

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
JOINT NEIGHBORHOOD AND LONG TERM PLANNING, PUBLIC
FACILITIES, ARTS AND CELEBRATION COMMITTEE AND
HOUSING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026 RECESSED
RECONVENED TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026**

**NEIGHBORHOOD & LONG-TERM PLANNING,
PUBLIC FACILITIES, ARTS & CELEBRATION
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Councillor Zusy, Chair
Councillor Al-Zubi
Councillor Flaherty
Vice Mayor Azeem
Councillor Nolan

HOUSING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Councillor Azeem, Co-Chair
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Co-Chair
Councillor Al-Zubi
Councillor Simmons
Councillor Zusy

A joint public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Neighborhood & Long-Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts & Celebration Committee and Housing Committee was held on Wednesday, March 25, 2026. The meeting was Called to Order at 11:00a.m. by the Housing Co-Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll of both Committees.

Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations

Councillor Al-Zubi – Absent*
Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/Remote
Councillor Flaherty – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 4, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

*Councillor Al-Zubi was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 11:04a.m.

Housing

Councillor Al-Zubi – Absent*
Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/Remote

Councillor Simmons – Absent*

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 3, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Councillor Al-Zubi was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 11:04a.m.

*Councillor Simmons was present and remote at 11:10a.m.

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss present findings on the state of housing production since the passage of the Multifamily Zoning in February 2025. Present at the meeting was Assistant City Manager for Community Development, Melissa Peters, Director of Zoning and Development, Jeff Roberts, Deputy Chief of Planning, Jennifer Caira, Housing Director, Chris Cotter, Commissioner of Inspectional Services (ISD), Peter McLaughlin, Assistant Commissioner of Inspectional Services, Jacob Lazzara, Zoning Project Manager, Emily Hutchings, Senior Manager for Data Services, Scott Walker, Executive Director of the Historical Commission, Charlie Sullivan, Preservation Planner, Sarah Burks, and Superintendent of Urban Forestry and Landscape, Andrew Putnam.

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Jennifer Caira for opening remarks. Jeff Roberts gave a presentation titled “Annual Housing Review”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler opened public comment.

Carolyn Fuller, 12 Douglas Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of more housing and in opposition to changing Multifamily Housing (MFH).

Noor Johnson, 218 Hamilton Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about luxury units being built.

Bill McAvinney, 12 Douglass Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about luxury units being built.

Liz Loya, 21 Field Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of amending MFH to align better with climate goals.

Carol Lynn Alpert, 99 Cushing Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to large development in their neighborhood.

Karen Brushett, 51 Cushing Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of more housing and for MFH to align better with climate goals.

Thomas Goreau, 37 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to MFH.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to MFH.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to MFH.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to MFH.

Jason Doo, 101 Inman Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of MFH.

Tod Brubaker, 225 Allston Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to MFH.

Gordon Moore, 9 Rutland Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions related to MFH.

Lawrence Klein, 700 Huron Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about MFH and asked for more community input.

Justin Saif, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of affordable housing and lowering rent costs.

David Halperin, 14 Valentine Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of more housing.

Marina Goreau Atlas, 37 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about environmental safety and demolition.

Patrick Barrett, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of more housing and against policies that slow or restrict development.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to MFH.

Lawrene Adkins, 45 Hayes Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to MFH.

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Chair Zusy who shared concerns about the impacts of the MFH Ordinance on neighborhoods and questioned if the Ordinance is creating situations where current lower-cost housing is being replaced with more expensive, luxury units. Chair Zusy pointed out the added work on City Departments due to of increased development activity and asked staff for feedback on how they are being affected and if there are ways to improve the Ordinance.

Charlie Sullivan explained how the workload has changed for the Historical Commission, especially when reviewing older buildings, adding that sometimes the reviewing of buildings can delay the construction process. Charlie Sullivan noted the importance of having a review process in place to help with negative impacts on historic buildings and neighborhoods, sharing that there is a strong interest in development.

Jacob Lazzara shared how ISD has evolved and adapted to the Ordinance and changes that came with MFH. Jacob Lazzara shared how the Department has received concerns from residents, but noted that their role is to enforce building codes when reviewing projects and issuing permits. Jacob Lazzara added that neighborhood meetings can be informative and that ISD has been actively trying to educate residents on the recent changes.

Jeff Roberts shared how the City is addressing the increase in development interest and noted that staff has been able to coordinate well. Jeff Roberts noted that many developers are looking for more guidance as it relates to zoning, but pointed out that earlier engagement in the development process may be able to address those concerns.

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Councillor Nolan who suggested that the housing report should separate AHO projects from inclusionary housing because of their differences and that the data should not be combined. Councillor Nolan shared concerns about how new developments are impacting solar energy and suggested that the City review the impacts further because of the City's environmental goals. Jeff Roberts explained that the City does not have hard data on how new developments are affecting solar energy because most buildings have not been built yet. Jeff Roberts shared some of the challenges that may occur while trying to obtain that data because many solar systems are privately owned. Jeff Roberts briefly reviewed past studies that were conducted, showing how building height and space can affect solar access.

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Co-Chair Azeem who reviewed the different options and choices the City can examine related to zoning and housing development. Co-Chair Azeem urged the Committees to be cautious, pointing out that the City just recently made the zoning changes and should avoid making quick decisions before seeing the actual results. Co-Chair Azeem added that positive changes can happen with new development, such as community benefits and more neighborhood activity.

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Councillor Flaherty who pointed out that housing is a regional problem and not one just affecting Cambridge. He shared concerns about new developments without affordable housing units affecting middle class residents and neighborhoods. Councillor Flaherty had clarifying questions related to accessory units and if there is data collected on the number of bedrooms within new units to understand if new development is good for families. Jeff Roberts briefly reviewed accessory units and shared that CDD is still working on how to collect bedroom data, but there is a wide range of unit sizes. Councillor Flaherty emphasized the need to support middle class families.

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler noted that this meeting would be going into recess and reconvening on April 7, 2026.

**Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler made a motion to close public comment.
Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll of both Committees.**

Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebration

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Yes -5. Motion passed.

Housing

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheller – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed

Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler made a motion to recess the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll of both Committees.

Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebration

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Yes -5. Motion passed.

Housing

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheller – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed

The joint meeting went into recess at approximately 1:02p.m.

On Tuesday, April 7 202, the Cambridge City Council’s Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee and Housing Committee that recessed on March 25, 2026, reconvened at 3:00p.m. by the Chair of the Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations, Councillor Zusy. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 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 Chair Zusy, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll of both Committees.

Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/Remote
Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/Remote
Councillor Flaherty – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Present – 5. Quorum established.

Housing

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/Remote
Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/Remote
Councillor Simmons – Present/Remote
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 5. Quorum established

Chair Zusy offered opening remarks (**Attachment A**) and noted the Call of the meeting was to continue the joint public hearing reviewing the impacts of the Multifamily Housing Ordinance. She noted that this meeting will feature outside experts, including a realtor, developer, and professors of urban planning, landscape architecture, housing, and transportation policy. The experts will share their observations, ideas for other ways to accomplish our goals, and recommendations for improvements. Chair Zusy added that there will be no public comment. Present at the meeting were Melissa Peters, Jeff Roberts, Jennifer Caira, Chris Cotter, and Charlie Sullivan. Experts included Ed Abrams from RE/MAX Real Estate Center, Time Love, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Gary Hilderbrand, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Jason Korb, Capstone Communities LLC, and Magda Maaoui, Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Chair Zusy recognized Ed Abrams who gave a presentation related to the MFH Ordinance. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Chair Zusy recognized Time Love who gave a presentation titled “The Design Impacts of the Zoning Code”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Chair Zusy recognized Gary Hilderbrand who offered remarks. (**Attachment B**)

Chair Zusy recognized Magda Maaoui who offered opening remarks and urged the City Council not to change the zoning, noting it is already helping address the housing crisis. Magda Maaoui explained that maintaining the current zoning while strengthening affordability efforts will help the City meet its housing goals.

Chair Zusy recognized Co-Chair Azeem who read remarks from Katherine Einstein, Associate Professor of Political Science at Boston University. (**Attachment C**)

Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Flaherty who offered comments related to the housing market in Cambridge and how many factors contribute to why Cambridge is different when it comes to housing compared to other cities. Councillor Flaherty shared how MFH may have unintended consequences because it is encouraging developers to create large apartment buildings and condos and replacing one, two, and three family homes. Councillor Flaherty shared concerns about the effects MFH may have on neighborhoods and property values and believes the City should look at other approaches to address the housing crisis. Councillor Flaherty asked how the City could encourage smaller development to increase housing but not impacting neighborhoods. Tim Love explained how smaller condominiums may be easier to afford rather than single family homes and limiting design standards may not reduce housing production. Tim Love added that it may be helpful to look at property that is more neighborhood scaled instead of developing large buildings.

Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Nolan who shared that she is committed to ending single- and two-family homes and added that it is important to keep homeowners in Cambridge with the option to downsize if they want. Councillor Nolan shared concerns about developers creating units that are studios or one bedroom rather than family size units and encouraged more affordability, green space, and climate resilient designs. Tim Love pointed out how the housing market responds to what the zoning code allows. Councillor Nolan asked for clarification related to smaller, lower priced units that were discussed in the presentation and if something like that is achievable or already happening. Tim Love provided an overview of what may incentivize developers to create

and provide smaller units and homes while also reviewing the challenges larger projects may have. Melissa Peters added how the MFH was created to increase affordable housing and it will be important to continue to review the outcomes of MFH to understand what is working and what is not.

Chair Zusy recognized Jason Korb who shared his experience as a developer and property owner in Cambridge. Jason Korb offered comments relating to as-of-right permitting, noting that the process can be expensive, time consuming, and can be challenging with today's economy. Chair Zusy asked him to speak more specifically about the MFH Ordinance and if changes would support better housing outcomes, especially for middle-income residents. Jason Korb explained that he has not used the MFH Ordinance but noted that the affordable housing overlay has worked well.

Chair Zusy recognized Councillor McGovern who pointed out that affordability can mean different things to different people, adding that the MFH was intended to create more housing for lower prices compared to single family homes being redeveloped. Tim Love explained how design changes can be used as an adjustment that can help improve housing outcomes. Councillor McGovern questioned if there would be a way to require design standards without slowing down the permitting process. Tim Love pointed out that the design standards should be incorporated in the zoning. Melissa Peters explained that having clearer standards would be beneficial and that more guidance from the City Council could help with addressing some of the concerns that have been raised, such as shadows and open space. Charlie Sullivan added how some recent development projects would benefit the City more if there were design standards and clearer rules.

Chair Zusy shared that projects can be confusing for residents because they do not always understand the different stages of projects. Chair Zusy emphasized the need for a more clear and public process so residents can participate in community meetings about development projects. Gary Hilderbrand offered comments related to zoning and how it directly impacts livability.

Chair Zusy recognized Co-Chair Azeem who raised questions related to current projects being financially feasible or if inclusionary zoning is causing developments from going forward, adding that including more requirements could prevent projects all together. Charlie Sullivan shared that some projects have not moved forward and he is unsure if it is related to financing. Ed Abrams shared how in his experience having 20% inclusionary makes it challenging for projects. Co-Chair Azeem shared concerns related to projects not being feasible and urged the City to work towards changes that will allow projects to be developed. Jason Korb added that special permits can create challenges within the process. Co-Chair Azeem pointed out how the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) is a good example of how permitting can help support development.

Chair Zusy recognized Magda Maaoui who clarified that her previous comments were not intended as being opposed to design changes, noting that strong design standards can be important with zoning and creating affordable housing.

Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Al-Zubi who shared that parking, environmental impacts, and zoning are all important factors when making decisions about long-term goals and visions for Cambridge and questioned how current development decisions will impact the future. Tim Love shared how current standards can be reviewed and adapted over time when needed. Councillor Al-Zubi noted that it will be important going forward how the City wants to define affordability.

**Chair Zusy made a motion to extend the meeting 10 minutes.
Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll of both Committees.**

Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Yes – 5. Motion passed

Housing

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Yes – 3, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Chair Zusy recognized Mayor Siddiqui who thanked the speakers for sharing their expertise and concerns and shared she is open to discussing refinements and how the suggestions and concerns can be incorporated into future recommendations as the discussion of affordable housing continues.

Chair Zusy raised concerns that even without parking requirements, market expectations are still shaping projects in ways that reduce open space and impact design. Tim Love explained how parking is usually driven by financing and market demands, which influences building layout and can limit better site design. Gary Hilderbrand added that tight setbacks and close building spacing negatively affect livability, privacy, and landscaping. Tim Love pointed out that refining design standards around parking, setbacks, and layout could improve outcomes without reducing housing production.

Chair Zusy announced that with the time of the meeting having expired, the joint Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee and Housing Committee was adjourned.

Attachment A – Councillor Zusy opening remarks and speaker biographies.

Attachment B – Remarks from Gary Hilderbrand.

Attachment C – Remarks from Katherine Einstein.

Attachment D – Communications from the March 25, 2026 and April 7, 2026 meetings.

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:

[Mar 25, 2026 Joint Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebration/Housing Committee - Cambridge, MA](#)

[Apr 07, 2026 Joint Housing/Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebration Committee - Cambridge, MA](#)