

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL  
HOUSING COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, December 16, 2025**

**HOUSING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Councillor Azeem, Co-Chair  
Councillor Siddiqui, Co-Chair  
Vice Mayor McGovern  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler  
Councillor Wilson

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Housing Committee was held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Siddiqui. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via zoom.

**At the request of the Co-Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote  
Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote

**Present – 5. Quorum established.**

Co-Chair Siddiqui offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to begin a discussion around social housing as referenced in Policy Order 2025 #131. Present at the meeting were Housing Liaison, Maura Pensak, Director of Housing, Chris Cotter, Assistant City Manager for Community Development, Melissa Peters, and City Solicitor, Megan Bayer. Also present was Councillor Zusy, Councillor Nolan, and Mayor Simmons. Panelists that was present included Chris Herbert and Susanne Schindler from Harvard Joint Center for Husing Studies, Tom Evans from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, Ben Green and Kavish Gandhi from Cambridge Housing Justice Coalition, Margaret Donnelly Moran from the Cambridge Housing Authority, and State Representative Mike Connolly. It was also noted that City Councillor Elect, Ayah Al-Zubi, was listening via the streaming service.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Chris Herbert and Susanne Schindler who gave a presentation titled “Social Housing: Overview and Considerations”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Ben Green and Kavish Gandhi who gave a presentation titled “Bringing Social Housing to Cambridge”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Margaret Donnelly Moran who gave a presentation titled “Cambridge Housing Authority Discussion on Social Housing at City Council’s Housing Committee”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Representative Mike Connolly who provided updates related to social housing at the state level and pilot programs. Representative Connolly shared that a working group named Cambridge and Boston Housing Authorities as strong candidates to implement the pilot program which could help Cambridge continue to develop housing policy and reaching housing goals.

**Co-Chair Siddiqui opened Public Comment and gave each speaker two minutes.**

Judy Clark, 81 Orchard Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of POR 2025 #131 and social housing.

Carolyn Magid, 71 Reed Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of POR 2025 #131 and social housing.

Valerie Ann Bonds, 812 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of POR 2025 #131 and social housing.

Rabbi Yoni, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of POR 2025 #131 and social housing.

Ed Henley, 237 Franklin Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of POR 2025 #131 and social housing.

Lee Farris, 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of POR 2025 #131 and social housing.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of publicly funded housing solutions and offered suggestions and concerns related to tenant protections.

Dan Totten, 54 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of POR 2025 #131 and social housing.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Azeem who shared support for exploring social housing options but also raised concerns related to financial feasibility. Co-Chair Azeem questioned if replacing LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credit) would require more funding and offered the suggestion of creating a task force to work through implementation. Margaret Donnelly Moran explained that LIHTC access has recently improved but noted that social housing shows a larger funding gap. Co-Chair Azeem highlighted how 100% affordable projects produce more affordable units per dollar and emphasized the need to create a task force that could review this in more detail. Kavish Gandhi added that LIHTC is what makes affordable projects financially feasible.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared strong support for social housing and creating strong implementation steps. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler noted the importance of being able to balance social housing with 100% affordable housing

and questioned how the City would be able to balance social housing with 100% affordable housing, adding that they both have benefits and tradeoffs. Kavish Gandhi shared that social housing should be viewed as complementary to 100% affordable housing, and not competitive. Margaret Donnolly Moran provided a brief overview on how public ownership helps to strengthen reinvesting in new affordable housing. Chris Herbert noted how important it is to have long-term visions and goals and that what may not be financially achievable today could be in the future.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who thanked everyone for their presentations and pointed out that it is important to clarify what affordable means. Vice Mayor McGovern shared that the City should be supporting both low-income residents and moderate to middle-income residents, pointing out that they earn too much to qualify for subsidies which results in paying high rent. The Vice Mayor emphasized that social housing should only be one of the tools to use to address the housing crisis and that it should not be competing with other options, such as 100% affordable. The Vice Mayor shared that he looks forward to having more discussions and creating approaches to social housing in Cambridge.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Wilson who agreed with previous comments related to the importance of finding the right tools to approach social housing and that lower-middle income residents should be included. Councillor Wilson asked City staff if they would be able to provide updates on what the next steps may be to move forward. Chris Cotter shared that the City is open to exploring social housing, but it will also be important to the City Council to revisit priorities, resources, and funding. Melissa Peters shared that this meeting is a good first step and it will be important to work towards how the City would like to define social housing, understand the desired outcomes, review tradeoffs, and funding costs before moving forward. Councillor Wilson shared that she believes the City can be successful with the implementation of social housing and looks forward to future conversations.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Zusy who shared her support for the idea of a task force being created and the importance of reviewing financial feasibility. Councillor Zusy offered suggestions on reducing costs, such as redeveloping existing buildings.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who also shared support for the idea of a task force being created and noted how mixed income housing can improve economic mobility. Councillor Nolan agreed with comments related to funding and that the City should look at creative ways to support social housing efforts.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Suzanne Schindler who asked the Cambridge Housing Authority what would be required to obtain procurement relief. Margaret Donnolly Moran explained that relief would require either state legislation or a Home Rule Petition that is initiated by the City Council, noting that Boston has been successful with this, and relief has been previously granted to them.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Tom Evans who provided an overview of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority's reserve funds and a recently created revolving capital fund to help with housing production, adding that similar ideas may be able to help support social housing.

Co-Chair Siddiqui offered closing remarks and thanked everyone for being a part of the complex discussion and looking forward to the next steps in the upcoming term.

**Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

**Yes – 5. Meeting adjourned.**

**The Housing Committee adjourned at approximately 5:03p.m.**

**Attachment A** – Communications from the public.

**Clerk's Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/1121?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/1121?view_id=1&redirect=true)