



SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

~ MINUTES ~

Monday, December 9, 2024 **1:00 PM** **Sullivan Chamber**

The Special Committee of the Whole will meet on December 9, 2024 at 1:00 PM to review and discuss the recommendations from The Charter Review Committee and any additional suggestions from the full City Council pertaining to the Cambridge City Charter

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1:05 PM
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Catherine Zusy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1:05 PM
E. Denise Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1:16 PM

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE/CHARTER REVIEW
Monday, December 9, 2024, Recessed
Reconvened Monday, January 27, 2025, Recessed
Reconvened, Thursday, February 13, 2025, Recessed
Reconvened, Monday, February 24, 2025, Adjourned**

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE/CHARTER REVIEW MEMBERS

- Councillor Siddiqui, Co-Chair
- Councillor Toner, Co- Chair
- Councillor Azeem
- Vice Mayor McGovern
- Councillor Nolan
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler
- Councillor Wilson
- Councillor Zusy
- Mayor Simmons

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review was held on Monday, December 9, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 1:00 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Siddiqui. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Dec 9, 2024 1:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of Mayor Simmons, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent*

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote

Councillor Zusy – Absent*

Mayor Simmons – Present/In Sullivan Chamber*

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Vice Mayor McGovern and Councillor Zusy were present in the Sullivan Chamber at 1:05p.m.

*Mayor Simmons went from in person participation to remote at 1:16p.m.

Mayor Simmons offered opening remarks. Co-Chair Siddiqui resumed Chair of the meeting and offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to review and discuss the recommendations from the Charter Review Committee (CRC) and any additional suggestions from the full City Council pertaining to the Cambridge City Charter. Present at the meeting were Megan Bayer, City Solicitor and Elliott Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor. Tanya Ford, Executive Director of the Election Commission, was present via Zoom.

Co-Chair Siddiqui opened Public Comment.

Robert Winters, Cambridge, MA, offered comments related to the history of the City Charter and suggestions made from the Charter Review Committee.

Co-Chair Siddiqui and Co-Chair Toner shared what the goals and intentions for the meeting were, noting that there have been previous discussions regarding the CRC recommendations in the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Megan Bayer who reviewed how this Special Committee of the Whole would not be making the final approval of the CRC recommendations but would be making recommendations that the full City Council would vote on in a regular City Council meeting. Megan Bayer explained that during this Committee meeting, the recommendations would be adopted by a majority vote.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the first CRC recommendation for review and discussion would be on the City Manager or Strong Mayor form of government, noting that the CRC did not reach a 2/3rds threshold for either option, but provided their thoughts on the pros and cons of each. Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who shared that she would like to have further discussion on this topic. Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner, Vice Mayor McGovern, Councillor Azeem, Councillor Zusy, Councillor Wilson, and Mayor Simmons who shared comments that were in support of a City Manager form of government. Councillor Azeem

offered comments that were in favor of having the Mayor be the City Council President with the City Manager form of government. Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who offered comments that were in favor of a Strong Mayor form of government as well as more discussion on how the Mayor is elected. Vice Mayor McGovern and Councillor Toner also agreed that there could be more discussion on how the Mayor is elected.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to maintain the City Manager form of government.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – No

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 2. Motion passed

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the next item for discussion would be a proposed modern charter overview and if the City Council would want a new Charter language drafted. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the CRC voted in favor to recommend to the City Council the drafting of the new Charter text. Megan Bayer explained that if the Council voted in favor of this recommendation, the Law Department would review and work on the drafted Charter language from the CRC and come back to the Council with proposed language for additional discussion and review. Megan Bayer noted that the CRC's draft Charter language was part of their final report and can be viewed by the public and Councillors.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council adoption of modern charter text structure and ask the City Solicitor's Office to begin drafting language.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui explained that the next two topics to be discussed were related to expanding enfranchisement and equity and that the first vote would be on maintaining an at-large City Council elected by Proportional Representation. Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who offered comments that were in favor of keeping Proportional Representation.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the City maintain an at-large City Council elected by Proportional Representation.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the next vote would be to maintain an at-large City Council of nine members. Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner, Vice Mayor McGovern, and Councillor Azeem who spoke in favor of maintaining the at-large nine members. Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who provided comments on why she would be voting against this recommendation by sharing that she believes it would be beneficial to have a combination of both at large and district representation as elected officials. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that she agreed with comments made by the Vice Mayor and that she would support maintaining at-large City Councillors of nine members who represent all districts of the City.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the City maintain an at-large City Council of nine members.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 1, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui noted that the next three topics that would be up for discussion would be enfranchising non-citizens in municipal elections, entrenching 16- and 17-year-olds in municipal

elections, and moving municipal elections to even years. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared concerns about these topics not being favorable at the Legislature and offered the suggestion of filing a Home Rule Petition in the future.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who suggested that it may be better to keep the topic of enfranchising non-citizens in municipal elections for more discussion, with the possibility of pursuing filing a Home Rule Petition in the future. Co-Chair Toner explained that the goal of this Committee is to update the Charter and have changes prepared for the ballot in November, pointing out that this topic may take longer to get results at the State House.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who agreed with comments made by Co-Chair Toner regarding keeping this topic up for discussion and filing a Home Rule Petition. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler shared support for enfranchising non-citizens in municipal elections.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who shared her support for allowing this to happen but agrees this could be a challenging topic to send to the Legislature. Councillor Nolan agreed that holding this for more discussion would be more beneficial.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared support for enfranchising non-citizens in municipal elections and believes that they should have a say in who represents them in their community. Vice Mayor McGovern spoke in favor of filing a Home Rule Petition and keeping this topic for more discussion.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Zusy who stressed that voting is a privilege of citizenship as well as running and serving in office. Councillor Zusy shared challenges that the Election Commission may encounter if non-citizens were able to vote in the municipal elections.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Wilson who agrees that this should be held for more discussion and shared it would be important to get more feedback from the community.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Azeem who indicated that he believes there needs to be more information and research conducted on increasing franchise in elections.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Megan Bayer and asked if she had any recommendations on how the Committee could move forward with this topic. Megan Bayer offered the suggestion of referring this matter to a different committee for further discussion related to pursuing a Home Rule Petition.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the matter of enfranchising non-citizens in municipal elections be referred to the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee for discussion and to consider a separate Home Rule Petition.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – Yes
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – Yes
 Mayor Simmons – Absent
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who suggested that a similar motion be made for enfranchising 16- and 17-year-olds in municipal elections.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the matter of enfranchising 16- and 17-year-olds in municipal elections be referred to the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee for discussion and to consider a separate Home Rule Petition.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
 Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – Yes
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – Yes
 Mayor Simmons – Absent
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Committee members for comments regarding moving municipal elections to even years.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who spoke in favor of moving to even years, pointing out that it would be better for democracy and could encourage more people to come out and vote if municipal elections were on the same day as state and federal. Councillor Nolan shared concerns about the Legislature not approving this matter.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who shared concerns about moving to even year elections and noted that it could be overwhelming for voters. Co-Chair Toner also shared that local issues that are being addressed by those campaigning for office on a municipal level could get lost due to voters focusing more on state and national matters.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Azeem who offered the suggestion of referring this matter to the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee for further discussion and provided examples of how this could be beneficial.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared he would be in favor of keeping this for more discussion and stressed the importance of understanding why more people do not come out to vote during municipal elections and how the City can improve those numbers.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Zusy who offered comments that were in favor of keeping municipal elections to odd years.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Councillor Wilson who were both in favor of referring this matter to the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee for further discussion.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the matter of moving municipal elections to even years be referred to the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee for discussion and to consider a separate Home Rule Petition.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the next vote would be on creating more flexibility and modernize election voting and tabulation methods in Charter language. Co-Chair Siddiqui pointed out that the CRC voted favorably to recommend election procedure language changed to use any new tabulations method, election procedure language be changed to authorize the City to use any voting method of proportional representation, and that the remaining election procedures and relevant laws be compiled, updated, and drafted by the City, Election Commission, and Law Department consistent with all CRC recommendations.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who spoke in favor of allowing other tabulation methods but should be specific on which methods would be possible.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Tanya Ford who shared that the current language is very outdated and that the Election Commission would be in favor of discussing and proposing changes to the language.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to create more flexibility and modernize election voting and tabulation methods in Charter language and request that draft language to be developed by the Law Department and Election Commission before a final vote.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the next votes would be regarding different matters related to participation and accessibility of government for all residents. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the CRC voted favorably on the following recommendations: participation in and accessibility of government for all residents by creating resident assemblies and public tracking mechanisms of Council Policy Orders.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner, Councillor Azeem, Councillor Nolan, Vice Mayor McGovern, Councillor Zusy, and Councillor Wilson who all shared they were not in support of creating resident assemblies and pointed out that there are already many advisory groups and boards that offer opportunities for citizen engagement. Co-Chair Siddiqui agreed with their comments.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who offered comments that were in support of resident assemblies.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Megan Bayer and Elliott Veloso who provided a brief overview of the process on how resident assemblies could be created and examples of how they were created in other communities.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council participation and accessibility of government for all residents by creating resident assemblies.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – No

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No
 Councillor Zusy – No
 Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 1, No – 7, Absent – 1. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Committee members for comments regarding public tracking mechanisms for Policy Orders.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared his support for having this be enshrined in the Charter. Megan Bayer provided an overview of the process the City Council can use if this were to move forward.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner, Councillor Nolan, Councillor Azeem, and Councillor Zusy who offered comments that were not in support of this recommendation. Committee members, including Co-Chair Siddiqui, agreed that there needs to be better tracking mechanisms, but they are not sure if this is something that should be in the City Charter. Committee members also agreed that to move forward with this recommendation, it may be better for the City Council to work with staff on how the current structure can improve.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council public tracking mechanisms of Council Policy Orders.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – No
 Vice Mayor McGovern – No
 Councillor Nolan – No
 Councillor Siddiqui – No
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – No
 Councillor Wilson – No
 Councillor Zusy – No
 Mayor Simmons – No

Yes – 1, No – 8. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared the next two matters for discussion were recommendations from the CRC relating to effectiveness of government and included matters regarding effectiveness of government through measurable goalsetting and maintaining two-year terms for City Councillors.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Mayor Simmons for comments regarding recommending effectiveness of government through measurable goalsetting. Both Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Mayor Simmons agreed that this is a recommendation that should stay within the City Council Rules and not the Charter. Co-Chair Siddiqui agreed with Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Mayor Simmons.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council improving the effectiveness of government through measurable goalsetting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – No

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – No

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No

Councillor Zusy – No

Mayor Simmons – No

No – 9. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Vice Mayor McGovern, Councillor Zusy, Councillor Nolan, Co-Chair Toner, and Councillor Azeem who all agreed that the recommendation by the CRC on maintaining two-year terms for City Councillors should be held for further discussion by this Committee at the next meeting. Committee members shared the pros and cons of both keeping the current two term length and switching to longer term lengths.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the final five recommendations from the CRC would be under responsiveness and accountability. The recommendations included responsiveness and accountability through delineating budget process and priority setting, giving the City Council the power to add or increase line items in the budget, enshrining resident initiative provision, enshrining group petition provision, and a campaign finance study committee.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who suggested that the recommendation on responsiveness and accountability through delineating budget process and priority setting be in the City Council Rules and not the Charter. Co-Chair Toner pointed out that the City Manager and staff offer plenty of access to budget-related topics and the process of starting budget planning has started sooner, which has only been beneficial to the City. Co-Chair Toner noted that by starting the process sooner, discussions can happen to share concerns, suggestions, and priorities ahead of the budget hearings.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to increase responsiveness and accountability through delineating budget process and priority setting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – No

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – No

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No

Councillor Zusy – No
 Mayor Simmons – No
No – 9. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared that he would be in favor of having more discussion on giving the City Council the power to add or increase line items in the budget. Councillor Nolan and Vice Mayor McGovern shared that they agreed with holding for further discussion. Councillor Nolan pointed out how the School Committee has more responsibility and authority with their own budget.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who offered comments that were not in favor of this recommendation, sharing that he is happy with the current authority the City Council has with the budget.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that, based on the comments made by Committee members, this recommendation would be held for further discussion at the next meeting.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
 Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – Yes
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – Yes
 Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui offered comments regarding the CRC recommendation to enshrine a resident initiative provision and what the goal of the CRC was behind that recommendation.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who asked Megan Bayer what citizens can do now through a petition process. Megan Bayer provided an overview of how citizens can file zoning petitions and changes to municipal ordinances. Elliott Veloso provided additional information on how this recommendation is used within towns and town meetings.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Azeem and Vice Mayor McGovern who offered comments that were not in favor of resident initiative provisions, pointing out that Cambridge is a city, not a town, and a recommendation like this may not benefit a city. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared she agreed with comments that have been made.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to enshrine a resident initiative provision.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll

Councillor Azeem – No

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – No

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No

Councillor Zusy – No

Mayor Simmons – No

No – 9. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Siddiqui offered comments regarding the CRC recommendation to enshrine a group initiative provision and what the goal of the CRC was behind that recommendation.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to enshrine a group initiative provision.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll

Councillor Azeem – No

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – No

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No

Councillor Zusy – No

Mayor Simmons – No

No – 9. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the final recommendation for discussion would be to enshrining a campaign finance study committee, which would have the ability to make campaign finance reforms.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who shared he does not believe that this is something that should be in the Charter and asked Megan Bayer if the City Council did decide to have a campaign finance committee separate from the Council, would they have the authority to implement campaign finance reform. Megan Bayer shared that there would be no legal issue with convening a body to study the issue, but to make any campaign finance changes that would require action from the State Legislature. Co-Chair Toner suggested that his recommendation could be referred to the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee for more discussion.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who suggested that the Committee could have more discussion on this recommendation but does not believe it should be in the City Charter and pointed out that there is campaign finance limitation language in the Ordinance. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Co-Chair Siddiqui agreed that there could be more discussion on this recommendation.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who asked Megan Bayer for clarification on this recommendation if the City Council were to file a Home Rule Petition. Megan Bayer shared that this is something her department would have to look in to further.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the matter of enshrining a campaign study finance committee be referred to the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee for discussion.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll

Councillor Azeem – No

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No

Councillor Zusy – No

Mayor Simmons – No

Yes – 2, No – 7. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that the Co-Chairs are actively trying to get a meeting scheduled to continue this discussion in January.

Co-Chair Siddiqui made a motion to recess the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

The Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review went into recess at 3:13p.m.

On Monday, January 27, 2025, the Cambridge City Council's Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review that recessed on December 9, 2024, reconvened at 11:00p.m. by the

Co-Chair, Councillor Toner. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and 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 Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Wilson – Present/ In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Mayor Simmons – Absent*

Present – 8, Absent -1. Quorum established.

*Mayor Simmons was marked present and remote at 12:11p.m.

Co-Chair Toner offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to resume the review and discussion of recommendations from the Charter Review Committee and any additional suggestions from the full City Council pertaining to the Cambridge City Charter. Present at the meeting was City Manager, Yi-An Huang, Deputy City Manager, Owen O’Riordan, City Solicitor, Megan Bayer, Assistant City Manager of Finance, Claire Spinner, Budget Director, Taha Jennings, Assistant City Manager of Human Services, Ellen Semonoff, Executive Director for the Election Commission, Tanya Ford, Assistant Director for the Election Commission, Lesley Waxman, and First Assistant City Solicitor, Elliot Veloso.

Co-Chair Toner opened Public Comment

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions related to proposed Charter changes.

Robert Eckstut, 251 Western Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the proposed Charter changes.

Marc Truant, 32 Warren Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions related to proposed Charter changes.

Siobhan McDonough, Walden Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and concerns related to proposed Charter changes.

Helen Walker, 43 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the proposed Charter changes.

Dan Totten, 54 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and concerns related to proposed Charter changes.

Robert Winters, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the proposed Charter changes and spoke on the disappearance of the penalties for interference in going past the City Manager.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions related to proposed Charter changes.

Patrick Magee, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the proposed Charter changes.

Marie Saccoccio, 55 Otis Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the proposed Charter changes.

Co-Chair Toner provided a brief review of the previous meeting that was held on December 9, 2024. Co-Chair Toner recognized Megan Bayer for clarification regarding initiative petitions in Cambridge. Megan Bayer and Lesley Waxman both shared how the City has the ability to do initiative petitions pursuant to state law even though it is not in the Charter.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who offered brief remarks regarding updates to the Charter. Co-Chair Toner shared that the goal of the Committee is to assist with the update and modernization of language in the Charter.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who pointed out that there have been previous hearings held before the December 9, 2024 meeting and that this has been an ongoing conversation within the City Council.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who provided a brief review of the five proposed changes that were submitted by himself and Councillors Nolan, Wilson, and Azeem. The proposed changes were provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Councillor Wilson suggested that the Committee go through the proposed changes one by one for discussion. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler reviewed proposed change number one, City Council budget authority, noting that it would allow the Council to collaborate more closely with the budget process.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan for comments related to proposed change number one. Councillor Nolan explained why she was in strong support of this proposed change, while also pointing out that the Cambridge School Committee has more authority as it relates to the budget. Councillor Nolan added that this proposed change would create good governance and provide more discipline for the Council.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Wilson who thanked the City Solicitor and the administration team for their work on responding to the proposed changes and how the Council moves forward with the next steps. Councillor Wilson shared her excitement for improving the Charter language, while also pointing out that it will not be a perfect Charter, and more work will

continue to be needed. Councillor Wilson offered comments that were in support of proposed change number one, proposed change number three, elected Mayor alongside a City Manager, and shared challenges with two-year term limits. Councillor Wilson also shared how other municipalities have staggered term limits that work effectively.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Deputy City Manager O’Riordan who shared strong concerns regarding City Council budget authority, stressing how important it is to maintain and achieve the balance that is needed for the financial success of the City. Taha Jennings highlighted how the City Council role has been very effective at shaping the budget by having discussions on City Council priorities and goals. Taha Jennings pointed out that the Finance and Budget teams will continue to work with the City Council to achieve those goals financially. Taha Jennings also noted how the budget is developed to support and reflect the priorities of the City Council. Taha Jennings thanked the City Council for sharing so much interest in the budget. Claire Spinner provided additional comments that supported the Deputy City Manager and Budget Director, and highlighted how the budget is a complex, year-round process that involves many employees with financial expertise. Claire Spinner provided a breakdown of the budget percentages and noted where the City Council would not have authority to change and noted that she believes that the current budget process with the Finance team and City Council provides more transparency. Ellen Semonoff provided a brief overview of the budget process for DHSP and shared concerns about whether her budget was to change and how that would affect programs.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who shared some concerns with the budget process in the past as it relates to Council priorities being recognized and added that it is important to be more collaborative with the Finance team to continue to be consistent with budget efforts. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that what she heard from Councillors is that there is something missing within the Council relating to the budget process.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared that there have been examples of when the City has responded to Council priorities and there have been examples where they have not. Vice Mayor McGovern pointed out the importance of stability when talking about the budget and shared a brief overview of how the School Committee addresses their priorities within the budget. The Vice Mayor offered the suggestion of the City putting a certain amount of money aside for the Council where they would have discretionary power over that amount, and asked the City if that is something that would be possible to do in the future. Taha Jennings responded by sharing the challenges that could arise with putting money aside. Taha Jennings noted that it is important for the City to continue to collaborate and enhance communication with the Council early on in the budget process. The Vice Mayor shared he would not support proposed change number one due to unintended consequences.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Zusy who shared that she was not in support of proposed change number one and believes that the City is doing a good job managing the budget and does not believe that the Council has enough information to alter the budget.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who asked Taha Jennings what impact this proposed change would have if the Council were to have more budget authority. Taha Jennings shared how the AAA rating and budget approach could be affected. Mayor Simmons shared

concerns about the proposed change number one and shared she would not be in favor. Mayor Simmons stressed the importance of community involvement and providing more community engagement as it relates to the budget.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to extend the meeting to 1:15p.m.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to close public comment.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Azeem who pointed out that many Councillors have shared interest in having more input with the budget and noted the concerns addressed by City staff. Councillor Azeem suggested that proposed change number one be withdrawn, and Councillors work with City staff on a different approach and language to City Council budget authority.

Co-Chair Toner shared that he believes the previous Finance Committee Co-Chairs have been conducting the budget process well and is not in favor of proposed change number one. Co-Chair Toner noted that the Council's role is to give the City Manager guidance regarding the budget and offered suggestions for more community engagement.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared he would support withdrawing the proposal at this time and come back to have more discussion. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler noted that the goal of this proposal was for the City Council to have more productive engagement earlier in the process.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who provided additional information on why Committee members brought this proposal forward.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who withdrew proposed change number one. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler provided a brief overview of proposed change number four, four-year terms, with elections every two years.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who shared she would be interested in discussing four-year terms further and address how it would be operational and impact future elections.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who offered comments that were in opposition to the proposed change at this time.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who suggested that the Committee take a vote on this proposed change and possibly move this for more discussion to the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council four-year terms for City Council, with elections every two years.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – No

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – No

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No

Councillor Zusy – No

Mayor Simmons – No

Yes – 0, No – 9. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who offered an overview of proposed change number two, City Solicitor appointed by the City Council, and proposed change number five, Department Heads appointed by the City Manager and approved by the City Council.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who shared her support for the two proposed changes, noting that it would be a joint appointment between the City Manager and the City Council. Councillor Nolan highlighted that with the appointment of the City Solicitor, it would promote opportunities for more collaboration with administration.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Wilson who shared that she agrees with the comments made by her Co-Sponsors, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Councillor Nolan.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who shared she was in opposition to proposed change number five and would be open to having more discussion related to the City Solicitor.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Zusy who shared she believes it would be a conflict of interest for the Council to appoint the City Solicitor. Councillor Zusy added that both proposed changes would undermine the power of the City Manager and his staff. Councillor Zusy noted that it is the City Manager's job to manage staff while the City Council's responsibility is to set policies.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared that he would be in favor of having more discussion on the appointment of the City Solicitor and asked the sponsors if the City Council had the power to hire the City Solicitor, would they also have the power to fire them. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler noted that the idea was to have this proposed change be similar to the appointment of the City Clerk and City Auditor and would be in support of whatever the Committee would like as far as the firing process. Vice Mayor McGovern shared that there needs to be a better balance between the City Solicitor representing both the City Council and the City Manager. Co-Chair Toner offered suggestions regarding the hiring process and how the City Council could be more involved. Vice Mayor McGovern shared he would not support proposed change number five.

Co-Chair Toner offered comments that were opposed to both proposed changes and does not believe the City Council should be involved with the hiring and appointment of Department Heads and the City Solicitor.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Azeem who suggested that these two proposed changes not get voted on today.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to extend the meeting an additional ten minutes.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Megan Bayer who provided feedback and clarification to some of the comments made during the discussion. Megan Bayer pointed out all of the work that is done through the City Solicitors' Office, noting that there is a lot of litigation that does not directly involve the Council and shared how closely the Solicitor works with the City Manager's Office day-to-day. Megan Bayer also added that much of the work cannot be openly discussed publicly. Megan Bayer offered the suggestion of the Council having more input on the hiring.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared that he would withdraw the proposals and come back with new language to incorporate the suggestions and comments that were brought forward in the discussion.

Co-Chair Toner offered comments regarding proposed change number three, elected Mayor alongside a City Manager. Co-Chair Toner shared what the current role, power, and authority of the Mayor is and suggested that before the next Committee meeting, members can discuss what would be the most effective way to have a better process of electing the Mayor.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that Department Heads are appointed by the City Manager and approved by the City Council. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – No

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No

Councillor Zusy – No

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 1, No – 7, Absent – 1. Motion fails.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review continue the discussion on changing how the Mayor is elected.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to recess the meeting.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

The Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review went into recess at 1:26p.m.

On Thursday, February 13, 2025, the Cambridge City Council’s Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review that recessed on December 9, 2024, and reconvened and recessed again on January 27, 2025, reconvened at 3:00p.m. by the Co-Chair Councillor Siddiqui. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and 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 Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote

Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Mayor Simmons – Absent*

Present – 8, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

*Mayor Simmons was marked present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 3:10p.m.

Co-Chair Siddiqui offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to continue the discussion and review of recommendations from the Charter Review Committee and any additional suggestions from the full City Council pertaining to the Cambridge City Charter. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared that there is an additional meeting scheduled for February 24, 2025, at 1:30p.m. Present at the meeting was City Solicitor Megan Bayer, Deputy City Solicitor, Elliott Veloso, Executive Director of the Election Commission, Tanya Ford, and Election Commission Member, Charles J. Marquardt.

Co-Chair Siddiqui opened Public Comment.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in strong support of community engagement and involvement and provided comments and suggestions regarding the election of Mayor.

Robert Winters offered comments on the appointment of the City Solicitor and provided comments and suggestions regarding the City’s response to elected Mayor options.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who shared that included in the Agenda Packet is a list of votes that have been taken in Committee thus far.

Co-Chair Siddiqui provided a brief review and update of the Charter Review process and goals of the Committee for the next meeting. In addition, Co-Chair Siddiqui acknowledged all the hard work that was done with those who volunteered to be members of the Charter Review Committee and suggested how much could be learned from the process in the future

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Megan Bayer who provided a review of the timeline as it relates to the State Legislature, pointing out that it would be better to send the petition to them sooner rather than later to get Charter questions on the ballot if the petition is approved. Elliott Veloso shared different scenarios that could occur once the petition is submitted to the Legislature. Tanya Ford shared the extensive process of what goes into creating ballots and how important it is to have a timeline in place to meet specific deadlines and requirements by State law.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who asked if any other municipalities have been successful with changing state law as it relates to ballots and elections. Elliott Veloso shared it would be something the Law Department could investigate and provided suggestions on how the Council could make changes that would be in their favor when presented to the State Legislature. Councillor Nolan asked how long a response from the State Legislature takes when there is a Home Rule Petition filed. Co-Chair Siddiqui shared she has reached out to Representative Marjorie Decker and suggested the Election Commission also connect with her and suggested the Committee address this topic at the next meeting.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who stressed how important it is to reach out to community members who may not be aware of the conversations that have been happening around Charter changes. The Vice Mayor explained that it is vital for the voters to understand what each proposed change on the ballots means and for them to have a platform to provide feedback regarding these changes.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared that after the last meeting on January 27th, he met with the Election Commission and Law Department to discuss different options for an elected Mayor. As a result of those conversations, the Law Department provided a response for an elected Mayor, which included three suggested options on how the City Council could move forward. This document was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Elliott Veloso provided a general overview of the response for the Committee. Tanya Ford indicated that the Election Commission had some concerns with options #1 and #2 and provided a brief overview of the concerns and why those two options will come with challenges.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who thanked the Election Commission and Law Department for their response, pointing out that it was very helpful to have different options for the Council to consider. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler offered comments that were in favor of option #3, where the process of elected Mayor would be created through an Ordinance or other methods.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who clarified that whatever the Council puts forward in 2025 won't take effect until November 2027, which Elliott Veloso confirmed. Co-Chair Toner provided comments that were in favor of option #3, noting that it would provide more opportunities for further discussion. Co-Chair Toner also shared that he would be in favor of the Mayor not serving more than 2 terms. Co-Chair Toner expressed how important it is to get language to the State Legislature as soon as possible for them to review and respond back to the Council.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who offered comments that were in favor of option #3, noting that it would be more transparent when electing a Mayor.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Zusy who asked if the current Charter has language regarding term limits and eligibility requirements for Mayor. Elliott Veloso confirmed that there is no language in the Charter about eligibility requirements. Councillor Zusy shared that she believes the Council should be choosing the Mayor, and that the public does not know enough to be choosing the Mayor. In addition, Councillor Zusy shared that if any language were created in regard to the election of a Mayor, it should be in the Charter and not in the City Council Rules.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who shared she would be in favor of having a more transparent process for electing a Mayor, noting the important role the Mayor serves for both the City Council and the School Committee. Councillor Nolan noted that option #3 may be the best choice and suggested that the Mayor be called the City Council President.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Mayor Simmons who stressed how important it is to provide education for voters when proposed changes go on the ballot. Mayor Simmons shared her appreciation for the response from the Law Department, noting that option #3 may be the best choice. Mayor Simmons added how crucial it is to involve the School Committee in the conversation of the elected Mayor because the Mayor serves as the Chair of the School Committee. Mayor Simmons added that any changes made regarding the election of Mayor will also impact the School Committee.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Azeem who asked if the proposed changes were made through option #3, would they be able to take effect before the next election results. Elliott Veloso responded by explaining that because the City currently uses a Plan E Charter, changes would not be able to go in effect until the Charter was amended and approved by the voters, and to give enough time for ballot preparation. Elliott Veloso added that whichever method the City Council decides, it would not take effect until 2027. Megan Bayer added that it would be important to be as clear as possible in the Charter that changes do not take effect until the 2027 election. Councillor Azeem shared he would be in support of option #3.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Wilson who shared her appreciation for the work done by the Law Department and Election Commission. Councillor Wilson agreed that educating voters and engagement is very important for them to understand and have a voice in the proposed changes. Councillor Wilson asked the Election Commission for more information on mailings that go out to voters. Tanya Ford provided a brief overview of the process, adding that they go to every household that has a voter in it.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared that he agrees with comments made by the Mayor related to the School Committee and shared that he had brief conversations with some Members regarding proposed changes to the election of Mayor. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler shared that he had a motion he was bringing forward that was in support of option #3. The motion was shared on the screen and read as follows:

That the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the City Manager is requested to direct the Election Commission and the Law Department to work with the City Council to draft via ordinance a process for the selection of a Mayor based on ranked choice voting and to clarify language to permit this in the Charter.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Committee members for comments related to the motion that was on the floor.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who shared concerns about the proposed motion and noted that he would not be in support.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Megan Bayer who reviewed and clarified the language in option #3.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared concerns about the proposed motion and suggested that some of the language may need to be changed. The Law Department and Co-Chair Siddiqui provided additional clarification on option #3. In addition, Megan Bayer shared that the goal of the next meeting is for the Law Department to provide a draft Charter for review, which incorporates proposed changes based off this Committee and Charter Review Committee discussions and decisions. Megan Bayer pointed out that there would need to be a different process to confirm which methods the Council would like to incorporate into the Ordinance. Co-Chair Toner suggested removing “ranked choice voting” from the motion. Co-Chair Siddiqui noted that the language in this motion indicates that the Committee is not interested in options #1 and #2 and wants to focus on creating language and having more discussion on the suggestions proposed in option #3.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who made the motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the City Manager is requested to direct the Election Commission and the Law Department to work with the City Council to draft via Ordinance a process for the selection of a Mayor and to clarify language to permit this in the Charter.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Absent

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Councillor Nolan who explained the importance of having the School Committee involved. Mayor Simmons shared that she is committed to having the School Committee engaged in future conversations. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler pointed out that the current Charter language does say that the Mayor has to be the Chair of the School Committee. Co-Chair Siddiqui and Co-Chair Toner indicated that adding additional changes to the Charter as it relates to Chair of the School Committee may not be feasible at this time, but it is a topic that can be discussed as the conversation around option #3 continues.

Co-Chair Siddiqui recognized Co-Chair Toner who made a motion to recess the meeting. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Absent

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review went into recess at approximately 4:45p.m.

On Monday, February 24, 2025, the Cambridge City Council’s Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review that recessed on December 9, 2024, and reconvened and recessed again on January 27, 2025, and reconvened and recessed again on February 13, 2025, reconvened at 1:30p.m. by the Co-Chair Councillor Toner. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Co-Chair, Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Siddiqui – Absent*

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote

Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Mayor Simmons – Absent*

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Councillor Siddiqui was marked present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 1:41p.m.

*Mayor Simmons was marked present and remote at 2:11p.m. and then went from remote participation to in person at 2:19p.m.

Co-Chair Toner offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to continue the discussion and review of recommendations from the Charter Review Committee and any additional suggestions from the full City Council pertaining to the Cambridge City Charter. Present at the meeting were Deputy City Manager, Owen O’Riordan, City Solicitor Megan Bayer, Deputy City Solicitor, Elliott Veloso, Executive Director of the Election Commission, Tanya Ford, Election Commissioner, Charles J. Marquardt, Election Commissioner, Ethridge King, Budget Director, Taha Jennings, and Assistant City Manager of Finance, Claire Spinner.

Co-Chair Toner opened Public Comment.

Robert Winters stressed the importance of allowing the public to have enough time to review and provide feedback on proposed changes to the City Charter and shared concerns about language in Section 107 and Section 8.

Co-Chair Toner reviewed the agenda and goals of the meeting and shared that the Co-Chairs would like to move this topic out of Committee and back to the full City Council for more discussion and to send a final document to the State Legislature.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Megan Bayer and Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who provided an update relative to the discussions and proposed changes concerning the City Council’s role with the hiring of the City Solicitor. Megan Bayer provided a brief overview of language that was created by the Law Department based off the discussions with Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Co-Chair Siddiqui. This language was shared on the screen. (Attachment A) Co-Chair Siddiqui added that there were many conversations with City staff, and this proposed language from the Law Department is a result of a workable solution.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Deputy City Manager O’Riordan who noted that this proposed language is not being endorsed by the City Solicitor’s Office or City Staff and pointed out that the current system works well as it is. Deputy City Manager O’Riordan shared strong concerns with the proposed language, especially with the proposed language in the second bullet.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Zusy who asked for clarification regarding if this proposed language would be replacing current language within the City Charter. Megan Bayer explained that this language would not be replacing existing language because the current Charter does not provide language related to the hiring of the City Solicitor. Megan Bayer shared that if this language were to pass, the Law Department would look into how to add it into the Charter. Councillor Zusy shared that she would not be in favor of this proposed language being added to the Charter.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who pointed out that in many other municipalities, the City Solicitor is a hiring authority, noting that what the Committee is discussing with the proposed language is approving an appointment. Councillor Nolan offered comments that were in favor of the proposed language, pointing out that it would be good governance within the legislative body.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Azeem who pointed out that there is more consensus around the first bullet in the proposed language and suggested that the second bullet be withdrawn for now to discuss later. Co-Chair Toner stressed the importance of moving forward with the conversation and voting on both bullets in the proposed language, noting that it would direct the Council to keep discussing or end discussion on this specific topic. Deputy City Manager O’Riordan again indicated that the City does not agree with the second bullet in the proposal.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who asked how this proposed language is different than what is currently being done regarding the City Council approaching the City Manager with concerns or support related to the City Solicitor. The Deputy City Manager explained that enshrining this language in the Charter, as a formal review of the City Solicitor, gives it a lot more weight than it otherwise would have. Deputy City Manager O’Riordan added that the language does not represent the broader responsibilities that the Solicitor has in terms of the operation of the Law Department and the City. Vice Mayor McGovern provided comments that were in favor of the proposed language, noting that language has been changed significantly since this topic was first brought to Committee on January 27th. The Vice Mayor offered suggestions for the proposed language, sharing that it could be a simple majority to approve the City Manager’s recommendation, but a 2/3 vote to reject it. The Vice Mayor noted that this suggestion does not make the Council’s position strong but does make it more difficult to politicize the appointment. Megan Bayer shared the Law Department can look at how to rework the language to capture the Vice Mayor’s suggestion.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Wilson who shared her concerns about when the Council reaches out to the City to help with drafting language on various topics. Councillor Wilson questioned why the City has reservations about proposed bullet number two, when the City Council already practices this. Deputy City Manager O’Riordan thanked Councillor Wilson for her concerns and explained the process of when the City Council requests staff to help draft language, noting that it may not always be language that the City endorses. The Deputy City Manager added that bullet number two is an example of that, wherein the City was asked to put forth language that works legally and gives the City Council the opportunity for discussion. Megan Bayer provided comments that supported the Deputy City Manager, noting that this language came forward not as a policy perspective, but as language that captured the intent of Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Co-Chair Siddiqui.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who provided comments that were in opposition to the proposed language. Mayor Simmons explained that she is in favor of having the legislative and administrative branches be separated as it is written in the Plan E Charter and does not believe there needs to be any changes made as it relates to the City Solicitor. Mayor Simmons provided comments that outlined how the proposed changes could be problematic.

Co-Chair Toner shared that he would be voting against both bullet points and believes that if this is something that goes forward, why wouldn't it be the same for other Department Heads. Co-Chair Toner noted that the Council's role is to review and evaluate the accountability of the City Manager, pointing out that the City Manager is the person the Council goes to when there are concerns with specific departments.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the City Solicitor shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the City Manager. The City Manager shall refer to the City Council and simultaneously file with the Clerk the name of the person the City Manager appoints as City Solicitor. Appointment of the City Solicitor made by the City Manager will be effective upon a majority vote of the City Council, which vote shall occur within 30 days after the date on which notice of the appointment was filed with the City Clerk. An appointment shall take effect if the City Council fails to act within those 30 days.

Deputy City Clerk Crane Called the roll

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – No

Mayor Simmons – No

Yes – 6, No – 3. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Megan Bayer who shared that the Law Department had a proposed amendment to bullet number one based off suggestions made by the Vice Mayor. (Attachment B)

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the City Solicitor shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the City Manager. The City Manager shall refer to the City Council and simultaneously file with the Clerk the name of the person the City Manager appoints as City Solicitor. The appointment of the City Solicitor made by the City Manager may be rejected by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the City Council, which vote shall occur within 30 days after the date on which notice of the appointment was filed with the City Clerk. An appointment shall take effect if the City Council fails to meet the vote threshold required to reject the appointment or fails to act within those 30 days.

Deputy City Clerk Crane Called the roll

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – No
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – No
 Mayor Simmons – No
Yes – 5, No – 4. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who made a motion to approve the proposed language in bullet number one as amended.

Deputy City Clerk Crane Called the roll

Councillor Azeem – Yes
 Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – Yes
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – No
 Mayor Simmons – No
Yes – 7, No – 2. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that due to the City Solicitor’s unique role of providing legal advice and representation to the entire City, including all officials, departments, employees and multi-member bodies, including the City Council, City Councillors may provide comments to the City Manager about the City Solicitor’s performance of work done directly for the Council, and the City Manager will incorporate those comments in the City Solicitor’s performance review.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Present
 Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – No
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – No
 Mayor Simmons – No
Yes – 5, No – 3, Present – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner shared that he would like to move the discussion to whether the Mayor should serve as a member of the School Committee or Chair the School Committee.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who noted that this is a conversation that needs to happen with the School Committee present. The Vice Mayor shared his experience as

being a member of the School Committee for four terms, and how having different Mayor's coming into the School Committee with different agendas could be destructive. The Vice Mayor shared that if he were on the School Committee he would support the Mayor not being the Chair of the Committee.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who shared how there can be challenges when someone from the Council, who has never served on the School Committee, becomes Chair of the School Committee. Mayor Simmons also pointed out that when people are campaigning for City Council, they are not campaigning for the School Committee. Mayor Simmons shared that she would support the Mayor not having the position of Chair, but still serve as a member of the Committee.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who agreed with the Mayor and Vice Mayor. Councillor Nolan shared the views of the Charter Review Committee recommendations, pointing out that nine members of the Charter Review Committee voted in favor of the Mayor serving on the School Committee, one member voted against, three members voted present, and one member was absent. In addition, Councillor Nolan shared that when the Charter Review Committee voted on whether the Mayor should serve as the Chair of the School Committee and no members voted in favor, with eleven voting against, two present, and two absent. Councillor Nolan shared she would support these two recommendations.

Co-Chair Toner noted that he would also be in support of the proposed recommendations.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Megan Bayer who pointed out that if the Mayor is not going to be the Chair of the School Committee, then there needs to be language in the Charter that addresses what the alternative method would be.

Co-Chair Toner made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that the Mayor stay as a member of the School Committee but not serve as Chair and request that the Law Department draft language to make that change in the redline document of the Charter.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner suggested that it may be in the best interest of the Committee to reconsider a previous vote that due to the City Solicitor's unique role of providing legal advice and representation to the entire City, including all officials, departments, employees and multi-

member bodies, including the City Council, City Councillors may provide comments to the City Manager about the City Solicitor's performance of work done directly for the Council, and the City Manager will incorporate those comments in the City Solicitor's performance review. Co-Chair Toner shared that it would be good to forward everything back to the full City Council as clean as possible, and that there was one member who voted present on this motion.

Co-Chair Toner made a motion to suspend the rules for reconsideration.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner made a motion to reconsider the following motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that due to the City Solicitor's unique role of providing legal advice and representation to the entire City, including all officials, departments, employees and multi-member bodies, including the City Council, City Councillors may provide comments to the City Manager about the City Solicitor's performance of work done directly for the Council, and the City Manager will incorporate those comments in the City Solicitor's performance review.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that due to the City Solicitor's unique role of providing legal advice and representation to the entire City, including all officials, departments, employees and multi-member bodies, including the City Council, City Councillors may provide comments to the City Manager about the City Solicitor's performance of work done directly for the Council, and the City Manager will incorporate those comments in the City Solicitor's performance review.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
 Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – No
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – No
 Mayor Simmons – No
Yes – 6, No – 3. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared that they had sat down with the Finance team to create language on the budget process. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler noted that the proposed language, which was provided in advance and included in the Agenda Packet, is different than what was originally presented at a previous meeting. Claire Spinner indicated that the current process is working well and helps to ensure that the City is aligning with best practices. Claire Spinner shared that she does not believe that specific language needs to be added to the Charter but could be done through City Council Rules. Taha Jennings agreed that there is currently a good process with the budget, but this is a decision for the Council to make and that he is open to discussion.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Zusy who shared concerns about the word “determine” in the proposed language. Claire Spinner provided an overview of why the word “determine” was in the language. Councillor Zusy shared hesitations about the proposed language because the City Council does not have day-to-day activity with the budget.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to amend the proposed language by substituting the word “determine” to “develop”.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
 Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – Yes
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – Yes
 Mayor Simmons – Yes
Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who provided an overview of the current budget process and shared that she would support the proposed language and believes the City Council should have more authority as it pertains to the budget. Councillor Nolan pointed out that the School Committee has more authority with the school budget than the City Council has with the City budget.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared support for the proposed language and that it would enable the City Council to be more transparent and involved with the budget process. The Vice Mayor agreed that it would be appropriate for the Council to have more authority, especially when it comes to Council goals and priorities.

Co-Chair Toner made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to establish City budget priorities in the Charter using Financial Procedures Language as amended.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner moved the discussion to whether the Mayor title should be changed to City Council President.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who pointed out that the Charter Review Committee voted in favor of changing the title of Mayor to President of the City Council and that she would be in favor.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Co-Chair Siddiqui who provided comments that were in favor of the title change, noting that the title change would more accurately represent the role of Mayor in Cambridge. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler pointed out that it is confusing to have a position called Mayor that does not actually have the duties of a Mayor, such as the Mayor of Boston.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Mayor Simmons and Vice Mayor McGovern who offered comments that were in opposition to changing the title of Mayor to President of the City Council, sharing that it is a system that has been in place for many years and that the community understands what the role of Mayor is. Co-Chair Toner agreed with the Mayor and Vice Mayor.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to change the title of Mayor to President of the City Council.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – No

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – No

Councillor Wilson – No

Councillor Zusy – No

Mayor Simmons – No

Yes – 4, No – 5. Motion failed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to extend the meeting to 4:00p.m.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner asked for clarification on whether the City would still be under a Plan E form of government if all of these proposed changes are approved and if language pertaining to petitions needs to be addressed. Megan Bayer explained that what the Council is proposing would fall under a Home Rule Charter and the State law for citizens petitions applies to Plan Charters. Megan Bayer added that the Council can add language to the Charter regarding citizen petitions. Megan Bayer and Elliott Veloso provided additional comments and information as it relates to the Plan E Charter, petitions, Home Rule Charters and offered suggestions on how the Council can move forward with proposed Charter changes and language related to citizen petitions.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Zusy who shared she would like to share on the screen with the Committee the language that was in the current Charter to help with clarification.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who pointed out that this would be considered a new recommendation because it was not recommended by the Charter Review Committee and questioned if this should be up for discussion.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review continue discussion on reinserting old language into future draft.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Present

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – No

Councillor Siddiqui – No

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – No

Councillor Toner – Yes
 Councillor Wilson – No
 Councillor Zusy – Yes
 Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 3, No – 4, Present – 1, Absent – 1. Motion failed.

Co-Chair Toner shared that for the remainder of the meeting, the Committee will be going through the red line draft of the Charter, which was provided in advance and included in the Agenda Packet. Co-Chair Toner noted that this would be an opportunity for members of the Committee to make changes to the pre-draft language.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who made the motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council that Section 2-3, subsection b – v, that the Mayor’s State of the City address be held at least one time per term.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
 Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – Yes
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – Yes
 Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to add in Section 2 – 8 Recommend revising to exempt those bodies governed by state law or special legislation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
 Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
 Councillor Nolan – Yes
 Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
 Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
 Councillor Toner – Yes
 Councillor Wilson – Yes
 Councillor Zusy – Yes
 Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to follow the recommendations of the City Council in Section 2-10 subsection c and d.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.**Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who made a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.****Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.**Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to accept the Law Department's recommendations for Section 3-2, subsections l and m, and Section 3-2, subsection r.****Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent - 2. Motion passed.**Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to keep the language in Section 2-8, subsection a.**

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council in Section 2-9, subsection a, to delete the Law Department’s recommendation “with the City Manager”.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Present

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Present - 1, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Megan Bayer who provided a brief review and recommendations of the following sections in the draft Charter for the Committee to consider: Section 2-1 subsection c, Section 2-5 subsection a, deletion of language in Section 2-7 proposed subsection e, Section 4-2 subsection b, Section 8-1, Section 8-2, Section 8-3, Section 9-4, and Section 9-6. The Law

Department was available to respond to any clarifying questions brought forward by Committee members.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to extend the meeting by 5 minutes.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner made a motion that the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review recommend to the full City Council to accept the recommendations from the Law Department in Section 2-1 subsection c, Section 2-5 subsection, deletion of language in Section 2-7 proposed subsection e, Section 4-2 subsection b, keep Section 8-1 and delete Sections 8-2 and 8-3, and remove Section 9-6.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to forward the draft Charter out of the Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review and to the full City Council.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Toner recognized Co-Chair Siddiqui who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent - 1. Motion passed.

The Special Committee of the Whole/Charter Review adjourned at approximately 4:37p.m.

Attachment A – Language regarding the appointment of the City Solicitor

Attachment B – Language regarding the appointment of City Solicitor as amended

Attachment C – 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:

December 9, 2024

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/920?view_id=1&redirect=true

January 27, 2025

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/945?view_id=1&redirect=true

February 13, 2025

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/957?view_id=1&redirect=true

February 24, 2025

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/961?view_id=1&redirect=true

A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the meeting agenda and Charter Review recommendations for discussion.

A communication was received from Councillor Siddiqui and Councillor Toner, transmitting an update on the Special Committee on Charter Review.

A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting questions regarding Charter Review recommendations and process.

A communication was received from Megan Bayer, Acting City Solicitor, transmitting a legal opinion in response to the Charter Review Committee's Final Report and the Process for Reviewing and Acting on those Recommendations.

A communication was received from Megan Bayer, Acting City Solicitor, transmitting a presentation relative to the City Council's Charter Review questions.

A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the Rules of the City Council.