



NEIGHBORHOOD & LONG TERM PLANNING, PUBLIC FACILITIES, ARTS & CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Monday, September 9, 2024

12:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee will hold a public hearing to discuss truck safety in Cambridge.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<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"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Neighborhood & Long-Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts & Celebration Committee was held on Monday, September 9, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 12:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. 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 Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

- Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote
- Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 4. Quorum established.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing to discuss truck safety in Cambridge. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler shared his thoughts and condolences to the family of Councillor Joan Pickett and asked for a moment of silence in her memory.

Present at the meeting was Commissioner of Traffic and Parking, Brooke McKenna, Assistant Commissioner for Street Management/Director of Traffic and Parking, Jeff Parenti, Commissioner of Public Works, Kathy Watkins, Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, John Nardone, and Fleet Manager, John Keeter. Also present was Councillor Wilson and Councillor Toner.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler introduced Kris Carter from The Lab @ MassDOT and Alex Epstein from USDOT Volpe Center. Kris Carter and Alex Epstein gave a presentation titled “Truck Safety Efforts”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation included information on large truck safety context, act to reduce traffic fatalities, side guards, safety effectiveness findings, LPD technology demonstration results, direct vision and MassDOT direct vision study, driver visibility maps, direct vision “report cards”, and recommendations. The panelists were available to respond to any questions that came forward during the presentation.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Councillor Nolan who asked what defines a truck. Alex Epstein responded by sharing there is a federal definition of commercial vehicles, which is either more than nine passengers or higher, or more than 10,000lbs used for interstate commerce. Alex Epstein noted that many

pick-up trucks are falling into the 10,000lbs for personal use. Councillor Nolan highlighted the importance of safety and how it is of increasing concern. Councillor Nolan shared that it is good to understand how to make City fleets better and apply that knowledge moving forward.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler had a question on the state-based registration policies that were mentioned and asked if more information could be shared on the D.C. and New York based requirements relative to these policies. Alex Epstein responded by sharing that in-state registered trucks are being subject to a safety requirement above the federal motor safety standards, noting that it is only applies based on the state of registration or where the company is resides.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler opened Public Comment.

Clyve Lawrence, 26 Plympton Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in strong support of making streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

Timothy Cavaretta, 59 Inner Belt Road, Somerville, MA, Director of Operations Food for Free, spoke in favor of safety requirements for trucks and the safety of commuters.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Brooke McKenna and Kathy Watkins who gave a presentation titled “Truck Safety in Cambridge”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered information on why truck safety is important, safer street designs, City truck fleet, City Truck Safety Ordinance, State requirements, education efforts, and next steps.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Councillor Nolan who highlighted the importance of education across the board, for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. Councillor Nolan asked if there was a way for drivers to have driving training required by Cambridge to educate more on the Street Code. Brooke McKenna responded by sharing there is work being done to educate drivers at a state level, but unsure if education like that would be able to happen on a municipal level. Brooke McKenna affirmed that it is an ongoing process for the City to educate drivers with the Street Code. Councillor Nolan pointed out how more awareness and education will help with a decrease in fatalities.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Councillor Siddiqui who had a question on expanding voluntary compliance and a timeline on the success of having 100% compliance. Brooke McKenna shared they currently do not have an answer, but it is a list that is being worked on and built out. Brooke McKenna shared that has been great success with Harvard and MIT and that the City plans on working with those who be most receptive. Councillor Siddiqui asked that more information be shared with the Council as this continues to roll out.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Councillor Wilson who asked if there was any data or a studies done on small businesses and the delivery and shipping companies they are using. Commissioner Watkins shared the importance of looking at vendors who comply with safety goals priorities. Commissioner McKenna noted that the Traffic Department is working with Community Development to target distributors who are working with small businesses and identify how they are the most impactful. Councillor Wilson asked what work is being done around promoting safer intersections. Brooke McKenna shared that intersection safety from both a reactive and proactive approach is being used to identify and prioritize locations in Cambridge.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler had questions regarding the City’s implementation with side guards and more information on how trucks are fitted for them. John Nardone responded by providing detailed information on when the City first started with retrofits for the fleet to the current process of working with vendors. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked if it easy to follow the Truck Safety Ordinance when purchasing new vehicles. Kathy Watkins shared the contracting side can have its challenges, but that working with larger vendors, there is less of an issue. John Nardone pointed out that many manufacturers are becoming aware of truck safety standards. Kathy Watkins and John Nardone shared how the City plans to incentivize those who have snow plow trucks with safety features this upcoming winter season.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Councillor Wilson who encouraged the City to work with businesses to use vendors with smaller trucks without affecting businesses in a negative way.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler thanked everyone for their time and informative presentations.

The Chair, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem - Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Yes – 4. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:20p.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/813?view_id=1&redirect=true

A communication was received from Brooke McKenna, Commissioner of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation, transmitting a presentation relative to truck safety in Cambridge.

A communication was received from Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, transmitting a presentation from Volpe Center regarding truck safety efforts.