



# ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber

**The Ordinance Committee, comprised of the entire membership of the City Council, will hold a public hearing on October 7, 2025 on Policy Order 2024 #33, regarding a request to amend Cambridge Code of Ordinance 6.08.10 (“Regulation of vicious dogs”) to bring into compliance with State law; and to create a “Kennel License” that complies with MGL Section 137A.**

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 type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Catherine Zusy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Ordinance Committee was held on Tuesday, September 30, 2025. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern. 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 – Absent
- Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Nolan – Present/Remote
- Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Councillor Toner – Absent
- Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote
- Councillor Zusy – Absent
- Mayor Simmons – Absent

**Present – 5, Absent – 4. Quorum established.**

Chair McGovern offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss Policy Order 2024 #33, regarding a request to amend Cambridge Code of Ordinance 6.08.10 (“Regulation of vicious dogs”) to bring into compliance with State law; and to create a “Kennel License” that complies with MGL Section 137A. Present at the meeting was Christina Correia, Director of Animal Commission, Elliott Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor, Diane Pires, Assistant City Solicitor, and Rebecca Fuentes, Deputy Chief Operating Officer.

Chair McGovern recognized Elliott Veloso who offered a brief opening statement related to the proposed amendments.

Chair McGovern recognized Diane Pires who gave a presentation titled “Cambridge Municipal Code Amendments”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Chair McGovern shared that no one signed up for public comment and opened the floor for Committee discussion.

Chair McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who shared that it is important for the City to be compliant with State law and asked for confirmation that this language is doing so. Christina Correia confirmed that this language would bring the City up to date.

Chair McGovern asked how many kennels there are in the City. Christina Correia shared that there are four kennels. Chair McGovern asked if those kennels have been informed of the updates. Christina Correia shared that Officers in the Animal Commission have been in contact with the kennels since September 2024 educating and providing information related to the updates. Chair McGovern shared that he has heard from the community that the only concern with the updates are tags and collar changes that need to be done when dogs are being brought to a kennel, noting that he understands it can be a nuisance, but it is state law, so it needs to be followed. Christina Correia added that it is a statutory requirement that cannot be changed. Chair McGovern asked if there would be any benefit in waiting to pass the language on the kennel license because of possible State changes being made soon. Elliott Veloso advised that the Committee move forward with the changes now due to “Ollie’s Law” already being passed, and if needed, amendments can be made to the language in the future.

**Chair McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion that the Committee forward the proposed amendments to Cambridge Code of Ordinance 6.08.10 and proposed language for “Kennel License” to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation to pass to a second reading.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent  
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes  
Councillor Nolan – Yes  
Councillor Siddiqui – Yes  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes  
Councillor Toner – Absent  
Councillor Wilson – Yes  
Councillor Zusy – Absent  
Mayor Simmons – Absent

**Yes – 5, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.**

**Chair McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent  
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes  
Councillor Nolan – Yes  
Councillor Siddiqui – Yes  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes  
Councillor Toner – Absent  
Councillor Wilson – Yes  
Councillor Zusy – Absent  
Mayor Simmons – Absent

**Yes – 5, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.**

**The Ordinance Committee adjourned at approximately 3:23p.m**

**A communication was received from Diane Pires, Assistant City Solicitor, transmitting a presentation related to amendments to the Cambridge Municipal Code.**

**A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to Policy Order 2024-33, regarding a request to amend Cambridge Code of Ordinances 6.08.010 ("Regulation of vicious dogs") to bring into compliance with State law; and to create a "Kennel License" the complies with Massachusetts General Laws Section 137A.**

## Chapter 6.04 – ANIMAL CONTROL REGULATIONS

### 6.04.120 – Violation - Penalty

Pursuant to G.L. c. 140, § 173A, any person who violates any of the provisions of Sections 6.04.020, 6.04.030, 6.04.040, 6.04.050, 6.04.070, 6.04.080 or 6.04.090 of this chapter shall be subject to a fine not exceeding fifty dollars for the first offense. The fine for a second offense shall be \$100. The fine for a third offense shall be \$300. For a fourth or subsequent offense, the fine shall be \$500 and the City may order the animal spayed or neutered. Any person who violates any of the provisions of Section 6.04.020 of this chapter shall be subject to a fine of fifty dollars for each offense. In addition, for a violation of Section 6.04.030 a person shall be subject to any and all costs of care and confinement, and any other amounts allowed by law. A violation of Section 6.04.060 of this chapter shall be punishable by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars for each offense. ;hno; (Ord. No. 1373, 10/19/2015; Ord. 1125 § 1, 1991; Ord. 998 (part), 1983; prior code § 4-6)

## Chapter 6.08 – ANIMALS CONSTITUTING A NUISANCE

### 6.08.010 – Regulation of dangerous dogs

- A. Definitions. As used in this section, the following words and terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context shall indicate another or different meaning or intent:
1. “Potentially dangerous dog” means:
    - a. Any dog which, when unprovoked, in a vicious or terrorizing manner, approaches any person in an apparent attitude of attack upon the streets, sidewalks or any public grounds or places; or
    - b. Any dog with a known propensity, tendency or disposition to attack unprovoked, to cause injury or to otherwise endanger the safety of human beings or animals; or
    - c. Any dog whose owner has been cited on three separate occasions within the previous twelve months for failing to restrain said dog; or
    - d. Any dog not licensed according to City ordinance as provided in Section 6.04.020.
    - e. Notwithstanding the above definition of “potentially dangerous dog,” the Director of Animal Commission or their designee are not mandated to find a dog “potentially dangerous” solely based on determining subsection a through d are present.
  2. “Dangerous dog” means
    - a. A dog that either: (i) without justification, attacks a person or domestic animal causing physical injury or death; or (ii) behaves in a manner that a reasonable person would believe poses an unjustified imminent threat of physical injury or death to a person or to a domestic animal; or
    - b. Any dog having been previously found to be potentially dangerous which, when unprovoked, in a vicious or terrorizing manner, approaches any

person in an apparent attitude of attack upon the streets, sidewalks or any public grounds or places; or

- c. Any dog owned or harbored primarily or in part for the purpose of dog fighting or any dog trained for dog fighting.
  - d. Notwithstanding the above definition of "dangerous dog,"
  - e. No dog shall be deemed dangerous: (i) solely based upon growling or barking or solely growling and barking; (ii) based upon the breed of the dog; or (iii) if the dog was reacting to another animal or person and the dog's reaction was not grossly disproportionate to any of the following circumstances:
    - i. the dog was protecting or defending itself, its offspring, another domestic animal or a person from attack or assault;
    - ii. the person who was attacked or threatened by the dog was committing a crime upon the person or property of the owner or keeper of the dog; or
    - iii. the person attacked or threatened by the dog was engaged in teasing, tormenting, battering, assaulting, injuring or otherwise provoking the dog; or
    - iv. at the time of the attack or threat, the person or animal that was attacked or threatened by the dog had breached an enclosure or structure in which the dog was kept apart from the public and such person or animal was not authorized by the owner of the premises to be within such enclosure including, but not limited to, a gated, fenced-in area if the gate was closed, whether locked or unlocked; provided, however, that if a person is under the age of 7, it shall be a rebuttable presumption that such person was not committing a crime, provoking the dog or trespassing.
3. "Enclosure" means a fence or structure of at least six feet in height, forming or causing an enclosure to confine a dangerous dog in conjunction with other measures which may be taken by the owner or keeper, such as tethering of the dangerous dog. Such enclosure shall be securely constructed and locked and designed with secure sides, top and bottom so as to prevent the animal from escaping from the enclosure.
  4. Hearing Authority means the Director of the Animal Commission or their duly authorized designee.
  5. "Impounded" means taken into the custody of the Animal Commission.
  6. 'Nuisance dog', a dog that: (i) by excessive barking or other disturbance, is a source of annoyance to a sick person residing in the vicinity; or (ii) by excessive barking, causing damage or other interference, a reasonable person would find such behavior disruptive to one's quiet and peaceful enjoyment; or (iii) has threatened or attacked livestock, a domestic animal or a person, but such threat or attack was not a grossly disproportionate reaction under all the circumstances.
  7. "Person" means a natural person or any legal entity, including but not limited to a corporation, firm, partnership or trust.

8. "Enforcing Authority" means the Director of the Animal Commission or their duly authorized designee.
- B. Determination that Dog is Dangerous.
1. A person may file a complaint in writing to the City's hearing authority that a dog owned and kept in the City is a nuisance dog or a dangerous dog, consistent with the definitions above.
  2. The Director of the Animal Commission, or their duly authorized designee, shall review and investigate any complaints for dangerous, potentially dangerous or nuisance dogs.
  3. Pursuant to M.G. L. c. 140, §157, the Hearing Authority shall investigate or cause the investigation of the complaint, including an examination under oath of the complainant at a public hearing in the municipality to determine whether the dog is a nuisance dog or dangerous dog. Based on credible evidence and testimony presented at a public hearing, the hearing authority shall: (i) if the dog is complained of as a nuisance dog, either dismiss the complaint or deem the dog a nuisance dog; or (ii) if the dog is complained of as a dangerous dog: (A) dismiss the complaint; (B) deem the dog a nuisance dog; or (C) deem the dog a dangerous dog.
  4. If the Hearing Authority deems a dog a nuisance dog, the hearing authority may further order the owner or keeper of the dog take remedial action to ameliorate the cause of the nuisance behavior.
  5. If the Hearing Authority deems a dog to be a dangerous dog, the Hearing Authority shall order one or more of the following: (i) that unless an owner or keeper of the dog provides evidence that a veterinarian is of the opinion the dog is unfit for alterations because of a medical condition, the owner or keeper of the dog shall cause the dog to be altered so that the dog shall not be reproductively intact; (ii) microchip identification; (iii) behavior training; (iv) that the dog be humanely restrained: provided, however, that no order shall provide that a dog deemed dangerous be chained, tethered or otherwise tied to an inanimate object including, but not limited to, a tree, post or building; (v) that the dog be confined to the premises of the keeper of the dog; provided, however, that "confined" shall mean securely confined indoors or confined outdoors in a securely enclosed and locked pen or dog run area upon the premises of the owner or keeper; provided further, that such pen or dog run shall have a secure roof and, if such enclosure has no floor secured to the sides thereof, the sides shall be embedded into the ground for not less than 2 feet; and provided further, that within the confines of such pen or dog run, a dog house or proper shelter from the elements shall be provided to protect the dog; (vi) that when removed from the premises of the owner or the premises of the person keeping the dog, the dog shall be securely and humanely muzzled and restrained with a chain or other tethering device having a minimum tensile strength of 300 pounds and not exceeding 3 feet in length; (vii) that the owner or keeper of the dog provide proof of insurance in an amount not less than \$100,000 insuring the owner or keeper against any claim, loss, damage or injury to persons, domestic animals or property resulting from the acts, whether intentional or unintentional, of the dog or proof that reasonable efforts were made to obtain such insurance if a policy has not been

issued; provided, however, that if a policy of insurance has been issued, the owner or keeper shall produce such policy upon request of the hearing authority or a justice of the district court; and provided further, that if a policy has not been issued the owner or keeper shall produce proof of efforts to obtain such insurance; and/or (viii) that the dog be humanely euthanized.

6. The hearing shall be held promptly within no less than five nor more than ten days after service of notice upon the owner or keeper of the dog. The hearing shall be informal and open to the public.
  7. After the hearing, the owner or keeper of the dog shall be notified in writing of the determination. If a determination is made that the dog is dangerous, the owner or keeper shall comply with the registration provisions of this section, stated below, in accordance with a time schedule established by the Animal Commission, but in no case more than thirty days subsequent to the date of determination. If the owner or keeper of the dog contests the determination, they may, within ten (10) days after an order issued under subsections B(1) to (5), inclusive, bring a petition in the district court within the judicial district in which the order relative to the dog was issued or where the dog is owned or kept, addressed to the justice of the court, praying that the order be reviewed by the court or a magistrate of the court. After notice to all parties, the magistrate shall, under Section 62C of Chapter 221, review the order of the hearing authority, hear the witnesses and affirm the order unless it shall appear that it was made without proper cause or in bad faith, in which case the order shall be reversed. A party shall have the right to request a de novo hearing on the complaint before a justice of the court.
  8. In the event that the Animal Commission has cause to believe that the dog in question is dangerous and may pose a threat of serious harm to human beings or other domestic animals, the Commission may seize and impound the dog pending the aforesaid hearing and appeal. The owner or keeper of the dog shall be liable to the City for the costs and expenses of keeping such dog.
- C. Determination that Dog Is Potentially Dangerous. Any Animal Control Officer or other agent of the Animal Commission may make a determination without a hearing that a dog is potentially dangerous, in accordance with the aforementioned definition of "potentially dangerous dog." Such a determination may be subject to the review of the full membership of the Animal Commission upon the petition of the owner or keeper of said dog or pursuant to M.G.L. c. 249, § 4.
- D. Registration Requirements. No dog deemed dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall be licensed by the City for any licensing period commencing 60 days after ordination after unless the owner or keeper of such vicious or potentially vicious dog shall meet the following requirements:
1. The owner or keeper of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall confine said dog inside his or her dwelling or inside a proper enclosure on their property. "Confined" shall mean securely confined indoors or confined outdoors in a securely enclosed and locked pen or dog run area upon the premises of the owner or keeper; provided further, that such pen or dog run shall have a secure roof and, if such enclosure has no floor secured to the sides thereof, the sides shall be embedded

into the ground for not less than 2 feet; provided further, that within the confines of such pen or dog run, a dog house or proper shelter from the elements shall be provided to protect the dog. It shall be unlawful for an owner or keeper of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog to permit said dog to be outside the proper enclosure or dwelling unless said dog is humanely muzzled and restrained by a substantial chain or leash and under the control of a responsible person. The muzzle shall be made in a manner that will not cause injury to the dog or interfere with its vision or respiration but shall prevent it from biting any person or animal;

2. The owner or keeper of a dangerous dog shall, at their own expense, have the dog microchipped for identification purposes and licensing number assigned to such dog;
3. The owner or keeper of a dangerous dog shall present to the Animal Commission proof that the owner or keeper has procured liability insurance in the amount of at least one hundred thousand dollars, covering any damage or injury which may be caused by such dangerous dog, whether intentional or unintentional, during the twelve month period for which licensing is sought, which policy shall contain a provision requiring the City to be named as an additional insured for the sole purpose of the Animal Commission to be notified by the insurance company of any cancellation, termination or expiration of the liability insurance policy, or proof that reasonable efforts were made to obtain such insurance if a policy has not been issued;
4. The owner or keeper of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall display a sign or signs on their premises facing out from all sides warning that there is such a dog on the premises. Said sign shall be visible and capable of being read from any adjacent public way or within 20 feet of its placement. In addition, the owner shall conspicuously display a sign with a symbol warning those who cannot read of the presence of a dangerous dog;
5. The owner or keeper of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall sign statements attesting that:
  - a. In the case of a dangerous dog, the owner or keeper of said dog shall maintain and not voluntarily cancel the liability insurance required by this section during the twelve month period for which licensing is sought, unless the owner or keeper shall cease to own or keep the dangerous dog prior to expiration of such license,
  - b. The owner or keeper shall, on or prior to the effective date of such license for which application is being made, have an enclosure for the dangerous or potentially dangerous dog on the property where said dog will be kept or maintained,
  - c. The owner or keeper shall notify the Animal Commission within twenty-four hours if a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog is on the loose, is unconfined, has attacked another animal or has attacked a human being, or has died or has been sold or given away. If the dangerous or potentially dangerous dog has been sold or given away, the owner or keeper shall also

provide the Animal Commission with the name, address and telephone number of the new owner of said dog;

6. The Animal Commission is empowered to make whatever inquiry is deemed necessary to ensure compliance with the provisions of this section, and any agent of the Commission is empowered to seize and impound any dangerous or potentially dangerous dog whose owner or keeper fails to comply with the provisions of this chapter. In the event that the owner or keeper of the dog refuses to surrender the animal to the Commission, the Commission Director may request a police officer to obtain a search warrant and to seize the dog upon execution of the warrant;
7. The provisions of this section shall not apply to K-9 or other dogs owned by any police department or any law enforcement officer which are used in the performance of police work;
8. The owner or keeper of a dangerous dog shall pay, in addition to the standard dog license fee, a sum of ten dollars for each dangerous dog registered;

E. Penalties for Violation

1. a. Any dangerous or potentially dangerous dog which does not have a valid license in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, or  
b. In the case of a dangerous dog, whose owner or keeper does not secure the liability insurance coverage required in accordance with this section, or has not provided proof that reasonable efforts were made to obtain such insurance if a policy has not been issued, or  
c. Any dangerous or potentially dangerous dog which shall be outside of the dwelling of the owner or keeper or outside of an enclosure and unmuzzled and/or otherwise unrestrained shall be confiscated by the Animal Commission and destroyed in an expeditious and humane manner after the expiration of a ten day waiting period exclusive of Sundays and holidays. In addition, the owner or keeper shall pay a one hundred fifty dollar fine.
2. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 140, § § 157 and 173A, if any dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall, when unprovoked, kill, wound or worry or assist in killing or wounding any domestic animal, the owner or keeper of said dog shall pay, for a first offense, a five hundred dollar fine and the Animal Commission is empowered to confiscate and, after the expiration of a seven day waiting period, shall destroy said dog. For a second or each subsequent violation the owner or keeper of said dog shall pay a fine of one thousand dollars.
3. If any dangerous or potentially dangerous dog shall, when unprovoked, attack, assault, wound, bite or otherwise injure or kill a human being, the owner or keeper shall pay a five hundred dollar fine and the Animal Commission is empowered to confiscate and, after the expiration of a seven day waiting period, shall destroy said dog. For each and any subsequent violation, said owner or keeper shall pay a fine of one thousand dollars.

4. No person shall be charged under subsections 1, 2 or 3 above unless the dog, prior to the offense alleged, shall have been declared dangerous or potentially dangerous pursuant to the provisions of this section.
  5. The Animal Commission shall provide notice of the impoundment and/or pending destruction of a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog to the registered owner or keeper of said dog. Service of notice shall be made by hand delivery or certified mail within five days next following the date of impoundment.
  6. If the owner or keeper of a dog impounded for an alleged violation of this section shall believe that there has not been a violation of this section, such owner or keeper may petition a court of competent jurisdiction praying that the dog not be destroyed. The impounded dog shall not be destroyed pending resolution of such owner's or keeper's petition. The dog shall remain impounded pending a hearing on the petition and any subsequent appeal.
  7. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 140, § 157(c), the Hearing Authority shall neither issue an order directing that a dog deemed dangerous shall be removed from the city, nor regulate dogs in a manner that is specific to breed.
- F. The owner or keeper of any dangerous dog or potentially dangerous dog who fails to comply with the requirements set forth in Section D above, and pursuant to M.G.L. c. 140, § 157A, shall be subject to:
1. A fine of \$500 for the first offense;
  2. A fine of \$1,000 for any subsequent offense; and
  3. All provisions set forth in M.G.L. c. 140, § 157(h).
- G. Each day there exists a violation of any of the provisions of this Ordinance, as determined by the Enforcing Authority, shall constitute and be punishable as a separate offense.
- H. The Director of the Animal Commission or their designee shall have the power and authority to enforce the provisions of this chapter and perform all the duties imposed by the provisions of this chapter. All fines and penalties assessed and collected under this chapter may be enforced by the issuance of non-criminal tickets pursuant to G.L. c. 40, § 21D, or as otherwise authorized by law