

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, June 22, 2026**

**HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Health and Environment Committee was held on Monday, June 22, 2026. The meeting was Called to Order at 11:00 a.m. by the Chair, Councillor Nolan. 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 by remote participation via Zoom.

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

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

Present – 3, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

Councillor Nolan offered opening remarks (Attachment A) and noted that the Call of the meeting was to review and discuss the 5-year update to the Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) including recommendations from the analysis and evaluation and feedback from community meetings. Present at the meeting was Department of Public Works (DPW) Commissioner, John Nardone, Superintendent of Urban Forestry and Landscape, Andrew Putnam, City Arborist, David Lefcourt, City Solicitor, Megan Bayer, and Deputy Chief of Planning for Community Development, Jennifer Caira. Mayor Siddiqui and Assistant City Solicitor, Sean McKendry were present via Zoom. Present from Reed Hilderbrand was Eric Kramer.

Councillor Nolan explained that she would hold public comment before and after the presentation from the City.

Michael Yogman, 14 Wyman Road, Cambridge, MA, shared support and concerns related to the UFMP.

Carol Lynn Albert, 99 Cushing Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support and concerns related to the UFMP.

Katherine Merseeth, 54 Lexington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Wenxin Du, 25 Grozier Road, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Peter Sturges, 99 Lexington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Alison Grinthal, 29 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared support and concerns related to the UFMP.

Elise Moore, 12 Avon Place, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Yafeng Li, 25 Grozier Road, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Councillor Nolan recognized John Nardone for opening remarks. Andrew Putnam and Eric Kramer gave a presentation titled “Cambridge Urban Forest Master Plan Health and Environment Committee 5 Year Update”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Councillor Nolan returned to public comment.

Karen Brushett, 51 Cushing Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Patricia Illingworth, 30 Lexington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Polyxane Cobb, 140 Lexington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Leigh Gilmore, 102 Lexington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Thomas Pounds, 102 Lexington Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Sara Nelson, 17 Rockwell Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Abigail Ransmeier, 15 Ellery Square, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Mariana Kruger shared support and concerns related to the UFMP.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for the UFMP.

Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who thanked staff for their presentation and the work towards expanding tree canopy throughout the city. Councillor Zusy shared support for the proposed recommendations in the UFMP. Councillor Zusy noted the importance of mature trees on private property and raised concerns about impacts that Multifamily Housing zoning may have on tree canopy. Councillor Zusy asked for more information related to tracking tree canopy and offered suggestions related to setbacks and ground-level open space, and tree protections

related to abutting properties. John Nardone shared that DPW is working with the Law Department and Community Development to create recommendations in response to a previous Policy Order from the City Council, adding that recommendations are still a work in progress and will be brought forward to the City Council in a formal response.

Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who thanked staff for the presentation and pointed out that trees were being removed before the Multifamily Housing Ordinance was adopted. Councillor McGovern asked if the City could charge higher tree mitigation fees to developers while also keeping the lower fees for homeowners. Megan Bayer explained that homeowners would still receive reduced fees, but the City cannot charge developers higher fees unless it is justified. Councillor Nolan asked for clarification on the current residential exemption. John Nardone responded and shared that homeowners pay 10% of the standard mitigation fee. Councillor McGovern asked for more information related to the City being able to protect trees on abutting private properties. Megan Bayer explained that the City has limited authority over disputes between private property owners, but the Law Department is researching possible ordinance changes. Councillor McGovern had clarifying questions related to slide 62 in the presentation. John Nardone and Eric Kramer provided additional information. Councillor McGovern shared support for collecting more data related to tree loss and reviewing different setback requirements to help protect mature trees, while also supporting housing development.

Councillor Nolan made a motion to extend the meeting by five minutes.

On a voice vote of three members present, the motion passed. Councillor Al-Zubi and Vice Mayor Azeem were absent.

Councillor Nolan asked John Nardone and staff what type of feedback they were looking for from the Committee on the recommendations within the UFMP. Councillor Nolan also thanked the Public Planting Committee and asked if additional feedback was needed from them as well. John Nardone explained that staff are looking for feedback on the UFMP and will take comments from the Committee, either from this meeting or in writing to review the proposed recommendations. John Nardone added that the Public Planting Committee had already provided feedback on the UFMP and that they continue to meet regularly. John Nardone shared that staff will continue to work on recommendations related to tree protection in response to the City Council's Policy Order. Councillor Nolan highlighted the importance of finding ways to better protect tree root systems during development, adding that the City has made progress in expanding the tree canopy over the last five years, but changes from Multifamily Housing might require changes to tree canopy approaches. Councillor Nolan agreed that it will be beneficial to collect updated data on tree canopy and to also encourage large property owners and universities to expand their tree canopy as well.

Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who agreed that tracking data related to tree canopy with developments from Multifamily Housing would be beneficial as well as keeping track of the number of abutter trees. Councillor Zusy asked what the next steps would be to strengthen the Tree Protection Ordinance. Andrew Putnam explained that language is still being reviewed with the Law Department and Community Development before any final recommendations are made and presented to the City Council. Councillor Zusy provided

suggestions related to proposed recommendations. Councillor Nolan added that forest does not just include individual trees and that language recognizing that is included in the report.

Councillor Nolan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Absent

Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Yes – 3, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Health and Environment Committee adjourned at approximately 1:07p.m.

Attachment A – Opening remarks from Councillor Nolan (not verbatim).

Attachment B – Communications from the public.

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

[Jun 22, 2026 Health and Environment Committee - Cambridge, MA](#)