



FINANCE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

9:00 AM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Finance Committee will conduct a public hearing on the city and school budgets covering the fiscal period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Joan Pickett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9:19 AM
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, May 14, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 9:00 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Pickett. 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.

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

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Pickett – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Toner – Absent*

Councillor Wilson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Mayor Simmons – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

***Councillor Toner was marked present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 9:19a.m.**

Co-Chair Pickett offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss the City budget covering the fiscal period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. Present at the meeting was City Manager Yi-An Huang, Deputy City Manager, Owen O’Riordan, Assistant City

Manager for Finance, Claire Spinner, Budget Director, Taha Jennings, Deputy Budget Director, Angela Pierre, and Principal Budget Analysis, Daniel Liss.

Co-Chair Pickett opened Public Comment.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to the budget and the environment and urged the Council to be generous with their funding toward the Urban Forestry Plan.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support of tree canopy.

Co-Chair Pickett noted that Public Comment would remain open.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized City Manager Yi-An Huang who offered opening remarks and reviewed the statutory role of the City Council relative to the budget. City Manager Huang his excitement about goals and priorities and shared that the budget conversations from the previous meeting last week were very productive.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Mayor Simmons who made a motion to forward Cable TV, Debt Service, Historical Commission, Women’s Commission, Human Rights Commission, Library, Veteran’s Services, Cherry Sheet, MWRA, City Overview Section, Financial Summaries Section, and Revenue Section proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

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

MAYOR’S OFFICE

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Mayor Simmons and Taha Jennings who offered an overview of the Mayor’s Office budget and the notable increase. Co-Chair Nolan pointed out the importance of transparency and thanked Taha Jennings for reviewing the context of why there was an increase.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to forward the Mayor’s Office proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

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

CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALIANCE

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Dr. Assaad Sayah, Chief Executive Officer, Derrick Neal, Chief Public Health Officer, and Deborah Odunze, Deputy Chief Public Health Officer. Dr. Sayah offered opening remarks and shared how the Cambridge Public Health Department works collaboratively with the City to improve the health and healthcare for the citizens of Cambridge. It was noted by Dr. Sayah that the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) is a safety net program which does not turn people away, but the Health Departments energy and focus is to prioritize residents of Cambridge. Dr. Sayah and his team responded to comments and questions from Councillors regarding the TB Clinic, Cambridge focused programs and their funding, funding towards mental health and substance use disorders, social worker roles, employment status, and the condition of facilities where staff are working, and patients are being seen. City Manager Huang was also recognized to provide comments, noting that the City is in conversations with CHA on how they can work with and participate in supporting infrastructures.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Mayor Simmons who made a motion to forward the Cambridge Health Alliance proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

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

CAPITAL BUILDING PROJECTS

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Nick Stoutt, Assistant Commissioner for Architectural Services, Brendon Roy, Director of Construction, and Rebecca Fuentes, Deputy Chief Operating Officer who offered an overview of the primary goals and priorities of the newly established Capital Building Projects Department. Co-Chair Nolan and Councillor Wilson were recognized for comments and noted the importance of being mindful of the cost of projects while enhancing spaces and the efforts across the City to maintain buildings. Nick Stoutt shared a goal is to look at projects and maintenance with a holistic approach. Deputy City O’Riordan was available to respond and support comments from the Capital Building Projects team and respond to comments and questions from Councillors.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Co-Chair Nolan who made a motion to forward the Capital Building Projects proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent –2. Motion passed.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD) and who was joined by her team. Iram Farooq offered a detailed overview of the responsibilities and goals of CDD and the impact of the recent restructuring which created the Office of Sustainability and Housing Department. Iram Farooq and her team responded to questions and comments from Councillors relative to goals around transportation, the Disparity Study, work and programs being done with small, minority owned businesses, open space, and cannabis.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Mayor Simmons who made a motion to forward the Community Development Department proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent –2. Motion passed.

HOUSING

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD), who was joined by Chris Cotter, Housing Director Anna Dolmatch, Homeownership Program Manager, and Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner. Co-Chair Pickett noted how housing is an area that has been a huge focus for the Council and it is

important to understand what the priorities are for the FY25 budget. Chris Cotter gave an overview of the Housing Department within CDD and shared how the goals and priorities align with the City Council as far as affordable housing and programs and resources available for affordable housing. Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Nolan, Vice Mayor McGovern, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, and Councillor Wilson for comments and questions. Chris Cotter and his team were available to respond, noting that the Department is now fully staffed with one vacant position.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Co-Chair Nolan who made a motion to forward the Community Development Department proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent –2. Motion passed.

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Susanne Rasmussen, Director of Environmental and Transportation Planning, who was joined by Nikhil Nadkarni, Senior Climate Program Manager, and gave a brief overview of the newly development Office of Sustainability, noting that the creation of this department was to respond to the growing importance of the City’s climate initiatives. Susanne Rasmussen highlighted that the focus of this Office is to improve community and environmental health through strategies, policies, and programs. Co-Chair Pickett recognized Co-Chair Nolan, and Councillor Wilson who noted the importance of having goals that align with the outcomes, and pointed out how it is not only efforts that are made in Cambridge, but regionally. Co-Chair Pickett asked for clarification on how ARPA funding plays a role in the department. Susanne Rasmussen and Nikhil Nadkarni were both available to respond to comments and questions.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Co-Chair Nolan who made a motion to forward the Office of Sustainability proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Wilson – Yes
Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Finance Committee went into Recess at 12:21p.m.

Co-Chair Pickett made a motion to reconvene the meeting at 1:05p.m.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent
Vice Mayor McGovern – Present
Councillor Nolan – Present
Councillor Pickett – Present
Councillor Siddiqui – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Wilson – Present
Mayor Simmons – Absent

Present – 5, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Co-Chair Pickett recognized the Commissioner of Public Works, Kathy Watkins, who was joined by John Nardone, Deputy Commissioner, Jim Wilcox, Assistant Commissioner of Engineering, Jennifer Mathews, Assistant Commissioner of Administration and Planning, and Ellen Katz, Fiscal Director. Kathy Watkins also recognized additional staff for the Department of Public Works (DPW) who were in attendance. Co-Chair Pickett recognized Kathy Watkins who highlighted the responsibilities, priorities, and goals of DPW, and reviewed some of the changes that were made in the FY25 budget, as well as the many ongoing and future projects and programs. Kathy Watkins and her team responded to questions and comments related to the budget and the Department's initiatives from Co-Chair Nolan, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor Wilson, Co-Chair Pickett, and Vice Mayor McGovern.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Co-Chair Nolan who made a motion to forward the Department of Public Works proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Pickett – Yes
Councillor Siddiqui – Absent
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Wilson – Yes
Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Mark Gallagher, Managing Director, and Fred Centanni, Director of Administration who highlighted that the Water Department continues to ensure that the City has a continuous supply of quality drinking water in addition to pointing out other responsibilities and priorities that fall within the Department. Co-Chair Nolan asked for more information regarding PFAS going forward and if additional funding is needed to ensure the City is meeting the appropriate standards. Co-Chair Pickett noted the importance of being transparent with residents, and Mark Gallagher shared that the Water Department website provides information to the public.

Co-Chair Pickett made a motion to forward the Water Department proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

HUMAN SERVICES

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, who was joined by her team. Ellen Semonoff and her team responded to comments and questions from Councillors relative to homelessness and mental health, universal afterschool and youth programs, the workforce development program, language justice programs, and adult programs. Co-Chair Pickett highlighted how important it is for the City to offer various programs and resources for community members. City Manager Huang was available to offer additional comments which supported the budget and services provided through Human Services.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Co-Chair Nolan who made a motion to forward the Human Services proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes
Mayor Simmons – Absent
Yes – 5, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT SECTION

Co-Chair Pickett recognized City Manager Huang, Deputy City Manager O’Riordan, Claire Spinner, and Taha Jennings to provide an overview of Public Investment funding. Deputy City Manager O’Riordan noted that there is an internal investment team of City staff that have also been in conversations throughout the budget season and introduced them. Deputy City Manager O’Riordan provided an overview of the decrease in funding and noted the importance of continuing conversations around public investments as the year progresses. City Manager Huang provided additional comments highlighting the focus long-term priorities and making decisions that reflect the City’s values. The City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Taha Jennings, Claire Spinner and the internal public investment team were available to respond to comments and questions from Co-Chair Nolan, Councillor Wilson, Vice Mayor McGovern, and Co-Chair Pickett.

Co-Chair Pickett recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to forward the Public Investment proposed FY25 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Pickett – Yes
Councillor Siddiqui – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Wilson – Yes
Mayor Simmons – Absent
Yes – 5, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

With no further business, Co-Chair Pickett adjourned the meeting at 4:21p.m.

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/748?view_id=1&redirect=true

A communication was received from Taha Jennings, Budget Director, transmitting the FY25 Budget Hearing schedule.

A communication was received from Taha Jennings, Budget Director, transmitting a list of department pulls for the May 14, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting.

A petition was received from Marlene Lundberg, regarding support DPW's request to retain the current "Lechmere" style of Bishop's Crook lamppost's.

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 8:04 AM
To: Nolan, Patricia; Pickett, Joan; City Clerk
Subject: Re: Public Comment Form Submission Confirmation

Here is the comment I would like to submit just in case I can't make it to the meeting at 9 AM:

Young Kim

17 Norris on Public Investment Section, Debt Service and department budgets for Community Development, Public Works and Water Departments relative to the Mass Ave Partial Construction Capital Appropriation

Please require City Manager to resubmit a 5-year appropriation plan that incorporates lessons learned from River Street; Central Square; and Harvard Square - Eliot Street projects and combines \$64.5M appropriate so far for partial construction of Mass Ave from Waterhouse St to ABP with appropriation for a sewer/stormwater separation under [Updated Combined Sewer Overflow Control Plan](#).

Better long-term and financially responsible approach would be a complete rebuild of Mass Avenue - Waterhouse to ABP in 3 phases as I have described in the email I sent to you.

The Capital Appropriations for River Street; Central Square; and Harvard Square - Eliot Street projects all included sewer/stormwater separation funded by sewer bond proceeds and separated bike lanes funded by bond proceeds.

The total adopted/proposed appropriation for these projects together with the Mass Avenue - Waterhouse to Alewife Brook Parkway aka Mass Ave Partial Construction Project is \$239.95M which is three times the total proposed Capital Budget for FY25 of \$74,892,720!

The submitted FY25 5-year appropriation plan that supports "quicker implementation of safety improvements" but deferring "potential future full construction which could be hundreds of millions of dollars and 10+ years in the future" will disrupt the residents and small businesses along this stretch of Mass Ave for potentially 15+ years at multi-millions in unnecessary duplication of tearing down and rebuilding the road

Thank you for your consideration

Respectfully yours,

Young Kim

Norris Street

On Tue, May 14, 2024 at 6:41 AM Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com> wrote:

I signed up to give comments at this morning's FinCom meeting starting at 9. But I have a medical appointment at 8 and I don't know if I can make it to City Hall by 9 and I might have to call in from the road if I can't get wi-fi service. So, I checked the area codes for dial-in connection and none of them are Boston area.

It would be a good idea to have a Boston or Cambridge based phone number for those who do not have wi-fi access.

I will do my best to join in.

For this septuagenarian, it will be a challenge so please forgive me if I have technical difficulties, If I have difficulties, please consider my plea to combine CSO implementation and Sewer/Stormwater separation for Mass Ave Waterhouse St to Alewife Brook Pkwy.

Thank you for your understanding,

Young

Young

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <noreply@cambridgema.gov>

Date: Mon, May 13, 2024 at 10:32 AM

Subject: Public Comment Form Submission Confirmation

To: <ycknorris@gmail.com>

Thank you for registering for public comment at the Finance Committee Meeting, you are currently number 1 in line to speak.

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device: Please click this URL to join - <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/97895847144>

Or join by phone (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

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International numbers available: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/abrHoO7Av>

Please be aware that ZOOM is ONLY being used to allow public comment at the beginning of the meeting. ZOOM will be deactivated when public comment has concluded.

If you wish to watch the meeting please go to the City's Cable channel 22-CityView or online via the City of Cambridge Open Meeting Portal at <https://www.cambridgema.gov>

We encourage you to submit you comments in writing at clerk@cambridgema.gov or <https://www.cambridgema.gov/remotepubliccomment>

Erwin, Nicole

From: nonie valentine <nonie.valentine1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 7:36 AM
To: City Council; City Manager
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Increasing the budget for parks/forestry

Dear City Council,

This is briefer than I would like but you have a finance meeting today and I wish to say simply, please increase financing for planting *trees*.

The tree loss that I've witnessed over the last two years alone has been alarming at a time we need planting to go in the opposite direction. As you know we need to increase our planting and maintenance of trees for cooling temperatures, for holding water in the ground and reducing runoff that ends up heating up oceans and affecting weather, and of course for beauty and habitat. Much of our recent tree loss has been out of carelessness, lack of enforcement, and lack of foresight. Development is going in the direction of reducing green and open space which means we need to redouble our efforts, not later but now.

Many thanks for securing the financing we will need to at least begin to address the climate crisis.

Nonie Valentine
Washington Ave.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 6:41 AM
To: Nolan, Patricia; Pickett, Joan; City Clerk
Subject: Fwd: Public Comment Form Submission Confirmation

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It would be a good idea to have a Boston or Cambridge based phone number for those who do not have wi-fi access.

I will do my best to join in.

For this septuagenarian, it will be a challenge so please forgive me if I have technical difficulties, If I have difficulties, please consider my plea to combine CSO implementation and Sewer/Stormwater separation for Mass Ave Waterhouse St to Alewife Brook Pkwy.

Thank you for your understanding,
Young

Young

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <noreply@cambridgema.gov>
Date: Mon, May 13, 2024 at 10:32 AM
Subject: Public Comment Form Submission Confirmation
To: <ycknorris@gmail.com>

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We encourage you to submit you comments in writing at clerk@cambridgema.gov or <https://www.cambridgema.gov/remotepubliccomment>

Erwin, Nicole

From: John Hanratty <jhanratty@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2024 7:36 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: 2025 Budget must include more funding for trees / new open space / existing park maintenance

M. Clerk: please add this into the council record.

The draft budget underfunds the planting and maintenance of trees in our City. Compared to most budget items, tree funding is relatively small but dramatically impacts our quality of life, health, and environment. The City spends too much time and money figuring out how to cram more people into the City. Shortcuts for developers remove requirements for setbacks, open space requirements, and trees and increase their profit. We're not paying enough attention to open space, trees, and infrastructure to support current and future housing projects.

In addition, the City does not maintain our existing open spaces and trees. The budget draft includes \$M's to "redesign" our parks. We do not need a new design; we need basic ongoing maintenance. A diverse population fully utilizes the few parks and open areas in the City. Playgrounds, basketball courts, walking paths, grassy areas, gardens, and fencing need loving care. Linear Park does not need a wider path, so bikers can go even faster at the expense of cutting down mature trees. 80% of path users are pedestrians who want to stroll in a green space. Raymond Park needs maintenance, not a redesign.

John Hanratty
15 Mount Vernon St,
Cambridge

Erwin, Nicole

From: Gabriela Romanow <gdromanow@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 12, 2024 8:01 PM
To: City Clerk; City Manager; City Council
Subject: Please put in the FY25 budget

More money for trees, especially flowering trees!

We all know the benefits that trees provide in terms of shade, cleaner air and carbon capture. But spring flowering trees also add joy and beauty to a city.

I understand there is little room for street trees, but there is room to fill the canopy in parks and along roadways and paths.

I urge you to provide a generous amount in the budget for planting and maintenance.

Thank you,
Gabriela Romanow
1010 Memorial Drive

Erwin, Nicole

From: VALERIE HAMMOND <ravnhammond@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, May 11, 2024 12:38 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: We need more money for trees in the budget, please!

M. Clerk please enter this into the council record.

I am very concerned about funding for trees and forests in Cambridge. We need increases in the budget and I thoughtfully request prioritizing planting more and more trees and less time and money to cutting them down. It is disturbing to hear about the loss of trees at:

Redevelopment of former Mass Ave Quaker site

- More Danehy Park trees killed by 2022 drought

- Redevelopment of WR Grace in Alewife (hundreds?)

- Redevelopment of Jefferson Park affordable housing

- **70 trees cut down last Saturday in Alewife to prevent camping by homeless!!**

Thank you!

Kindly,

~Valerie Hammond

19 Cogswell Ave

Erwin, Nicole

From: Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 11, 2024 11:18 AM
To: Nolan, Patricia; Pickett, Joan; City Clerk
Cc: Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Azeem, Burhan; Toner, Paul; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Wilson, Ayesha; City Manager; O'Riordan, Owen; Jennings, Taha; Watkins, Kathy; Hayes, Patrick; Pereira, Erika-Leigh
Subject: Learn from PUBLIC WORKS: SEWER/STORMWATER - RIVER STREET Capital Appropriation

Dear CoChairs of Finance Committee,,

Not including Sewer/Stormwater Separation capital appropriation in the Mass Ave Partial Construction Capital Appropriation project but instead deferring it to future years is fiscally irresponsible when we have history of PUBLIC WORKS: SEWER/STORMWATER - RIVER STREET Capital Appropriation.

It was first included in FY18 Adopted Budget, even before the Cycling Safety Ordinance was passed in 2019, appropriating \$18M bond proceeds and 14.125M sewer bond proceeds for a total of \$32.125M. "Project improvements will include replacement of City utilities (sewer, drain, and water)... an enhanced bicycle facility, and a redesigned Carl Barron Plaza. A comprehensive community design process will be undertaken to develop the design of this key corridor."

This appropriation plan was changed in FY19 and FY22 Adopted Budget to an "appropriation of \$54,000,000 funded the design and initial improvements" as stated in the [Adopted FY24 Budget](#). The adopted FY24 appropriation added an FY24 appropriation and bond authorization of \$30,000,000 (to support the construction of sewer and drainage improvements and surface enhancements on River St between Memorial Dr and Central Square, including Carl Barron Plaza and Tubman Square) and another \$3M to support the design of improvements on Kinnard St and Jay St. This brings total authorized appropriation to \$87M.

The Proposed FY25 Budget for PUBLIC WORKS: SEWER/STORMWATER - WESTERN AVENUE & RIVER STREET added another \$19.5M in sewer bond proceeds. I don't know why the line item now included Western Ave but the FY26-FY29 FUNDING stated that "FY27 funding will support the design of improvements on Kinnard Street and in the Jay Street area. FY29 funding will support construction." Since "\$3M to support the design of improvements on Kinnard St and Jay St" was included for the River Street Project, I will assume the additional \$19.5M is for the River Street Project bringing the total appropriation for this project to **\$106.5M**.

You should ask the City Manager for the total capital appropriation for SEWER/STORMWATER - Western Avenue for more comprehensive analysis.

The walking distance from Memorial Drive to Central Square on River Street is 0.7 miles, one way compared to the walking distance of 2.0 miles from Waterhouse Street and Alewife Brook Parkway is 2 miles two-way or 6 times longer separated bike lane miles assuming SBL on River Street will remain one way.. If you do a quick back-of-the-envelope extrapolation of River Street appropriation to Mass Ave

Partial Construction, the combined sewer/stormwater separation and SBL installation + other improvements will be over staggering \$600M.

Please demand the City Manager and Budget Director to include Sewer/Stormwater separation in the 5-year appropriation plan for the Mass Ave Partial Reconstruction.

Thank you for your attention. I can provide you with all the backups if you wish,

Respectfully yours,
Young Kim
Norris Street

Erwin, Nicole

From: Mary Jane Kornacki <amicusmjk@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2024 7:34 PM
To: City Clerk; City Manager; Azeem, Burhan; Simmons, Denise; McGovern, Marc; Nolan, Patricia; Toner, Paul; Siddiqui, Sumbul; Pickett, Joan; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan; Wilson, Ayesha
Cc: O'Riordan, Owen
Subject: Keep Cambridge green. Increase the tree budget

My message is brief. City Manager Huang I urge you to develop a budget that acknowledges the central role trees play in a liveable city and as a hedge against climate change. There needs to be a stronger commitment budget-wise to the city's green canopy.

Councillors, please push back against any proposed budget that keeps funds for trees stagnant. If you truly believe in all the environmental imperatives you support such as bike infrastructure and BEUDO, you cannot turn your back on increased funding for what is an essential part of the city's infrastructure and a step toward environmental justice. Trees need better funding than they have gotten in recent years.

M. Clerk, please enter these remarks into the council record.

Thank you.

Mary Jane Kornacki
103 Avon Hill Street

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Mary Jane Kornacki
103 Avon Hill St
Cambridge, MA 02140
617.354.7983 (h)
617.480.5778 (m)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Annie <wildwatercress@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2024 5:44 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Tree budget

Dear Councillors and City Clerk,

Please include my comments in the record.

You are all well informed about the social, environmental, health and mental health benefits of trees. But in order to renew our urban canopy and to make it a reality, please:

Hire experts for Urban Forest Master Plan, treat for emerald ash borer, support Green Cambridge Planting and when you plant what I hope will be 1250 saplings, I urge you to make sure that many of these are put into environmental justice neighborhoods and areas by the affordable housing units that will be built.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Ann Spanel
85 Pemberton Ct.
Cambridge, MA 02140

Erwin, Nicole

From: Diane Martin <moumar@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2024 4:48 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Forestry budget discussion - \$ for caring for trees

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing in advance of next Tuesday's Finance Committee hearing to advocate for NO REDUCTION to the tree budget for the next 4 years. We need more money for trees and better care of trees, not less. This year and in the coming years Cambridge needs and residents expect:

- working irrigation systems in Danehy Park, Linear Park and other public spaces
- expert updates to the Urban Forest Master Plan
- adequate and ongoing pruning of public trees
- treatment for the Emerald Ash Borer
- support for Green Cambridge to grow and plant saplings

Additionally, I want to register my dismay at the destruction of beautiful, mature trees at Jefferson Park to make way for new constructions - 200 trees that will never be replaced in the extreme heat island of North Cambridge. Need I remind you that Rindge Avenue and North Cambridge include the most dense and largest publicly subsidized housing in Cambridge. We should do better and as my elected representatives I expect you to work harder to push back on both government and privately funded development to save our mature trees and open spaces. As we work to add more housing, please don't ignore the quality of life for all Cambridgians, and the outstanding benefits that healthy trees add to life here.

Diane Martin

34 Madison Avenue, Unit #1

Email: moumar@comcast.net

Erwin, Nicole

From: Melissa Ludtke <melissa.ludtke@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2024 4:36 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; City Manager
Subject: Trees, and the urgent, vital need to plant and nurture more of them in Cambridge, especially in heat island zones of the city

Dear City Council Members:

We have recorded the 11th consecutive month of our Earth's record-breaking temperatures. Warmer temps = more rainfall --> leading to severe flooding that is happening in regions throughout the world. At a time when the consequences of our intensifying climate crisis result in unprecedented challenges to human health (not to mention other species essential to our well-being) with flooding, wildfires, unlivable heat and air pollution, it makes neither common or practical sense to skimp on the investment of city funds in the planting and nurturing of native trees, especially in parts of the city known as heat islands.

Yet Cambridge's urban forestry initiatives remain woefully underfunded.

We must do better, and the clock is running on the intensification of heat related issues. Trees are the Earth's natural cooling system, and we need them to be here for us in Cambridge.

As you consider the budget, let's significantly raise the city's spending on trees. It's not a surprise that every year in participatory budgeting, items revolving around trees get funded through direct voting of Cambridge residents.

The council needs to listen to residents and fund Urban Forestry at the level our climate circumstances require.

Melissa Ludtke
30 Buena Vista Park, Cambridge 01240

Melissa Ludtke
Author, *Locker Room Talk: A Woman's Struggle to Get Inside*, forthcoming from Rutgers University Press, August 2024
<https://www.melissaludtke.com/>
Substack: <https://melissaludtke.substack.com/>

Co-Producer, *Touching Home in China: in search of missing girlhoods*
[Website](#)

phone: 617-416-1989

Erwin, Nicole

From: Mlundber99 <mlundber99@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2024 3:01 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Fw: Protecting our architectural heritage in Lechmere Canal Park

From: Mlundber99 <mlundber99@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 9, 2024 12:03 PM
To: Azeem, Burhan <bazeem@cambridgema.gov>; Nolan, Patricia <pnolan@cambridgema.gov>; Pickett, Joan <jpickett@cambridgema.gov>; Mayor <Mayor@cambridgema.gov>; Sobrinho-Wheeler, Jivan <jsobrinhowheeler@cambridgema.gov>; Toner, Paul <ptoner@cambridgema.gov>; Wilson, Ayesha <amwilson@cambridgema.gov>
Cc: Marlene Lundberg <mlundber99@aol.com>
Subject: Protecting our architectural heritage in Lechmere Canal Park

May 9, 2024

Re: Approval of DPW budget request for Lamp Posts in Lechmere Canal Park

Dear City Council Members:

I firmly wish to retain the exact same historical design of lamp posts in Lechmere Canal Park. About four decades ago, City Council mandated that the architectural design of the park echo historical elements of the neighborhood. Key elements were the terra cotta brick walkways and the lamp posts at Centanni Park. Following this mandate, Carol R. Johnson designed a beautiful landscape much beloved by residents all these many years later.

New England Development Is spending millions to renovate the park, keeping as much of the original design as possible. Moreover, DPW has agreed to retain and restore the beautiful Bishop's Crook lamp posts.

I strongly support DPW's decision. Please approve their budget request to keep this same historical style of lamps in the park, a jewel of Cambridge.

Sincerely,

Marlene Lundberg

4 Canal Park, 602, Cambridge, MA 02141 / 617-714-5011





**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024**

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, May 8, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 4:00 p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Nolan. 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

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 Pickett – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Toner – Present/Remote
Councillor Wilson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 9. Quorum established.

Co-Chair Nolan offered opening remarks (Attachment A) and noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold public hearing on the City and School budgets covering the fiscal period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. Present at the meeting was Superintendent Dr. Victoria Greer and Ivy Washington, Chief Financial Officer. School Committee members that were present were David Weinstein, Elizabeth Hudson, Jose Luis Rojas Villarreal, Rachel B. Weinstein, and Vice Chair Caroline Hunter.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Pickett who offered opening remarks and echoed comments made by Co-Chair Nolan regarding the role of the City Council relative to the School Department budget. Co-Chair Pickett noted that overseeing how the budget is being spent, how

goals are being developed for students, and monitoring the performance of those goals are all priorities of the City Council.

Co-Chair Nolan opened Public Comment.

Marissa Fried, 26 Pinckley Street, urged the School Department and City Council to reevaluate how funding is spent and to increase salaries for education support professionals.

Toni Preston, 9 Plymouth Street, Cambridge, MA, urged the School Department and City Council to reevaluate how funding is spent and to increase salaries for education support professionals.

Luisa de Paula Santos, 51 Walker Street, Cambridge, MA, urged the School Department and City Council to reevaluate how funding is spent and to increase salaries for education support professionals.

Yemisi Oluwole, 43 Governor Winthrop Road, Somerville, MA, urged the School Department and City Council to reevaluate how funding is spent and to increase salaries for education support professionals.

Dan Monahan, 229 Lexington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, urged the School Department and City Council to reevaluate how funding is spent and to increase salaries for education support professionals.

Danielle Mulligan, 167 Tremont Street, Cambridge, MA, urged the School Department and City Council to reevaluate how funding is spent and to increase salaries for education support professionals.

Quan Goode, 2 Buck Street, urged the School Department and City Council to reevaluate how funding is spent and to increase salaries for education support professionals.

Dan Totten, 54 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, shared that he supported the concerns raised by Cambridge Public School employees.

Michael Eden, 122 Hamilton Street, Cambridge, MA, urged the School Department and City Council to reevaluate how funding is spent and to increase salaries for education support professionals.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Simmons who made a motion to close public comment. Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Dr. Greer and Ivy Washington who gave a presentation titled “Cambridge Public Schools FY 2025 Adopted Budget”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of the FY25 community engagement, FY25 budget, key investments, and structural improvements and adjustments.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Azeem who shared that he supports the School Department budget. Councillor Azeem asked that moving forward, he would like to see more information available on improvements within the Department and what goals the City can expect improvement from with this new budget. Dr. Greer responded by providing examples of where growth and expansions have taken place and improvements they are working towards in the future.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Toner who shared that he supports the School Department budget. Councillor Toner asked for more information on the progress that has been made in the Rindge School of Technical Arts (RSTA) program at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS). Dr. Greer shared the progress that has been made and pointed out the new partnerships within the RSTA program. Councillor Toner asked how many of the twenty-eight plus new positions would be working directly with students. Dr. Greer shared that all of those positions would be working with students. Councillor Toner offered comments relative to the current collective bargaining within the School Department.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who thanked the School Committee and the School Department for putting the budget together. The Vice Mayor offered comments regarding information on packet page 11 and the school district climate survey, and asked what the School Department is doing to address concerns that are being brought forward by staff. Dr. Greer responded by highlighting the resources available to provide emotional support and partnerships with frontline staff. Vice Mayor McGovern noted the importance of not only making investments in social and emotional support for students, but for staff as well. Dr. Greer shared that in addition to the implementation of telehealth services, there are also social workers and counselors across all schools where investments have been made to ensure they have the right tools and resources to help students. Vice Mayor McGovern shared that he is in support of the budget.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Pickett who shared that the key investments information in the presentation was extremely helpful with understanding the budget more. Co-Chair Pickett noted that going forward she would like to see how the investments that are made help achieve the results that the School Department is trying to accomplish, noting that it is important to be accountable. Co-Chair Pickett thanked Dr. Greer and her team for developing the budget. Dr. Greer thanked Co-Chair Pickett for her feedback and shared that the School Department does have a data dashboard online that is available for the public to view, which tracks the School Department’s progress.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Siddiqui who shared her excitement for the commitment being made towards reading proficiency and the goals working towards that, as well as the expansion of the EPP program. Councillor Siddiqui asked for the name of the ELA and math software that is being used. Dr. Greer noted that there are many software's being used, and that she could provide that list at a later time. Councillor Siddiqui asked if there ~~has~~ been conversations around the excel tutoring that is offered to students who are two plus years behind would be expanding to other students. Dr. Greer pointed out that the excel tutoring is specific for students who have shown long standing learning challenges and learning gaps, in addition to in school interventions that students receive. Councillor Siddiqui noted the work that was done around allocating funding to community partners and that was ~~aparta~~ part of this current budget. Dr. Greer shared that it was, and that it is in the process of assessing partnerships with the goal of being fully implemented in the next year.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked if the programs implemented during the pandemic to give students access to the internet and Wi-Fi hotspots have continued to be provided. Dr. Greer shared that if students need connectivity at home, the School Department will let them borrow a device to continue home support use. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler pointed out that the City is interested in expanding its afterschool programming and the need for additional staffing and offered the suggestion that School Department employees who work full-time be offered time and half as incentive to be hired as afterschool staff to help with the rollout of the afterschool expansion.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Wilson who thanked Dr. Greer and her team and shared that she appreciated all the comments made during public comment. Councillor Wilson offered comments relative to the priority and investment around reading skills for third grade students and the utilization of mental health services. Councillor Wilson shared that she would like to see more support and expansion for the Family Liaison at CRLS and highlighted the importance for the need of equity, pointing out that those who have less need more.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Simmons who highlighted how engaging and concise the budget process has been in making sure that everyone had a part in the involvement. Mayor Simmons provided comments relative to the negotiation process with employees, noting that there are challenges that are faced by everyone involved throughout the process, and believes that bargaining is being done in good faith. Mayor Simmons shared that is important for everyone to be known and supported within their jobs and that the right resources are available to provide to the students. Mayor Simmons shared that she supports the budget.

Co-Chair Nolan asked how the School Department is evaluating the effectiveness of its programs. Dr. Greer shared that there have been ongoing discussions on how to evaluate effectiveness of programs and the challenges that are faced when deciding whether a program is not working, and the accountability that comes with the possibility of cutting a program. Co-Chair Nolan shared that she fully supports the evaluation of programs and asked how the insufficient feedback received from staff is being addressed. Dr. Greer noted that there are two directions that are being taken to address feedback, one being the instruction leadership academy and school principals having deeper conversations with their staff. Co-Chair Nolan offered comments regarding some of the specific goals listed by the School Department in the budget

book, with Dr. Greer noting that there are set targets and goals each year. Co-Chair Nolan shared that she would be supporting the budget.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Simmons who made a motion to forward the School Department FY25 Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

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

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Yes

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

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:08p.m.

Attachment A – Opening remarks from Co-Chair Nolan (not verbatim).

Attachment B – The City Clerk’s Office received three written communications.

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/746?view_id=1&redirect=true