



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

~ MINUTES ~

Monday, August 5, 2024

10:30 AM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Economic Development and University Relations Committee will hold a public hearing with the City Manager to receive an update on and offer suggestions for consideration in the city's negotiations with Harvard regarding future Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Economic Development and University Relations Committee was held on Monday, August 5, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 10:30 a.m. by the 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 by remote participation via Zoom.

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

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

Present – 5. Quorum established.

The Chair, Councillor Toner offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing with the City Manager to receive an update on and offer suggestions for consideration in the city's negotiations with Harvard regarding future Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement. Present at the meeting was City Manager Yi-An Huang, Assistant City Manager of Finance, Claire Spinner, Assessing Director, Gayle Willett, Assessor, Andrew Johnson, Housing Director, Chris Cotter, Acting City Solicitor, Megan Bayer, and Assistant City Solicitor, Evan Bjorklund. Joined remotely via Zoom was Assistant City Manager for Community Development, Iram Farooq. Also present was Mayor Simmons and Councillor Nolan. **The Chair, Councillor Toner opened Public Comment.**

Dan Totten, 54 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, provided comments on the history of Harvard and urged the Council to weigh in on what should be included in the PILOT agreement.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized City Manager Huang who offered brief remarks on the relationship between the City of Cambridge and Harvard University. Evan Bjorklund, Gayle Willett, and City Manager Huang gave a presentation titled "City of Cambridge & Harvard University PILOT". The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered a review of what Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) is, the legal process of negotiating terms of a PILOT agreement between the City and Harvard, the role of the City Council in negotiating PILOT, and a review of the current

Harvard and City PILOT agreement. In addition, the presentation also included information on Harvard being the 9th largest property taxpayer in Cambridge as well as information on other Universities in the Country increasing their PILOT commitments to their respective municipalities. Throughout the presentation, Committee members were recognized for comments and questions relative to the PILOT agreement. City staff were available to respond.

The Chair, Councillor Toner added that he had shared questions and priorities that were brought forward by Committee members in advance of the meeting with the City Manager and his team (Attachment A). Councillor Toner reviewed some of the priorities, noting that many members had similar ideas.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who offered comments relative to the relationship between the City and Harvard University. The Vice Mayor pointed out how important it is to have these conversations to connect and collaborate with each other to create positive relationships, even if the City and Harvard University do not always agree.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Siddiqui who shared she agreed with the comments made by Vice Mayor McGovern. Councillor Siddiqui reviewed the goals and priorities that she sent to the Chair (Attachment A).

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who offered comments and suggestions around Harvard University supporting students of color and the Legacy of Payment report.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who reviewed his suggestions and priorities towards PILOT (Attachment A), stressing how important increased PILOT payments would be able to help the City fund universal afterschool and more affordable childcare options for Cambridge residents. In addition, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler offered suggestions around housing and tuition assistance for Cambridge residents.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Wilson who shared that she appreciates the conversation and stressed the importance of economic support in addition to supporting families. Councillor Wilson thanked the team for providing more information and examples on other Universities and how they are supporting the municipalities they reside in. Councillor Wilson shared that she agreed with the priorities that were provided by other Committee members and shared additional suggestions on how to collaborate and work towards a successful relationship and commitment with Harvard.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared his excitement for the possibility of Harvard to have the opportunity to share their support for Rise Up and affordable housing in Cambridge. The Vice Mayor highlighted how Cambridge and Harvard have the ability to set the precedent for other PILOT programs, noting that the suggestions that have been discussed would be beneficial for the community and Harvard.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who stressed the importance of thinking creatively while maintaining the partnership opportunities with Harvard.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized City Manager Huang who offered comments and suggestions relative to negotiations with Harvard and ways to move forward with continued conversations.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who noted the importance of Harvard using its resources and institutional expertise to help pave the way towards climate change.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who shared that she appreciates the conversation about working more closely with Harvard and provided suggestions on partnerships with Cambridge Public Schools and decarbonization efforts.

The Chair, Councillor Toner asked if Harvard and MIT are the only nonprofits in the City that have PILOT programs with Cambridge. Gayle Willett responded and shared that the City will always accept volunteer commitments and provided examples of other nonprofits who partner and volunteer with Cambridge. Chair Toner provided comments on the importance of housing and stressed how transportation use with the universities is an opportunity to reduce motor vehicle traffic. In addition, Chair Toner noted how important it is for the community to understand the work that is being done with Harvard through PILOT.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Mayor Simmons who echoed the comments made relating to transportation and stated how important it is to include seniors when discussing transportation and shuttle options.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized City Manager Huang who offered brief closing remarks and shared that it will be important to take this input to help advocate for the context of the next PILOT negotiations.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 5. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:40a.m.

Attachment A – City Council priorities for PILOT

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/807?view_id=1&redirect=true

A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the Agenda for the Economic Development and University Relations Committee Meeting.

A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the Harvard Town Grown Report.

A communication was received from Councillor Toner, transmitting the EXECUTED Amendment to PILOT MOA (122023).

A communication was received from Caroline LeMay, Special Assistant to the City Manager, transmitting a presentation regarding the City of Cambridge and Harvard University PILOT.

Attachment A

City Council priorities for PILOT

Councillor Toner

- Increase campus housing for graduate students and/or provide additional support for the city to develop more housing.
- Provide economic support to Cambridge students and families through funding/scholarships to assist with paying for 2–4-year college.
- Work with the city to support creating a city-wide network of shuttles to and transportation alternatives accessible to residents.

Councillor Nolan

- work with the city and other institutions on how we might develop a coordinated free shuttle system across the city
- work on developing a solid plan for local offsets in BEUDO

Vice Mayor McGovern

- Significant increase in funding for the Affordable Housing Trust.
- I like your suggestion of scholarship money.
- Increase in PILOT payments to the general fund

Councillor Wilson

Thank you, Paul! I agree with you, and wonder if there could be some economic development support for small businesses?

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

- Increased PILOT payments to help the City fund universal afterschool and more affordable childcare options for residents
- Harvard committing to create housing for their students on campus land owned by the university
- Funding tuition for Cambridge residents to attend college and graduate without debt

Councillor Siddiqui

- Increase PILOT amount from the \$4 ~ million overall
- Have Harvard increase their housing % for housing students, i.e. if its 50 percent now, then can we commit to an increased amount
 - a. Envision says "Identify opportunities to require local academic institutions to use their assets—especially their land—to build more housing, explore new housing partnerships and models that can better serve university-affiliated populations and the community, and encourage universities to house more of their university-affiliated populations
 - i. Have we made progress towards this?
 - ii. Do they have properties like 884 Main Street that MIT gave to the City?

What I would like the \$ to be used towards would not only be housing related issues, but also economic support to families (Rise Up ongoing support), and education related issues