalism that we hold dear. I encourage the Charter Review Committee to recognize this system's value and success and consider preserving it for the benefit of our community. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to shaping the future of our city. Your careful consideration of this matter will ultimately lead to a decision that serves the best interests of the people of Cambridge. Sincerely, Patrick McNeal</p>
12/4/2023	Caitlin Dube	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee, I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council. The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager, Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum. Thank you, Caitlin Dube</p>
12/4/2023	Susana Domingo Amestoy	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee, I am writing to support switching to a mayor-council form of government. I have nothing against this particular City Manager, but it is wrong not to have a properly democratic form of city government. We are one of the last remaining cities in MA that has not moved away from the Plan E form of government. A democratic form of government doesn't just make sure that key decisions are in the hands of the people's elected representatives. It also ensures that those representatives have to take responsibility for their decisions. Things are different when there is a City Manager. City Manager's allow councillors and mayors to pass the buck. They can explain away their failure to learn about an issue by saying it's the City Manager's purview. They can explain away their decision not to do what they were elected to do, by saying the City Manager was opposed. Again, I am not supporting the mayor-council form of government because I am unhappy about a specific policy choice the current Manager has made. I disagree with some, agree with others. I just think we should have a more democratic form of city government and join the rest of the cities who have made that pivot. sincerely, Susana Domingo Amestoy Cambridge, MA, 02139</p>
12/4/2023	Shimon Rura	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee and City Council, I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council. It would also create a level of leadership churn that I think would negatively impact the city's departments. The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager, Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum. Thank you, Shimon Rura Cambridge, MA 02140</p>

			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>I worry about a lack of continuity in programs that work well in the city if we lose the professional management and are primarily run by politicians. I also feel that the city manager can be more accountable because city council hires them and oversees their work, whereas it can be hard to get rid of a bad mayor due to incumbency bias and skills that make someone very electable do not necessarily translate to good at managing a city.</p> <p>Thank you, Nicole Davis</p>
12/4/2023	Nicole Davis	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Greetings Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am writing in support of a strong mayor form of city council. Something that the committee has talked about often with the city manager system is that the manager can be recalled by the city council and that the city council can provide oversight/recall the manager if needed. I believe that any mechanism created to oversee the manager, however well crafted, will not be used. The manager process is a time consuming - the search for current manager Huang took several months of the mayors time, taking time away from legislating and working together with the other councilors and city staff's time working on other administrative activities. The time, and the money, needed to conduct the search process is time and money that could be spent on direct city-resident services instead. The mayoral system, is chosen, would have elections take place at the same time as regular city council elections would respect and protect resident and city staff time.</p> <p>The latest search for the city manager also only received input from 750 city residents. This is much lower than the 2,000+ vote threshold needed for each city councilor to be elected and for the mayor to be chosen from amongst them. In a city that leads the way in the area for Participatory Budgeting, we should be further encouraging resident engagement in city matters.</p> <p>I also do not agree that a Mayor is undemocratic or leads to city being poorly run/drainng resources. The City maintains a City Auditor office, which would not be abolished upon switching to a manager system.</p> <p>Please move vote for the council-mayor form of government to respect the time of city staff and residents and to show residents that Cambridge does prioritize citizen voice.</p> <p>Thank you, Ellen Mei</p>
12/4/2023	Ellen Mei	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>My hope is that the City Manager form of government helps keep Cambridge Unique, Progressive, results-focused, and Less "Politicized" (vs some surrounding cities that have strong mayor systems)</p> <p>Thank you, Jose Jimenez</p>
12/4/2023	Jose Jimenez	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>My name is Ruy Martinez, I live on 56 Litmanee Street, and I'm a member of Boston DSA. I've lived in Austin, Texas, where we have a mayor and city council, along with a very powerful city manager. I'm writing to urge you all to consider a mayor-council form of government in your final report.</p> <p>From my experience in Cambridge and Austin, there are real issues with the City Manager position. It's clear to me that the manager is de facto a political appointment. As we saw dramatically in 2021, the City Manager can refuse to implement policies, say policies are impossible to do, or ignore them. Only in Cambridge have I ever seen a law like S.107, C.A.S. that threatens jail time for "interfering with manager's duties and responsibilities". It's incredibly disempowering as a citizen to know that an appointed manager can (and has in the past) subtly threaten jail time to the people I elect - I remember hearing this the last time the City Manager question came up.</p> <p>You all have worked really hard on this - the time for waiting seems to me to be closing at some point soon. I really view this from the principle that I elect the people to represent me. Obviously, some amount of administrative positions are necessary to handle the day to day operation of the city, but why can't we have a General Administrator or Financial Officer that is accountable to the mayor or council? There are real criticisms I have of "strong mayor" systems, but I do think that the current situation with a super strong City Manager is even worse. A mayor can be constrained by making sure that they have to attend meetings, that a Council majority can overrule them, and so on. But as of now, there's basically no way to "overturn" the bad administrative decisions of a City Manager - even if we like this one! That seems to me like an executive position with no checks or balances.</p> <p>So, with that being said, I'd really urge you all to recommend a mayor-council system. Thanks for reading my email.</p> <p>Best, Ruy Martinez</p>
12/4/2023	Ruy Martinez	Email	<p>Hello committee,</p> <p>I'm writing to you all today with the hopes I'll convince or push some of you towards adopting a strong mayor governance. I'm someone who has been a Cambridge Resident for nearly 17 years, during that time, I've followed and been involved in local politics to a much larger degree than the average resident. I firmly believe the issues that I - and others in my community - care about, such as police reform, municipal broadband, and safer streets are not advancing forward due to the city manager. I've been told - as well as countless other residents - that progress is coming, but I've cared about the same issues for a decade and we're not anywhere close to achieving the stated goals. All roads lead back to the city manager blocking reform, so that I say - let's reform that position. Let people vote on the mayor, and give the mayor the power to make Cambridge progressive once more. Appreciate the time.</p> <p>Robert Eckstut</p>
12/4/2023	Robert Eckstut	Email	<p>Hi Charter Review Committee Members,</p> <p>Please vote to KEEP the current structure of government which involves a city manager.</p> <p>We have a unique form of government in which the City Council - members who are not technocrats, but community activists and politicians - do not manage directly but can hire/fire a competent person with technical skills to run the city. The City Manager is insulated from political pressures and from running for reelection every two years, and can focus on the important business of running our city departments with minimal political pressure. We need a competent, technocratic leader who is focused on being a good manager and steward of taxpayer funds. This is not possible when the city manager becomes a politician. I hope you will strongly consider keeping our form of government.</p> <p>Amanda Beatty</p>
12/4/2023	Amanda Beatty	Email	<p>One provision of the recall, perhaps, or some other action, should involve making the Policy Orders passed by City Council actionable—it seems too many just go in the circular file (the waste paper basket id that phrase is too dense to use now), again, a very anti-democratic process.</p> <p>To the Charter Review Committee:</p> <p>I have been very concerned by the undemocratic governance structures in Cambridge. In this commentary, I will speak to the measures the committee is considering tomorrow:</p> <p>(1) I have never understood why there is not a democratically elected mayor. Hopefully that position could be defined in a way that would take some power away from the completely undemocratically appointed City Manager, and give the elected representatives - the mayor and the City Councilors - more say in crucial decisions. Further, there should be mechanisms for recall of elected officials when they are not representing their constituents. And I have already commented on what I view as a very unfair system of voting, which could be fractionally improved by at least using a fractional transfer of ballots from those candidates who have more votes than needed.</p> <p>(2) I think the Resident Assembly is another promising step toward more democracy. I particularly like that people on this Assembly will be compensated, as that can eliminate having only people wealthy enough to give time to civic engagement. But, it would be important to choose the assembly people by having some kind of proportional stratified random sample to insure representation across various demographic groups in the city. Also, it would be very important to have mechanisms in place to have 2/3 majority decisions of the Assembly go directly to voters, AND to have those city-wide votes, given some kind of large majority approval, binding. There should be budgetary and legal support from city employees to help realistically develop those measures requiring funding.</p> <p>(3) Further, I am hoping the Resident Assembly is only a first step. We could learn an enormous amount from Cubs (population about 11 million) about democratic participation, where, for example, the new Families code involved 133,000 public meetings nationwide, and where the people of Cuba submitted 783,000 proposals for changes, which resulted in modifying about 50% of the proposed legislation. See https://peoplesdispatch.org/2023/03/23/how-the-cuban-government-and-its-people-collaborated-on-the-family-code/#...&next=The%20referendum%20was%20predecided%20by%20a%20popular%20consultation,people%20of%20Cuba%20submitted%20783%20000%20proposals%20for%20changes%20for%20more%20details. Instead of one resident Assembly we could have elected committees of a few neighborhood blocks each that those committees would send representatives to larger neighborhood groupings and so on until getting to City Councilors—which might also involved having district Councilors...</p> <p>(4) Finally, to continue bringing a bit more democracy to Cambridge, we should have an elected Police Review Board, also with real power in their recommendations. And we should have an electoral process that does not involve 30 candidates running for 6 positions, whether we need candidates elected from districts or another mathematically determined fair system of voting.</p> <p>Sincerely, Marilyn Frankenstein Cambridge, MA 02138</p>
12/4/2023	Marilyn Frankenstein	Email	<p>Dear Committee members,</p> <p>I've been following your work for the past year, and I am grateful for the volunteer hours you've all put in to make Cambridge better, including the myriad ways you've engaged the public to solicit our feedback. In that light I am slightly offended on your behalf when I read comments from folks who are alarmed you may be recommending a new form of government soon, saying things like "This committee has been working in the background with no input from the public" and suggesting we need a complete do-over of your work.</p> <p>As you wrap up, I am writing to show my support for three things geared toward making Cambridge more democratic:</p> <p>1) a change to a mayor-council system in Cambridge 2) an elected PRAB (Police Review & Advisory Board) 3) a Resident Assembly with the power to create a ballot referendum directly with a supermajority vote. (I am very excited you've taken up the idea of the Resident Assembly and I hope you give them actual power.)</p> <p>I am going to let my support for #2 and 3 stand on its own because I want to elaborate at length about #1.</p> <p>Around the last vote on Mayor vs Manager, I recall committee member Jim Stockard saying something to the effect of "the current system works pretty well. We have wonderfully low property taxes and a good bond rating" (apologies for the rough paraphrase).</p> <p>With all due respect to Mr. Stockard, and acknowledging that his perspective reflects the thinking of many, I strongly disagree that this is a good way to evaluate our current system. Low property taxes are not a virtue for the two-thirds of Cambridgeans who rent. They're certainly not for the friends of mine who can barely afford to live here. In fact, I'd argue they are a net negative for all renters. By prioritizing such low residential property taxes over the years, and because Proposition 2 1/2 prevents us from raising commercial real estate taxes independently of residential, we've created a vicious cycle where, to make up the revenue gap, we allow more and more commercial development, which directly competes for housing construction and drives up all market real estate prices and, thus, rents. I bring all this up because I think it's completely logical that Mr. Stockard mentioned low property taxes in a pro-Manager argument. For one, a City Manager much more closely resembles a business executive than a politician, so it is natural that they would prioritize maximizing revenue growth and attracting commercial development through low taxes. (It's no coincidence that supporters tout these things as a strength of the position.) But also, a City Manager, because of their political insulation, has a much easier time carrying out policy that's unpopular with two-thirds of the population - like policy that keeps property taxes low and rents high. You can have all the feedback channels and "accountability" mechanisms you want (and every single one of them could be utilized equally with a strong Mayor), but at the end of the day, there's no way you can tell me that a hired City Manager is equally accountable as an elected Mayor would be to my friend who's on an endless waiting list for public housing, struggling to make rent, wanting those with power to do whatever they can to prevent their displacement but with little more than their vote as leverage.</p> <p>As for the bond rating, Somerville has the same rating and a strong mayor. But my point is, property taxes and municipal bond ratings are not what the majority of Cambridgeans care about. Things are not "working pretty well" for most people here! I'm sure you're hearing this argument a lot from those who want no change. I know you're hearing it from City Manager Huang himself (I think it was improper for him to comment). I'm sure the system is working well for these people. But most people in Cambridge are struggling.</p> <p>I'm not saying switching to a mayor-council system will fix all our problems, but it can only be an improvement on what we have. I cannot stress enough that any accountability measures you like about a manager-council system can be utilized equally well in a mayor-council system. But we must elect the executive for a more democratic Cambridge. And I'm not trying to argue that we should strive for unlimited democracy. Of course there is a role for some level of expertise in our government. (With a CA/FO, I believe we can have the best of both worlds.) But when it comes to democracy, I wonder if you'll agree with a simple principle which I find useful: those who govern should be held to a binary choice on every issue - either enact the will of the majority, OR when you choose not to, explain why. Between a City Manager and an elected Mayor, only one actually has to do the explaining.</p> <p>You are a committee that's meant to be representative of the entire city. I hope you will keep all our people in mind - including the low-income renters who are disproportionately people of color and, for obvious reasons, underrepresented among those commenting on this issue - as you make your final decision.</p> <p>Finally, please do not fall into the trap of thinking that a change to mayor-council is the radical choice. If anything, it's the other way around, with only one other city (Lowell) still using a Plan E charter.</p> <p>Sincerely, Stephen Cellucci</p>
12/4/2023	Stephen Cellucci	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I would like to email to voice my support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents.</p> <p>Since he became the City Manager, we have seen tremendous transparency. Mr. Huang has been incredibly helpful for both after school and Cambridge preschool. In my interactions with Mr. Huang, I have found him to be incredibly thoughtful. Moreover, he tackles tough issues and works relentlessly to address the many challenges in our community.</p> <p>Yi-An Huang is an exceptional City Manager. I believe the current system of government is what best serves our community.</p> <p>Sincerely, Lynn Li</p>
12/4/2023	Lynn Li	Email	

			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I want to express my strong support for a change to a mayor-council form of government for Cambridge. Quite simply, I believe the chief executive of our city should be elected by the people. So many people are disenchanted with local politics, and I don't blame them. Electing a mayor would be a big step toward motivating more civic participation.</p> <p>I find it frustrating that the City Manager doesn't have to answer to voters. Take, for example, HEART. As a social worker who understands the need for an alternative to a police response to many situations, I'm deeply disappointed that the city manager hasn't acted on funding HEART. Just like our last city manager did with municipal broadband, even though the public and the city council have signaled clear support, the Manager in both cases has stalled, dodged, and effectively vetoed the orders by sheer inaction. This isn't about the individual, it's about the position. It doesn't make sense that there's nothing I or other Cambridge residents can do to hold him accountable. I don't think an elected mayor would be able to hide from people's disapproval in the same way.</p> <p>Thank you very much for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Hope Turner</p>
12/4/2023	Hope Turner	Email	
			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding after school), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you, Jin Wang</p>
12/4/2023	Jin Wang	Email	
			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you, Steve McAdoo</p>
12/4/2023	Steve McAdoo	Email	
			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you, Zhiqiang Fang</p>
12/4/2023	Zhiqiang Fang	Email	
			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you, Sabrina Cannistraro</p>
12/4/2023	Sabrina Cannistraro	Email	
			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government because of its transparency and proficiency. It runs our city very well. Our current City Manager has made so much progress on issues that matter to residents. Please continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you, Kim [Cambridgeport Resident, Home owner]</p>
12/4/2023	Kimberly Ma	Email	
			<p>Hello Members of the Charter Review Commission,</p> <p>I am writing to share my support for maintaining our weak mayor + city manager structure. During the course of my campaign for governor, I had the chance to observe many municipal governing structures around the Commonwealth. I left the race with clarity that Cambridge has one of the best arrangements in the state. I strongly urge that we maintain our current structure.</p> <p>With thanks for your consideration and all best wishes, Danielle Allen</p>
12/4/2023	Danielle Allen	Email	
			<p>To the Charter Review Committee:</p> <p>I wrote a short letter tonight, having recently learned that you are voting tomorrow night. I am unable to attend the meeting and couldn't find another way to communicate this. I do hope that things slow down.</p> <p>Thank you for listening, Stephanie Beukema</p> <p>I am a long-time resident of Cambridge, having gone to school and lived and worked here for 40 years. I have walked, biked, driven, and continue to be a fan of public transportation. I have rented in many neighborhoods as well as owned property. The lifting of Rent Control and the ensuing gentrification and all of the money that has flowed in more recently through technology and science ventures have altered the landscape even more than the academic institutions that were so long the hallmark of Cambridge. This is a city with housing and traffic flow problems, several hospitals and a reservoir that provides us with drinking water, theaters and restaurants, fine public schools, and small and large parks throughout. Slowly, new small businesses are filling in some of the holes left by Covid. We keep changing.</p> <p>I cannot see how the fundamental form of city governance that puts Cambridge in the lead of neighboring communities for affordable housing and strong financial management and prioritizes the Public Library and its branches and its parks and public gardens is responsible for the financial disparities and equity issues that exist. I am shocked to discover that several current members of the City Council and the Charter Review Committee are focused on changing the governance itself. I am grateful for the new City Manager, who has increased the accountability of the office and improved some of the systems for information-sharing. I am grateful for the many people who work in city government and effect the work that keeps the city running. I am grateful for the many ages and professions involved in running our institutions and services, whose plurality and diversity of point of view help us all feel we belong. I am grateful for the academic institutions of MIT and Harvard whose contributions to the community are multiple and on many levels. We are bursting with experiences and enthusiasm for the new while also occupying bureaucracies and aging infrastructure, and the ensuing tension can be difficult to contain and manage.</p> <p>As an old-school feminist with liberal values, I have a lot of trust and confidence in the Office of the City Manager, as well as the person currently occupying the role, Yi-An Huang. He points out in his recent letter to the Committee and the community at large how progressive in its decision-making and actions on many fronts this city is now. A "strong Mayor" system in this context sounds like a "strong man" leadership style that I, for one, do not want. We have a system with checks and balances that are still working. I hate to think of what it might mean for Cambridge to follow Florida's lead in hurching the right and losing its footing.</p> <p>Stephanie Beukema</p>
12/4/2023	Stephanie Beukema	Email	
			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am writing to express my support for keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents, and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you, Yi Jian</p>
12/4/2023	Yi Jian	Email	
			<p>To the members of the Charter Committee:</p> <p>You have a major decision in front of you, one that could potentially shape the balance of power in Cambridge for generations to come. I'm sure you're getting a bunch of correspondence as the reality of the moment has become more widely known!</p> <p>I believe this form of government is fundamentally undemocratic and flawed. The council's "power" to fire the manager is too all-or-nothing to serve as a meaningful check on power. On the other hand, the strong mayor proposal offers a much more intricate set of checks and balances, and most importantly it enfranchises the people. I hope that you will vote to send a strong recommendation in favor of strong mayor to the council.</p> <p>It is a daunting proposition to fire the manager given the time, expense, and disruption involved. It takes a year to conduct an executive search, with no guarantee that better options would emerge. This is a nuclear option and an empty threat even when there are no poison pills in the contract.</p> <p>I have to say, I respectfully disagree with the utopian characterization of "Plan E" offered by City Manager Huang in his recent editorial. Plan E doesn't center councilors, it sidelines them. It means that on any given night there can be hours of public testimony on a motion and amendments that bring the council to clear consensus, only for there to be total silence for months or years as the motion collects dust on the city manager's desk without any response. This isn't just about one or two pet issues that failed to pan out; it happens all the time. The idea that multiple people are making executive decisions at Cambridge City Hall is a fallacy. His letter doesn't even hint at the deep flaws in the balance of power that had to have been obvious coming in as a total outsider.</p> <p>It is a bit of an aside, but since so many people are leaning on the city's strong financial position to argue in favor of Plan E, it must be pointed out that our position is in many ways a house of cards that has demolished the city's working class and driven up the cost of housing for everybody beyond belief. Because of state law, we can't raise commercial property taxes any higher unless we also raise residential property taxes. To get around this, the city's policy is to build an endless amount of commercial development. By substantially increasing the taxable commercial square footage each year, the city can raise an ever-increasing sum of money from commercial taxes without violating Proposition 2.5 and without raising residential taxes. In fact, the city generates a huge excess of revenue each year, \$30 million of which is used to further pay down the residential taxes.</p> <p>Problem is, commercial development drives up the cost of land, leading to displacement and impeding housing production of all kinds. This has severely impacted low income people, people of color, queer people, and more. The abolition of rent control was forced upon us, but we made the choice to massively overbuild biotech and underbuild housing in the decades that followed. Or rather, I should say that the city manager made that choice. Renters had no direct vote or ability to initiate a referendum under Plan E and the council has always been a rubber stamp in our budget process. And so the city's working class was tragically hollowed out.</p> <p>So please, have the courage of your convictions and make a strong recommendation to the council in favor of strong mayor. Posing this question to the voters won't solve everything, but it is an important step for us to take.</p> <p>I also support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential assemblies selected by sortition that pay residents for their time and have actual power Youth voting, non-citizen voting, even year elections More democratically elected bodies including the Police Review and Advisory Board High threshold to initiate a recall process Making city council a full time position so that those in student loan forgiveness programs aren't required to take a second job in order to serve while staying in good standing. <p>All the best, Dan Totten</p>
12/4/2023	Dan Totten	Email	
			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>As a Cambridge resident for over 15 years, went to the Graduate School of Design at Harvard and a career based in this vibrant city, I feel I am deeply connected with Cambridge. Moreover, I am currently raising a first-grader attending a Cambridge public school. All these made us proudly call Cambridge home.</p> <p>I am writing to express my unwavering support for maintaining the current City Manager form of government.</p> <p>Under the leadership of our present City Manager, Mr. Huang, significant strides have been made toward enhancing the livability of our city. Notably, there has been a marked increase in bike lanes annually, alongside the expansion of parks and sidewalks. All these have made Cambridge so livable without a car. As a mother of a young boy, I am particularly grateful for the city's efforts in upgrading playgrounds and parks. These improvements have provided engaging and enjoyable spaces for children to spend time after school.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my perspective.</p> <p>Warm regards, Ling Zeng</p>
12/5/2023	Ling Zeng	Email	

12/5/2023	Noah Spies	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I appreciate the work the charter review committee is undertaking to update Cambridge's institutions. I am writing to urge the committee keep a City Manager form of government. While I've had my doubts about how representative past City Managers have been of the city's interests, I think the solution is to improve the hiring and oversight processes, rather than injecting more politics into the city's top managerial position.</p> <p>The current City Manager exemplifies how such a process can bring in a professional, thoughtful and responsive leader who listens and incorporates feedback from all of Cambridge and not just the narrow slice which elected him. His regular report-outs and annual review process show a manager working for all of us, willing to receive feedback and eager to work with the Council in a way that an elected Mayor likely wouldn't - these reports and reviews should be formalized and the current system largely kept intact.</p> <p>Thank you, Noah Spies</p>
12/5/2023	Edward Sung	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager, Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you, Edward Sung</p>
12/5/2023	Jaclyn Chai, Bob Hsiung	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>We write to show our support for keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager, Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you, Jaclyn Chai Bob Hsiung</p>
12/5/2023	Phoebe Kosman	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>Hello, and thank you for your work on this important issue. Ahead of tonight's meeting, I'm writing to voice my support for keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager, Mr. Huang has done a terrific job responding to the needs of residents and to creating a more responsive city government, and is best placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>With thanks and best wishes, Phoebe Kosman</p>
12/5/2023	Isabelle Woollacott	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee Members,</p> <p>As a Cambridge resident, recent college graduate, and healthcare worker, I'd like to share my support for the necessary shift to a Mayor-Council system, made up entirely of resident-elected officials. The City Manager position has proven to be designed in a way that buffers the City from resident concerns and can operate without accountability to residents. Boston, with nearly 7% as many residents, can function on an elected Mayor-Council system, so why can't Cambridge? Anyone with as much municipal power as the City Manager, should be directly elected by the people, not hired internally.</p> <p>I'd also like to share my support of a Police Review Advisory Board made up of community members. Not only is there a lack of accountability to the people from the City Manager, but also from the police, and that accountability is essential to a safe City. This was especially apparent in the months following the murder of Arif Sayed Faisal by Cambridge Police, where the outrages and constant organizing of community members were ignored by the City Manager. We must allow citizens to decide what is just in our community, and to support initiatives such as genuine funding for HEART and increased police interaction with residents, especially young people and marginalized community members.</p> <p>This directly relates to the need for a Resident Assembly as well, to increase community engagement in municipal processes and to return more power to the people. This assembly should be made up of 50-60 residents, where if a 2/3 consensus is reached by the Resident Assembly a decision should go directly to a vote by the community.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and I hope we can see a future with increased democratic capabilities and community engagement in the City of Cambridge.</p> <p>Sincerely, Isabelle Woollacott</p>
12/5/2023	Andrew Natenshon	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee and City Council,</p> <p>I wanted to write in support of the current City Manager form of government. Cambridge is in a privileged position with significant resources and a well run infrastructure. The current system allows the City Council to focus on political issues while optimizing for a City Manager focused on operational excellence.</p> <p>Yi-An has exemplified this, making important progress on afterschool programs and keeping Cambridge running smoothly.</p> <p>Thank you, Andrew Natenshon (father of two students in CPS)</p>
12/5/2023	Jesse Baer	Email	<p>Dear Committee Members,</p> <p>I support a strong mayor system, so I was elated to hear that the balance of opinion among you has shifted in that direction. Others weren't so glad. It's readily apparent that supporters of the Plan E charter have mounted a last minute all-out campaign to defend it. I imagine this puts you under a lot of pressure, but I hope you will stand firm.</p> <p>As it happens, those now advocating to preserve the status quo are inadvertently making a strong case for change. Their arguments tend to focus on outcomes. Cambridge is on a good track, they say, and would be doing worse if we didn't have a city manager, insulated from electoral politics.</p> <p>Now, I don't actually agree that things are going well. But let's assume you do. The rest of the argument probably sounds straightforward and common sense enough. But that is precisely why it is so corrosive.</p> <p>In a democracy, elections are not a nuisance or a distraction. They are fundamental to the very substance of governance. Democratic politics doesn't always feel good, look good, or even lead to the best outcome. It's messy, it's ugly, it's divisive and inefficient.</p> <p>Given all this, it can be easy to wonder, why do we do this to ourselves? Isn't all this fighting and politicking exhausting? Wouldn't it be easier to just hand it over to someone who could disregard the ever shifting political winds, cut through all the mess, and just make things work?</p> <p>That's the promise of the strongman. It's a message that may well get Donald Trump re-elected next year. And it's also the argument being made by defenders of Plan E, as much as they'd hate the comparison. Especially given the racist history of arguments for this form of government, the comparison is, and frankly should be, inescapable.</p> <p>My formative political experience was as a CRLS student, trying to get the City Council to lower the municipal voting age so that high schoolers could vote. It was formative because it taught me about the power of organizing, but also how much the system was rigged against change. Because even though we got the City Council to move from rejecting our proposal 6-3, to approving a modified version by 8-1 the following year, it was a home rule petition, and it proceeded to die at the State House without even the dignity of a hearing.</p> <p>I went off to college and it took me about two decades to get involved in local politics again. And now, having done so, I've quickly been reminded of how comprehensively the system is rigged against change and structured to discourage democratic participation. Volunteering for a candidate in this last cycle, I was repeatedly confronted with the challenge of motivating people to care. Why bother participating when the real power is vested in someone beyond the reach of democratic accountability?</p> <p>It's a good question, and one I found myself asking just earlier today. This is the second letter I'm writing today. In the first one, I asked the City Council to insist that Manager Huang engage in good faith to finalize a contract with Cambridge HEART. His willingness to disregard the Council's earlier resolution calling on him to do so, and his choice to skip a recently scheduled Council hearing, drives home to me that there are fundamental problems with this position transcending the personal qualities of anyone who might hold it. Mr. Huang may well be just about the best person we could hope to serve in his current role, and I sincerely hope he will stay in city government regardless of what happens. He's certainly a far cry from his predecessor, who seemed to take pleasure in flouting the will of the people he served. And yet, in the end, he still privileges his own preferences and biases over the popular will, because that is the essential nature of his job.</p> <p>I mentioned above that I don't actually accept the premise that things are going well in this city. I was born here almost 40 years ago. In that time, I've watched the vibrant diverse city I love be slowly drained of everything that made it vital and unique. I don't think it's too late to save this city, but I think it begins by reviving our democracy, and re-engaging the populace in the work of self-governance. We don't have the power to reform the home rule process, but we can give the voters of Cambridge real power in line with their peers in neighboring towns.</p> <p>That is a minimum, but we should go further still. I love the idea of Resident Assemblies vested with actual power, and as my personal history might suggest, I am thrilled that it would include 16 and 17 year olds. And as my support of HEART suggests, I think real police accountability is vital to make Cambridge a place of equal safety and justice for all its people, so I would strongly urge you to put forward an independent and empowered Police Review Accountability Board.</p> <p>I love this city. I don't want it to wither into a soulless enclave for rich people and upscale chain stores. But reinvigorating it starts with rejecting the narcotic logic of disenfranchisement. We can't determine what happens nationally next year, but we can model the direction we'd like things to go. I hope you'll choose democracy.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jesse Baer</p>
12/5/2023	Owen Elrif	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee Members,</p> <p>My name is Derek Etkin and I live on 109 Clay Street with my spouse and our two CPSD students. I am writing in support of a Mayor-Council form of government with a democratically elected executive (mayor). The current Plan E charter is one of the oldest municipal charters in the Commonwealth and is not equipped to respond democratically to the increasing challenges we face over housing, education, infrastructure, and police accountability.</p> <p>Unless I'm mistaken the city council hasn't rejected a city manager contract since Bob Healy got the job in 1981. The unelected City Manager position is strengthened by elected city councilors who are put in a position of supporting him/her or "getting on their bad side", and having their initiatives ignored. The system gives preference to the status quo and to citizens with the time and connections to build a relationship with the unelected executive ignoring the rest of us who are under the impression that our voice is heard during the election.</p> <p>Civic engagement at the municipal level in Cambridge is lower than it must be to build the city we need for everyone. I urge the committee to follow through on creating a Resident Assembly that is supported by City Hall with stipends and resources, and with the power to put decisions to the voters.</p> <p>Cambridge needs to have a police review advisory board who can independently investigate claims of police misconduct and order disciplinary action including and up to termination of employment of police department employees. This PRAB itself should be accountable and democratically-elected and not appointed by the city manager. Please recommend that the new charter includes the PRAB elected by voters.</p> <p>Derek Etkin</p>
12/5/2023	Ye Tan	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager, Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents, and is best-placed to continue that momentum. Currently, Cambridge city is very well run. Change to strong mayor system may do more damage than benefit the city as a whole.</p> <p>Thank you, Sincerely, Ye Tan</p>

			<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I'm writing to urge you to recommend a mayor-council form of government in your final report.</p> <p>The chief executive of our city should be elected by the people. Cambridge is one of only two remaining MA cities with a Plan E Charter (the other is Lowell). Cambridge has had this charter since it was adopted in 1940. It's been lawyer-scholarly dispensing with Plan E. Here are some examples of cities that already have: Medford operated under Plan E until 1988, Gloucester operated under Plan E until adoption of a home rule charter in 1974, and Revere adopted Plan B in 1965 after operating under Plan E.</p> <p>Please consider the anti-civil rights history behind the City Manager form of government presented by Kevin Hsu in his public comment. I was surprised to learn that multiple cities' transitions from mayor to city manager forms of government were supported by the KKK. But it makes sense that racist groups would want a system that takes voting power away from Black and other marginalized citizens. I've noticed many commenters who favor a manager-council system saying that the committee should take more time to study the issue and that we shouldn't make such a big change without having a more inclusive process. But they must be simply unaware that this committee was created exactly for that purpose through a long and painstaking process. You've all spent countless volunteer hours already and created numerous opportunities for public feedback - if people are frustrated they're only hearing about it now. I don't think that's a reason to scrap all your work and start from scratch! I'm frustrated that the city manager hasn't acted on finding HEART despite a clear order from the council, which is supposed to be the people's representative body. The other day, he skipped a hearing on the issue. I'm sure he had a good reason, but it's been two years now and he hasn't acted. The same thing happened with municipal broadband under our last manager. And there's nothing I can do to hold him accountable. I don't think an elected mayor would be able to hide from people's disapproval in the same way.</p> <p>None of the pro-mayor supporters have criticized this particular city manager. They have all had thoughtful systematic critiques of the city manager position itself. If the people of Cambridge like this city manager then I'm happy to tell you the Chief Administrator and Financial officer (CA/FO) positions will be hiring in 2026. And our current city manager could apply.</p> <p>Legally, the City Council is not allowed to tell any city employees what to do. All requests have to go through the City Manager. Because the City Manager controls the staff and resources, the City Council can't do much at all in terms of the operations of the city. Even for simple requests like fixing potholes. The City Council has to contact the City Manager to get to get the problem fixed. Violations of s. 107 of MGL, c. 43: The Council may not interfere with manager's duties and responsibilities in matters of appointments and removals and may not give orders to any subordinate of the city manager... punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. Also subject to removal from office and loss of eligibility to "ever again" seek any elective city office.</p> <p>Legally, the city manager can say no to the policy orders. They can just ignore them (aka the "pocket veto"). Sure, sometimes, a policy order can evolve into an ordinance, which is law. (After the city manager failed to adequately respond to policy orders around bike lanes, the city council eventually passed an ordinance). However, City Councilors are often squeamish about actually passing an ordinance, so they'll pass a policy order instead. Passing an ordinance is a multi-month process taking multiple city council meetings. If for every ask the city has to make it an ordinance, does it really sound like the city manager works for the city council?</p> <p>What's stopping the City Manager (supposedly an apolitical position) after leaving office to work to lobby for the special interests that they were tasked to reign in as the executive with control of nearly a BILLION dollar budget? The city manager seems like the radical option to me! The compromise position is the creation of the Chief Administrator & Financial officer positions under the mayor so that the city benefits from professional skills of these two positions while the mayor directs the vision for the city.</p> <p>The pro-Manager side seems to hold on to this notion that collaborative goal setting is not possible without a city manager. Why not add into the charter that the mayor and/or their staff is required to attend every city council meeting? If the mayor understands what the council's decision making process is, tensions are less likely to flare up. The council should provide the mayor a quarterly performance review, and the end-of-year performance review of the mayor should be made public to the voters. I am looking forward to a mayor who takes this city into the next phase of growth by 2026.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Maritza Soto</p>
12/5/2023	Maritza Soto	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I very strongly support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: bringing increased transparency to the City Manager's progress against their goals).</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Molly Howard</p>
12/5/2023	Molly Howard	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I am writing to express my support for the current city manager system. As a homeowner in Cambridge for more than 12 years the current system is both professional and democratic and has worked very well for our city. Cambridge has continued to thrive and improve in many ways under past and current city managers and it makes me proud to call this city my home.</p> <p>Thank you!</p> <p>Chunmin Chen</p>
12/5/2023	Chunmin Chen	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee Members,</p> <p>Thank you for your service on behalf of the people of Cambridge. You've grappled with important questions pertaining to our form of government with seriousness and focus. I am writing to suggest you consider the following:</p> <p>Maintain the strong city manager form of government, with a mayor selected by the Council from among its members. This form of government provides effective democratic representation by ensuring that the council has oversight of the city manager, reflecting the will of the voters more fully because of our proportional representation elections. The city manager can then use their expertise to effectively implement the will of the Council. In my experience the mayor as Chair of the School Committee has also been able to effectively serve as a bridge between the City Council and the School Committee, in part because they are a member of both bodies. This has helped the City better support children by working in a coordinated, collaborative fashion.</p> <p>Consider extending the length of terms in office. Writing as a School Committee member recently elected to a third term, I know first hand how much time and focus is taken up by the campaign season. It is important for voters to meet candidates through forums, other events, and one-on-one campaigning, and that is very time consuming. Two year terms leave a too-short window of time for newly elected members to get up to speed, and for new committees typically composed of both new and returning members to establish relationships, form subcommittees and engage in the work, before needing to plunge back into campaigning.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration. Please reach out to me if I can be helpful</p> <p>Best wishes,</p> <p>David Weinstein Cambridge School Committee Member</p>
12/5/2023	David Weinstein	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Crandall Peeler</p>
12/5/2023	Crandall Peeler	Email	<p>Good afternoon all,</p> <p>After I did some research about strong manager model vs. major model, I believe the strong city manager may be better trained and more efficient.</p> <p>I support the current city manager.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Jin</p>
12/5/2023	Jin	Email	<p>December 5, 2023</p> <p>Dear members of the Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>As a resident of Mid Cambridge and a local businessperson who has worked with the city in many capacities of the past 5 decades, I have serious concerns regarding what I understand to be this Committee's proposal to recommend a change to a strong mayor form of government.</p> <p>I have not been following the committee's work closely, which I also understand has been difficult to do for members of the public. I endorse any effort to review the effectiveness of our local government from time to time. That is what we do in our biennial elections of Councilors. That is what we do when the Council selects a new City Manager. In my opinion, our local governance is very democratic, principally because of PR voting and at-large representation on the council.</p> <p>From my experience working with many municipalities in Massachusetts, our current form of government works relatively well. There is robust debate on most every significant issue, not unlike a town meeting. There is easy access to Councilors to discuss one's concerns and opinions on pending issues. And while there is consideration and debate and often reconsideration from time to time on a wide range of civic issues, there is a City Manager whose role is to execute the Councilors' collective vision and provide the day-to-day operations that we need to have our city run smoothly and meet our needs as residents.</p> <p>An elected strong mayor form of government would accomplish no improvement over the current situation. And yes, there are improvements to be made as always. But to my mind the two areas of critical importance in good government are:</p> <p>A Council that establishes a responsible vision for the city, sets expectations for the city management to accomplish that vision, and evaluates the city manager's performance and success with appropriate frequency. We need to provide our elected councilors with more training and support so that they can perform their duties at the highest level.</p> <p>A City Manager who works well with the Council, selects and supports highly competent departmental operations, sets exemplary standards of service to the citizens and taxpayers, and holds departmental managers accountable for responsible and effective operations at all levels.</p> <p>By changing our form to a strong mayor, elected at-large every two or four years, diminishes the role of the elected councilors and subjects government operation to a biennial or quadrennial political process that will interfere with long term management operations. Most concerning to me, an elected strong mayor will inevitably use the resources and administration of the mayor's office to favorably influence re-election. Lastly, the probability that we would be governed by a mayor, popularly elected by the slimmest of margins and perhaps without demonstrated excellence in organizational leadership, is in fact not very democratic and threatens what we have come to accept as a highly successful municipal operation, as complicated as many of the large corporations and institutions at home in our city.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>George Metzger</p>
12/5/2023	George Metzger	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee and City Council,</p> <p>As a recently-named US citizen, I feel privileged that my new status as a Cambridge voter gives me a voice, however small, in the naming of our city. I'm writing this letter to apply my voice to the defense of our current model of administration: a partnership between the City Manager and the City Council. I don't see that we would be better-served with a Strong Mayor model.</p> <p>I became a US Citizen in large part because I love living in Cambridge. We get so much here: amazing services, dedicated civil servants, low tax rates, good schools, and of course, unparalleled investment in our public buildings, parks, and infrastructure. It seems to me that the "City Manager / City Council" form of government is at the heart of what we value in Cambridge for the following reasons:</p> <p>The City Manager takes the long view of what's best for Cambridge. In the alternate Strong Mayor model, our leadership would be distracted from their core job of leading the city every election cycle. The City Manager is a non-political position. The City Manager is answerable to the Council - and thereby to the whole electorate - whereas a Strong Mayor is only answerable to their small constituency of voters.</p> <p>The City Manager position attracts candidates who are seasoned administrators (like Yi-An Huang). Cambridge is a world-renowned center with a diverse population and billion-dollar budget, and the job of running the city is complex. We need an administrator with deep experience and these important qualifications are not at all guaranteed by an electoral process, but they can be sought by the Council during the hiring process, and evaluated over time.</p> <p>The shared leadership of the City Manager / City Council is efficient. In this model, the City Councilors establish a strategic vision for the city, while the City Manager and professional staff work out the administrative and operational details. Everyone is bringing their respective skills to the table.</p> <p>The shared leadership of the City Manager / City Council is a system of checks and balances, particularly with respect to the budget. The City Manager ideally acts as a mediator between the political imperative to spend money in the short term, and the administrative imperative to keep our finances healthy and credit rating secure over the long term.</p> <p>A Strong Mayor would necessarily be the result of a minority vote. Of the 100,000 people in Cambridge, only about 60,000 are eligible voters, and of those, only 20,000 historically vote, meaning that a Strong Mayor would represent, at best, only a narrow 20% of our community. And because incumbency is a powerful determinant in local elections, a Strong Mayor's small group of supporters could be making decisions on our behalf over the course of several election cycles - or decades.</p> <p>I commend the Council for pursuing a Charter Review, and see value in this kind of self-examination. But when the review is complete, I urge the Council and the Charter Review Committee to recommit to the shared leadership of the Manager / Council model, since it has served us so well.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Sarah Roszler</p>
12/5/2023	Sarah Roszler	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Sara Kimmel</p>
12/5/2023	Sara Kimmel	Email	

12/5/2023	Mike Goodman	Email	<p>Dear Charter Committee Review members,</p> <p>I'm writing in favor of mayor-council form of government, in place of the council-manager system we currently have. I've been a resident in Cambridge for 12 years and in that time I have found local government to be opaque, confusing and exclusionary. I've heard many others echo these same sentiments. I'm sure this status quo is working out for some people who happen to be connected or privy to insider circles, it is also an affront to the ideals of democracy, and leaves most citizens of the city politically disengaged. Long term this hurts the city as a whole much more than it helps the few who benefit. By having a mayor who is accountable to the electorate, Cambridge will finally have a true public representative with executive decision making power, as opposed to an appointed CEO who can hide behind layers of bureaucracy. This in turn will activate our residential base to become more involved, and make Cambridge a more vibrant and inclusive city, while keeping us on the cutting edge of relevancy. Most cities in the commonwealth of Massachusetts have long ago realized the benefit of this system as opposed to plan E, including Medford, Gloucester and Revere, who all moved away from the system last century in favor of council-mayor.</p> <p>On a similar note, I want to also express my support for Resident Assemblies, and an elected Police Advisory Review Board. My reasons are very much in line with my reasons for supporting a council-mayor system - I want to live in a democratic and active Cambridge, where residents feel they have a stake in how the city operates. I do not want to live in a bureaucracy that functions more like a corporation than a civic entity. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Mike Goodman</p>
12/5/2023	Patricia Wagner	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I wanted to write regarding a topic that will be heard today - I support keeping the current City Manager form of government. A strong mayor system would mean the City's main executive would no longer be chosen for their managerial talent by a majority of our democratically-elected Council.</p> <p>The benefit of the current system is evidenced by our current City Manager. Mr. Huang has made progress on issues that matter to residents (for example: expanding afterschool), and is best-placed to continue that momentum. I do not believe a strong mayor system would result in meaningful, day-to-day results for our residents.</p> <p>Thank you, -Patricia Wagner</p>
12/5/2023	Charles Mitchell	Email	<p>Dear Charter Review Committee,</p> <p>I write briefly in favor of a change to an elected mayor form of government, away from an unelected city manager. I ask this as a supporter of democracy.</p> <p>Best, Charles Mitchell</p>
1/31/2023	Robert Winters		<p>Hope when the process is complete, there might be a provision for redress of grievances. 1846 charter had a provision like this.</p> <p>Knows a history of the charter/city and proportional representation - maybe some modifications might be necessary</p>

Appendix H: coUrbanize Comments

Question	Date	Who	Comment
How can the city better engage with and involve its residents in decision-making processes			
	Sept 12, 2023	Ashley S	more transparent! Don't publish documents on your website that talk about strenuous guidelines for ARPA program selections, but then make it difficult to find the actual program accountability structure. Don't share federal ARPA documentation on your webpage, if City approved programs and/or employees have no intention of upholding Federal guidance. Similarly, don't train City professionals to talk about City resources and then allow/tell them to not connect residents to those services. There is so much talk about tenants rights here. Be specific about how the City intends to uphold tenant rights, in this case, specifically as it pertains to Federally funded-City controlled programs designed to support Cambridge residents.
	May 13, 2023	Ausra Kubilius	OMBUDSMAN!
	August 17, 2023	Candy Liang	More public discussion forums
	May 09, 2023	Charlene A	Community organizing including regular free, outdoor events. Listening to all voices, not just those with the most power, influence or money.
	May 12, 2023	Ciaran Hedderma	Trust elected officials to actually represent citizens. Participatory budgeting and online input are great for small-scale things like park improvements, but in a city of 118,000, there is no substitute for effective representation. Not everything requires community input (why do we have to hold community meetings for minor zoning petitions?), but engaging public events where people have the chance to talk face-to-face with their representatives are a great way to make sure that officials get to hear from a cross-section of the city, not just the people with the time to make calls and set up appointments.
	May 14, 2023	Dave Halperin	We have a lot of community input processes that disproportionately favor an unrepresentative slice of the city that is privileged enough to have time to attend meetings. We should rely less on that and more on processes that have controls to ensure they're representative like scientifically valid surveys or sortition. Additionally, elected officials ran on a platform and got votes and that should count as representative community input in a stronger way than who showed up to a meeting on a weeknight and they should have more leeway execute on that platform without needing to constantly go back to the community.
	Jul 06, 2023	Eric Walk	I think there's an opportunity to open up committee and commission roles more often and more broadly. I feel like every time I go look, there's never an opening on one I'm interested in or qualified to join.
	Jun 28, 2023	Evan M	Walk the walk when it comes to transparency and accountability instead of postering and passing the buck. The most egregious example of this is the Cambridge Police still refusing to release the names of the officers involved in shooting and killing Faisal. I can not respect my local government when they actively conspire to obstruct justice and information from me. This jeopardizes my safety and is ever so cruel.
	Jul 25, 2023	James Mahoney	This is a tough question. Since most of us are busy living, we have little time to keep tabs on the early stages of city proposals and developments. Consequently, I think most of us are in "react" mode when it comes to City proposals and programs. The City does a good job with its daily email newsletter. Perhaps the Council could issue something like that in the week following its meeting, to include an *objective* synopsis of what was discussed and what the outcomes were. That might help us to know earlier what's being considered or proposed. Generally, improving and modernizing the City website would help, including a more intuitive user experience. For example, in my experience, trying to search on most things returns old or mostly irrelevant results, and doesn't seem to source all of the information that the site holds (e.g., searching on a Council proposal number never seems to work). Although not a City responsibility, the loss of a true Cambridge Chronicle is a blow to knowing at least some of what's going on in the city.
	Jun 15, 2023	Jared Batchelder	Wards for a hyper local touchpoint and voice
	May 12, 2023	Jen Schwartz	I have found in my community, that people often accept that nobody cares about their opinion, that organizations (companies, usually) don't change because of feedback. Unless genuinely and directly prompted to give feedback, they don't offer it. Surveys like this are a great way to get it, people just need to find out about it without having to be in the circle of politically active lobbyists. Mailings may be wasteful, but they work, and when it's this important, it's worth it. Posters, ads online? I think people care a lot about Cambridge, they just don't know if anyone would listen to them and thus don't reach out.
	May 08, 2023	JOHN REARDO	Do away with PR voting. Divide the city into 5 districts. each district would elect its own councilor, 5 is enough for me but if 9 are required then elect 4 at large. This way each district would have a go-to councilor to take your issues to.
	Aug 15, 2023	Kari Jorgenson	Contact residents when proposals would impact their neighborhood and respect feedback.
	Jun 13, 2023	Kelly Dolan	The biggest barrier to participation is accessing up-to-date and current information. City websites are outdated and clunky. Emails to City Admins and Councilors go unanswered. City Council meetings are 4 to 5 hours long, meeting minutes are poorly compiled, Councilor updates are very slanted.
	Jun 08, 2023	Kelly Dugas	Reaching out to the people who would be affected by such decisions is a great start. Reaching out to the people instead of Harvard University.
	Jun 27, 2023	I c	Stop these incredibly divisive and expensive "plans" before they are implemented and actually listen to residents, not just pander.
	Jun 07, 2023	Mark Goodman	Contact residents directly when projects are being considered in their neighborhood. Be responsive to residents and taxpayers.
	Jun 27, 2023	N Leone	Neighborhood flyers/ posters/ mailings notifying residents of city meetings and issues being discussed.
	Aug 15, 2023	Paola Bronson	Expand the city newsletter to be a centralized source of info for residents:- Include mail-in surveys to find out what residents think- Include a table where each department provides bullet points to communicate challenge(s), and potential solutions, and who the resident should contact if they have concerns (including neighborhood-specific contacts)- List upcoming discussion opportunities- Offer quarterly "office hours" for leading city officials, and biweekly office hours for city councilors - include the time/place on the newsletter. Alternate between in-person and online office hours so that people that cannot attend in person are included.
	May 13, 2023	Patrick Barrett	The city already does a great job when they wish to. BEUDO was a great example of an incredibly poor outreach. The council seems to be somewhat arbitrary about when process is necessary and CDD is too lacking in opinion and direction to be taken seriously or lead. There ought to be a better flow chart of how process in the city should work and make it the responsibility of citizens to engage or not.

	May 05, 2023	Rachel Plummer	Meet people where they are: not everyone can participate in community meetings or City Council meetings because of childcare issues, not being able to miss work, speaking a language other than English, etc. Also, not everyone feels like their voice is valued, since they don't see change come from sharing their opinion. Furthermore, some people feel alienated at community meetings/hearings (for example, at meetings about the AHO amendments, there was a lot of negative sentiments being spread about people who live in public housing). The city can work on engaging with people where they live, where they work, and where they spend their leisure time (in parks, housing developments, community centers, social service organizations, food pantries etc.). People need more civics education, education about why their voice matters and how they can engage with their government. We only hear from a tiny minority at public meetings, a group who is generally like minded and similar in demographics - this must change.
	Jun 29, 2023	Sam Bosbach	I think the city already does quite a bit of outreach and communication to give residents voice in government. Most complaints I hear tend to be outcome oriented, not outreach oriented. "They already knew what they were going to do when they had the community meeting/they're just letting us vent, not listening" I think the city strikes a fair balance between community engagement (meetings, committees, budgeting, etc) and administrative action. Too much community engagement disproportionately raises up the loudest, angriest voices and stifles action.
	May 17, 2023	Sergio Coronado	Neighborhood representation on city council matters. People are going to be motivated by their neighborhood needs then the City's needs. Lumping us all in and hoping that an online survey will capture everything will often just target a small motivated group.
	Jun 22, 2023	Steven Darwin	Clearer understanding of how the city policy makers receive comment/feedback - as to what matters. Clearer understanding of what it takes to make your voice heard.
Is there a particular problem with the Cambridge City Government that you think a new City Charter could solve			
	Sept 12, 2023	Ashley S	How can the city take a multifaceted approach to supporting housing needs? Make public and easily available the means of accountability, and procedures for unforeseen situations. If a landlord refuses to take the steps necessary to receive ARAP EPP and/or COVID-19 Housing Stabilization award funds, what else will the city do to help the Cambridge resident in need? Is the City content with residents experiencing harm and homelessness as a result of seeking the programs already in place? Be transparent in applications, on websites, and with City professionals about what the lengths the City is willing to take to support residents through unexpected difficult times.
	May 13, 2023	Ausra Kubilius	Please create an ombudperson position.
	May 09, 2023	Charlene A	Funding and support for organizations such as Cambridge Heart
	May 12, 2023	Ciaran Hedderley	City Council is basically an advisory board, and elected through a confusing process. Most of the literature calls this 'proportional representation', but that would suggest that voters would be allowed to choose a platform with a slate of candidates, rather than ranking candidates with (often very similar) platforms from a nonpartisan list. I would rather see a true proportional representation where candidates affiliate with a platform. Plenty of municipalities use this system successfully, because it allows voters to choose candidates based on local priorities, rather than trying to learn about all 22 (in last year's election) candidates, and somehow rank them. I don't believe that the council-manager form of government is right for Cambridge. I'd like to see an executive that is accountable to citizens, and an election process that makes it easy for citizens to choose candidates who share their priorities.
	Jun 14, 2023	Daniel Arredondo	We need to abolish our current way the city is being run. We need to elect a strong mayor and reduce the power of the city councilors.
	May 14, 2023	Dave Halperin	More democratic budgeting process, whether via a strong mayor or other change. I appreciate the need for technocratic expertise as well but the process should be less insulated from voters. The idea that the council can impose democratic will on the city manager via threat of termination does not seem to work out in practice.
	Jul 06, 2023	Eric Walk	The city has run very well and efficiently I'm the 12 years I've lived here.
	Jun 28, 2023	Evan M	Really not a fan of the weak mayoral system. The City Manager position seems too powerful to be this far removed from voters and without enough checks and balances. I'm a Cambridge native and am in strong favor of restructuring the management of our city to eliminate this position and be under the control of a Mayor directly elected by, and directly accountable to, us, the residents.
	Aug 07, 2023	George Mabry	Create districts with councillors assigned to represent that district.
	Jul 25, 2023	James Mahoney	The current Council/Manager structure works well, particularly since we have had effective Managers who have paid attention to the long-term financial health of the city. The two-year term for Councilors means that the Council make-up changes frequently. So though there is relative consistency over multiple terms, single-issue groups are able to disproportionately influence and staff the Council. For these reasons, and because the Manager typically serves over many election cycles, we benefit from a pragmatic, middle-of-the-road Manager who can keep her/his eye on the overall picture and trends, and can temper some of the more aggressive initiatives while advancing City and Council objectives. To put it another way, we need the Manager to be a voice of reason, balancing desires and goals with practical realities and the overall health of the city. I believe that the City has been fortunate in this regard over at least the past four City Managers, and with the current Manager.
	Jun 15, 2023	Jared Batchelder	"At large" councilors do not meet the hyper local needs of neighborhoods. There should be wards. I could win North Cambridge running on the issue of Rindge Ave traffic alone.
	May 08, 2023	JOHN REARDO	The city government is too big. In a city our size, we do not need full-time city councilors and staffers for each. Councilors should be part-time and compensated by stipend, not salaries and benefits.
	Aug 15, 2023	Kari Jorgenson	I agree with creating districts.
	Jun 13, 2023	Kelly Dolan	More communication to residents and business owners, easier ways to keep up with city and council business.
	Jun 08, 2023	Kelly Dugas	A Mayor elected BY the People of Cambridge and a City Councilor elected for each section of Cambridge instead of all being At Large.
	Jun 27, 2023	l c	Perhaps we could actually ask ALL residents about major changes that the CDD and city council "say" we have all asked for? The council members are not representing us all, as less than 1/3 of residents even bother voting, and many of them "change" their minds after elections are over. The fact that the current council is now trying to gain further control is quite worrisome.
	Jun 07, 2023	Mark Goodman	Residents should have more say in the projects that the city undertakes in their neighborhood. Posting signs on utility polls is not a serious attempt at outreach. There needs to be more transparency and accountability with decision making.
	Jun 27, 2023	N Leone	Focus on creating a city that promotes a healthy middle class by providing affordable housing and health care. We who work at local institutions can't afford or find either at present. Cost of living is higher than middle income salaries. Academic and professional salaries.

	Aug 15, 2023	Paola Bronson	<.002% of residents answered this survey. With each city newsletter, provide a mail in survey (no stamp required) asking residents about their view. Be inclusive and provide the questions/answers in different languages, and allow write-in answers. No deadline, provide a questionnaire with each newsletter. The City Council can best represent Residents if they understand their problems and perspectives.
	May 13, 2023	Patrick Barrett	Prior to the Healy administration council positions were part time. We should return to this. Further the position of council aide never existed and doesn't need to exist. They are not regulated by the charter and thus act as proxies for activities that would otherwise be illegal for councilors to participate in. The charter review itself is promulgated by an aggressive few councilors who see their positions more akin to state legislators than a board of directors.
	May 12, 2023	Pete X	Yes. Elected officials do not have enough power and responsibility in the present form. Over the years, they have allowed the City Manager to operate almost entirely without oversight, creating the situation where he (and it has always been he) can often ignore requests from the council.
	Jun 29, 2023	Sam Bosbach	More oversight over the unelected City Manager.
	May 17, 2023	Sergio Coronado	Ideally a strong mayor system and not a city manager. This makes it difficult for residents to feel involved in government process in Cambridge because it's run like a business and not a democratic process. Additionally City Council elections at large also contribute to this, the City council should be elected via neighborhood representation
	Jun 22, 2023	Steven Darwin	A mandate that new developers or prospective new developers work to accommodate local business. The last thing Cambridge wants is to become a replicate of any airport USA.
Share any other ideas, comments or feedback here. Or elaborate on one of your previous answers			
	Sept 12, 2023	Ashley S	Cambridge residents are experiencing harm and homelessness resulting from limited action from City professional when landlords decide to actively discriminate against tenants who have been awarded ARPA Eviction Prevention and/or COVID-19 Housing Stabilization Funds by refusing to provide the information necessary to receive funds in favor of evicting these Cambridge residents. I was told by City professionals that there were many people having similar experiences. Yet I was told by the person in the City Hall finance department, that they had never heard that landlords were refusing to take the steps to receive funds. I asked them where is the document that explains what should happen if a landlord refuses to take the funds. They said that such a document does not exist. MAKE THAT DOCUMENT EXSIST!!! Or be honest with your residents about not actually being concerned with their well-being and having somewhere to live in hard times.
	May 13, 2023	Ausra Kubilius	Traffic flow and safety has become a mess, especially in North Cambridge. Please have an impartial study of such before building. I'm less concerned with height than I am with location, a safe one that doesn't impede traffic flow.
	May 12, 2023	Ciaran Hedderma	I strongly feel that the electoral system in Cambridge is outdated, and an equal mix of proportionally elected at-large seats (elected from issues-based slates) and local members would yield better results. That way, you know who to contact when something in your neighborhood needs to be fixed, but there are also people on the council with a mandate from the whole city, to ensure that the big picture doesn't get ignored.
	Jun 14, 2023	Daniel Arredondo	The city needs to do a better job in getting voters engaged in elections.
	May 14, 2023	Dave Halperin	I strongly support keeping our existing proportional representation system and hope we don't move to wards. PR ensures every election is competitive & almost every voter has an elected councilor they voted for as one of their top preferences. The current system allows councilors to get most of their votes from one geographical area and we can see that usually doesn't happen so it doesn't make sense to impose wards when voters don't seem to see geography of the city as a primary issue. Ward based councilors would likely focus more on protecting the area they represent at the expense of focusing on citywide needs.
	Jun 28, 2023	Evan M	I also think there needs to be more advanced notice and mechanisms for feedback (and then responding too and hopefully actually incorporating) from residents before implementing policies and budgets.
	Jul 25, 2023	James Mahoney	Cambridge has a very vocal, highly visible, very progressive cohort, which is well-represented on the City Council. But despite their thinking so, that cohort does not represent the entire spectrum of city residents, and may not actually even represent the majority of the citizenry beyond the core that votes in city elections. Many of the progressive policies and ideas are laudable, but the vigorous pursuit of them is very often not clearly thought-through. The result is that unintended consequences seem to frequently crop up as these policies are implemented. It is also not unusual for proponents to dismiss or disregard known downsides of some substantial initiatives because of their view that the ends justify any means. It would be really great if we can figure out a way to get more people to vote. I think two main reasons that people don't vote are that they don't think they know enough about the candidates and issues to vote intelligently, and that they don't think their vote will matter.
	May 08, 2023	JOHN REARDO	Keep a strong city manager form of governance. It provides better fiscal accountability. Do away with PR voting. Move to district-elected councilors and at large councilors. We don't need fully staffed full-time councilors in a city our size, a very costly and unnecessary expense should be a stipend only.
	Jun 13, 2023	Kelly Dolan	Given the vast diversity in our community and our poor voter turnout having a city manager provides a good check and balance to the power of the Council. I also have come to appreciate the PR system of voting, but would like to see much more education to constituents for how it works.
	Jun 27, 2023	l c	Cambridge is already one of the most densely populated cities in the country, trying to add tens of thousands of more residents before we are even able to keep up the current infrastructure is a mistake. Our environment is greatly suffering and the livability of the city is diminishing. Perhaps we cannot solve the national housing crisis on our own? Over-development and expanding universities/colleges are causing the crunch, turns out not everyone who wants to live here can, and those with the most \$ seem to win out, forcing out many long-term residents.
	Jun 07, 2023	Mark Goodman	The city is profligate in its spending of taxpayer money and beholden to ideological interests rather than the people who live in its neighborhoods. It's truly amazing to see how the city spends money to needlessly change neighborhood driving/parking patterns.
	Jun 27, 2023	N Leone	Incentivize developers to build high quality middle income housing (not market rate, that is too expensive for many professional/ academic middle class workers).
	Aug 15, 2023	Paola Bronson	- Provide a tutorial session explaining the main concepts and nuances of the existing charter, the main concepts of how the city government in Cambridge currently functions, and the changes that are being considered. This can be provided both in person, with Q&A at the end, and as an online video (with a person to contact if you have questions).- Continue to provide ways for residents to express their views, not only online, but also in-person and via mail.- The charter review is an opportunity to educate our students. Provide a video that teachers can show at the upper elementary/middle school/high school levels, along with some suggested discussion questions. Give the students a mechanism for suggesting changes (e.g. a student-specific questionnaire with some open-ended questions), so they feel involved at an early age

	May 13, 2023	Patrick Barrett	We should keep the manager/council system. Further we should return the position of councilor to part time, eliminate the position of aide, and break up CDD into departments of zoning/development, community, and economic development respectively.
	Jun 29, 2023	Sam Bosbach	Keep the current election system and educate residents to encourage turnout. More online modes for feedback that are better advertised. Explain decisions in city-scale terms, rather than national or global-scale terms. Partner with state and federal officials on major issues, while continuing to do what we can locally to improve (don't let "we can't solve big problems locally" arguments stifle action). Collect more data and increase transparency around resident opinions on local politics, modes of transportation, ownership/renting, etc.
	Jun 22, 2023	Steven Darwin	Some really big money is starting to influence the city that I have been in and brought my family up in over the last 40 years. If we strive to be a unique diverse culture then some new boundaries need to be set. I for one am simply considering leaving. It's gotten to be too much.
Think of your number one concern in Cambridge, what is it What do you think is stopping Cambridge from addressing this			
	Sept 12, 2023	Ashley S	Landlords discriminating (Chapter 151B section 4 subsection 10) against tenants who have been awarded Cambridge ARPA Eviction Prevention Program and/or Cambridge COVID-19 Housing Stabilization Program, by refusing to complete documents necessary to receive the award funds for the resident. Lack of accountability and oversight on ARPA funded programs approved by the City Council/City Manager, has left City professionals without alternative means of supporting residents who have already been approved for housing support. As a result, Cambridge residents are being unjustly sent to housing court for eviction AFTER being notified about steps to receive award funding, without legal representation, without information from City professionals, while being asked to sign documents contingent upon timelines controlled by the city – not the tenant.
	May 13, 2023	Ausra Kubilius	We need an ombudsperson--direly. As a member of the Cambridge community, I'd like to have an impartial person, with some authority, who responds to complaints/problems with some decisions by City officials. If Cambridge in Canada can do it, so can we: https://www.cambridge.ca/en/learn-about/ombudsman.aspx
	Jun 27, 2023	Brennan Waters	I think housing is my #1 concern. The rent is too high, the cost of condos is too high. High rent means that many of Cambridge's residents have to move out or live with more roommates than they wish. High prices for me means that when I save enough to buy a place, I likely won't be able to afford Cambridge.
	August 17, 2023	Candy Liang	Provide more affordable housing and support the homeless population
	May 09, 2023	Charlene A	Housing inequities: residents being displaced and y housed
	May 12, 2023	Ciaran Hedderm	Housing affordability. Not enough housing in the right places, and insufficient housing planning at the regional level. I don't think Cambridge can really address this on its own.
	Jun 14, 2023	Daniel Arredond	We need to allow for higher dense housing to be built in the city. Mix used buildings that include residential and are not only research/office towers. Makes no sense to only build commercial/office when we have a high demand for more affordable housing. We need to build taller structures in the city to accommodate the housing demand the city is facing. It's ludicrous that the average rent in Cambridge is at \$3000 a month. The primary obstacle to addressing it is the lack of clear policy that the city is putting forward.
	May 14, 2023	Dave Halperin	The number one issue, as consistently expressed by voters is housing. The primary obstacle to addressing it is lack of a clear policy leader for the city. Everyone agrees it's a priority but it's no one's job per se to introduce and get to yes on policies to address it and as a result it's much easier for things to not get done than get done.
	Jul 02, 2023	EM	Our city is spending vast amounts of money that could benefit everyone, on the small amount of perfectly-bled young knowledge workers who have no bulky tools to take to work, nor dependents. This feels inequitable, and like just another tax on people because they are poor, or caregivers, or not perfectly-abled.
	Jul 06, 2023	Eric Walk	Eliminating poverty is the main challenge we face. We need a mix of solutions, from universal basic income to free public transit and more to do it. What we lack is the money to do it all at once while maintaining city infrastructure (i. e. schools, parks, etc.)
	Jun 28, 2023	Evan M	Affordability! Housing and otherwise. The displacement of people by the wealthy (students, academics, biotech, ect) is really driving out so much of the deep seeded charm and wellbeing of this community for those who are here for only a few months-years.
	Aug 07, 2023	George Mabry	We need to have districts with a city councillor elected by and responsible for that district. Otherwise, who do you call with a concern? Cambridge is very diverse, and different parts of Cambridge have different concerns. Contacting a random councillor dilutes district concerns and doesn't require any councillor to represent that district's specific concerns. Having 9 councillors represent me effectively means no councillor represents me.
	Jul 25, 2023	James Mahoney	Very expensive, issue-driven programs and mandates to implement evidently pre-ordained solutions driven by narrowly focused true-believers, with no independent cost/benefit analysis to determine ahead of time whether the practical and overall community value is worth the investment. Some questions that appear not to be regularly and openly asked before plans are near-finalized include: What are we actually trying to accomplish? How much will it cost and how long will it take? Is this the best way to address the issue or are there other ways that would be more effective and/or less costly (in terms of both dollars and quality of life)? What is the opportunity cost (i.e., what won't the city be able to do because of the time and cost of the proposed action)? What sometimes stops the city from sober cost/benefit analysis is unquestioning acceptance that implementing some form of an aggressive straw proposal is inevitable. Other times, it's blind allegiance to the idea that Cambridge must lead all others in chasing every progressive aspiration, regardless of cost to the city or those who will have to pay the cost.
	Jun 15, 2023	Jared Batchelder	"At large" councillors do not meet the hyper local needs of neighborhoods. There should be wards. I could win North Cambridge running on the issue of Rindge Ave traffic alone.
	Jun 30, 2023	Jasanne Blancha	Gentrification!!!
	May 12, 2023	Jen Schwartz	Sustainability. The climate crisis working group report has the answers. But also, Cambridge must address the rich businesses that fight progress (see: Harvard claiming reducing emissions for BEUDO is impossible, as if they can't generate or store any energy). Eversource and the MBTA are dangerously sub-par and they make sustainability difficult. We the people don't have the power to fight them, so we need your help. Equality, cost of living, housing, addiction, mental illness, lack of community and resources, are all factors that impact sustainability, which makes people question how to prioritize. The answer comes in the only clear villain—excessive profit. When we fight big business, we can protect our rights and quality of life. When we reflect on how Cambridge can improve, I'd naturally question how we can align action better with belief. Everyone in our city council, if not the whole city government, knows the threat of climate change and wants us to be more sustainable, but belief isn't enough to make change. Actions from our fearless leaders led to the BEUDO amendments, an incredible victory that will make Cambridge a leader in sustainability. Actions like creating a fund to retrofit homes and apartments funded by businesses trying to offset emissions. Actions like ensuring diversity of electricity sources to avoid the Eversource local monopoly. Actions like banning Target's greenwashed thick plastic bags or protecting bike lanes. I can't wait for more sustainability wins post-BEUDO amendments. Thanks.

May 08, 2023	JOHN REARDO	Keeping our taxes low, especially for seniors on a fixed income. We have been blessed with fiscally responsible city managers who have kept property taxes reasonable. In a strong mayor form of governance, I envision the council will run amuck with spending meaning our property taxes will skyrocket.
Aug 15, 2023	Kari Jorgenson	The normalization of public drug use and intoxication (smoking - meth/crack, shooting up) on heavily trafficked pedestrian areas like Mass Ave. I don't think enough people realize how a city can spiral to become completely unlivable - like San Francisco and Portland Oregon - when this becomes the norm.
Jun 29, 2023	Kaveh Daneshva	1) Drivers running the red lights in crowded junctions where there are lots of pedestrians, minors, and strollers crossing the street. I wish there were automatic systems detecting those drivers or more law enforcement officers at those junctions who could stop those drivers. 2) Xfinity internet monopoly is frustrating and embarrassing. We live in one of the most innovative cities in the world and yet we are with one internet service provider.
Jun 13, 2023	Kelly Dolan	Housing affordability is certainly a big issue, but I don't think that our City Council can do much to effectively address that. It concerns me that a few Councilors promise they can fix it, because that just undermines the effectiveness of our institutions to a very vulnerable demographic. The two biggest issues facing our city are the lack of leadership from CDD and the school department. One is failing to plan the growth of our city, the other is failing to educate all of our children. Both are ignoring their stated mandates and seem to have no accountability.
Jun 07, 2023	Mark Goodman	The city is busy changing streets in ways that inconvenience residents and hurt small businesses. The city is spending tax payer money on projects that taxpayers don't want in order to satisfy a small, vocal group of cyclists and ideologues. The decision making process is cloaked in pseudo transparency—meetings that purport to solicit resident feedback but are actually just cover for forgone conclusions. My real estate taxes are one of my biggest expenses. It is infuriating to see how the city needlessly wastes taxpayer money while ignoring the desires and needs of taxpayers.
Jun 11, 2023	Matt Purdy	Rent is out of control. We need rent control and more low-cost housing.
Jun 27, 2023	N Leone	Lack of affordable housing for non-student workers earning less than \$200,000. Lack of availability of medical doctors, especially primary care but also specialists. I am not aware of initiatives to address either.
Aug 15, 2023	Paola Bronson	Increasing drug activity and violent crime. Cambridge police lack basic equipment like body cams and vehicle video surveillance, and do not have a narcotics unit.
May 13, 2023	Patrick Barrett	Crime in Central Sq, Weak School system, and lack of follow through on planning. The council largely gets in the way of any progress in large part due to fickle interest and lack of fundamental understanding of the subject matter. It's easier to move on or just throw money at a problem than trying to manage it better or act.
May 12, 2023	Pete X	Not enough housing
Jun 29, 2023	Sam Bosbach	Housing costs. Cambridge desperately needs more housing (as does the whole region). Folks need to stop fearing change of character and realize that the character will be gone if no one can afford to live here but the rich.
May 17, 2023	Sergio Coronado	Livability is a huge concern. We are city with ample resources and yet lack affordable housing for all walks of life. I worry that this will become a place of extreme wealth and poverty like Boston has become. This needs to be a place where young and old people, people with families and all walks of life can live.
Jun 22, 2023	Shreya Du	There seems to be no interest towards urban planning or making the city pretty (like many other cities), for example, why cant the T bridge between science museum and lechmere be painted vs the ugly ghetto graffiti? What about potholes on every road.. reminds me of a 3rd world city.
Jun 22, 2023	Steven Darwin	I see a looming problem with property owners/developers wanting to cash in on the Mass Ave Central Sq corridor jeopardizing the viability of local businesses/storefronts while that transition takes place. I'm happy to talk about my own experiences. I think it's more serious than anyone realizes and it's a lengthy discussion. Steven Darwin Formally of Darwin's Ltd.
Jun 26, 2023	Taylor Larick	Anti-democratic policies like a powerful unelected City Manager and ranked-choice voting for only 4 of 9 council positions. Time and time again, popular progressive policies are stymied by a conservative appointed City Manager.

Appendix I: Former Elected Official and City Employee Interviews

1. Anthony Galluccio
2. Arthur Goldberg
3. Bob Healy
4. David Maher
5. David Sullivan
6. Henrietta Davis
7. Jeffery Young
8. Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler
9. Louie DePasquale
10. Michael Sullivan
11. Rich Rossi

Anthony Galluccio

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

Yes, all his life.

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

City Councilor, Vice Mayor and Mayor (15 years total). Then elected to the state senate.

3. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you/ your office to do its job well

The dynamic of getting the city manager to pay attention to his priorities. Requires relationship, seniority, and political relationships.

A mayor saw more specifics with plan e. Lawsuits at the school level, race, and class and always below the surface in Cambridge.

Saw the mayor's role as the mediator, when there were major issues and dynamics to navigate it was a good role for the mayor to step into rather than the manager.

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job

The biggest frustration is the lack of populism. I made a point to get votes across the city, and didn't want to be viewed as someone that only had a certain constituency.

Leadership as mayor among other councilors who don't necessarily always want you to lead initiatives because they have to run against you. A different dynamic with the school committee who isn't running against you could be more of a leader.

What if no mayor

- There are multiple different perspectives of the mayor's role. I see it as a mediator role, and I don't think the city would benefit from not having a mayor.
- But I think we could benefit from a bit of a job description for the role because everyone sees it differently. You need a political leader in the city.

Separately elected mayor

- Do you have to look at it from what is the best long-term process for the city? What I would worry about, is the long term, what if 6 councilors announce they are running for mayor and then maybe lose a huge portion of the councilors
- If you have a separately elected mayor maybe impose a term limit

Other:

- I think part of the goal I'm hearing is increasing engagement and democracy - and I don't think a strong mayor or longer term for council necessarily would increase voter engagement

- I don't agree that the city council inherently doesn't have power, it's built on whether there is an incentive to work together or not.
- People/ residents will often say more democracy, if you pose the question to them about a separate election for mayor many would say yes
- I think this charter review was more of a power grab than a desire for more democracy

Budget - do you think the council has enough weight on the manager's budget

- The budget is central to the government. There should be a strategy around the budget ongoing constantly. But I do think there is a need for more engaging ways for the public to participate in the budget process outside of public comment.
- I do think the council has significant power in the current budget process if they work together.

Engagement

- We are lacking productive and inclusive engagement.
- We don't inform the public - how do we inform people? It's very easy to stack a public meeting, but there are ways to bring individuals from different perspectives together to have a conversation.

We should be thinking about what is going to continue to attract strong candidates for the city manager position if we were worried about that position and the well of candidates that would fill that type of role. If we are worried about that, then I might be more in favor of a strong mayor. However, the recent city manager process proves there is a good talent pool and the selection and process supports the strong Manager form of government so there is no need to look to a strong Mayor

Arthur Goldberg

1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

No.

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to the City government

Now retired, I spent about 30 years in the law department, started as an assistant city solicitor, first assistant solicitor, and then moved to deputy city solicitor for 8 years.

3. Have you held other positions with the city

Acting Chair of Licensing Commission - 5 months.

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you to do your office to do its job well

- During my time in the solicitor's office the number of attorneys grew from 6 to about 11 full time attorneys. The growth was a result of an increase in demands of the city council, keeping up with new initiatives, representing the city in litigation, advising boards/councils, and drafting ordinances.
- Part of the solicitor's office role is to interpret the city charter, when there are questions about provisions in the charter they come to the law department whether informally or formal opinions.
- I worked under Bob Healy, Rich Rossi and Louis DePasquale. What was interesting was how each manager interpreted their powers. Healy interpreted a bit more conservatively in terms of their responsibility over city department heads. In the charter city councilors are not supposed to deal directly with employees of the city manager outside of public meetings, and Healy protected his employees very conservatively. Didn't want city employees talking directly to city councilors, managed everything through him. I thought this was a good separation of powers because it protects employees and allows them to do their job within a clear administrative hierarchy.
- As Richie and then Louis moved into the city manager role they were more liberal in allowing councilors to interact directly with city employees. Perhaps some public thought was that Healy was too rigid with his interpretation. Under Richie councilors started meeting in private more directly with employees about policy initiatives. Louie might have encouraged even more. I think this dynamic can create a complicated situation for city employees.

5. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job

With any structure you are relying on good people who are willing to collaborate in those roles to make it function well. Any form will have abuses and push limits of powers, and some people might not want to cooperate, if that's the kind of person they are.

6. What do you think worked well in the relationship between city council and the city manager What are/were some of the challenges

Personalities are always at play but not structural issues.

7. Some of the items that the Charter can impact are issues such as terms for elected officers, department head and committee appointment authority, structure of and allocation of

authority in City government, budget process, elections and voting. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to share regarding those issues

Budget process - we've heard that that process could be more transparent and open to the public?

- I think the managers feel they were appointed because of their financial expertise and their department heads know their departments best. Opening it up more to council and public has the potential to politicize the process and perhaps make it hard to make objective decisions based on an informed understanding of all the considerations involved in putting a complex overall city budget together. I understand frustration from CC and the public: the manager spends months putting together the budget, and when it comes to the council, they have limited time to ask questions, and minimal resources to review and analyze. There could be more flexibility along the way, it seems like now the council is giving the manager priorities and the manager is funding their priorities.

8. Anything else you would like us to know

Informational Charter Elements:

- Charter Right - Process written into the council rules but comes from MGLA (Chapter 43, Section 22 of the General Laws).
- The current charter requires a city council vote on an expenditure of fifty dollars or more, which probably should be changed/ reflective of inflation.
- The charter states the council will set the manager's salary by ordinance, which isn't done anymore, it's defined in the contract
- Make charter language gender neutral
- Repealed MGLA Chapter 54A still applies to Cambridge proportional representation ("PR") voting in local elections

Current Provisions

"mayor could take control of the police if there is a vote of the council"

- This hasn't happened. And since the manager appoints/oversees the police, not sure it really makes sense. It should be the manager.

"the right to public comment"

- Says all meetings of city council should provide opportunity for the public to be heard. I don't think this needs to change but under OML there isn't a right to public comment. So if you did away with this public comment right in the charter, the Council wouldn't have to allow public comment in the same manner that it's done now.

Number of Councilors

- No real opinion, doesn't feel the number is super critical

Ward vs At-Large Councilors

- No real opinion - I know the general idea behind ward councilors - to represent specific parts of the city. I think with PR in Cambridge, actually does empower minorities in certain areas - tim toomey (east Cambridge) - if you have a certain minimum votes under PR, in a way for a specific area to have a representative.

Elections on even years?

- The elections commission might have concerns about moving elections to even years. Would it impact the PR?

Current process how councilors choose mayor - seems time consuming, done behind the scenes?

- Probably not the best way to choose a mayor, could move to a popular vote. The other thing is that councilors should be careful to comply with the OML, so that a quorum is not deliberating outside of public meetings to determine who the mayor will be.

Free cash - Why isn't it subject to budget planning in the same way?

- Not sure why it couldn't be discussed in advance, although free cash is typically addressing an urgent need that might arise at any time during the year. But there is so much of it and some is planned.

Bob Healy

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

No

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

City Manager for 32 years, deputy city manager prior to that - 39 total in Cambridge.

3. Have you held other positions with the city

Deputy city manager

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you/ your office to do its job well

Allows for the manager to manage and for the elected city council to do policy/ legislation.

The basic foundation of any city is finance, if you don't have fiscal stability you can't do all the programs that you'd want.

Managing the city as a business with residents as the customers.

Thinks the system works well and has been stable over most of the 80 years of the charter.

How do priorities like municipal broadband get funded or not funded? How do those decisions get made and what are the inputs?

- Cost / Benefit analysis - initial financial cost and long-term maintenance cost
- If the council / public mandate something the manager has to comply the manager reports to the council and the council can always fire the manager.

All the various elements of the city and the organizations are a sort of extension of the city and help provide the eyes and ears to the community.

How does information/ feedback flow to manager? Is it just through the city council?

- No, the manager also listens and hears directly from the public, the manager shouldn't isolate themselves

District vs At-Large Councilors

- PR works with Plan E, and I think the number of councilors is appropriate
- I don't think a district councilor would be beneficial for the city as a whole, focused too much on individual issues.

Elections

- I think RCV works well, if it's working well why try to break it

Mayor's Role

- Important role on the School Committee
- The mayor is the political role of the city and needs to be out there and doing more than other councilors
- City Council can declare a state of emergency and put Mayor in charge.

David Maher

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1. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

School Committee - 1991-1998,
City Council - 1999-2018
Mayor - 2010–2011 & 2014–2015

2. Have you held other positions with the city

Currently - CEO and President of the Chamber of Commerce

3. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you/ your office to do its job well

I always felt like the plan E form of government was good. But more recently I wonder if we might be outgrowing that form.

The current feeling feels like weekly whiplash, and I believe that is coming from the council. And part of that is coming from not having defined goals and objectives. Which leads to a clouding of what the council is and supposed to be.

Feels disjointed right now, doesn't necessarily mean we need to throw it out.

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job

Lack of goals/objectives.

At the state level there is a very defined legislative process, but on the local level ideas and legislation are all over the place.

There needs to be more leadership among themselves to not take on everything, and leave to the staff a number of items they are capable of handling.

Staff should be more willing to share their expertise but they feel hesitant to do so because they often get undermined by the council

5. What do you think worked well in the relationship between city council and the city manager What are/were some of the challenges

Worked with three different managers, and saw the change in their management styles.

I think the role of elected officials has morphed less of oversight to more interfering in day-to-day operations.

- The council hasn't done a good job of defining objectives and holding themselves to it

6. Anything else you would like us to know

Four-year terms for councilors?

- No, the council should be as close to the public as possible. Even though it might benefit the councilors.

District Councilors?

- I'd be worried about that change. We somewhat have them already in how the council builds its base of voters. I think we are a small enough city that we can do this without breaking up the city into districts.

City Council over time?

- Early on the council was much more collegial, we worked together. It wasn't about what I wanted or other councilors wanted but about finding common ground.
- The council now is much more in silos and they aren't collaborating together
- Should be thinking about the council as a board/supervisors with the mayor as the chair.
 - When hiring a manager there should be clear goals and priorities that the manager can be deemed successful against. But the council is lacking that right now.
- There is a lack of accountability/transparency. There should be x committee meetings

At the state level there is a defined legislative process:

- Filing deadline (all bills for the term need to be put forward), review period (in committee hashing items out, public meetings), then referred from committee to full leg and vote.
 - A big issue might take a year, but it allows a full airing out of policies/initiatives.

David Sullivan

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

Yes, went to MIT for undergrad and has lived in Cambridge since then for 53 years.

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

City Councilor for 10 years in 80s.

Other positions: lawyer in state government, elections division, state ethics commission, counsel for senate ways and means, counsel for administration and finance, chief policy advisor for state senate president.

3. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you/ your office to do its job well

Cambridge overall has a pretty successful structure and is a well-run city. Large universities, a magnet for intelligent/successful people, transformation of Kendall square, ability to build a strong tax base, competent civil servants.

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job

I like the City Council structure, don't think it needs to change. Representative of different points of view, ideologies, and areas of the city. The various points of view have been well represented across major issue areas like rent control, and affordable housing. I do not favor any form of district representation, I know it does work in some structures and without PR it's helpful in increasing representation. PR does a great job of accomplishing various forms of representation, you could vote for your neighborhood rep or vote based on a larger city-wide issue, but it is left up to the voters.

Executive leadership: I think a strong mayor form of government should be strongly considered. City Manager does a great job with efficiency, fiscal responsibility, and day-day ops, it is not as good at changing policy. Because the city manager isn't supposed to get involved/advocate for specific policies. The city manager contract clause, where if the city council wants to discharge a manager they have to pay a huge amount, which is a big disincentive for the city council. And as a result, they never discharge a manager.

If you are trying to change a policy, it is really hard to get done without executive leadership. A Managers teams can provide information/technical assistance but is not involved in the politics in the way an elected mayor can be

At the state level without the governor, it would be impossible for the legislature to get stuff done. The executive can provide political pressure necessary to get votes.

Priorities with an elected strong mayor:

- Democracy, which is hard with a city manager
- Candidate can run on a policy-related platform and can execute on it

Maybe a hybrid system with a strong mayor, with a COO hired by the mayor maybe confirmed by the council. Could help with maintaining a strong administration.

How might stability be affected by an elected mayor that might change every 2/4 years?

- Definitely a concern, pros, and cons of all systems. Balance is the key. The nature of democracy is that voters get to change things, including their leadership. And although stability is good for the structure of the city, should for example one person be in a specific department head role for 10, 20 years? The balance should lean more in the direction of democratic accountability and change when necessary, rather than towards stability.

You mentioned maybe having city council approve a coo position under a strong mayor?

- For balance, it would be good, but the potential downside is if the council doesn't want to approve someone. The mayor should be able to hire someone they trust and can work with. Risk for abuse.

Sticking with Manager / Council form - what could be changed?

- Wouldn't favor changes to the current council structure/term/size.
- Remove buy out clause in the manager contract
- Maybe modify the charter to allow manager/staff to get more involved in policy
- Is there any other remedy or recourse with the manager to hold accountable that isn't firing?
 - No, there really isn't

How do you see the strength of employees under a manager vs an elected mayor?

- Yes, exceptional employees with stable jobs is an obvious advantage to a citymanager. But there are a lot of examples of exceptional employees working for elected officials at the local and state level.

Would a change to mayor change Cambridge's position in state politics?

- I think it could strengthen Cambridge's role. An elected person would empower the executive for Cambridge in relation to neighbors.

Budget Process - how might be improved?

- It is already starting to happen, the current manager is deliberately encouraging councilors to bring ideas about the budget forward. Maybe creating a more formalized process? Implement hearings earlier in the process to hear input.

Henrietta Davis

Interview Recording:

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

Yes, since just after college.

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to the City government

Left following 2 years as Mayor, before that 14 years as City Councilor, and 8 years on the School Committee

3. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you to do your office to do its job well

There are a lot of strengths in the current form. I really care about getting policy through and implemented. Having a good relationship with a professional staff, made a significant difference. Lots of opinions about what to do, and helpful to see what the professionals are doing. I relied on them for their expertise. I could do my part as Mayor to get policy through the council. I think about 3 aspects of government the people, politicians and professionals to get things done. Helpful to think about the city in this way and know my role.

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job

Not a lot of challenges with the structure. I know there is a perception around how to get popular ideas implemented, for example broadband, I wanted to see that implemented across the city. But it hit a wall in the manager's office, because they explained the actual cost and obstacles to getting it implemented. NLC involvement, so I could see how things were being done in other communities. And understood there were other communities struggling to get issues through, there are genuine obstacles to policy initiatives.

In Cambridge, because of professional management, once we are able to work through a policy initiative or idea, the implementation is very effective and sticks and continues to improve over time.

- Ex climate initiatives - started little by little bringing colleagues along and other parts of government. And now a leading city in climate
- When redoing high school Manager didn't want to pay extra dollars to have an effective cafeteria which would have an impact on the quality of food, and between the councilors, staff and public engagement they did end up implementing it.
 - Manager maybe didn't want to recommend the cafeteria but he said if there are at least 5 votes that's what I have to do, but an individual councilor can't direct this. So requires the council to coalesce around an issue or policy.

City Council Goal Setting

- During her tenure, they were doing the goal setting every other year. And it was a great mechanism to reflect back on, because they were in agreement on what their goals were.

5. What do you think worked well in the relationship between city council and the city manager What are/were some of the challenges

Council Relationships

- No one person on the council could do anything, so the only way to get things done was with majority/supermajority. Needed to create coalitions around issues, in order to move forward. I sought support from the staff - did they buy in around an idea, was it possible?
- Elections of mayor is a starting point for coalitions. Building an idea of who you could look to for support on ideas. .

6. Anything else you would like us to know

Issue around schools

- Some city councilors feel they should be able to medal in the school committee and their budget. I want as a citizen to make sure your committee knows that is an important separation of powers because the school committee knows best for the school system.

Running for Office / How do we get more inclusive in this system?

- It's very different now, than when she ran because they had a local newspaper and capacity for anyone to find out what was going on in the city for free or not a lot of money. With a lack of a local newspaper it can be difficult to figure out what is happening in the city.
- Concerned about how anyone can vote for anything, when all information needs to be sought out online.
- I think district councilors could help fill that void.
- Always a supporter of at-large PR, good for the city, and coalesced ideas that were important all around.. But local representation like a district councilor, a point of connection. I'm not sure if at-large government works as well as it used to.
 - Example in Outer Cape - there is the providence town independent, you know everything that is going on in the outer cape. Why is a building like x, what's the housing policy, who is blocking it.
 - Maybe district government is a solution, could serve people better because someone is accountable in your neighborhood. - ex tim toomey (east cambridge)
 - A lot of councilors come from west campaign because maybe that's where there is \$\$
- State Representative Race - I know very little about him as a candidate and campaign.

Term length / term limits

- I like the idea of running every two years for the state rep/senators, at least I get to see this person every two years, and have a concept of who they are.
- 4 years might be good / better if there were district councilors
- Definitely would need more research to figure out how it really works, who's voting, who's not voting, who feels like they know what's happening
- Look at the public, instead of the person running for the office - what makes for the best representation

Jeffery Young

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

No

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

Superintendent of Schools 2009 - 2016

Had over 20 years of superintendent experience prior to being hired in Cambridge. Superintendent in Cambridge from 2009 - 2016. Came from 11 years as superintendent in Newton. And Lexington and Lynnfield prior to that.

3. What else do you want us to know

School Committee

- Surprised about the way school committee members ran every two years but were all at-large. His prior experience with Newton had a much different composition. Newton has 8 wards; there was 1 school committee member from each ward. All members were elected city wide but only ran against others from their same ward.
 - Charter Text: “Eight of these members, who shall be known as school committee members, shall be nominated and elected by the voters at large, 1 school committee member to be elected from each of the 8 wards of the city”
- His perception of the way Newton’s school committee was structured was once the committee was seated, the incentive was to collaborate because you’d never be running against the other members on the committee.
- Members running against each other in Cambridge created a different culture on the school committee.
- The pay difference was significant between Newton (\$7,750) / Cambridge (\$38,000)
 - Cultural difference - believed the idea was to diversify the economic standing of those running and on the Cambridge School Committee. His general sense was that most of the members were middle class.
 - One observation was that if they were making \$30k/\$40k, a possible effect is that you want to keep that income steam. If that meant competing against other members on the board which lend itself to less than pure intentions/dynamics.
 - Some members had other jobs and others didn’t - for both groups the income was still important, but for those that didn't have another job, the school committee became their job. And that's a really different environment from most school committees in MA. If this is my job I should do a lot and be really involved. In other communities, school committees tended to focus more on high-level policy rather than getting involved in the day-to-day functions.

School Committee Budget
Fall/ Early Winter

- He would work with CFO Claire Spinner, COO Jim Maloney, principals, staff, union and curriculum staff, to figure out what was needed in the budget. Around January would present the proposed budget (based on internal discussion, public meetings and meeting with city).
- The superintendent's budget was always balanced
 - because would meet with the manager and finance director they would say we have x money and need is x. And over weeks would figure out how to come to an agreement. The City would make an effort to increase if needed and as superintendent, I would make edits internally if needed.

Superintendent proposed budget → school committees approved budget → city council (meeting) → pretty much they just approved what the school was doing. I can't recall a specific time when they refuted a specific item.

- Before we even began the budget process, would meet publicly with SC. you give us guidelines/goals and his job was to build a budget that reflected those guidelines.

Who was it that you were talking to / oversight from when building a budget? Did you have the support you ended to do it well?

- Hearing from school principals, curriculum leaders and teachers, and public hearings. It was always about all of those inputs.
- I felt like the systems that were in place, I was in schools all the time, and feedback from people who were in the schools all the time, public hearings, parents/families/caregivers, and I had enough to put together.

Distinct structural differences between Cambridge / Other places?

- Strong city manager form vs newton's strong mayor - it was the personal relationships that superseded any structural impediments.
 - presumably, the managers would have been more in a professional position with training/ other professional development around running a city. Able to talk to those managers in an almost shorthand because of their professional experience.
 - Mayor system/ newton: relied on his legislative background, and I think because we built a relationship the trust was there. Even though that mayor wasn't exactly trained in finance/ professional management
- Trust relationships with School Committee?
 - Some were very positive relationships and some are not so positive.
 - When I was first appointed it was originally a 5-2 vote (against - fred, denise) after the 1st vote fred said let's have a show of support, and changed his vote, denise didn't, final vote 6-1.
 - And again a few years later another vote, so that always creates a dynamic for relationships because some people don't vote for you.

Constraints on your ability to hire who you wanted to hire?

1993 reform act

- Took SC out of personal decisions
- SC power hire/fire superintendent who has the power for all other personal

- The school committee never messed with any personnel appointments nor the manager.

Structural things to be done differently to address race issues?

- Desegregation
 - Control choice policy, like most policies in US is about desegregating.
 - A technical/ mechanical of school assignments
- Integration
 - What happens within those schools once those kids are there is “integration” whether it happens or not. Curriculum, family engagement, teachers, etc.
- 6/7/8 - Kto5 was ok and high school was pretty good, and 6/7/8 was the dead zone.
 - One of the biggest ones was those teachers in 6/7/8 weren’t licensed/ in the subject areas that they were teaching
 - Comparing graduations in 8th grade, 50 at king open or 10 at the FMA school.
 - Those kids in the smaller graduating class struggled because they had teachers that were teaching across grades and subjects that they weren’t experts in
- Lack of curriculum was also a significant impact
 - What is the school committee's role in maybe a struggling curriculum or teachers, etc?
 - Maybe wouldn’t want to have SC leading those changes because they don’t necessarily have an educational background.

Minding the Gap - <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/2010/04/21/minding-the-gap/>

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

Yes

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

City Councilor - 1 term. 2020/2021, On the housing committee and chair of the transportation committee.

3. Have you held other positions with the city

N/A

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you/ your office to do its job well

It pays enough to be a full-time job, which I viewed as a positive. Especially during the pandemic which required a lot of extra meetings and attention. Having a dedicated legislative aid to help with constituents, notes, etc was particularly helpful.

Able to develop good relationships with other councilors, committee system was ok / worked well. Virtual meetings were helpful.

Great that the council now has to approve appointments to certain boards and commissions, would be great to add that oversight with department heads.

5. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job

With a strong manager/ weak council system, it was challenging to get things done as a councilor. Boston for example with the Mayor/Council system has more clear paths for accountability that Cambridge lacks. The process of councilors voting on the manager's contract is not clear to the public and lacks accountability.

- The only existing mechanism for accountability is to fire the manager, which requires a lot of money and an extensive process to replace. More challenging than having an election every 2/4 years like a mayor.
- Right now there are few ways to bring the city manager to the table on issues, if the council feels like they aren't heading in the right direction.

Relies on the manager to take action - like whether police have body cameras.

Council doesn't have the ability to:

- add to the budget
- Provide oversight on personal decisions
- Infrastructure projects

Culture of funneling items through the manager, if you want to collaborate with staff on an idea or initiative. Things take longer / potential for conflict.

Positive movement / change to pass informal goal checks on managers every # of years on certain goals.

Budget oversight:

- If the council votes down the budget its a nuclear option, but there is no other recourse in the review of the budget
- Ability to move around elements of the budget.

City Solicitor

- Maybe change the structure so the solicitor reports to the council - like in Malden.
- For example, when the council tried to get rid of teargas, the solicitor wouldn't draft the ordinance.
- A mirror to the current system with the city clerk - the council hired the clerk and the council could fire the city clerk.

Department Heads

- Confirmation of key department heads - like police chief / cdd.
- Would be good to set up meetings between department heads/staff and council/councilors on items that they are trying to get answers on. It's difficult because of the division between council/department heads.
 - Challenging to make any electoral issue, because of limited resources for councilors.

Staff

- Additional staff for the council would be helpful, maybe a centralized communications person or another shared person for specific tasks.
- Providence has 1 or 2 communication staffers so when the council passes something, they are tasked with getting that news out. Would like to see more press releases/ interviews, spreading the word about what Cambridge is doing.

Form of Government

- Generally supportive of an elected mayor. But even with that system, would want to strengthen the legislative and balance that power between the branches

6. Anything else you would like us to know

RCV / At Large Elections / Term Lengths

- Change elections to even years - Portland, Maine
- Single transferable vote / RCV
 - Pros and cons - I wish more cities had it for comparison.
- District / At-Large
 - I did a lot of door-knocking and got 1500 renters to vote for me. If I was running to represent one district I don't know if I would have gotten elected

- Difficult to have regional representation with the current system. Maybe if you had a mix of at large / district. Maybe multi-member districts - maybe like 3 elected RCV.
- How lines are being drawn if there was a district councilor system.
- The difficulty of the current system of single transferable vote, is that its confusing for people. - maybe explore other forms of RCV, dual transferable vote?
- Right now, the people who vote get more representation. But the flip side is that certain communities vote more and reason that others not voting.

Term lengths

- 2 years is short, and a lot of the second year is focused on running. Public financing could be helpful to alleviate the time spent campaigning
- 4 years might be a long commitment, especially for young people looking to run. Maybe staggered 3 year terms?
- Term limits - don't know about that, generally think more about term limits for executive but not for legislative at least at the state level, it takes a lot of time to do the community organizing work.
- Maybe term limits for manager or elected mayor.

Campaign fundraising

- The biggest challenge is that people are donating small amounts not 1,000 dollars to campaigns.
- CT/RH - have public financing for elections.
- Don't want to give money to people who run every two years but are not actually running, free money. Require people to have x number of donations to get public funding.

Relationship to constituents / supposedly representing the whole city

- Constituent service is more challenging with an at-large system. Because people don't know who their counselor is to go to. If they don't know who to go to, they email the whole council and either get no responses or 4 councilors responding.

Why support charter review?

- Cambridge hadn't done it in 80 years. And seemed like a good process to start
- Split throughout the process on having an appointed vs elected committee. Collins Center had worked with elected commissions and saw that they tend to fail at higher rates.
 - Supporter of direct democracy, but always more political aspects

Louie DePasquale

<https://cambridgema.zoom.us/rec/share/PdvDDPxJyzKdtJV8OY5UMUdwgZhGvARSjnIgKRVoZoSbvGPXqbE9wCr9rTDER6Op.JSj65DbAga8iwuYT?startTime=1673625762000>

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

Have lived in Cambridge my whole life.

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

City Manager

3. Have you held other positions with the city

After college I worked in the Treasury Department, eventually transferred to the budget office. Promoted to budget director (20 years). Assistant City Manager for Finance (15 years), then City Manager (6 years).

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you/ your office to do its job well

The incredible team working for the city was always a highlight for me and a major appeal to apply for manager positions. Public service is a thread throughout the team.

I have always had a customer service mindset. Government doesn't work for everyone because people don't come to city hall because they aren't comfortable, but over the last 20 years the city has made progress. We made an effort to reach out to different groups, and worked to help residents of Cambridge see themselves in the city government.

I feel the manager system works well. Mayor structures can also be effective systems, but I think the manager structure works for Cambridge.

In Cambridge, the City Manager understands that the city council sets policy priorities and they as the manager are responsible to execute.

In my time as manager I worked with 3 different mayors, and I feel and I think they would as well that we were a team. Councilors are my bosses. Cambridge is an \$800,000 corporation, customer service corporation. Important to have a skilled and experienced professional to manage that, the city wouldn't have the financial strength otherwise. Financial health of the city makes for a strong system. Healy worked hard to get the city a bond rating and that was a significant first step into building what the city has now.

The manager works for the council, but not directly for the residents, and I think that's important. In a mayor structure a few strong voices can really influence the mayor.

There will always be controversy in cities. But the manager doesn't need to try to determine what or who is right or wrong, but to try and get people to come together and compromise on issues. Manager can make more impartial decisions, and deal with the consequences of the council. There will always be some

small number of loud voices. I tried to always do what was best for the whole city, not necessarily 1 or 2 groups of people.

In situations with Mayors, how did you compare yourself as they were elected and you were appointed?

- Mayors face a lot of similar challenges. I worked closely with Curtatone and Walsh, and we partnered together a lot. Felt we were on a similar playing field.

5. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job

6. What do you think worked well in the relationship between city council and the city manager What are/were some of the challenges

Biggest challenge is when you have to do something that doesn't agree with the council. For example during covid the council wanted to mandate vaccines for city staff (council voted 9-0), and after speaking with the staff I made the decision to not require that. Then Boston required vaccines for restaurant workers and the council wanted to implement something similar but I couldn't justify that if I wasn't requiring that of my staff. I think this is a healthy dynamic that allows the manager to be the bad guy sometimes when the council is advocating for something. Can help take some heat off the City Council.

Goal was never to disagree with the mayor or council, but sometimes needed to have courage to say no you hired me to do this and we need to do x.

- Another example was the initiative for Cambridge to have their own cable tv system - as the city manager he couldn't justify it with the investment and no similar systems in other municipalities that saw success.

As the manager I tried to keep the office as open and transparent as possible. Encouraging public engagement as much as possible.

7. Some of the items that the Charter can impact are issues such as terms for elected officers, department head and committee appointment authority, structure of and allocation of authority in City government, budget process, elections and voting. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to share regarding those issues

At-Large vs Ward Councilors

- I think the at-large council works. There are folks that represent certain areas like Tim Toomey - East Cambridge or Thomas Danehy - N. Cambridge. I think having city wide councilors is important for them to be thinking about what is best for the whole of the city. But I'm not saying district councilors couldn't work, just the at-large perspective is important.

Budget Process

- Many ideas about how to get more participation in the budget process.
 - When people are satisfied they aren't coming to council budget hearings.
 - In the past we set up neighborhood meetings to discuss the direction of the budget and priorities. No matter the investment we did to get people to show up, at many of those meetings I had more staff than residents.

- Participatory Budgeting first started when he was finance director. Great way to start to get people involved. Started at \$100,000 and now over 1M. Budget office has done a good job, 8,000 residents participated last time.

Do you see any areas that could provide opportunity for resident involvement?

- People in the administration have a lot of experience. Wouldn't want to see the manager in a position where they feel like they are making a wrong decision.
- But there are definitely opportunities to increase participation and dialogue around elements in the city operations.

Appointment of Department Heads

- Manager needs to have the authority for appointing department heads. There should be a role for residents and councilors, they should be able to voice their opinions and preferences (a good example is with the police commissioner)
- The role of City Council to share what they are looking for in particular roles (skills, qualifications, background) and the manager to determine who that individual is.
- Regarding boards and commissions - as manager I always felt I was trying to find quality people who could do the job well.
 - Should people be paid for these roles, that is an important discussion

Mayor vs Manager

Boards/commission appointments in Mayor systems some might argue is more opportune for appointments of friends/ political favors. Do you think managers are insulated from that potential dynamic?

- Not insulated from that as a manager, because it's about the individual person.

Public Accountability / democracy

- Every city manager is appointed by the City Council. When you are appointed, you are going to want to do a job that makes the council feel like they made the right choice.
- The accountability is to the City Council and you want the public to know what you are doing and why you are doing it.
- If an individual isn't following the mandate of council / public input - yes that person should be removed. But that doesn't mean there won't be instances where the manager does not execute or do something in the way the council wants. If they said no to something they need to explain that.
- There were always situations in Somerville / Boston where residents didn't feel the mayor was listening to them, and that's a normal part of any structure.

8. Anything else you would like us to know

- The Mayor and Manager need to have a strong working relationship.
- The City / School Relationship is strong and unique in Cambridge
- Cambridge has a strong council that wants to have more say, which isn't a bad thing but you need a line so that the manager has the final say. City council is working hard and they know what residents want . Any way to increase the relationship, and provide more opportunity for the council to have a say.

Michael Sullivan

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long
4th/5th generation in Cambridge.

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:
Now clerk of Superior courts Middlesex county, 14 years city councilor (chair of the finance committee), Mayor for 2 terms

3. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you/ your office to do its job well
Relationships generally, and with the administration were really important for productivity. I understood the different roles, and powers. Everyone had different ways to engage with the administration some councilors would meet with the manager once a week.

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job
The challenging part is that some of the other councilors didn't show up to committee meetings because there were other community events and such going on - maybe there should be a quorum requirement for committee meetings

5. Anything else you would like us to know
Councilor Composition:

- 4-year term - I'm not sure what it would do. Might lose the connection to the constituents
- Ward/ District: the at-large system required me to outreach to the whole city, and I think that is a good thing.
- Separately elected mayor? - maybe, not sure the mayor should be the most popular person running.
 - When I was in the council the election of the mayor was very challenging for the council.
 - The Mayor's role needs to be collaborative, the best mayors realize it is not about them it is about working together and providing leadership.

Goal Setting

- When we did have the goal-setting sessions, I couldn't figure out what we did with them at the end
- Maybe more necessary if the council is struggling to come together or is having strong disagreements

Mayor vs Manager

- I don't think the city should move to a strong mayor system

- There might be something to say about having one person in the city manager role for 30 years, maybe there should be consideration around limits on the length of time a city manager can be in the position

Budget

- Do you think the council should have more power over the budget?
 - Commitments the city makes are farther ahead than 6 months to 1 year, need to be thinking farther ahead in terms of budgeting.
- Maybe - 2-year budgeting (statutory rules around that?)

Richard Rossi

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident If yes, for how long

Yes, I grew up in Cambridge.

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

City Manager

3. Have you held other positions with the city

As a kid I worked in DWP and the Water Department. Intern for City Manager, John Corcoran. Assistant to Superintendent in the Water Department. City Purchasing Agent (3-4 years). City Manager Bob Healy appointed me as acting and then permanent deputy city manager (32 years) then city manager for about 40 months.

4. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government allow(ed) you to do your office to do its job well

Overall I thought and still do that it's a good system, clear lines of responsibility. City manager responsible for the administration of the city. The City Council was responsible for policy. Manager was in charge of implementation of those policies. Then there are different positions that manage checks and balances like the city clerk and auditor.

General position - Cambridge has a structure that produced a system that was/is really successful. Doesn't mean you can't polish it, and add more effective parts.

- Public buildings/ utilities, leader in affordable housing and climate.
- Strengths from bond rating agencies.
 - Successes because of strong fiscal health: rescuing the Cambridge Hospital, investing in housing, capital budget process - rebuilt schools, roadways. Climate studies on vulnerabilities.
- If you had mayors turning over all time, how would that affect employees with regularly changing leadership?
- I think the manager always tried to be in sync and responsive to the council. Needs to be a more public process because of the dynamics between individual councilors.

5. What aspects of the structure and processes of Cambridge government create(d) challenges for your office to do its job

Budget Process:

- Possible addition: In the end of summer or early fall establish public meetings with manager, key staff and council, to capture council goals/ admin goals/ budget requests. Currently often the council is passing goals in January, while the city staff is already ¾ of the way through creating the budget.
 - A new process would benefit from this new mandate

- Also include a finance presentation on the current financial standing of the city.

Public Engagement

- Challenge for elected officials, staff and the public to have so many public meetings, can be difficult to know how to participate
- Example: 10 years process for the new library - years of gathering public comments. New people come and go in the city administration, new residents, new elected officials.
- Recognizes some people/groups felt the public process wasn't always safe in the traditional methods, so administration would go talk with certain groups. Found surveys and workshops created a more welcoming environment

6. What do you think worked well in the relationship between city council and the city manager What are/were some of the challenges

It's a process of relationship building, relies on all parties being positive and willing to work together. You learn to understand your role and how processes work.

- Example council wanted investment in affordable housing, started with a small amount of tax revenue to being able to put 10s of million
- For a long time the city was really worried about big tax increases to certain parts of the city. Healy did a lot to hold the budget by not expanding jobs in administration, but now the city has the room to add more roles.
- Often working with local state officials and councilors on issues, like when uber came in and cabbies were being affected, they worked to level the playing field requiring uber/lyft to subscribe to the same rules as local cabbies. Partnering with other communities like Somerville to encourage state action. Or green line expansion.
- Looking to experts in other areas for advice, for example a major rodent problem, looked to NYC experts, and brought their "tsar" to Cambridge to educate the staff.

7. Some of the items that the Charter can impact are issues such as terms for elected officers, department head and committee appointment authority, structure of and allocation of authority in City government, budget process, elections and voting. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to share regarding those issues

Free Cash

- The city has more free cash than a lot of other major communities put together, but Cambridge self insures all our properties that money is the insurance policy
- Some free cash is allocated in the budget to certain departments

As a City manager did you feel in conversations with other cities or orgs at the same level as a mayor?

- Felt it was an equal playing field. Cambridge was a leader on a lot of initiatives like affordable housing/ environment/ bicycle access. Cambridge was offering the expertise and staff.

What would you think about City council approval over city manager staff?

- Prefers a system where the city manager gets to hire experts. Possible to have a structure where the council gets to interview candidates for certain roles, but shouldn't be for everything. If all boards/commissions and department heads were subject to council approval it would be a huge

time commitment on the council. But doesn't support denying the manager the ability to appoint who they want, there is always recourse to terminate the manager if unhappy with administration.

- There are certain positions - like housing authority or similar that council has to approve
- Maybe a chair of a committee gets a review from the council.

Elections

- Important to ensure appropriate funding for whatever is needed, are computer systems up to date, do we have the consultant we need?

Ward vs at large city councilors

- I think the city should be represented as a whole, anything that could be done that might make it more fair/equitable should be implemented. But I don't know what the actual solution is or have the information
- Consider how it would impact the current voting system
- Different neighborhoods vary in makeup and needs like north cambridge vs alewife. Should survey the public on this question.

Cambridge and its financial stability

- How would you stretch cambridge budget muscles that would be allowed within existing laws?
 - Eminent domain of a vacant building, owning the water system, reclaiming Danahy park, are all examples of opportunities the city had to invest in the community because of its financial strengths. Continuing to do that work.

8. Anything else you would like us to know

More open dialogue when there isn't a pressing issue. Important for the city to be investing in building constituencies all the time.

The city has a lot of resources and information like vulnerability study - could benefit from distributing and educating residents