



HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

2:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber

The Health and Environment Committee will hold a public hearing to review and discuss ongoing work to mitigate and reduce Combined Sewer Overflows within Cambridge and the surrounding area and other mitigation efforts to address extreme weather events that affect city residents and future infrastructure projects.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2:04 PM
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2:10 PM
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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 – Absent*

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent*

Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote

Present – 3, Absent – 2. Quorum established

*Councillor Siddiqui was present and remote at 2:04p.m.

*Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler was present and remote at 2:10p.m.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan noted that the Call of the meeting was to review and discuss ongoing work to mitigate and reduce Combined Sewer Overflows within Cambridge and the surrounding area and other mitigation efforts to address extreme weather events that affect city residents and future infrastructure projects. Present at the meeting from the Department of Public Works (DPW) was Acting Commissioner, John Nardone, Assistant Commissioner of Engineering, Jim Wilcox, Senior Project Manager, Lucica Hiller, and Director of Engineering Services, Diane Stokes. Present from the Charles River Watershed Association was Emily Norton and Julie Wood. Present from Mystic River Watershed Association was Patrick Herron. Present from Save the Alewife Brook were Eppa Rixey and Kristin Anderson. Vice Mayor McGovern and Councillor Zusy were also present.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan offered opening remarks and read from the following statement (not verbatim). We are here today to have a conversation about Combined Sewer Overflows and climate resiliency. Today’s meeting will build on the March 27, 2024 Health and Environment Committee meeting on regional coastal flood resilience (which also touched briefly on CSOs), but will primarily focus on the City’s ongoing work to mitigate CSOs in the area. This meeting will include a presentation from City staff from the Department of Public Works as well as representatives from the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA), the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), and Save the Alewife Brook (StAB). My goal, that by inviting regional partners to the table along with City staff, we can continue to work together collaboratively and expeditiously towards clean waterways.

Regional collaboration is never as straightforward as we hope, but this seems to be one instance where our partners have done a great job at working towards the same goals - and we should recognize and appreciate that we are all rowing in the same direction. The different groups represented here: the City staff, the City Council, and the Watershed advocacy groups, all have different roles to play, so in bringing us all to the table today, I hope to continue and expand upon the coordinated effort to eliminate CSOs in the region.

The current situation is untenable, and yet, we should recognize the significant work and the significant expense that we have already undertaken: (budget book page I-37) “Over the last 25 years, the amount of combined sewer overflows has decreased to the Charles River by 98% and Alewife Brook by 85%”. Completed and ongoing work has been no small feat. Many of us lived through the West Cambridge separation project, the Port is going through a separation project now, and there are dozens of other separation projects, sewer mitigation projects, green infrastructure projects, and large stormwater tank installations that make up the total picture of this work. And still there is a lot more work to do.

For example, I love CitySplash – the event for swimming in the Charles which is only once a year now, hosted by the Charles River Watershed Conservancy.... Which I have done many times... And, with the annual Charles River swim hosted by the Charles River Conservancy being cancelled this year due to elevated levels of pollution, I am acutely aware of how essential it is to work to improve all our rivers, including the two in Cambridge – Alewife and Charles. My vision, and I understand it is ambitious, is to have swimming in the Charles be possible all the time.

We are spending a lot of money on these various sewer and stormwater investments - and I believe staff will be able to provide some rough figures - for system wide improvements. And these investments are primarily paid for through sewer rates paid by Cambridge residents, which we need to be clear about. As City staff will get into, they have done a lot of financial work to smooth out those costs and rate increases over time for residents, but we will need to consider what even stronger levels of investment will do to lower-income residents who continue to struggle with year-to-year rate increases. So going forward, if much more significant investments will continue to be needed, we need to really consider funding sources and how we manage rate increases for residents.

This meeting and the updated CSO Control Plan will continue this important work, with a particular focus on considering the impacts of climate change. A draft CSO Control Plan will be completed in December 2025 with a final plan to follow in by the end of 2026.

Some framing questions for each of the presentations that I would ask you all to be thinking about as we go through the meeting:

- What are we already doing as part of our CSO Control Plan?
- What are the barriers to doing more and doing it faster? (cost/time/coordination)
- What can we do moving forward to improve the plan and improve regional coordination?

Without further ado, let’s go around the table and introduce everyone before I hand it over to Acting DPW Commissioner John Nardone and his team. After the DPW presentation is over I will ask the Charles River Team to come forward for their presentation, followed by the Mystic River Team, and then the Alewife Brook Team. After all four presentations, we will shift to public comment and then general council discussion.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized John Nardone and the team from DPW who gave a presentation titled “Ongoing CSO Mitigation Work and the Updated CSO Control Plan”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Emily Norton and Julie Wood who gave a presentation titled “Ending Sewage Discharges to the Charles River: past, present & future”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Patrick Herron who gave a presentation titled “CSOs on Alewife and Mystic”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Eppa Rixey and Kristin Anderson who gave a presentation related to the Combined Sewer Overflow Planning. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan opened Public Comment.

Ann Stewart, 25-31 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about new development in Alewife and stronger stormwater infrastructure.

Gwen Speeth, 16 Churchill Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about CSO in the Alewife area and emphasized that it is a safety hazard.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke on the importance of green infrastructure and shared possible solutions to CSO.

John Tortelli, Sunnyside Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered suggestions on solutions to fix overflow.

Ann McDonald shared the importance of public process and looking at community and health factors when discussing potential solutions.

Rob Ware, 12 Elliott Street, Cambridge, MA, offered suggestions on solutions to fix overflow.

Annie, Arlington, MA, shared concerns about CSO in the Alewife area and encouraged the City to reach some goals sooner than the 2050 goal.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Azeem who asked if there were options to expedite some of the goals presented today during the meeting. Jim Wilcox explained that these projects will take time because they are large, capital projects. Additionally, Jim Wilcox provided a brief overview of the current challenges which prevents the projects from beginning sooner, such as availability of funding and the complex work that is done to achieve sewer separation. Councillor Azeem acknowledged the challenges and shared suggestions on how the city could move forward sooner.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Wilson who asked for more information on the CSO discussions that are happening regionally and with neighboring cities. Jim Wilcox shared that the CSO Control Plan is a joint effort between the City of Somerville and the MWRA and shared a brief overview of the work that has been done collaboratively over the last four years. Jim Wilcox shared that there are over 30 other communities that contribute to the sewer system. Jim Wilcox noted that there have been more conversations around how communities can work better together to address the CSO problem. Councillor Wilson pointed out that this matter is an urgent one with serious health concerns, which is why it should be addressed as soon as possible. Councillor Nolan recognized Emily Norton who read a quote from Matt Romero, Executive Director of the MWRA Advisory Board.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan shared that she would be putting a motion forward related to the CSO plan. The motion was shared on the screen for the Committee and public to view.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who asked clarifying questions on if future improvements are being designed around the current population or projected population numbers and funding of projects. Jim Wilcox explained that population does not have a big effect of the sewer system and that funding for projects have been outlined in the budget book and there are ongoing conversations related to future funding with the MWRA.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Vice Mayor McGovern who shared his support from what was said by Committee members and emphasized the need for necessary changes and for the changes to move more quickly.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan made a motion that the Health and Environment Committee recommend That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with relevant City departments and the recently formed coalition to consider options including consideration of costs and benefits to meet a 2050 25 year storm level of control of CSOs, update regulations for private development of stormwater, use of green infrastructure, and improve meaningful public outreach regarding ongoing sewer and stormwater investments, including the creation of a Combined Sewer Overflow Commission.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 5. Motion passed.

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with relevant City departments and the recently formed coalition to consider options including consideration of costs and benefits to meet a 2050 25 year storm level of control of CSOs, update regulations for private development of stormwater, use of green infrastructure, and improve meaningful public outreach regarding ongoing sewer and stormwater investments, including the creation of a Combined Sewer Overflow Commission.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Patick Herron and Kristin Anderson who thanked the Committee and the city for allowing their associations to be part of the conversation.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized John Nardone who shared an overview of the efforts that have begun to end CSOs and thanked everyone for their involvement with reaching goals. John Nardone emphasized how important it is to continue to move forward.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Wilson – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Health and Environment Committee adjourned at approximately 4:07p.m.

Attachment A – 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:

[Sep 9, 2025 2:00 PM - Health & Environment Committee - Committee Meeting](#)

A communication was received from Councillor Nolan, transmitting a presentation from Cambridge Department of Public Works titled "Ongoing CSO Mitigation Work and the Updated CSO Control Plan".

A communication was received from Councillor Nolan, transmitting a presentation from Charles River Watershed Association titled "Ending Sewage Discharges to the Charles River: past, present & future".

A communication was received from Councillor Nolan, transmitting a presentation titled "CSOs on Alewife and Mystic".

A communication was received from Councillor Nolan, transmitting a presentation from Save the Alewife Brook related to Combined Sewer Overflow Planning.

Attachment A

Erwin, Nicole

From: G Speeth <gaspeeth@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 12:00 AM
To: City Clerk; Nolan, Patricia
Cc: Hayes, Patrick; McGovern, Marc
Subject: Thanks and clarification for Health and Environment Committee re 9-9-2025 Meeting

Chair Nolan, Committee, and other City Council Members,

Thanks so much for holding today's meeting about addressing combined sewer overflows.

Somehow, the fact that raw human waste is regularly spewed out of our Cambridge pipes, then flows in an open concrete channel through our densely-populated neighborhood has become normalized. It's not normal, and it's not okay.

Following up on Chair Nolan's point that ongoing CSO sewage pollution is a public health threat, I wanted to clarify that extreme sewage flooding may be an intermittent potential problem that climate change's increased intensity rains might cause, but the threat to our health is happening now. Please

The research Patrick Herron mentioned suggests that all of us who live near the Alewife Brook are at increased risk for serious gastrointestinal disorders. When I saw my first CSO outfall at Mass Ave and Route 16, I thought: "Wow, I need to let Public Works know how much it stinks here so they can do something about it." It never occurred to me that Cambridge knew about the stench near my house and wasn't intent on resolving it as soon as possible.

Please do all you can to prioritize giving us the same level of CSO control that the neighborhoods around the Boston Harbor and beaches benefit from -- 25-Year level of control.

Sincerely,
Gwen Speeth

Erwin, Nicole

From: Christopher Logan <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 9:08 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

The time to act is now. Cambridge has the opportunity to get sewage pollution out of the Alewife Brook and undo the damage to the affected residents. Please work to separate sewers, create green stormwater infrastructure and storage tanks, and reach a 25-year level of control. Thank you.

Christopher Logan
chriswlogan@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: ann stewart <ahstewart@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 3:29 PM
To: City Clerk
Cc: City Manager
Subject: CSO comment city council health and environment committee sept 9 2025

To: Cambridge City Council Health and Environment Committee
Cc: City Manager, City Clerk
From: Ann Stewart, 25-31 Wheeler Street
Re: Long-term CSO Plan

This Council rezoned to double and triple our population under the premise that it would create a large amount of affordable housing or solve a regional housing shortage. You never thought to consider the impacts until solar rooftop owners asked. It's like the approach to bike lanes with little consideration for businesses and their delivery vendors and elder or disabled customers dependent on parking.

When CDD recommended adding a residential tower to the MBTA's Alewife T Station development proposal and the public learned this state-owned land is the site of the worst sewage pipe dumping untreated human waste into Alewife Brook, to your credit you passed a policy order asking for Green Stormwater Infrastructure and tanks, but weakened it by not being specific about the "ask."

Leadership and transparency demands that you now ask:

Where does DPW propose significant new green stormwater infrastructure and new sewer separation projects in the Alewife sewershed?

How many people in Arlington, Cambridge, and downriver will continue to have properties flooded with human waste because of our delay?

How many public paths and recreational lands will be covered with sewage during and after big rainstorms?

Where's our public health department?

Listen carefully: When you hear solutions put off 25 years, many people will translate that to mean there's no problem until 2050.

Cambridge is operating an open sewer in our neighborhoods, and it's time to stop, so take a hint from the Massachusetts plumber with the tagline "We give a poop about your pipes."

Erwin, Nicole

From: Anne Snyder <annewsnyder@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 3:16 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk; Letourneau, Jennifer
Subject: Please approve CPA Funding for Maher Community Garden

Dear Cambridge City Council Members-

I'm writing to request approval of funding to replace the fence at the Maher Community Garden, as recommended by the CPA Committee. I am a co-coordinator for the garden, so I represent all 44 gardeners with this request. For the past couple of years, our cedar posts and boards have been in a state of rapid deterioration so not only is it challenging to keep out the critters, it is also increasingly dilapidated in appearance. Additionally, our 20 year old gates are not ADA approved.

Given the prominent location of our garden, we welcome many daily visitors. Many folks from Neville place visit frequently, as do Cambridge residents and out of town folks exploring Fresh Pond Reservation. Interactions between gardeners and visitors are one of the highlights of being at the garden. With a much needed replacement fence, we will soon be able to take pride, once again, in this wonderful Cambridge resource.

Thank you for your attention to our request.

Yours-
Anne Snyder
Co-coordinator of Maher Community Garden

Erwin, Nicole

From: Eric Grunebaum <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 2:52 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Councillors,

Thank you for discussing this important subject today. I'm sorry that I could not be there in person or by zoom and that my comment is late; I'm at a work conference.

When I moved to the North Cambridge/Alewife neighborhood in 1998, I had no idea that my community was the home of an open sewer. Who would believe that this public and natural health crime still exists in a modern, wealthy and highly competent city?

Yet the City and state have normalized this practice, referring to it clinically as "CSO's." They no longer see it for what it is: a disgusting health threat. Essentially when Boston Harbor was "cleaned up", they left Alewife Brook as a permanent casualty. It's now time to fix it.

Alewife Brook is in a unique situation as it travels directly through densely populated communities very close to where people live and next to public pathways. It literally floods basements, yards and community paths. This close proximity to people makes it different from the Mystic and Charles Rivers with their higher banks and larger perimeter parks. In addition, the flow of Alewife Brook is a fraction of the volume of these rivers, so the sewage pollution is far more highly concentrated.

It's akin to a firehose of sewage when we have bursts of rain as we did just on Saturday. And we know that more of these intense storms are coming with the increases in global temperatures we are seeing. Does it matter if the sewage releases only happen several dozen times each year?

Not if the firehose is pointed at you. And when it's not a firehose of sewage, the odors can be

overwhelming every other day of the year.

When I attended the January hearing of the lawsuit defendants, Cambridge, Somerville and MWRA, the difficulty of finding land for sewage solutions was raised and yet we have 10 acres of *public* land immediately adjacent to the Alewife Brook; the MBTA garage site. And nearby the garage is an amazing model for green stormwater infrastructure in the Alewife Stormwater Wetlands.

Let's raise our aspirations and do it again –

Replicate that amazing combination of a functional stormwater wetland and a cooling, healthy natural space with another green stormwater infrastructure implementation in collaboration with the MBTA, the MWRA and Cambridge. A new green and "blue" space here can knit back the remaining fragments of The Great Swamp, reconnecting Alewife Reservation, Yates Pond (now overshadowed by the garage) and the Jerry's Pond green and blue spaces.

Thank you for your leadership and advocacy today and I ask that you use your voices to speak at the level of the Commonwealth because we cannot count on our City Administration -- afterall, they are a defendant in the Boston Harbor lawsuit. Use your voices to catalyze green stormwater infrastructure solutions to the state because they have so many co-benefits.

Since the Alewife Stormwater Wetland was completed 10 years ago, Cambridge's Administration has repeatedly revealed a preference for only constructing concrete tank solutions -- essentially garages for sewage. It's time for another significant stormwater wetland on a portion of the MBTA's garage site. Please use your public advocacy to nudge forward this enlightened and forward thinking solution.

Best,
Eric

Eric Grunebaum
eric.grunebaum@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Marina Goreau Atlas <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 2:39 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Dear Health and Environment Committee of the Cambridge City Council Members: Committee Chair Councilor Patty Nolan, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Siddiqui, Councilor Azeem, and Councilor Sobrinho-Wheeler,

I first conducted combined sewer outflow fecal coliform and dissolved oxygen monitoring where one CSO outflow meets the Charles and Mystic watershed in North Cambridge in ~2007, with peers learning about this in an AP Environmental Science class. My team then was shocked to find fecal coliform so high and dissolved oxygen so low our tests required professional scientific support for interpretation. Since then, experts have confirmed that despite numerous promises from decision-makers to fix this, the CSO separation promises remain unfulfilled. Experts, such as Dr. Kyla Bennett, on the hazardous waste permitting and M4 discharge permitting process note that toxic contamination to the watershed is a compounding problem on top of the groundwater pollution from raw and untreated sewage.

Yet technologies and strategies to manage and mitigate this have organically grown exponentially including those led by advocates locally. From rain gardens such as those regularly installed through a partnership with Biodiversity Builders through the Cambridge Mayor's Program using native plants that can help pre-treat sewage discharges, to de-paving techniques lead by scientists at the Cambridge-based Biodiversity for a Livable Climate who have shown reducing impermeable surfaces is a key strategy to stop groundwater from carrying untreated sewage contamination into people's homes in an increasingly unstable climate where rains take longer to fall then fall more rapidly causing flash flooding where there was never any historically. As such, in sensitive places like within the 500 year flood plain to areas built on landfill without standard ground permeability like the rest of the Cambridge shorelines in the watershed, it is critical to not only walk the talk on completing sewer separation early but to demand all

available low impact strategies are considered like depaving strategically and planting runoff gardens between bike lanes, pedestrian thruways, or areas cars do not require to add places for runoff to flow and for plants to pre-treat sewage-stormwater contamination by absorbing and reducing bacteria in runoff. Considerations for sewage storage tanks may also change in a rapidly warming world, particularly without adequate permeable surfaces with deeply-rooted native plants to help sink contaminated groundwater quickly into the ground so the public's health is not unduly impacted. Several plants from rosa palustris to wildflowers like native asters such as Aster Novae/ New England Aster with 12' roots are great ways to both stabilize soil without heavy carbon or chemical intensive methods, add greenspace, improve property values, and improve residents' mental health.

Please join us by making the healthy choice the easy choice. Mandate sewer separation to make good on outdated promises in your tenure given your position, require; fund; and monitor progress towards installing and expanding green native-plant berm-and-swale infrastructure based on wisdom and data gained from scientists partnered with community groups and local residents and from Cambridge and Watertown about strategic depaving, improving water quality while also improving air quality with well-planned deeply-rooted and long-lived native plants, supporting biodiversity that improves livability and slows zoonotic disease spread, and improve public health for everyone in Cambridge and the surrounding area.

While these requests may seem critical for people in the Alewife area and the Mystic-Charles watershed, the Cambridge Climate Law and Alewife Master Plan both underscore the need for us all to come together to make this happen finally.

Taking these steps with urgency and building in places for strategic improvement to incorporate new information, best practices, and newly available scientific evidence is critical for all impacted by climate change, from people living in and around Alewife to those inextricably impacted by climate across the City of Cambridge.

I urge you to adopt a plan to:

- 1) Complete sewer and water infrastructure separation before 2050.
- 2) Expand places for Green Stormwater Infrastructure in creative ways like easements,

separations between bike and pedestrian ways, and implement a depaving and native plant "hellstrip" program like surrounding municipalities have successfully incorporated into city policies. Maintain mechanisms so policies can be updated or improved upon to include new techniques such as pollinator pathways plantings and incentivize improvements that do not rely on chemical intensive solutions.

3) Address soil stability with deeply rooted plants, not fracking waste or stabilizers that pollute and harm public health in order to plan for underground combined sewage storage tanks and treatment methods that are stable and durable for long-term use to support the needs of Cambridge residents and the expanding residential and industrial areas near Alewife and Fresh Pond.

4) Plan for sustainability by prioritizing public-health protective actions that get us to our climate commitments in a non-chemical-intensive-and-global-warming-forcer-intensive way. Please harness the collective wisdom of local scientific experts, advocates, and those who are invested in the long-term health of this area to make a more sustainable long-term plan for green engineering towards managing sewage waste and increasing infrastructure before a residential increase overwhelms an already fragile system where untreated sewage pollution is a present and persistent threat to the public's health. Specifically, please require planning beyond short-term windows as 2050 is only a few decades away-- a very short timespan when we consider that Cambridge, like the field of environmental science, prefers 200+ year time horizons for long term planning.

I urge members of this committee to kindly take the time to learn about the work of local experts like the Mystic Charles Pollinator Pathway Group, Green Cambridge, Save the Alewife Brook, Robert France who wrote the Alewife Master Plan, and local hydrology experts like Jim Laurie of Biodiversity for a Livable Climate to achieve a healthier and more sustainable future for us all. I kindly request committee members consider further consultation or potential partnerships with local public health experts and scientists to achieve this in a shorter time frame. For example, such a committee could create an opportunity for information sharing or communication with the WEC3 committee of Watertown who leads on the planting strip policy to bring in resources to achieve these requests using the power of local expertise and advocacy to harness our collective capacities and walk the talk going forward on this imminent public health issue in order to use new techniques and resource models to addressing this growing

problem in Cambridge.

Thank you for your careful attention to this matter and advocacy for doing the right thing for the environment we depend on and the public's health.

Thank you for taking action on this urgent and overdue matter.

Respectfully,
Marina Goreau Atlas

P.S. Here is a list of North American Native plants for improving septic fields that a group like Biodiversity Builders could assess for Cambridge relevance and implement easily within their existing capacity and partnership with the City through the Mayor's Program or other routes:
<https://www.prairienursery.com/septic-field-mix-for-sand-gravel-backfill.html>

Marina Goreau Atlas
marina.er.atlas@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lois Josimovich <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 2:20 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Dear Councillors,

I'm writing to ask for your urgent support to stop the dangerous sewage outflow into Alewife Brook and surrounding properties going into Arlington and Somerville. This has been going on far too long and requires immediate action to start a remediation effort, not these endless extensions of time.

Please do something now that will enforce full Sewer Separation, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Underground Storage Tanks, and a 25-year level of control.

Thank you.

Lois Josimovich
loiswrite@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Meredith Olsen <meredith.olsen@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 2:08 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Zoom links to meetings

Hello,

I tried to join a Cambridge City Council/Health & Environment Committee meeting today, and the Zoom link on the website didn't work, because my gmail address was not recognized as a Cambridge resident (even though I am). I was able to sign in to Zoom and enter the meeting number (not use the link) to make it in. But in the future, perhaps you can correct the link? Please see below.

Thanks,

Mereidth Olsen

Here is the error message I got:

Request Id: 7626ce4e-d7db-421a-a70e-4e3c7d441000

Correlation Id: ccb55c4a-1948-47d4-aff6-f9e3ad8566ed

Timestamp: 2025-09-09T18:02:14Z

Message: AADSTS50020: User account 'meredith.olsen@gmail.com' from identity provider 'live.com' does not exist in tenant 'City of Cambridge' and cannot access the application 'cambridgema.zoom.us'(Zoom) in that tenant. The account needs to be added as an external user in the tenant first. Sign out and sign in again with a different Azure Active Directory user account.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Lori Stokes <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 1:19 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Hello. I'm writing to ask the Council for action to End to Sewage Pollution by 2050. This includes a combination of:

- Complete Sewer Separation by 2050.
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure.
- Underground Combined Sewage Storage Tanks.
- Engineering a 25-year level of control for the year 2050

Thank you,
Lori Stokes
Arlington

Lori Stokes
lori.stokes@comcast.net

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Melanie Abrams <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 12:30 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

I strongly urge measures for Sewer Separation, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Underground Storage Tanks, and a 25-year level of control on CSOs.

As CSOs are the discharge of raw sewage into our waterways, they are both a major health hazard and source of environmental harm. Some examples of how this affects me and my close friends/family personally:

I kayak weekly on the Mystic and Charles rivers - it is often my main form of outdoor recreation, especially as I do not own a car to access less urban settings - and I have to check water quality reports each time I go and wear a mask on the water sometimes to avoid having my mouth spattered with water contaminated by raw sewage. I have gotten sick from the contaminated water.

My parents, brother, and I all take walks on the Alewife Brook regularly - my brother lives right outside the brook in Arlington. We enjoy the diversity of wildlife there - we see many types of herons, swans, redwing blackbirds, turtles, muskrats, and much more - but have to be cautious around rainfall events because these are all in the path of the CSOs. The animals cannot escape even when the humans are warned, and several years we've seen local swans' signets disappear after algae blooms.

My friends' basement in Somerville was flooded a couple years ago by some of the tens of millions of gallons of wastewater, contaminating their belongings with human fecal bacteria. They lost a lot of their possessions which they could not clean, and had to wash the filthy water off the more durable ones in their bathtub.

Year after year, the 'temporary' variances are granted to allow discharge of these enormous volumes of raw human waste directly into our local waterways. Year after year we are told that there are plans to start planning ways to reduce CSOs - while the problem gets worse. Please take strong and timely action to reverse the trend and restore healthy waterways for people and

our environment.

Melanie Abrams

melanie.b.abrams@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Reva Stein <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 12:25 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

I am writing about the Alewife brook sewage problem in Cambridge. Please do what you can to make sure there is complete Sewer Separation by 2050 and Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Underground Storage Tanks and Engineer a 25 year level of control by 2050. I am a renter and I live at 2 Seagrave Rd, Cambridge in what is declared to be a flood plain. Years ago our basement flooded and the water was several feet high with fetid water. I have lived here for over 24 years. I am also a supporter of building move affordable housing in Cambridge. I am not sure if the two are related. I hope you will both fix the problem of Sewage Pollution into the Alewife brook and also support additional affordable housing in Cambridge. Thank you, Reva Stein

Reva Stein
revastein15@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: ver1m@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 12:22 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: CPA Funding for Maher Community Garden

Hello City Councilors,

I am writing in support for CPA funding for Maher Community Garden. We gardeners value "our" garden as a place of happiness and community, plus we know the produce we pick is fresh and organic. Not only do the gardeners benefit but also patients, guests and residents of the 2 Neville facilities, some of whom actively garden in one of several raised beds. Also, visitors from other cities and countries visit Maher.

Unfortunately, the fence is in terrible shape and needs repair/replacement. With your approval of the CPA funding, the garden can be made safer and look more presentable.

Please approve the funding request for Maher Community Garden.

Thank you for your consideration,
Mary Verhage

Erwin, Nicole

From: katherine dander <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 12:15 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Please take action to End Alewife Brook Sewage Pollution by 2050.

katherine dander
kat.dadner@yahoo.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: MARCIA CIRO <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 12:15 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Let's have CLEAN water: rivers and brooks and ponds. I am a supporter of Alewife Brook protections as well as the CRWA's Cut the Crap. We need to do everything we can to keep our water clean.

MARCIA CIRO
r87933@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Peggy Lynch <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 12:04 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 20S0.

I am so glad this is being addressed and I trust that the Councillors and the CM will agrees that this is long, long over due:

- 1) sewer separation
- 2) green storm water infrastructure
- 3 underground storage tanks
- 4; at least 25 year level of control

If not now ? When?

If not Cambridge? who?

if not this Council? Who?

Peggy Lynch
Brookline st

Peggy Lynch
mlynch4@icloud.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Ellen Mass <emass73@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 11:34 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Respecting City of Cambridge and its Western waterways

Over the years, Councilor Nolan has supported improvements to West Cambridge and its waterways. Former Councilor Zandervan and H.Davis have sponsored many resolutions to clean up our Western waterways that enter the Mystic River and Atlantic Ocean and which contain pollutants harmful to all animal species.

After full development of West Cambridge in the 90s, with the Fresh Pond Mall and MBTA transit hub, with the Fresh Pond natural cleaning flow to Little River and Alewife Brook, and changing the river's design to a straight channel rather than curved flow, the watershed has become highly polluted and a serious flood zone. Years of advocacy for this needed project to benefit West Cambridge has not brought success.

Thanks to those groups who continue to ask for justice for our West Cambridge environment and essential natural resources to be protected in that area. Also grateful for city officials who will continue to bring the issue to the forefront of city business.

Best, Ellen Mass
Founder Friends of Alewife Reservation
Cambridge, Ma.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Meredith Olsen <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 8:53 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Please set a real timeline for Cambridge sewer separation, green stormwater infrastructure, underground storage tanks, and a 25-year level of control. I live in North Cambridge and any time it rains, the day after you can walk past a sewer grate and it smells (strongly) of sewage. This is in neighborhoods. Ironically, there are metal signs on these grates saying "No dumping - drains to Alewife Brook," with a picture of a FISH. No humans should live like this. I especially expect more from Cambridge. Thank you.

Meredith Olsen
meredith.olsen@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Elizabeth Thomason <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 8:22 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Hi city councilors,

I live in Alewife and walking around the beautiful Alewife Brook Reservation led me to birdwatching. I love to see migrating birds, recognize duck couples I've seen through every season, and learn about how green spaces in cities are essential havens for our feathered friends. Unfortunately, I have seen the repercussions of the sewage pollution in this area firsthand; I found a dead duck in the water on one of my bird walks. This pollution of our environment along with the health risks it poses is why I'm writing to ask you to please support sewer separation with a pledge to end sewage pollution by 2050. I know this is a big undertaking but green stormwater infrastructure, underground combined sewage storage tanks, and engineering a 25-year level of control for the year 2050 will drastically improve the future of this neighborhood and the wildlife it draws. Thank you for amplifying my and my neighbors' voices on this issue!

Elizabeth Thomason
ejthomason1@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: mikeccinbos <mikeccinbos@protonmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 7:38 AM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Sewage being dumped on your neighbors - CSOs

Hello,

I am your neighbor. I and my wife pay state taxes and frequent Cambridge business. We support your community.

And Cambridge is literally dumping sewage on us.

We bought our home just a block away from Alewife Brook because we loved the green space around it. We only learned of the sewage long after we moved in. We walked along that freeway many times and unknowingly walked and ran through dam and wet that almost certainly contained sewage. I have seen unhoused people and uninformed kayakers using the water.

This is a disgrace for Massachusetts. We take care of each other. And Cambridge is not meeting that standard of care.

You can change that by supporting a solution to this problem that includes

As much Sewer Separation as practicable.
Green Stormwater Infrastructure.
Underground Combined Sewage Storage Tanks.
Engineer a 25-year level of control for the year 2050

Be the strong and good people we know the people of Cambridge are and do right by your neighbors.

Michael Behizadeh

=====
Slava Ukrani!

Freedom is not the absence of something

"There is no Freedom without Solidarity"

Erwin, Nicole

From: Silvia Dominguez <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 10:33 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Take responsibility and stop polluting Alewife brook. Raw sewage is a public health issue.

Silvia Dominguez
lacachao@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Martha cleveland <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 8:58 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

I lived in north Cambridge for many years. And now my son and grandson are living there. They frequently take advantage of the nature walks at the Alewife. I am writing to you to request you complete the important work of saving the Alewife from sewage so they can continue to enjoy this space as my grandson Please continue with sewer separation, underground storage tanks and a 25-year level of control. I recently visited Deer Isle and heard that Cambridge is working towards connecting!

Martha cleveland
marth0214@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Carlee Blamphin <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 8:12 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

I am asking for: Sewer Separation, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Underground Storage Tanks, and a 25-year level of control.

Carlee Blamphin
carleez@me.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Amy Cohen <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 4:43 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

It is unconscionable that in 2025 raw sewage is being sent to Arlington.
We need Cambridge to complete sewer separation , build green stormwater infrastructure and more underground storage tanks ASAP.

Amy Cohen
acoh7680@yahoo.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Patty Hnatiuk <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 4:03 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Saving Alewife Brook must be an essential top priority for our City! All Council members need to make this an immediate and top work action! Including:sewer separation, green stormwster infrastructure, underground storage tanks and a 25 -year level of control. We know what is needed. Please get to work on planning and implementation now! Thank you.

Patty Hnatiuk
pattyhnatiuk@comcast.net

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Naomi Dworkin <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 2:31 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Thank you for understanding the seriousness of this issue for our health and safety. The plan needs to include a 25 year minimum level of control so it is done well. It is beyond understanding that in the 21st century we have to work so hard to fix a system that routinely dumps raw sewage into a publicly accessed waterway. Completing sewer separation and Underground Combined Sewage Storage Tanks, as well as the use of green stormwater infrastructure, is clearly a necessary pathway. The home of Harvard University and MIT as well as thousands of residents, and the site many visitors prioritize, should be able to complete this work which should have been done many years, in fact many decades ago. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Naomi Dworkin
naomidworkin@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Mark Paglierani <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 9:02 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Please stop the sewerage from entering Alewife Brook. Lifelong resident of East Arlington who walks and bikes on these paths. We are all tired of the pollution that is entering this brook. Something needs to be done. This is 2025. It is not an option to continue with the status quo.

Mark Paglierani
markpag@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: SUSAN GOULD <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 7:46 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Cambridge - please I know it is impossible to make any changes in your great city because change sometimes deletes Tradition but The sewage storm water needs to be addressed. If you ever seen an egret with a tampon wrapped around its leg and had to try to explain it to your child while in nature YOU WOULD DEMAND CHANGE.
Please save our water for fish birds and the republic of CAMBRIDGE

SUSAN GOULD
sgould@challiance.org

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Janine Hart-Hueber <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 7:36 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Dear Councilors,

Since I moved from Somerville to Arlington in 1969 at the age of 10 years, I and my neighbors have been subjected to the stench from Alewife and the reduction and elimination of live fish swimming in Alewife Brook because of the disgusting situation from the sewers. It's time to fully rectify the situation and prevent anymore human sewage from entering the brook and ruining our neighborhood. Remember, the animals, birds and fish were here first. It is our responsibility to take care of the earth and their home.

Live up to your reputation as a forward-thinking city and clean up your act for Alewife Brook!

Janine Hart-Hueber
25 Milton St.
Arlington, MA

Janine Hart-Hueber
harthueber@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Alida Castillo <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 9:29 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Dear Councilors,

I ask that you please end sewage pollution by 2025. It is hard to believe that in this day and age, in one of the tech capitals of the world, raw sewage is dumped into the local waterways. It is not only embarrassing and disgusting (walk by the corner of Rt 16 and Mass Ave after a rainstorm), but it is also unhealthy. Studies have shown that living near a CSO causes more health problems, probably because the germs are airborne. I live in North Cambridge and am directly affected by the nearby CSOs. Please consider sewer separation, green stormwater infrastructure, and underground tanks to solve this unhealthy issue. Thank you,

Alida Castillo

22 Cottage Park Ave, Unit 6, Cambridge, MA, 02140

Alida Castillo

alida.castillo@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: nonie valentine <nonie.valentine1@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 7:52 PM
To: City Council
Cc: City Clerk
Subject: Combined Sewer Overflows

Dear City Council,

You know about Cambridge's shall we say crappy (!) contribution to the four CSOs at Alewife Brook. On Tuesday you'll hear again about the mind-blowing gallons of untreated sewage going into the brook after rapid downpours like Saturday's. You'll hear about the dangerous bacteria from CSOs leading to gastrointestinal illness. And just how disgusting it is that we don't properly deal with waste until it comes for our feet on the Alewife path. Or comes for our lungs through the air when those downpours are followed by a dry spell. This is unfortunately our climate pattern now: fluctuations between heat and short, sharp rains that run off hard surfaces. It is not an abstract issue for the people at Alewife. They're sick of it; and sick *from* it.

Good steps have begun but do we honestly think they are enough? We are plunging headlong into further development without taking care of basics like sewage infrastructure. We think in dollars and cents mainly, and still somewhat siloed from our partners in cleaning up compromised water and land.

What if we approach this *as if* it is urgent as it is. *As if* we can focus, work hard at collaboration, and be more imaginative than usual.

How: by getting on with separating stormwater from sewage pipes and putting in a stormwater tank. But couldn't we also restore part of the land under the demolished garage and its surrounds to the wetland that Alewife once was? Wetlands are made to order for absorbing stormwater and carbon, and oh yes, purifying that water and air, cooling, and providing habitat. The model wetland already there draws in both kids and adults with its color and sound and life. Restoring wetland is part of the hybrid solution to CSOs that endures in its multiple benefits. Our responses to climate can be smart if we also think of repairing small water cycles.

Further, couldn't our city make a less dubious contribution to Alewife Brook right at source? By having some public and private buildings with *composting toilets* that produce fertilizer, not sewage? I know, it's wild. If Crane Beach can do it so can we. Creativity on behalf of "green infrastructure" pays off over the long haul, bringing multiple co-benefits. It takes a little maintenance, a little thought, a little care, a little collaboration. It's time to widen our usual solutions to take into account a different ethos. Not of control but of collaboration and care.

Imagine, we could turn this decades-long CSO stigma into a story of repair, beauty, and education. Running through puddles on Alewife path in clean water and unafraid.

Sincerely,

Nonie Valentine

4 Washington Ave.

Erwin, Nicole

From: Darci Hanna <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 7:47 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Please help implement sewer separation, more green stormwater infrastructure, underground combined storage tanks and a 25-year level of control. As climate change cause more frequent extreme weather events, this is crucial to start working on now. Cambridge should be a leader on these issues. Please end sewage pollution by 2050. It can't come too soon.

Darci Hanna
darci.hanna@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: John Tortelli <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 7:14 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

As someone who lives on the Alewife in Arlington and had your raw sewage in my yard and in my home I'm asking that you end this horrible practice. It's 2025 definitely time for clean water-end pollution now.

Thank you
John Tortelli
101 Sunnyside Ave
Arlington MA

John Tortelli
tortjohn@yahoo.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Rob Vandenabeele <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 12:00 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

Dear Council Members:

Please take action to End to Sewage Pollution by 2050 that includes a combination of:

As much Sewer Separation as practical.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure.

Underground Combined Sewage Storage Tanks.

Engineer a 25-year level of control for the year 2050*

A 25-year level of control is what engineers often refer to as "virtual" combined sewage elimination. It means that there are no sewage discharges, except in a really big storm that occurs roughly every 25 years. Today's "25-year storm" has a 4% chance of occurring in any given year, statistically expected once every 25 years. That means around 6 inches of rain in 24-hours, according to the most current rainfall model (NOAA Atlas 14).

Sincerely,

Rob Vandenabeele
ecofriendlybeerdrinker@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Trudi Goodman <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 7:43 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

We need Sewer Separation, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Underground Storage Tanks and a 25 year level of control.

Trudi Goodman
trudigoodman@yahoo.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)

Erwin, Nicole

From: Carolyn A White <arlington@savethealewifebrook.org>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 1:48 AM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Finish the Job! End Sewage Pollution by 2050.

It is way beyond time for Cambridge to fix this stinking, unhealthy ongoing problem.

Carolyn A White
cawhitema@gmail.com

Sent from [Save the Alewife Brook](#)