



HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

12:30 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Human Services and Veterans Committee will hold a public meeting to discuss the status of after school programming in Cambridge

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Ordinance Committee was held on Tuesday, February 28, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 12:30p.m. by the Chair, Councillor McGovern. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote

Vice Mayor Mallon – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Toner – Present/Remote

Councillor Zondervan – Present/Remote

Present – 5, Absent – 0. Quorum established.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern noted that the call of the meeting was to discuss the status of afterschool programming in Cambridge. Councillor McGovern shared that Mayor Siddiqui was present at the meeting and he introduced City Staff that were also present, which included the City Manager, Yi-An Huang, who was joined by Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for the Department of Human Services and Michelle Farnum, Assistant Director of Child, Youth, and Family Services for the Department of Human Services (DHSP).

The Chair, Councillor McGovern opened public comment.

Danielle Jones McLaughlin, 21 Newtowne Court, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of having after school and asked for more support for children with IEP's.

Maya Gonzalez, 17 Seventh Street, Cambridge, MA, stressed the importance of having more inclusion for children with disabilities and asked that DHSP and the School Department be more cohesive and work together to support each other.

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Rachel Grashow, 107 Rindge Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about communication between DHSP and caregivers and asked that the Council and the School Department work together to meet the needs and concerns of caregivers.

Sherri Harrison, 50 York Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that they support after school.

Eugenia Schraa, 259 Washington, Cambridge, MA, had follow up questions from the previous After School update meeting that was held in June 2022 and shared concerns about bussing students to programs.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized the City Manager who offered remarks concerning afterschool programs in Cambridge. He was followed by his team, Ellen Semonoff and Michelle Farnum, who gave an overview of their presentation titled “Cambridge After School Programming” (Attachment A). They highlighted the progress that has been made in afterschool post pandemic and noted they were committed to expanding access to afterschool programs in Cambridge. One important fact they shared was that while the afterschool programs are not as high in numbers as they would like to see, Cambridge has a higher portion of students in afterschool programs than the state and national average.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Azeem who thanked DHSP staff for their presentation and was happy to see the progress that has been made. He had a clarifying question about the three specific schools that DHSP is expanding on and why they were chosen. Ellen Semonoff and Michelle Farnum were both available to respond and provided the reasoning behind those specific schools and said they feel confident that they can make the expansion happen with these programs because it is where they are seeing the most in demand. Ellen Semonoff also offered comments on other schools in Cambridge and the possibility of having more programs available with them.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Zondervan who thanked staff from DHSP for their efforts to solve afterschool program concerns. He had clarifying questions around expanding the current model which operates at the King Open Extended Day Program to other schools. Ellen Semonoff shared that it’s hard to anticipate what comes next, and although one model works well in one school, it may not be the best options for all schools. She noted that they will be looking at the results from that pilot to help move forward with expansion.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who had some clarifying questions around full time staff and the hours worked associated with them and whether there is better retention with staff in different programs, specifically the coed staff. Ellen Semonoff and Michelle Farnum broke down the different full time roles in different programs, noting that hours for full time coed staff include hours spent during the day engaged in school based activities.

Vice Mayor Mallon stressed the importance of having the School Department involved and Principal support going forward with expansion to create a stronger partnership with DHSP.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Mayor Siddiqui who offered comments around bussing for the 2022-2023 school year and shared how the School Department came up with a criteria to figure out how to prioritize bus requests. She stressed the importance of how DHSP and the School Department should coordinate with each other around bussing moving forward into the next school year. Mayor Siddiqui suggested DHSP reach out to as many school principals as possible to work out solutions on program expansions.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern thanked the Mayor for her work on both the School Department side and the City side and thanked DHSP for thinking of different ways to address concerns. He shared that he was very happy to see that another full-time inclusion specialist had been added on to staffing and asked for an update on how many inclusion specialists are

currently in the program. Michelle Farnum shared that there is currently an Inclusion Manager and Inclusion Specialist, and with them they support frontline inclusion facilitators who are embedded in programs to support young people. Ms. Farnum noted that DHSP is looking to add one additional full time inclusion specialist to help with student assessments, work with families, and coaches program staff. Councillor McGovern addressed concerns regarding IEP's and how evaluations done in school versus evaluations done for afterschool may see different results around having one on one staff with a student. Michelle Farnum noted that although they cannot reserve seats, DHSP does whatever they can to support the youth who do get into afterschool and she shared that often times when talking about assessments, it's important to look at the environment to which the youth is in.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who offered suggestions to improve staffing for DHSP. He noted that City Year is a great opportunity for young people to participate, noting that they are the number one recruiter of young people of color who enter the teaching profession, and offer professional development and resources. He noted that it could be another addition to moving forward with establishing positive programs in Cambridge.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized the City Manager who shared that he appreciated all the comments and engagement surrounding the topic of afterschool. He noted that he appreciates all of the work that has been done and stressed the importance of setting goals that are achievable to better serve Cambridge families.

The Chair, Councillor McGovern recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Yes – 5, No – 0. Meeting adjourned.

Attachment A – Presentation titled “Cambridge After School Programming”

Clerk's Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record.

The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/451?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=3777490821a5086713ba49108ccb9fc6

A communication was received from Assistant City Manager, Human Services Ellen Semonoff, transmitting a presentation regarding Cambridge After School Programming.