



# FINANCE COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

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**Tuesday, May 18, 2021**

**10:00 AM**

**Sullivan Chamber**

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**The Finance Committee will hold a public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2022 budget**

Cambridge Health Alliance Public Works Water Community Development Historical Commission Peace Commission / PRAB	Cable TV Debt Service Library Human Services Women's Commission Human Rights Commission	Veterans' Services MWRA Cherry Sheet City Overview Section Financial Summaries Section Revenue Section Public Investment Section
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**CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE**

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE, CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MAY 18, 2021

10:00 AM, SULLIVAN CHAMBER

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** If you're joining us, we're taking a preliminary break, uh, and we'll be starting the meeting in a moment.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** That is resolved. I will now go to the roll.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Present

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Present

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Present

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Present

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Present

**Present-7, Absent-2. Quorum established.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. At this moment, nine departments have been pulled for discussion. Uh, before that, um, Madam Co-Chair, did you want an introductory comment?

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Just briefly, Mr. Chair, and thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** First of all, Mr. Chair, I want to commend you on your work chairing these proceedings this year. You've been doing exemplary job. It's been very hard, and I just want to acknowledge my colleagues.

You know, although COVID appears to be loosening its grip on us, we still have a very long way to go. Tensions are high, people are tired, and I just want to commend my colleagues who are staying the course to being as amicable as possible, even though these times are very hard.

As we look across the state in the country, cities and towns are struggling to pull themselves out of, uh, the devastation of COVID, and we are not there. Are we in an extraordinary good place fiscally?

I would say we are better than most. And so, with that in mind, we look at this budget, and we look at the work that's gone into preparing this budget. I also just think it's important that we acknowledge the staff that work very hard to put this together.

With--under the cloud of, again, this pandemic, uh, they started working on this a good six to eight months ago

to bring us a balanced budget that have some, um, programming that is continuing, programming that is new, while still helping our black and brown community, our business community, our children and their families, our elders, and I could just go down the laundry list.

I just say that to say that I, I do, uh, appreciate the efforts that everybody, uh, put into this. I also appreciate and acknowledge the passions that come forward through, uh, our deliberations and debates.

And I just caution us, particularly after coming off a meeting that ended, I feel like, five minutes ago, 11 o'clock last night, that as we debate, we are courteous, we are kind, and we are thoughtful, because we are all ruling in the same direction, which is trying to make sure that the city is in a good place for our citizens. Thank you, Mr. Chair, I yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Madam Co-Chair, well said all around. So, I'm going to list, um, the nine departments that have been pulled, and offer my colleagues a chance to review others if they so wish.

As of this morning, the following department have been pulled; Cambridge Health Alliance, Public Works, Community

Development, Cable TV, Library, Human Services, Financial Summary Section, Public Investment Section.

Dear council members, uh, do you wish to pull any other departments? Actually, Mr. Clerk, has anybody raised their hands? I don't--

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** No one has raised their hands.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. So, we are going to stay with those nine. Yes, Madam.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If we are not going to be pulling any other departments, then I would respectfully ask that we move the other departments favorably to the City Council.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you very much. All those in favor?

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that vote, and I'm just going to--for the record, I'm going to list the, the departments that we are, um, or that the council is, uh, approving. The Water Department, the Historical Commission-

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**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** The Water Department?

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** The Peace Commission.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** That is that we're moving forward.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Oh, thank you.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** They're moving forward to the full City Council.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Thank you.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Debt Service, Women's Commission, Human Rights Commission, Veteran Service, MWRA, Cherry Sheet, and City Overview Section. On that motion,

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-7, No-0, Absent-2. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. So, the first department, that will be discussing is the Cambridge

Health Alliance, and we welcome--I apologize, we're going to go to public comment first. Mr. Clerk and Ms. Stephan, the first speaker is Jim Roosevelt. Welcome, Mr. Roosevelt. You have three minutes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Jim Roosevelt, 14 Meadow Way, Library Board. Jim spoke about the library budget and the hours that branch libraries are open. He highlighted on how ten years ago they reduced the hours of the branch libraries such that none of them operated more than four days a week due to the financial limitations. He spoke on the fact that the branch libraries serve neighborhoods in more accessible way than other cities.

He urged the City Council to maintain the manager's request to fund returning the branches to the hours during the week, with the busier branches having some Saturday hours, and even having an evening service as well. He appreciated the City Council's consideration and the manager's support of the expansion of hours.

Ms. Nancy Woods, 4 Hastings Square, Trustee of Public Library. Nancy spoke on 2022 budget for public library. She thanked the City Council and the City Administration that



has been 24/7 available during the pandemic.

She highlighted that the library pivoted several times to figure out how to provide virtual programming, contactless pickup within the confines of COVID. She seconded Jim Roosevelt's comments and pointed out that the library does provide and can provide a parent of little kids, that the weekend and after school hours and evening hours are the time to be there. She thanked the City Council for the support over the years.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, and thank you for being a trustee. So that appears to be all people who have called in. And, um, we will wait till 10:30 to close public comment. We've been asked to, uh, slightly reorder the list of, uh, departments to begin with Cable TV, and then we will go to Cambridge Health Alliance.

So, Cable TV will be first, and the first question that was submitted is by Councillor Nolan. Councillor Nolan, please present your question.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you, Chair McGovern. Thanks to everybody's who's working on this, we worked pretty late last night, glad to see us here to discuss this budget.

My question about, um, the Cable TV came in response to a meeting convened by the Council, um, Committee on Neighborhood and Long-term Planning with neighborhood groups who had--who are working valiantly to try to do more outreach into their neighborhoods.

And a couple of the groups have benefited from CCTV and Cable TV being able to broadcast their meetings, which enables people who have, otherwise, childcare responsibilities, or dinner, or just mobility, and can't come to a meeting to be able to participate in a way that was not possible before the pandemic.

And one of the questions that was raised at that meeting was whether that could be extended to more groups. So, the context of this budget, I recognize the, the staff is already doing, kind of working overtime and doing so much for the community, and I wondered if this was an opportunity for us to think about better supporting the neighborhood groups to encourage them to continue their outreach efforts by including a sense that we might be able to provide additional support to, um, Cable TV in order to provide this, uh, vital community service.

**DIRECTOR CALVIN LINDSAY, JR.:** Through the Chair to

Councillor Nolan, thanks so much for your question. Um, we spent, um, I was talking with my team last night, and we spent a little bit of time, um, going over your question.

I think that we certainly can, um, provide some assistance to some of these outside groups. I would--the, the way I think would be best would be for us to, um, offer some assistance on the presentation end. What I, I don't want to become a part of the production for a lot of these meetings.

We just don't have the personnel to do that, um, but we can certainly start to work on a structure where we can help being on the presentation arm, um, for a lot of these groups, I do think it's a good idea to kind of increase the, the voices, uh, that are out there. So, we can certainly--we will certainly work on that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes. And thank you so much. And I apologize if this question came to you, uh, somewhat late, um, in the, at least the budget process. I know you are doing so much. Again, I appreciate all of your colleagues are working hard.

This is yet another way that I hope that we can move

forward, and, and I would not expect, just so you know, your group to do anything other than help this groups be able to present their meetings and in a way that allow more people to access them.

And again, I don't know how to do that, and I, I'm not sure if it involves any kind of additional budget allocation right now, but I wanted to put it on the table so that if you do need more support, that we're aware of it and we can move forward in the future with trying to, um, to, to help again support this initiative.

That, that, that was my question, uh, Chair Carlone, and I don't know if there's any, any other response to that. Just I really appreciate the, um, the willingness to engage. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Mr. Lindsay, did you want to add something?

**DIRECTOR CALVIN LINDSAY, JR.:** No. I'm all set, sir. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Councillors, are there any additional comments or questions? No. hands are raised. Thank you. So, uh, we'd like to move this budget forward with a favorable recommendation, Mr. Clerk.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-7, No-0, Absent-2. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** The next department is the Cambridge Health Alliance. Um, and the first question submitted is by Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Through you, um, thanks to Cambridge Health Alliance, uh, folks for being at the meeting today. Um, it's been great to see the partnership between the city and the CHA over the past year through the pandemic.

I know a lot of our residents, uh, including myself, have, uh, gone to CHA for, for COVID tests, I've depended

on it for, for care. It's been more important than ever this year. Um, I wanted to ask, um, you know, the nurses and healthcare staff at CHA, in particular, have done so much for Cambridge, uh, during the pandemic, um, you know, what are we doing to ensure they have safe staffing, fair compensation, uh, and benefits?

**CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE CEO ASSAAD SAYAH:** Good morning. My name is Assaad Sayah. I'm, uh, the CEO for the Cambridge Health Alliance and the Commissioner of Public Health for the City. And, um, thank you, Mr. Chair, uh, thank you, Madam Co-chair, and to the councillors, and thank you, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, for asking the question.

I can, um, uh, assure you that our nurses are absolutely important for us and they are absolutely critical to the work that we do every day. Uh, and we just, um, finished celebrating Nurses Week, uh, where the whole organization's celebrating the tremendous work that our nurses do every day, uh, not only during Nurses Week, uh, with many activities and recognition and celebrations to our nurses.

Through a lot of work, uh, we really have--we continue

to provide, uh, the best possible work environment for workforce, particularly our nurses. I can tell you we've been in two years, uh, in negotiation with the M&A, the nurses union that represent our nurses, and that negotiation has progressed to a point where, uh, you know, I think, both the organization and the union are very close.

Uh, and there are a couple of important pieces that we need to resolve to make sure that, uh, the, the contract is fair and equitable across the board, both to the nurses and also to the organization, and the rest of the workforce, because we do have 14 other unions and non-unionized, uh, employees within the organization.

I can tell you the organization has been negotiating in good faith across the board, uh, and our staffing is excellent. It actually meets and exceed, uh, any metric that one was put throughout in Massachusetts or outside Massachusetts, and, and our nurses would attest to that.

Um, there's a couple of pieces that are important that we are resolving in, in the negotiation, and we are--uh, as I said, our nurses are absolutely critical to the work that we do. Thanks for question.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you. That's, um, helpful. I appreciate the, the response. And know that there's--we can't get, you know, too deep into to contract, uh, discussions in a public session, so, so I won't push it, but we'll just say that, um, you know, I think in addition to, to the words and the public celebrations of nurses, which I'm sure they appreciate workers, appreciate being celebrated at their, their contracts, and that's not something that myself and others on the council are paying a lot of attention to. Um, so thank you again for, for being here, for answering. And I'll yield back.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Does any other councillor wish to take up this subject? Councillor Zondervan?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Yes, Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to follow on to my colleague's question, does the department have sufficient funds in the budget to, to compensate the, the nurses and staff at, at the levels that are being negotiated?



**CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE CEO ASSAAD SAYAH:** Well, thank you for your question, Councillor Zondervan. The funding from the City is to the Department of Public Health, and a small proportion of our nurses serve at the Department of Public Health, and, and that, you know, a lot of them are part of the union in negotiation, etc.

Um, I, I think the two questions are a bit, uh, different--separate, uh, because, uh, obviously the, the negotiation for the nurses' union is not only related to the funding, but also is related to the rest of the--of the contract, related to all kind of things, uh, benefits, etc.

Um, I, I, I would say that historically, the city has been, uh, very supportive of the work that we do in, in partnership, and supportive of the work that we provide in partnership with the city to fund the Department of Public Health, and serve the citizenship of the City of Cambridge.

I think we can all recognize, uh, that Cambridge has been a leader in many ways, particularly in Public Health, to the surrounding communities, uh, and the work that's been done historically through a department that's relatively small, who's nationally recognized over the years, uh, has been tremendous and heroic. So, thank you

for the question.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Any other councillor wish to take this subject up? All right, no hands are up. So, the next person with the--Councillor Nolan, uh, just got in there with her hand up. Councillor Nolan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Actually, it was just generally about, uh, relations with the school department and others, not about this particular subject.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So, you're, uh, stepping back from your question?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** All right. Thank you for being courteous. Um, Doctor, I have the next question. And I noticed in the write-up, um, really a major goal of the Health Alliance is based on assessment findings, community stakeholders and the Health Department staff identified three priorities for the City's Community Health Improvement Plan.

And, uh, I'm not expecting you to talk for hours on this, but you list, um, what was identified, community and social resilience, and then maybe some more obvious ones, healthy eating, and active living, and mental health with the cross-cutting theme of health equity.

I have been aware of the mental health facility and your efforts, but I'd like you just to briefly talk about how you deal with community and social resilience.

**CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER CLAUDE JACOB:** Good Morning. Through the Chair--

**CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE CEO ASSAAD SAYAH:** I'm sorry. I'm on mute. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for asking the question. I would like to ask, uh, Claude to really respond. Go ahead, please.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Mr. Jacobs, I wasn't sure who to direct it to. Mr. Jacob?

**CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER CLAUDE JACOB:** Good morning. Through you, uh, I'd like to thank the, uh, council for the opportunity, uh, to provide this quick update. Uh, just a gentle reminder, while it's been a long year with COVID for the last 15 or 16 months, uh, we are one of three local health departments in the Commonwealth

of Massachusetts who have earned this national designation as, uh, an accredited health department, as Dr. Sayah already mentioned.

So, with that, there are three priority areas that we've identified, uh, over the course of the past year, uh, regarding community and social resilience, healthy eating, active living, and mental health.

Uh, so just know that what we have embedded in our budget as a support for staff and for capacity building efforts in community, for example, around our community and social resilience, it's really about our connectedness and engagement of partners across the city.

We are, uh, working with the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, for example, about establishing these neighborhood resilience hubs, just making sure that we have the support available so that whether it's extreme, whether advanced, where activities happening in the fabric of the neighborhoods that we have an added support.

We do depend on our partnership with the Community Development Department, with Human services, with the schools, with the Police Department. So just know that this is a national framework, but by consensus, we identify

these three priority areas, um, and you're speaking to community and social resilience.

I would also remind the council that we are, uh, one of a few, uh, cities participating in a national demonstration project called Resilience Catalyst in Public Health. Uh, we are honored to be invited by our partners at George Washington University, the American Public Health Association, as well as the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

And one by-product that you may recognize through COVID, uh, is our Neighborhood Ambassador program, so the Cambridge Community Corps. So, this is by design, it anchors to the art and the science of our work. So, I just wanted to use that one example. So, all this is embedded in our budget.

Uh, and the other priority area is having to do with healthy eating and active living. What we've seen through COVID is the exacerbation of food insecurity, for example. So, we provide mini-grants to support our partners, uh, especially the area of food pantries.

Um, and May is Mental Health Awareness Month, so we try to do as much as we can to demonstrate the linkages to

services, but also anchoring to the, to the, um, resources at, uh, Cambridge Health Alliance.

Um, so I'll just stop there to say that, uh, it's embedded in our budget, it's really anchored to supporting staff, but also building capacity and community with, uh, some mini-grants that we make available to partners.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you for that response. Do any other councillors wish to take up that question? No hands are up, um, unless --

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, Mr. Manager.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** Can I just say one thing? I thank Claude every Monday for all the assistance he's given, but I can tell you we would not be in the position we're in during this pandemic if it was not for Dr. Sayah's assistance.

He has been an incredible friend, partner, advisor to me during this whole process, and just I want to publicly thank him for all he's done in all his leadership, uh, weekly dearly, 24 hours. And I just wanted to mention that because we talked about Claude, but Assaad has been an incredible partner in all of this, more behind the scenes,

that's why I just wanted to give--make that statement.

Thank you.

**CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE CEO ASSAAD SAYAH:** Thank you, Mr. Manager.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, thank you all. And Doctor, I don't know if you know, but the manager gave us your home cell number and, uh, so we thank you for all you do. Um, Mr. Clerk, I move that we accept, uh, the budget and approve it with a favorable recommendation.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** And just to be clear for the record, the, the motion will be to refer the Cambridge Health Alliance budget to the full City council with a favorable recommendation. Does that sound right, Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-7, No-0, Absent-2. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** The next department that is being pulled is the Public Works Department. And it appears that I have the first question, but I'll go last. Councillor Nolan, uh, you have the first question under Public Works, parks, and planting.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Right. One of the first questions, which was pretty, uh, short and sweet, we know we have a huge commitment to, um, replace and try to claw back some of the, um, 18% or 20% of true canopy that's lost.

So, the real question was, and I believe another councillor asked this as well, but my first question was, how are we going to get this done? I know in the budget it said that last year we planted 700 trees; this year, t's supposed to be 947.

I think implied in that, but it was not called directly out, and we've talked about it a number of meetings is not only the planting, but ensuring that they live. I know I have a tree in front of my house, it's the



third one, it's finally flowering, and, and going to be there.

But I know that the city had to come back twice to replant, and, and obviously, the more we can do to both make sure we're getting all those trees planted, but that they survived. That's the first question in a nutshell.

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** Through you, Mr. Chair. Councillor, before I respond to your question, perhaps I should just introduce the other members of the Department of Public Works staff who are with me this morning.

Um, Ellen Katz. Um, Ellen is our Fiscal Director, and she's also in charge of, of our Energy programs. Um, Kathy Watkins. You know, Kathy, Kathy's a City Engineer Assistant Commissioner for Engineering at Public Works. Rebecca Fuentes. Rebecca is our Assistant Commissioner for, um, Planning and Administration, and then John Narden. John's the Deputy Commissioner at Public Works.

Um, to your question, Councillor Nolan, um, I think what we've set ourselves is an extremely ambitious, um, target in terms of restoring, um, the canopy within back to a 30% of the overall, um, area of the city within the next,

um, 30, 40 years.

Um, with regard to trees in the public right of way and in public spaces, you know, I think it's, um, our ultimate expectation is that we will increase the number of trees that we're planting in the public right of way and in public parks and public spaces to about 1,200, 1,300 a year over the next couple of years.

Um, to that end, um, you know, we've increased our, um, our--the number of professional staff in our forestry division. We have a new superintendent of, uh, forestry, Andrew. Andrew, you've met Andrew, um, over the last number of months as we talked about the, um, uh, Tree protection Ordinance. And we also have a new assistant, um, arborist, um, um, Abby Bentley.

And, um, and we've just recently hired, um, a supervising landscape architect in our engineering division. Um, and so--and we're also in the process of hiring a planting crew, uh, three people in our operations division through, um, working with Andrew. So, I think in the short term, we expect that through, um, a variety of programs, together with contracts, we'll be able to actually plant the trees.

And I think even as, as things stand, I think we've a pretty sophisticated program in place in terms of maintaining those trees. You know, soon after they're planted, um, there's, um, a compost tea, um, uh, program that, um, our own forces, um, uh, use on newly planted trees. We, um, have our contractors water the trees for the first three years of their lives, and that's on a weekly basis.

And this should all be, um--our expectation is over the next number of months that this will become more public in terms of our choreograph program where we record all of this information should be public facing in the near future. I can't give you the details as to how much of that will be public, but that's the expectation. And so, there's a significant ambition in terms of that, which we do as a department.

I think the bigger challenge ultimately is to try and reverse what's happening on private property. Uh, and, and I think, um, that which is provided for in the Tree Protection Ordinance, um, which I expect we'll be discussing in the next couple of weeks. Um, what we're trying to do there is disincentivize people removing trees

by having a mitigation requirement that is not insignificant, but at, at the same time, um, if indeed someone is compelled to remove a tree, they're incentivized tree plant as well.

And so that's one part of it. I think we also expect to have a friends group, um, established in the near future. At, at the moment at Public Works, we're working on, um, a Cambridge Urban Forest France, um, publication. And we expect to have a much more significant outreach and engagement program, um, happen over the next year, again, with perhaps with the diminishing issues associated with COVID that will allow us better engage with the community in that regard.

I think, you know, the other part of this is, uh, uh, and we need to continue to work with people about planting in the--encouraging people to plant in their back gardens, plant in, in, um, at the back of silo, and so on. I think that's something that, um, we want to begin to engage with the community over as one of the near--in the near future. You know, beyond that, uh, and Kathy can speak to some of the work that we're doing in our park projects.

We have in the Triangle Park, and I think we have this

in our--in our budget, an image of, um, what's going to happen at the intersection of Binney Street and Land Boulevard, where we expect in a--in a particular park to plant 400 trees as that micro forest in that area. And so, we're, we're looking for all sorts of opportunities to further publicize, uh, what we expect to do, um, with tree planting and tree care in the city.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. I appreciate that. I'm happy to stand ready to try to get the word out, and I think adopting would be fine. I also have a couple of photos from a tree in Somerville I took that I will pass on to you about what they're doing in multiple languages about trying to get trees adopted so we can build on best practice. On, on that question, I'm set, Chair Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Um, before we move on to other questions, I'd like to move that we close public comment, Mr. Clerk.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-7, No-0, Absent-2. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, Councillor Nolan, you had another question? Did you want to bring that up?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Uh, I, I would, unless there's other--I'm not sure how you're doing this, but I'm happy to do this, and it's another question. I'm, I'm sure having seen the unbelievable work and crushed in nature of the team and understanding the, the nature of the challenges being changed during my recent tour of DPW.

The question, um, which I can read is that the department has taken on much of the solid waste changes. And I will say this is an area that the city has really proven and met our goals and really been able to make a significant dent in changing the nature of our solid waste, meaning that we really are separating it out.

And today, I, for the first time, put out my compost,

first time in however long that is, instead of schlepping it over to Danny Heat Park because it will be kept up separately. And so, the question is the--and the additional work related to all the various times that, um, the Traffic Department has, has done certain streets. I know DPW has to go out and work on that.

There's also a number of ways in which that collection has changed the nature of equipment, etc. Do we need additional training? Do you need additional training or support for the staff with all these changes coming in, the new types of equipment and the kind of different approach to, um, moving forward with a Department of Public Works that is fundamentally different from where it was even, even 20 or 30 years ago?

And I know you've done a lot to try to do that training, and I just wanted to understand how that's going and whether there's more things that we could do to support you in those efforts of this very big, uh, culture shift.

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** Um, through you, Mr. Chair, uh, Councillor, um, I mean, your, your question is quite right in terms of the challenges we as a public--a Public Works Department are facing. Um, I, I think the

changes that have occurred here over the last 20 years are enormously significant.

Um, and I think we anticipate that the changes that we'll see over the next 20 years will be just as, if not more, significant in terms of the role of, of the Public Works, most particularly when it comes to our environmental programs. Um, you know, I think we have a professional staff that are highly competent. I think there are always training opportunities that, um, available for them to advance their skills.

Um, I think similarly, with regard to our labor force, I think it's really important to us that we provide incentives to our labor force for them to improve their skills, uh, and thereby improve the quality of the product that we provide the public.

Um, I'm happy if, if John or Rebecca want to speak a little bit more in detail in terms of some of the training programs that we provide for our employees and where we see ourselves going in terms of, um, training and, um, educational opportunities for people. Rebecca, do you want to speak to that for a second?

**REBECCA FUENTES:** Um, thank you, Owen. Um, I would



just like to, you know, echo the idea that a lot of change has happened in the past 20 years and that every single member of the Public Works team has been part of that. I think across the organization, um, we strive, whether, um, it's in our fleet maintenance, in our forestry program, in our engineering program, um, in our building and custodial services, to offer top of the line highest quality services.

And I think we're a leader in all those areas, and that all those crafts are really important. Um, I think as we look ahead, um, one of the things that we're, um, sort of most excited about, um, two things, um, that I'd point out is building on our comprehensive safety programs.

So, um, we've made a lot of progress in our employee safety programs in the past number of years. Um, and, you know, we're looking ahead now to, um, taking that to a new level with, um, working with a consultant with some of our existing budget resources in order to develop a more comprehensive plan to engage employees in an employee safety committee.

Um, and then I would also say that we look forward to participating in the working ideal process, and, um, sort

of getting--um, aligning our approach of looking for equity and excellence, um, so that our workforce reflects the diversity of the Cambridge community.

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** I, I think, uh, uh, beyond that, you know, in terms of just equipment and, um, um, infrastructure, uh, councillor, we've had this conversation already. I think there are fundamentals that we need to be conscious of in terms of improving, um, the services that we provide the community.

That means we just need to have, you know, property qualified, property trained staff, but we also need the infrastructure in place so that we can, you know, purchase the equipment, and so on. And so, you know, the, um, the Municipal Facilities Improvement Program, we have an investment that is occurring at Public Works at this point in time that will allow us invest in, uh, more advanced electric, um, equipment, and so on.

And so--and we also need to have mechanics who can repair and replace that, and we need to have drivers who are properly skilled. And so, these are programs that we have that, um, are ongoing at all. But John could speak a little bit more to what's happening in, let's say, in our

mechanics area at the moment.

**JOHN NARDEN:** Yeah. Uh, through you, Mr. Chair, I, I won't take a lot of time because I think Owen and Becky covered most of it, but, um, Councillor Nolan, you did--you were able to get a great tour, you see some of the equipment that we have.

As we get new equipment in, we, uh, constantly--you know, we'll bring that manufacturer in, they'll give us training on the equipment. Uh, but it's interesting that you bring it up. Just this morning we were talking about, we just got in a new, uh, plugin electric hybrid packers.

Uh, the second one will be on the road tomorrow, so we're excited about that. But with that electrification of vehicles, whether it's hybrid or straight electric, there's certainly training that our mechanics need to go through. So, we're setting up that training.

This morning, we were talking about getting that set up. Hopefully, within the next couple of months, as we electrify more and more of our fleet, they're going to need more training in that and we'll go and do that.

Um, I think some of the incentives we have in our union contracts has really allowed people to get a little

extra money and to get better education on this stuff. We brought in a great--a great staff of mechanics over the last number of years.

They've all been, you know, really pushing forward and using those incentives to go in from the ASE tests, um, and kind of expanding their horizons and expanding what we can do. So, we do--we, uh--Becky's great at finding us programs there where we can train people, whether it's safety, equipment, uh, or anything else. So that's all I get on that one.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Councillor, did you want to follow up on that or move on?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** No, those, those answered. I'm very excited about this. I want to make sure that you get the message we are behind this change and that there's some reference in the budget, and yet I know that there's even more going on and, and, and want to support that change because we can't do it quickly enough.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, so far, that is the longest answer to a question by the most people in, uh, the whole committee meeting, so a very thorough response. So, we have two other councillors who have raised their

hands. First, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, and he will be followed by Councillor Zondervan. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Um, I was going to ask about funding, uh, for sidewalk reconstruction. Um, it's been particularly, you know, evident in Cambridge that, uh, we've pretty narrow sidewalks and especially in our, our residential areas during the, the pandemic while, uh, residents, you know, while get off the sidewalk and walk into the, the road, uh, sometimes when, you know, folks were really trying to maintain social distancing.

Um, I think it was evident even before in, in winters. I remember, you know, running into people when, when snow is piled up and you do the dance of going off to the side as someone passes and, and you do that maybe two or three times on a block on some streets.

And so, I've just always been interested, um, uh, when we are reconstructing sidewalks, what we can do to, to widen them. Uh, and in--or in cases where it's not possible to just, uh, make it, uh, you know, more straightforward for, for things like snow clearing and, and how we're

thinking about that in terms of, you know, budgeting to, to build out sidewalks, uh, as part of the, the, uh, FY22 budget.

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** Um, through you, Mr. Chair. Um, Councillor, thank you for that question. Um, I, I think perhaps, I think Kathy's the best person to respond, um, to your question here. Um, obviously she's involved in the five-year capital plan, which is a significant focus on, uh, sidewalk works. So, Kathy, do you want to respond?

**KATHY WATKINS:** Sure. Through you, Mr. Chair. Um, so I would say there's a couple things that go on during the design of sidewalks. So, one of the biggest issues in terms of accessibility, and this also relates to snow clearance, are existing obstructions at large street trees and then also the detailed design of the driveways and then also the sidewalk width.

So, sort of picking off each of that, um, one of the things that we started doing about 10 years ago with street trees was instead of having this sort of endless debate between accessible sidewalks versus street trees, we sort of broadened the conversation and are starting to do more

and more curb extensions around those street trees so that you can get a fully accessible sidewalk and provide, you know, good growing conditions for those large trees.

Um, and so that allows you to get that sidewalk with you lose a parking space or two. The communities in general have been really supportive of maintaining that accessibility, and that provides a much easier sidewalk to maintain than if you have a one or two-foot narrow sidewalk that's extremely bumpy behind a street tree.

So, I'd say that's one of the things that we're looking at. Um, we also look really clear closely at driveways. So traditional driveways can be extremely steep, which can be very challenging for, um, people using any kind of mobility device, and also, um, really challenging during snow conditions. And so, we make those much more level and then have a defined ramp up.

And then in terms of width, the real focus has been particularly on narrow residential streets. If we have less than a six-foot sidewalk, it means that it can be challenging for pedestrians, and it also means that we can't plant new street trees because we need to make sure as we're planting new street trees that we're maintaining

an accessible sidewalk.

And so, we've had a number of locations where we've worked at, can we widen the sidewalk, you know, even six inches so that we can keep and again, accessible sidewalk and also get new street trees in. Um, so those are all the things that we work on, and I think they all make it easier to maintain sidewalks during, um, winter conditions.

And then also, you know, generally just improving the conditions of the sidewalk so that you don't have very uneven bricks that it can be very difficult to maintain for snow and ice clearance. So again, I know that snow clearance is always a challenge, but those are things that we work at and can incorporate during the reconstruction of sidewalks to make it better in the future for those streets.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you. That's, uh, helpful to know you're thinking about it. Um, one quick, uh, follow up, uh, question was that I, uh, imagine a piece that's, that's challenging when we talk about expanding sidewalks and it's, it's great to hear that we're looking at, you know, how can we even get six inches more?



But I imagine one of the challenges is that our, our streets are also not that wide and, and, you know, any expansion is taking away from something. Um, I'm always conscious of, of the fact of, you know, how much space parking is taking up, and as we're doing the plans as part of the, uh, the Cycling Safety Ordinance that's going to result in, in bike lanes and maybe take out parking or look at new configurations of parking, uh, that may allow more space there on the street with some of that parking coming out or moving.

Is that something we're, we're thinking about for sidewalk reconstruction as part of that and, you know, to expand the sidewalks and, and add trees, or are those sort of separate processes?

**KATHY WATKINS:** Uh, through you, Mr. Chair, those are absolutely things we're looking at. So, you know, we're all sort of, and I use this term fighting for space, but we're all, all working on the same goals, but, you know, there is limited space in the right of way.

Um, there are times where if we need to remove parking for, um, to provide, you know, protected bike lanes, it can provide additional space for street trees. There's other

times where we're more constrained. Um, and so that is definitely what we're looking at as part of these projects. And you know, Owen mentioned, um, the new supervising landscape architect position in the division, um, and that person is starting in early June.

And one of the reasons behind creating that position in the budget was to say that we need to make sure that we're looking at how we're implementing the recommendations of the Urban Forestry Master plan in our capital projects.

And so, part of having that person on board is to make sure that these kinds of discussions are sort of getting equal weight with all the other things that we're trying to accomplish in the public way. But, you know, oftentimes, these things can be very synergetic and actually can help compliment each other.

So, when we talk about, you know, what makes a street comfortable for walking and biking, having a healthy tree canopy is part of that. And so, I think everyone is really committed to making sure that that's really part of those discussions.

**COUNCILLOR SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Great. Thank you, and I'll yield back.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Uh, I did announce that Councillor Zondervan is next, however, on our list is Councillor McGovern, and he has joined us. So, uh, Councillor Zondervan, uh, I apologize. Just wait a moment and we'll let Councillor McGovern ask his question. Councillor McGovern.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you Mr. Chair. My apologies for being late. Um, question about the Urban Forestry Department. I see that, uh, there's an increase in salary and wages and just wondering, is that due to raises and benefits for existing staff, or are we increasing staff?

I think, you know, we are planting, we talked about 700 or so, uh, trees that we planted, but, um, you know, we often hear that we don't necessarily have the staff to help maintain those trees and, and, and help them survive. So, um, any, any money in the budget for increasing staff in that department?

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** Um, through you, Mr. Chair. Councillor, if you--if you look at page 5, 147 in the budget buck, um, you'll note that there was a significant increase in, uh, salaries and wages, uh,

between FY20 and FY21. Um, there's a smaller increase between FY21 and FY22.

The increase between FY21 and FY22 is primarily associated with just caller increases, um, health benefit increases, uh, and pension increases. However, the increase between FY20 and the FY21 was about \$340,000. And that accounts for an additional three labor positions that are being provided for, um, in the Urban Forestry division.

Um, you'll recall last year that we deferred the hiring of those people until after April of this year. And so, we're actually in the process at the moment of bringing these people on board. And these, these people will form a planting crew operating with the, um, Forestry division.

Again, um, going back to what Kathy just alluded to, we are in the process of bringing on a supervising landscape architect, and over the last four years, we've hired a superintendent of forestry, as well as an assistant, um, city arborist.

You know, one of the things that we've committed to as part of the Urban Forestry Master Plan is, is completing an annual report. And so, there's--undoubtedly, there are challenges ahead of us in terms of maintaining the urban

forest.

Um, and so as we begin to look at our annual reports, which will be public documents, we'll begin to reassess as to whether or not, you know, our, our resources are adequate to be able to properly manage, um, the urban forestry going forward.

I mean, I think we all accept it's a significant challenge, but you know, again, we want to be able to, um, measure and manage at the same time so that if indeed resources are required, we can request such if indeed that's what's necessary.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. McGOVERN:** Okay. All right. So those three--those three positions will, will be coming on. And then those--um, just a quick follow up, through you, Mr. Chair. Um, you know, obviously a landscape architect is, I think is, is great and is an important position.

I'm not--I don't--I don't know quite what's in that job description, but is that--my guess is that that person's not necessarily going out and watering the trees and doing some of the maintenance on the trees. So, it's not just the increase of positions, but it's the types of positions, right?

And so, um, you know, we just--so I just wanted to put that out there and, and, and, you know, who's doing the sort of, you know, the frontline work, for lack of a better term, of, um, you know, of making the actual sort of day-to-day maintenance and, and care. Right?

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** Absolutely, Councillor. And again, the three people that we're bringing on into our labor force, there are a planting crew who will also be watering and pruning those trees during the year.

And again, we have a crew of, um, I think it's maybe nine people in the department who are arborists who are also doing that type of work on a daily basis throughout the year as well. And so, like--and we also have contracts, uh, and contracts to both plant trees and to prune trees and to manage our urban forestry, uh, canopy as, uh, urban forest as well.

So, I think there are a lot of resources that are being brought to bear on, um, our urban forest at the moment. And again, we'll see where we're at in the next year or two in terms of making changes to what's been happening over the last 10 years.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Great. Thank you. Uh, my second question is --

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** One minute, Councillor. Are there any other comments by councillors on the first question of Councillor McGovern's? Okay, I have--Please, Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to my colleague for asking that question. I, I have a, a more general question along the same lines. So just, do we have enough, uh, resources in place to, to respond to the canopy crisis?

And that I'm thinking particularly, uh, in terms of both the capital, uh, expenditures of, of planting more trees, as well as, um, encouraging and supporting planting of trees on property. I know that with the adjustments we're making to the Tree Protection Ordinance, the hope is that we can use some of the funds, um, and, you know, some of the mitigation funds towards private tree protection.

But, you know, is that enough? Do we--do we anticipate that to cover those costs? Or do we need to try another ways to, to fund those activities?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Commissioner, please.

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** Through you, Mr. Chair, uh, Councillor, uh, you'll recall that we appropriated \$1.2 million last year toward, um, advancing the Urban Forestry Master Plan. Um, and, and given COVID, we didn't spend as much of that as we had expected to spend.

And so, um, our expectation is that will be spent during this financial year. We also have \$400,000 for tree planting in our operating budget. And again, I want to just recall that five, six years ago, we had \$25,000 in our operating budget.

Um, we had perhaps, you know, five or six people less in our Urban Forest Division. Um, and so there have been significant advances made in terms of, um, what's happening in terms of Urban Forestry at this point in time.

You know, I can't tell what the future holds in terms of, um, where we're going to be at, be it in terms of the, um, you know, the success or otherwise of the Tree Protection Ordinance and its amendments, uh, or indeed of our workforce.

I know that we have people in watering starting this-- starting yesterday morning, and we have order by bike in



turns. We have 10 of those each and every summer who are effectively ambassadors for the Urban Forestry Master Plan and do a wonderful job.

And so, there's just an enormous number of different resources being applied toward this program at the moment, but I can't necessarily forecast as to whether it's enough, it's more than enough, um, until we begin to see what happens over the next couple of years.

And, and again, our expectation is that we'll come back to City Council if either the Tree Protection Ordinance needs to change, we need more resources, or whether or not, we're actually being successful.

And again, our expectation is that there'll be a flyover done in the next year, we'll get a better sense as to where the canopy is. At this point in time, I don't expect you're going to see any significant change in that canopy given the fact that it takes a long time to grow trees, but, but, um, we expect to monitor in pretty significant detail where we're going in terms of the urban forest, uh, in near future.

And we're also looking at different metrics as well, be it in terms of just looking at, um, we've been measuring

all of the small trees that we've planted over the last five or six years. We're looking at their DBH on an annual basis.

And again, we want to begin to look at those metrics and see how successful our new programs are in terms of, um, maintaining a healthy forest as well.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Um, I believe we're going to go on to Councillor McGovern's second question. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. McGOVERN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, so I know this sort of crosses over a little bit into, uh, inspection services, which was, um, discussed last week, but, um, I want to talk a little bit about rat management.

Um, seemingly like, uh, I submitted this question and, um, literally within like an hour later, I was looking out my window in, in my neighbor's backyard during the day was a rat the size of a small dog. I swear to God, I didn't know--I didn't even know it was a rat at first.

It was enormous, just kind of sitting there on the grass, enjoying itself. Um, and you know, I know we--I know we're doing the new barrels, um, which is great, but I just

sort of wanted to put out there, I just, I really think we need a stronger plan and more of an emphasis, um, on this issue.

It's not just a quality-of-life issue, but it's a public health issue. Um, I know other communities are really, maybe we do--we might do things that other communities do and we might do more. Other communities might be better at branding.

Um, you know, I know Somerville has a rat czar, you know, that's the job is dealing with rats. Um, but what, what funding, if anything in the--is in your department in the budget to really be more aggressive in dealing with this issue?

I mean, it's not--I mean, people are seeing them, like I said, during the day, there seems to be no fear of of people. Um, it's just becoming a, a huge issue in many of our neighborhoods. Um, I'd just like you to talk about that for a second.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** Oh, again, I just jump in and then I'll turn it back to Owen. So, Councillor, you're absolutely right. We're losing the war against rats. Last year, we put in a much stronger effort in trying to

win that war.

It's not from a lack of effort from Inspection or Public Works. They've done everything possible. It's just been a difficult battle. Uh, Dan Rivero from my office is actually, and Matt Nelson, have also joined the team because they felt like manager's office needed to get involved in this because it, it is a serious situation.

Uh, we, we are funding the barrels, which I think is an important initiative. Uh, we've not officially announced this, but I think Dan can give a preview that we do have another initiative coming, uh, City Solicitor is reviewing it.

But I would say in talking to some us, some of all those many things well, and I think Joe has really done a good job on addressing a rat concern in a couple areas that we--one was the barrel and this is now another initiative that Cambridge has in place.

So maybe Dan can briefly talk about where we're going with that. It's still unofficial, we got to confirm that we can do anything. But it's exciting because I think it will help also. And then we can turn it back to Owen and I know, uh, they've got a strong team working with Inspection.

And we've actually put a team now, a logic group that meets regularly to figure out how to address this. So, I know Dan's on the line from my office who's been a point person, especially in terms of getting information out.

Uh, so Dan, don't say too much because I don't want to get in trouble with Nancy, but let's give enough information out there so we can at least give people a word of what, what we're thinking, please.

**DAN RIVERO:** Sure. Thank you. I'll, uh, I'll just briefly give a little a high level, uh, overview. So, you know, we do have the rodent task force that meets pretty regularly, which encompasses, you know, the Manager's Office, Inspectional Services, Public Works.

Um, we've recently brought in members from MIT and Harvard. Um, we also have the Housing Authority, and um, uh, Cambridge Public Health, and Cambridge Public Schools. So, we all meet and sort of discuss rodent issues and, and hotspots around the city.

One of the things that we've kicked around for a while is the idea of offering, uh, baiting on private property, uh, as a service that the city would provide. Somerville seems to have had some success with their programs. So,

we've been in discussions with Somerville about modeling something similar here.

And, you know, I don't want to give too much away, but we are in the process of figuring out how exactly that would work in Cambridge and what we could offer residents, uh, for a little bit of relief and being able to go on those private properties through some sort of outside contractor that the city would hire, Inspectional Services would manage, um, so that we would go and do an inspection, give people some sort of, you know, tips that they, uh, could use, you know, make sure there's not harborage on your property that you're storing your trash properly, using one of the new barrels once they come out, participating in the compost program to make sure your food is locked up at the curb, things like that.

Um, and then we would be able to offer that private baiting service, uh, to help mitigate rodent activity on people's properties, because we know that people are having issues. Sometimes it's a neighbor's property that is causing the problem on your property and you're doing everything that you can, um, so just trying to offer a, a little bit more. So, we hope to have some more information

to share in the coming weeks on that.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** And obviously, we don't go on public property, we don't provide that service, but I think this, in talking to the City solicitor is a public health issue, which will give us some freedom to extend what we can do. So that is one of the umbrellas that we're going to try to do this under, I think we can.

So, I just wanted to get that out there because we met on this, this week to, to address some of the concerns. I know East Cambridge and Cambridge Port have, have really seen, it seems to us the most update. So, I'll turn it back to Owen, who I know has put a lot of effort into this as well.

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** Through you, Mr. Chair, I, I don't have that much more to offer other than the fact that, you know, we work, uh, pretty intensely with, um, our Inspectional Services Department who provide really wonderful, wonderful service in this regard.

They have a number of people there who speak with residents on a fairly constant basis, who go out and do inspections. And again, we assist them in terms of, um, adding baiting, uh, where that's necessary, and then I then

associate all of our construction projects.

We have a very proactive program that's in place and, um, where we bait, monitor, bait, monitor, bait, monitor, uh, and we can sort of upscale or downscale in terms of the amount of baiting that happens on that base. I don't know if John, if you want to speak beyond what I've said in that regard.

**JOHN NARDEN:** Yeah, thanks, Owen. Through you, Mr. Chair, just a couple of quick points. I mean, first off, I don't want to downplay, um, the fact that we are going to be rolling out standardized trash barrels. I mean, it, it makes a significant, uh, difference when it comes to rodent population.

So, you know, just this week, it's great, we got our compost program back up and running. We encourage people to really participate in that compost program because that gets all of your food waste out of the trash that rats are typically in, into a small and more manageable barrel that's typically, you know, a tight-fitting, not locked lid, but pretty, pretty close to a locked lid.

Um, you know, we are continuing to roll out our big belly program. So, on public spaces, you know, the big



bellies we found are as rodent resistant as you can get. Uh, and the manager has made a big commitment over that. We're going to be installing \$300,000 worth of, of big bellies just on Cambridge Street alone and we continue to put them in the squares.

But then the standardized barrel, uh, is, again, it's a, it's a great effort from the city to make sure people have the space to put trash in and to do it right. My other point is just this, and it--and this goes with any of the rodent control measures we take. This is a community effort. It can't just be about the city. So, it's great if we can go on private property.

If you look at Somerville's program, you know, I think they stress the fact that they have to work with those property owners to get their properties cleaned up, to get food sources removed, to get water sources removed, to get hybrid removed before the city can even come in and start to help.

Uh, so those are things to keep in mind. I think, uh, Dan's been great about getting the rodent task force back together. We had, uh, a lot of momentum right before COVID happened where we were going out to community groups and we

were meeting with them.

Uh, I think we'll be able to start that up hopefully again soon so we can get that word out that the city is here to help, we want to help, but it's a community effort.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. McGOVERN:** Okay. Um, thank you. And I'll, um--you know, I have some other thoughts and, and questions that aren't necessarily tied to the budget, so I'll talk to you guys at another--at another time because I think it's a--it's a two-phase, you know.

There's the prevention, which is buying these barrels or whatnot, but when you look at how quickly rats reproduce and everything, I mean, it's a constant--it's a constant fight, and I think we need to do more around--be more creative around some of the, um, I hate to say it, but some of the, you know, dealing with the rat barrels and, you know, looking at ways to be more aggressive in that area.

It can't just be, take care of your trash and the rats are going to go away. We'll lose that fight if that's--if that's what we do. So, uh, thank you for your--for your answers. I'm glad you guys are working hard on it, and I, I can talk to you about it offline. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you for, uh, a

good question and a detailed response. So, the next speaker is Councillor Zondervan. I don't know if we dealt with your question or if you have additional questions. Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, as, as you know, I've served on the Rodent Committee for many years and, um, just, uh, last fall, my, my dog killed another rat in, in our backyard.

And, and I do want to slightly disagree with my colleague. It, it really is about taking care of the trash because that's what feeds the rat. And so, I, I really am excited about the, uh, standardized barrels being rolled out, and, and I hope that we will see a real impact of that.

I mean, every day after--every week after trash day, you know, I, I look down the street and I can see the hole in the bottom of the barrels of, of some of my neighbors and, you know, no fault of theirs. It's just really, really hard to, to manage this problem.

And, and I think the standardized, standardized barrels will, will really help. Um, but that being said, I, I do agree with my colleague that we have to be very aggressive and, and continue to, to monitor this problem

and, and respond aggressively because it's just--it's really--it just keeps going, you know.

I mean, I've literally been, you know, thinking and, and working on this with you all for years and, and it just doesn't seem like we're making a lot of headway. So, um, I look forward to the barrels, and, and I hope it will--it will start to help.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Mayor Siddiqui, you have the floor.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Thanks. This is more of a comment, um, but would love to know a little bit more. Um, I think the education piece of this is important and even, you know, I know we're cover, we're going into more in-person, um, events for the future, but clinics for people, you know, renters about trash handling and behavior with food outside is very important.

Having things in different languages, I think, um, perhaps you already do, but you know, I think especially with this effort, um, making sure that, you know, we are keeping that at the forefront, um, so that, you know, people are recognizing how, you know, bad the situation, uh, is. So, I want to make that comment and just, um, make

sure that we have that going forward if we don't already.

Thanks.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Any other councillors with a question or comment? If not, um, I have one. Oh, do we have another? No. Um, first of all, since John is on the screen, I remember, uh, a few years ago when DPW was planting bear root trees in front of the library and it looked pretty dire the first year because it was a bear root. I said, "John, what are you doing?" And John said, "Give it time."

And every time, to your credit, and DPW's credit, I drive by City Hall, I look at the trees, I did it this morning, and it is amazing how healthy they look. So, um, if you hear people complaining about trees, just point out the ones in front of, uh, the Post Office.

So, my question is, um, I'm glad DPW is hiring a staff landscape architect or another landscape architect. Um, Community Development has a landscape architect who does very quality-oriented, smaller parks. Uh, will this person be in--your DPW person be in addition to that? Or are we replacing the person in Community Development?

Uh, if you could explain this person's position and

what you see there. I'm thrilled that you're doing this, but what they're actually doing, what will they be responsible for.

**JOHN NARDEN:** Um, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Um, I'm going to ask Kathy, maybe just to give you a detailed response here.

**KATHY WATKINS:** Well, thank you. Through you, Mr. Chair, um, this person is, is not replacing, um, Rob Steck who does incredible park designs. Um, we've had a lot of collaboration with CDD about this position, and really this position is to compliment the existing efforts.

So, um, you know, CDD has led majority of the park design projects, and then they come to DPW, and we oversee the construction and the ongoing operations and management of the--of the park spaces. And so, the idea is to really, um, increase our capacity here so that we can have a smoother transition, um, get into more details during the construction.

And again, the city has taken on a tremendous number of open spaces. And, um, if you look at the amount of construction in the open space, um, category, we have significant needs here. And so, it's really to compliment

those efforts in terms of those park designs.

The other thing we really want, um, this position to focus on is, um, the design of both our park, you know, complimenting the park design processes and also our other capital projects. So, when we're looking at street designs, when we're looking at plaza designs, making sure that we're really looking at it comprehensively for, uh, tree canopy. Um, and so that's another big piece of it.

We also want this position to help fill in on some of the private development review, so that as we're looking at private developments, um, that again, we're looking at it with a lens of the urban forestry, the canopy.

And so again, it's really to compliment the existing staff, both here at Public Works, as well as CDD, and really just make sure there's another voice really looking at these critical issues in a number of different areas and a number of different projects. So, I hope that helps answer the question, but I'm happy to, to go into more details.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** No, you, you answered it perfectly, and I'm thrilled that you thought this out as clearly as you have. And I think it's great. Personally, as

a designer, I think the more design quality people, people who understand the full picture, the better things run in the long run.

So, thank you for that. Uh, if there are no other comments or questions, and it doesn't appear there are, um, I'd like to move to refer the Department of Public Works budget to the full council with a favorable recommendation.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So, the next department is Community Development. Um, there are three people who submitted early questions. Um, one series of questions were answered at the first hearing. Uh, so we will start with



Vice Mayor Mallon. Vice Mayor, you have the floor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
Could you repeat which department is in front of us?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Oh, I apologize if it  
wasn't clear. Community Development.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Great. Thank you so  
much. Um, and through you to the City Manager and, uh,  
Assistant City Manager, Farooq and your team, I had a  
question about the Economic Development Division of the  
Community Development Department.

Uh, I did notice that in the--in the budget book,  
there are two whole pages on this department's key  
initiatives. Uh, this is longer than anything, except the,  
uh, Police Department, which consists of nearly 10% of our  
overall annual budget and over 300 employees, and  
affordable housing, which is always our number one city  
priority for as long as I can remember.

This department still only has four FTEs during a time  
when we know that the economic recovery will be long and  
will require creativity and resources. I think this team  
has done a tremendous job over the last 15, 16 months, uh,  
really trying to support all of our small businesses and

our restaurants who have been really, really hit hard by the COVID pandemic.

And seemingly every single day, there was new guidance, uh, new grants, new everything. But I, I remain concerned that this department is so small as we come out of the public health crisis and into a, I think is going to be a really long economic recovery, particularly for our small businesses and small restaurants.

Um, why, why are we not seeing an increase in staffing in this department, given the number of key initiatives that are in that budget book and what we know we will need over the next year to support our struggling small businesses and our art sector?

So that's really my big question, is why are we not increasing staffing in this tremendously, uh, critical area where there are really only four FTEs, um, in the budget right now and presented for fiscal 22

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** Thank you, um, for that question, Vice Mayor. And through you, Chair Carlone, uh, if I might just begin by backing up a little and just introducing the CDD team, um, before I get to the, the question.

Um, so with me today, I have our, Sandra Clarke, our, uh, Chief of Administration and Operations, um, we have our, uh, division--well, I should introduce the rest of our finance team who have worked incredibly hard on this budget.

So, uh, Kevin Gookin and Peggy Kutcher. And I'll take a moment to, uh, to introduce, um, Judith Tumusiime, who has joined us as our, um, uh, Federal Grants Manager. Uh, she has just begun, so has not actually worked on the budget, but she replaces, uh, Betty Lyons, who has done a tremendous job in this role, uh, for over 15 years with the department.

And, um, we're looking forward to have Judith step into those, uh, those big shoes. We also have our division directors, uh, so Lisa Hemmerle from our, uh, Economic Development Division, uh, Suzanne Rasmussen from our Environment and Transportation Division, uh, Jeff Roberts from Zoning and Development, uh, Chris Carter from Housing, and Melissa Peters from Community Planning.

Um, so those are our five division directors who oversee the six program areas, um, that we have. And we have a whole host of other supporting cast, uh, who might

get pulled into to respond to some specific questions, um, that I am not going to get into because we will be here for a while.

Um, so now to pivot to the Vice Mayor's question, I will, um--I guess I will take that in the spirit more as a comment than a question. There is no, no dispute at all as to the incredible work and the incredible volume of work that is being done by the four-member team in our Economic Development Division.

They have--I mean, they, they have more than a full-time job at regular times. And this year during COVID, um, they have been working around the clock to, to support our small businesses, everything from making sure that we are listening to the concerns of folks, to, um, creating standing up new programs, staffing them, uh, working on the, um, the grants, reviewing those, working with a whole host of other departments and divisions, uh, to bring together collaborative groups, and at the same time, continue the standard work that they always do, which are the additional, you know, things like, uh, the storefront, uh, improvements and so forth.

So absolutely no dispute there, Vice Mayor. I think

additional capacity is always helpful, um, but I also think that it's always a, a balancing act in terms of the, the budget. I know we've talked with, uh, the manager about the, the capacity issues that just about every division, but clearly this is one of our smallest divisions.

And there's--particularly this year, there's, uh, the balance of trying to make sure that we are being fiscally prudent and maintaining, um, the right levels of, of capacity to keep work going. Um, so I don't know if Louis wants to add any more to that, but I think we are--we, we absolutely share your, um, your support and positive, uh, feedback on the work that's underway in this group and the significance of it and, um, and, and always the need for additional capacity.

But I know that we do a lot of thinking around these issues with the City Manager around budget time each year.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** So again, I think during COVID, and I appreciate picking out this one division, but there are probably 50 divisions that have gone 24/7, 7 days a week that can be recognized for the work they've done. So again, I want to thank Economic Development. I think we've given them the additional

assistance they've needed.

I think we have gone far and beyond what anyone could have expected in terms of being, providing the service. I think we can continue to provide the service. I think we are still in a COVID financial position, uh, and we really look closely at oppositions if there is a determination at some point that we need additional assistance that we will look at.

But I mean, I think you could say every department in the city right now could take a look at, we need some additional assistance. And, you know, we've been averaging 40 to 50 new positions every year for the last three years, and we just felt that this was the year that we could not continue that pace.

And, you know, if there's ways we can assist, and if we feel that in some way, shape, or form, we are not meeting the needs of the business community, trust me, we will adjust that. But I know, you know, in working as a team with CD and Public Works and my office, I think we will meet those needs.

So, these are difficult decisions. Uh, I think, you know, there's, there's many areas in CD and on many other

departments, but this year here, we chose to keep the budget as close as we could to the same level of positions, believing 100% in my mind that we will not miss a beat in providing the service.

So that's, that's how I would say. But again, I want to thank the Economic Development for all their, their work. And I do know we did put some extra funding in the budget, not necessarily related to staffing, but in other areas.

So, like I said, I think you could pick a lot of the visions in this budget right now and say you could add more people, but it's trying to balance what the taxpayers can afford, what we can afford in the middle of COVID, and still provide the service. And I think under Lisa's leadership, this team will continue to do a phenomenal job and we'll be okay.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Vice Mayor, did you want to follow up?

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Oh, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And through you, I certainly am the first person to say that every department in our city and every employee has been working overtime, but we are focused right now on

this particular division of the Community Development Department.

And as Ms. Farooq said, um, each member of EDD has more than a full-time job during regular times. Um, we are not in regular times, we haven't been in regular times, and I understand that we have added 40 to 50 positions, um, in the past three years, but none of them have been added into this division, even though I think when--if we are looking to be fiscally prudent, um, it would make sound financial decision to add in at least a position, um, to really help us get our small businesses back on track. Um, you know, if you think about tax abatements and assessments, right?

Like, we need to have thriving businesses in our--in our districts in order to be receiving those tax dollars. So, I actually think it would be a really sound financial decision and fiscally prudent to, to add a position at EDD right now.

I understand that's not where we are, but I would hope that over the next year, um, we can really look at this division and figure out how we can add capacity here. As we all know, coming out of this COVID pandemic, uh, particularly as I've said, for our restaurants and our



small businesses, it's going to be very, very difficult.

Um, and I think the, the team over there has done an incredible job being creative, but, um, there's lots more to do, and I think we, we could do that with that added capacity. Um, and so I guess that's--that was major--that was my biggest question around EDD and wishing that we had more capacity there.

Even though I understand that the city is recognizing that we may be in a difficult financial position and, and decisions were made, I think this would be--this would've been a place where I think we could have gotten a lot of bang for our buck.

And so, I hope that we can look to add capacity, um, in other ways for this division over the next year. You know, oftentimes we do it with consultants or bringing on people to add that capacity one in FTE is not, uh, part of the budget. So, uh, like, that's all I wanted to say, but thank you, um, Mr. Chair, I, yield back.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** Through you, Mr. Chair, I want to assure the Vice Mayor that we're on the same page with that. FTE is coming along and we need additional service, whether it's consulting, all we have to

have additional staff, we'll be happy to have that discussion.

And we've told department heads in the upcoming season that we'll be certainly open to discussions if there are additional needs. So, I think we can get there as we take a look at where we're going. So, I appreciate that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Thank you for the question and the response. Uh, the next councillor is Councillor Nolan. You have the floor, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** And I just have to say thank you to Clerk Wilson for sending out the questions so that I could have them all in one place. Um, this is--my first question under this was, um, and by the way, I want to appreciate, um, Vice Mayor Mallon's, uh, question about Economic Development.

She's been championing us working on this, and I, as the City Manager said, "We know that everyone's been working 24/7. This has been a very challenging time." Uh, one question I had, uh, similar to in building on, uh, the question of our economic development work, so much of our sustainability work ends up bringing in people from the outside, and I'm just curious as to how much of that

sustainability overall spending is consultants.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** Through you, Chair Carlone, um, let's say just looking at our Environment and Transportation Divisions budget, so it's not perfectly, um--it's not perfectly sustainability, it does include some transportation work.

But frankly, since our transportation work, uh, really does focus on, um, sustainable modes of transportation. I feel somewhat comfortable clubbing that under the same umbrella. Um, so we have in that division about \$2.15 million for salary and wages and \$1.45 million towards OOM for a total of about \$3.6 million.

And off that, um, almost \$1 million is, is consultant support. Um, and that breaks down into about \$812,000 on the very clearly sustainability side and about \$265,000, um, on transportation consulting. Um, and \$170,000 out of that \$812,000 is, um, allocated towards NetZero related initiatives.

So just from the OOM, I would say just the bottom line is about \$1 million out of the \$1.45 in OOM is for consultant support.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. And that's

for a combination of the consultants who do the, the various reporting and also the ones who are facilitating all the meetings, that's all together?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** Yes, because, um--sorry, through you, uh, Chair, the, uh, consultant, uh, contracts typically include technical work and the public outreach related to that particular item. Um, that obviously happens in tandem with staff work.

So, um, even, you know, every element of this, whether it's technical work or it's, um, consultant work, I mean, or sorry, or outreach work, it involves both consultants and staff, and then of course, staff have to oversee the consultants and manage those contracts. So, it's really hard to tease apart 100%, but budget-wise, that's how it--um, how the effort breaks down.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I'm not sure if I'm supposed to wait to be asked to be called or just--Okay, thank you. I think it would be helpful--we don't have to, um, do this now, but it'd be helpful just to have that laid out at some point because often people ask us, and we -

And, and I don't have the answer to the question, so it, it, it doesn't have to be even in the budget book, but

it would just be, be helpful to know on all these initiatives, what is being spent on that. And, um, it may follow up on this other question that if we're spending so much of this money on these various efforts, if there's ever a way that we, um, could use staff, um, maybe not the technical reports, but some of the facilitation, then it, it may well be, we'll, we'll add more capacity, um, by using our own staff.

My next question is, um, which I'll just read, and I'm sure you're familiar with this, uh, Assistant City Manager, Farooq. I've asked you it a number of times and it's very apropos of the budget. Often, it seems as though there's a challenge to deal with all the zoning issues, which falls to the CDD staff.

There is some additional staff anticipated. We talked a little bit about that, and I'm just concerned, and whether it'd be sufficient for the demand. As specifically around the zoning issues, I'm thinking of how often we hear, we don't have the capacity, for instance, to do a full-scale review of all the zoning as Somerville did, that it would take too much time.

There's so many different times when we have brought

or we are considering some zoning changes and there's many, many initiatives as outlined in the book about the number of responses to planning board or, or other questions.

Um, I'm thinking of also, we have often asked, and we heard a lot about in the CCF Alewife discussion about the fact that we haven't had a chance to step back and take the time to bring forward a full-scale zoning review for the Alewife District, which the Envision Plan envisioned several years ago.

So, I think the overall question is how are, um--how are we going to be, be able to meet this ongoing in the future? Because I don't think these zoning demands will stop, right? They will just continue in terms of us wanting to approach, the development continues, there's lots of up zonings. And there's also a real appetite for us being able to have the time to take the Envision overall for the city and Alewife and other individual, uh, planning efforts forward.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** And through you chair, um, to Councillor Nolan, um, I'll take that there's multiple questions, uh, rolled into that, so I'll take those, uh, one at a time. Um, in terms of just the basic

question about capacity around zoning, um, so our capacity has in fact increased quite a bit.

So, um, the, um--we used to have three zoning staff, um, and since 2018, um, that number has, um, has gone to five zoning staff. So, um, it's almost, almost doubles doubled, admittedly starting from a, a small base. Um, but we are currently down, uh, a person with the retirement of Lizza Peyton, but are actively working to, uh, to fill that position, uh, and hope to have, uh, somebody in--you know, start interviewing some.

So, if you look at how much zoning work has happened in the, um, the city, if we look at a few years passed and, and average that out, uh, the council has typically adopted about, uh, three or so--uh, I'm sorry, three to five, uh, zoning--three to four zoning petitions. And, um, this fiscal year, um, you as a body have adopted six zoning amendments already.

Uh, one zoning petition was voted down. Uh, there are five others that are pending, uh, and might still be adopted. And if by the--if you even adopt half of those, um, by the end of the year, there might be eight to nine zoning petitions that would be adopted. And that's, uh,

twice as many as, uh, have happened in past--you know, the typical year in the past.

Um, so both our capacity and our output have actually increased significantly in recent years. Um, and then to get to some of the other questions--actually, there's one more thing I would say, that we are also devoting some of that increased capacity in that--in the Zoning and Development Division to, um, priorities that the Council has asked us to work on.

So, um, we have now started--we have now development economics consultant, uh, and have been working on those reports. And, um, I just want to take this moment to, to touch on a point that came up in the last question about can we use staff to do some of these things?

I just want to really emphasize, and this is probably true of every department, not just CDD, uh, when we hire a consultant, there is actually a significant amount of staff work in tandem with the work of those consultants.

So, um, there is contract management, but there is also, um, a huge amount of intellectual work that is being done at the same time by staff, um, on those efforts. Um, and certainly also working on, on outreach when those, um,



when, when that's warranted, not in the case of Development Economics, because that work--you know, the outreach happens, um, through our Council and Planning Board process in, in those instances, um, but in any event.

So that is a whole new area of endeavor that our Zoning and Development staff have taken on. Um, we're also working on the Climate Resilience task force, which is being staffed by our Zoning, um--sorry, the Climate Resilience Zoning task force, and that work, uh, is being staffed by, um, Zoning staff.

So, there is, in fact, a lot more efforts that are underway that are taking up that capacity. Um, with regard to, um, to things that have, you know, examples like zoning overhaul, um, and Somerville was noted as, uh, as an example, I will say--and, and I've been the one to say that taking on something of that magnitude would mean, uh, a slowdown, if not a stoppage, on some of the other, uh, zoning endeavors that are desired. And that's actually exactly what happened in Somerville.

Their effort did take about three years, um, maybe even more than that. And they did really slow down on everything else in the zoning realm, aside from development

review during that time. Um, so it's, it's not--it's not a function of capacity, it's just a pragmatic thing that when you are, um, overhauling the big picture, uh, you, you shifting the baseline by, by then adopting smaller changes, actually then works counter to the, the bigger effort that's underway.

So that's why, uh, that is a tension that will need to be--if that's desired, that will need to be dealt with. And, uh, we will all need to reach agreement on, uh, whether we do want to--if we want to do a big overhaul, uh, that then there will need to be a slowdown on some of the, um, the smaller items and, uh, amendments that are desired.

And with regard to Alewife, we can certainly take that on. I would say that, um, we have--we don't think that, and this may be our fault, but I don't think that we've heard, uh, a uniform, um, consensus on what is the direction. Uh, we've heard some, uh, folks be really supportive and want to take on the, um, the Envision Alewife Plan as it is and figure out and, and, you know, move to zoning.

Um, but we have also heard, um, from the Council as, as well, uh, some reservations about the plan, uh, and, and the vision that's being, um--that is to be translated into

zoning. And I would say it would be not, uh, a good use of time to start on the zoning before we have agreement on the vision.

So, I, I would welcome additional discussion on Alewife so that, um, if that is in fact a, a desired direction, uh, that we agree on the, the vision and the plan, and then we'd be happy to move to the, um, to the zoning if, uh, if that's the, the desired priority from the Council.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Any follow up, Councillor, before we open it up?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** No, I, I appreciate. What I'm hearing from you is that there's obviously you're balancing a lot of challenges and you need a specific directive to work on it. And, and I do think the question of Envision may have changed partly with the pandemic.

On the other hand, it is our plan for the--strategic plan for the whole city, and we have been assured, and I know you are all working hard to implement various parts of it. So, I think we do need to make sure that if you are waiting for some additional direction, that, that we owe that to you then. But, uh, on this question, I'm, uh, done,

Chair Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Uh, we have two additional councillors who have questions. Um, truthfully, we don't know which one came first. We weren't watching the screen, so I'm going to start with Councillor Zondervan, followed by Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Councillor Zondervan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just, uh, wanted to follow up on the previous question and, and I'll preface my comments by acknowledging that everybody's working really hard, I get it, um, but, you know, we're just not seeing the results.

And in, in the case of zoning, part of the reason that we're seeing so many zoning petitions is that both on the development side, people are buying properties on spec and then, you know, juicing what they can build to an upzoning.

And then on the citizen side, people are rejecting this whole approach that we have to planning our city and saying, hey, we should be doing something else. And so, you know, while all that's going on, we did envision, and then it's just sitting there and we're not really implementing it in, in a visible, uh, way.

And, and, you know, we've brought this up many times that what we would like to see is what Somerville did. And, and yeah, if that means slowing down developments for one or two years, so what? Let's just do that, let's get it right and, and then move forward.

But it, it just feels like we're, we're spinning our wheels and we're caught in this trap where we're just constantly barraged by these zoning petitions because nobody's happy. The developers aren't happy because they want to build bigger building, and the citizens aren't happy because they want fewer buildings and they want more trees.

So, you know, let's put our heads together and figure this out once and for all, instead of just going back and forth like this year after year and not really getting out of this, out of this trap. So, you know, if that means we need more resources, then let's get some more resources, and let's get it done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Ms. Farooq.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** Through you, Chair, um, thank you for--thank you for that, Councillor Zondervan. I would say, um, I hear your comment and I just

want to clarify, I'm not saying that there's a capacity issue. Um, what I am saying is, um, that--and I'm also not saying that development would have to slow down, uh, if we are doing rezoning because, um, you know, development can continue and developers and members of the public always have the, um, the capability to bring forward zoning petitions.

It would have to be a, a Council decision on how then they, um, they want to--whether they want to take those up or not. And I will also say that, um, big planning and, um, even with a lot of consensus, um, can still be modified by a citizen or a developer-sponsored petition very soon after that.

I mean, uh, I'm, I'll, uh, dig back a little bit into history, and, um, we went through a pretty comprehensive, uh, planning study in, um, the early 2000s, uh, wrapped up in early 2000s with a rezoning of the entire eastern part of the city.

And, um, almost immediately after that, that was when Alexandria first moved to Cambridge and they purchased a large tract of land and rezoned--and, and filed a rezoning petition, uh, I would say, six months to a year, um, after

we had just rezoned it.

And that was something that then got adopted and overturned, uh, many of the, the zoning principles that had just been adopted. So, there's no, um, there's no stopping, uh, that momentum. That can--that can always happen no matter how, um, how well we have planned and how much consensus we've built.

But just to go back to Envision for a moment, I just want to say that we are working on many of the, the envision, uh, recommendations, uh, because keep in mind, there are zoning recommendations, and then there are also, uh, some non-zoning recommendations. So, um, we are, in this coming year, anticipating starting a Cambridge Street Planning Study.

Uh, we are working on--we'll be working on citywide design guidelines, uh, that will, um, modify and supplement, uh, the design guidelines that are in article 19.3 of the zoning. Uh, we are working on, um, publicly-owned--I'm sorry, privately-owned public space and coming up with design guidelines and signage to really make that feel, uh, as public as possible.

Um, we have, of course, been working on climate

resiliency work, um, both through the CCPR and, um, through the resilience zoning task force. Continuing on NetZero, we are working on a new mobility, uh, blueprint right now, and, uh, in the coming year, we will be taking up work, uh, on circular economy.

And these are all, um, recommendations that have emerged from Envision. I know it's really hard to track because, uh, I will admit that the, um--that one of the pieces that we had really, we've been wanting to do for, for some time now is put together, uh, a website and dashboard that will make it clearer and more transparent to everybody.

It's just that that is a joint effort between CDD and IT, and, uh, clearly central folks who, um, who are part of that work effort, uh, have been involved in supporting the city in, in other--During the pandemic, we've really had IT need to shift and pivot to support all of these other efforts as we've all gone remote and so forth.

So, it's only now that we are, um, switching back to this effort, and we hope that we will have that website that people will be able to see how those recommendations are proceeding, um, later this year, maybe end of summer,



early fall.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor, I'm going to move on unless you want to say something else on the subject.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, I do appreciate the, the response and, and I certainly understand that, that anyone can file a zoning petition. Um, but I think we do need to really reconsider how we are--we are planning.

I, I think part of the, um, point of doing a more comprehensive planning process is that we do build up that consensus and, and it doesn't guarantee that nobody's going to override it with the zoning petition, but it does put some stakes in the ground as to what we are likely to accept and what we're not.

And, and without that, we're just going to continue to get, you know, pushing the envelope, you know, how much, how much are you--are you, uh, willing to take? How big a building can we plop down here? Um, and I do think that a more comprehensive, uh, planning process is helpful, and, and a more holistic planning process.

And, and I've said this many times that, you know,

Envision has given us the start of that process, which is to outline what our goals are, but the, the really key part of that process is a continuous evaluation of what are we doing and how does that align with our goals.

And again, I get it, you know, the pandemic has, has turned all of our lives upside down, so I'm not criticizing what did or didn't happen last year, but, but looking forward, we just really need to figure out how do we make this a more, uh, holistic planning process that really involves the community continuously, not just one time, and that really puts some clear stakes in the ground as to what we're looking for, uh, in terms of our buildings, in terms of our open space, our canopy, so that we get more of what we want, and, and not more of what we don't want. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. You know, I, uh, generally agree with that comment, and I, I think, um, Ms. Farooq does too. This is a difficult problem with the city that's bursting at its seams. Um, I do think Envision gives us a window, and I do firmly believe the Council has the policy right to determine what kind of development is most appropriate based in part on a

vision and based in part on impacts of different kinds of development.

And, uh, I think that's what we'll be bringing up and I hope and Envision part two, if we want to call it that, uh, we'll get to that in different meetings and, and discussions. So, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, uh, had his hand up as well. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Through you to Ms. Farooq, and thank you to the, the Community Development Department for all the, the work, uh, um, CDD does for Planning and Economic Development and Affordable Housing.

I think so many of the, the city's challenges are sort of Planning and Community Development challenges. Um, I'm grateful for the staff there. Um, the question I had was, was sort of a, a follow-up on this line of, uh, comprehensive planning and, and zoning.

And I, I hear the, uh, the, uh, idea that it's, uh, a little bit of staffing, uh, but also sort of figuring out priorities in terms of one-off petitions versus comprehensive, uh, zoning. Uh, and that if, you know, if we wanted to shift towards, uh, comprehensive, uh, zoning and

away from petitions, that that would be a trade off, and that that's a decision we have to make.

I guess I, uh, just putting myself also on the, the side of really wanting to do a comprehensive rezoning, um, like Somerville has done recently or places, um, and that is a, a trade off I'm completely fine with. I think some of the petitions that are, are coming to the Council, um, are not, uh, great.

Um, I'm specific thinking of the, the--a couple of the developer petitions recently, um, like the one at Alewife that we spent, um, probably hundreds of hours collectively on between city Council hours, staff hours, uh, and then didn't pass.

And so, what, what was all it for? Um, or the petition that that's just started to come through, uh, in Kendall for an office tower that doesn't have, uh, any housing in it, um, which is kind of wild to me in a, a city that has an affordable housing crisis, uh--a housing crisis that you would, uh, propose another office tower without any housing, but almost can't blame the developer because our zoning doesn't really make clear that this area of Kendall, like every area in the city, should have housing.

And so, you know, that's absolutely why we've got to be doing, uh, comprehensive, uh, zoning. Um, and that the piece on, on sort of time spent a, um, you know, stay in pretty close contact with city Councillors in Somerville, and the, the amount of time that it seems like our Council spends on, on zoning petitions versus the, the city Council in Somerville is a, a lot more, uh, in Cambridge.

And some of that may just be because we're a more attractive place for development. Um, but I have to think some of that is because they've done a comprehensive rezoning. And so folks know what they can build and what they can't, and they're not trying to override that all the time, like we see here, where, uh, this current zoning is, is out of date, and so folks feel like they can, uh, you know, ask for an override of it, um, a lot, um, and so we end up spending a lot of time on it.

Um, the question I had was when, uh, CDD is looking to hire, uh, zoning staff, like there's a vacant position now, I imagine there's a, a trade off a bit between sort of hiring folks with the, the expertise to drill down at the, the block-by-block level for these one-off petitions versus folks with expertise and sort of, uh, citywide, uh,

planning in terms of, you know, a comprehensive rezoning.

How are we, we thinking about that in terms of hiring and, and, you know, uh, allocating, uh, budget for, for salary, for, for bringing on folks? Are we thinking about that, that trade off? Or are we just sort of assuming folks will be good at both? I'm sort of interested to hear about how CDD is thinking about that.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** Um, through, through the Chair, and I might ask, um, Jeff Roberts to, um, to join me a little bit in, uh, responding to this question. Um, but I would say there is--there is not a distinction between people who, um, think of zoning comprehensively versus block by block.

Zoning folks, uh, needs to be able to, um, to actually think logically from the start of what is the goal that is trying to be accomplished, and then how to convert it into actual regulation. And I think that's really the, the biggest skill, um, that, that as somebody who has a zoning expertise needs to have.

And that can work on a, a very discreet problem, but it can also work on something that is really, um, complicated and, and multi-faceted. Um, it's really--I

think the, uh, the issue that you're raising might, uh, potentially be more for, um, from a Community Planning side. But even there, I would say that, uh, the skillset is actually very similar, and it's a matter of then modifying the specific outreach strategies and the scaling of it, that, that is different.

Uh, but I'm going to look to, um, to Jeff to speak a little bit to the kinds of skillsets that we are looking for, um, from the next, um, staff person in Zoning Development.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Roberts.

**JEFF ROBERTS:** Uh, thank you, Iram, and through the Chair, I, I would echo, um, what Iram just said that, you know, we, our team, you know, works on, uh, a, a number of different things, and, and they do, um, cover a range of different topics, but the, the skillset isn't necessarily that different.

It's the ability to, um, look at issues to be able to break them down rationally to, to gather information from, from lots of different places, and then ultimately, to sort of translate that into a, um, kind of a, a, a policy mechanism, which is, you know, I was just talking to, to my

staff about how, you know, it's a little bit of a combination of, um, you know, almost like computer programming, as well as, um, just understanding how, um, how people think about, about land use, whether it's from a, uh--from an economic development perspective or from a, um--or from an architectural perspective or, or an urban design perspective.

So, it, it really is, it's not so much about having, um, you know, expertise in one particular area, but being able to, um, to take a sort of planning concepts and translate them into workable regulations and, and policy that gets to the right kinds of, of outcomes. And the other thing I would note is, is that, you know, as a team, we're not doing this alone.

Um, you know, pretty much everything we're working on, you know, we rely on the expertise of our, you know, say our Environmental, um, Planning group when we're, you know, working on climate resilience or, um, or sustainable design, um, and development standards.

And we're, we're working with the economic development division when it comes to retail and, and small business, and we're working with transportation on a number of



different issues. So, we're--so we're always relying on, um, the, the more particular, uh, topic area expertise that, that we have available in our, in our department, which is, is fairly extensive.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thanks, and that's helpful. I'll yield back.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you Councillor, and thank you, Mr. Roberts. I'm sure you meant to say urban design staff as well, which before your time and Ms. Farooq's time, when I was a consultant to the city, I did an urban design analysis of zoning that was being proposed, and it showed contrary results to what was being proposed.

And quite frankly, my work was put in a drawer and the zoning was approved. So, I would greatly encourage Community Development to literally include urban design studies if you're not on particular studies--on particular areas to understand what a build out is.

Um, I used to do that for Community Development, and I'm sure you're doing that in part, if not fully. So, the next series of questions is from Councillor McGovern. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. McGOVERN:** Thanks, um, through you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to--again, I, I know we're sort of, this is not necessarily budget conversation, but I did kind of want to put this out there. And I, I, you know, I don't want to be Debbie Downer here, but, um, you know, even if we had a citywide plan, we did everything that people are saying they want, we are still going to get disagreement, you know, about projects.

I mean, we, you know, we did envision, and there were a number of folks who said, you know, it wasn't good, it's not a good document, it's not a good--it wasn't a good process. And then when a proposal comes in that doesn't address Envision, those very same people say, well, wait a minute, what about Envision? Right?

So, they hate it, but then they like it on one hand. We have, you know--I, I don't want to get into specific projects, but, you know, there are projects that have--that have been very much in line with goals that the city has set. You know, there's a project in front of the BZA, right? Sustainable, 100% affordable on a main corridor.

And we're arguing over two stories. Like, so, you know, I know we keep--we keep talking, we need this plan,

we need this plan, and I'm just saying, we could do a plan, and we're still going to end up in debates because people aren't going to be happy with that plan. And until something is actually in front of the community, you know, you, you end up in, in, in these arguments.

So, I just, you know--I just--I don't see that as a panacea, and even in Somerville, right? I pay attention to Somerville too. There's lots of debates over what development is happening in Somerville, despite the fact that they have this plan that we, we think that we should have as well. So, I don't think there's any way around that.

Um, you know, I also think, you know, what we could consider, we make it very, very, very, very easy for people to file zoning petitions, 10 signatures, right? There's a number of conservation districts that are coming forward that are going to change, potentially change entire neighborhoods, and it takes 10 registered voters to file that. That's 10 people who can dominate the conversation and change the course of what CDD has to do, what we have to do.

And maybe we need to think about making that more

difficult to do, right? Or, or think about, you know, maybe it's a 100 signatures, maybe it's 50 signatures, um, because this is what allows these petitions to keep coming forward. And even if we had a plan, developers are going to file upzonings regardless of what the plan is, because they're ultimately going to be looking for their best interest, and there'll be residents that will file down zonings because they don't want to see the development.

So, I, I, I think this is part of what we're in for. I, I think this is part of the work we have to do. And, um, yes, you know, we should certainly set some them all for sort of setting more guidelines and making things more clear. Um, but at the end of the day, I'm not sure what the way around--if there's a way around getting into these debates because, um, you know, people just have different opinions and, and want different things. So, I just felt that was important to say, um, you know, because I don't think a citywide plan is a panacea. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. I have to respond to every point you made. Uh, Envision was supposed to have an urban design element. That's what the policy order was. It never got there. That's what I hope the

second phase is you have to test all the principles and the directions.

So that's part of the problem right there. When East Cambridge and University Park was done, it was based on urban design guidelines and a master plan. One was one developer, University Park, the other was the City. And people knew what was coming, neighbors knew what was being built, and when I say neighbors, I mean developers, what was being built next to them.

And quite frankly, they said, "You need to enforce everything like you did on our building." On 2072, the proposed affordable housing at 102 feet in what is presently a 45-foot height zone, you can go to 70 feet on the affordable housing overlay, which we worked on, as you know, more than two years, and they're 32 feet over the affordable housing overlay. The neighborhood would accept the affordable housing overlay. And as far as the conservation district go--let me complete, please.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. McGOVERN:** I'm not--I'm not looking, I wasn't looking to get into it, but

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yeah, but you raised points, and I--excuse me. As Chair, I want to make it clear

that there's another point of view. A conservation district does not overrule zoning. If zoning allows something, a conservation district allows it. It's the way it's done.

Historic conservation districts do not overrule zoning, despite what people are saying. So, I just--you said three points, I'd let you say them, I just want to say there's another way to look at them as well. Are there any other questions for Community Development?

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Mr. Chair, just to be clear, I was not saying--what I was saying was in this debate of zoning petitions that, you know, keep getting filed, um, it's very easy to file a zoning petition, and maybe we should think about that. And I wasn't saying Envision was good or bad, I was just simply pointing out that even with plans, there's disagreement.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Envision is not done as far as I'm concerned.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** I'm, I'm sorry, we can't talk about this. You're, you're the expert. I'm sorry.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. It's--it, it was inadequate and, um, it did not fulfill the Council's compromised policy order, compromised in the best sense.

So, I have a few questions for Community Development. Um, when we say we're going to have citywide design guidelines, which I applaud completely, will there--will it reflect different area and neighborhood contexts?

I mean, you know better than anyone that we have a variety of, of context, so will there be a series of guidelines that reflect that variety? Or, uh--well, I'll leave the question there.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** Thank you, Chair Carlone. So, uh, we'll say what we are working on will have, um, three components, and they might come as, uh, some separate projects. But really there's a, uh, overarching citywide design guidelines, which, uh, as you know right now, uh, we, we have very limited citywide design guidelines.

Um, and, and, and frankly, there isn't something that applies, uh, everywhere. It's only with certain caveats and certain, um, thresholds. So, we're, we're looking to come up with something that's more, uh, universal, uh, that addresses parts of the city that currently are left unaddressed, um, and at the same time, acknowledge that there are, um, particular parts of the City that require--

that have different, uh, different needs because they have different, be it historic character, different scale of development.

So, Kendall Square is, uh, by necessity, very different from Harvard Square or Porter Square, or Central Square, um, and different from something that is in--more in the neighborhood matrix. Um, so, um, so we will have-- the intention is to have citywide and then also have some area-specific guidelines for particular parts of the city, um, that modify those baseline guidelines.

We are also working on some, um, design guidance for, um, public realm, which will be a little bit separate and will guide both the City's work as well as, um, when developers are doing work that interfaces with the public realm.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Good answer. Thank you. Um, city's open space plan. I know Envision had--has policies. Is there actually a plan, per se?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** So, thank you again, Mr. Chair, for that--for that question. Um, I would say the way that we are looking at open space planning, um, is to look at, uh, a few different things. One is, uh, a, a



need's assessment perspective.

So, look at where, um, you know, different parts of the city where, uh, improvements are needed to open space or where there might be, um, potentially dearth of open space. And then to be able to think about that, uh, either through city intervention or really, um, often--more often than, than that, through working with private development.

Um, then, uh, related to that, we are looking at how when, you know, when development get--when--sorry, open space gets developed through, uh, public-private partnerships or through redevelopment of an area on private land, then how can we make sure that that feels truly public?

So having some, um, guidance and design standards for, um, privately-owned public space. Um, but in our--we are also doing an update to our, um, open space plan, which is a seven year--every seven-year cycle that we have to do this plan for the state. Uh, and it looks at inventorying, what we have; and what's needed.

Um, so we are going to be taking that up in this coming year, um, and we'll be looking at it through a few different lenses. So, looking at improving connectivity,

looking at, um, existing open spaces and how those can be improved to better serve the community.

Um, there is obviously thought to how we might look at new spaces, although that is a very challenging prospect in a city that is as built out as ours, um, with very few opportunities for creation of new space, um, but we'll also be looking at it very closely from the, uh, the lens of, um, equity, um, looking at who is being served, who, who is in the catchment area, our community profile, um, looking at community resilience, how our open space network, um, um, can support public health, um, and, um, access and, and resilience.

So, when, um, when Public Health was here, the--Claude spoke a little bit about community resilience, and that's something that we are, uh, partnering very closely with, um, both DPW and Public Health on. And, uh, the work on the open space planning is really going, going to be, uh, taking those principles, um, and looking at the open space network through that lens.

Um, so, so we expect to have both kind of a more, uh, technical piece of it, uh, an evaluation piece with objective standards, and then a, a very robust community

engagement process that really solicits, um, feedback from the community, uh, in terms of how they use the space and how it can be--how the network can better, uh, support the, the needs of the community. Um, I would say that that's what--that's the plan for, um, for this coming year's, um, open space planning work.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I look forward to it. Thank you for that. Uh, Mr. Clerk, are there any other hands up?

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** I don't see any here.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. So we, we are--

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Councillor Nolan raised her hand.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Nolan, you've raised your hand, please.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. Are we--I, I had had two other questions in this area. Are we--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, we--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I wasn't sure.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** We try to limit it to two questions each, but--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:**--but Councillor Nolan, pick one of the two.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** All right, I'll pick one, but I do want us to, um, about housing, but the other one is one I've also raised, and I'm concerned about not having in the budget some very specific goal setting, but the housing question was, um, the latest figures on housing in this, uh, section show a very welcome increase in units.

And there are plans for more than 400 affordable units in the pipeline. And these are consisting both of new rental units from existing housing and inclusionary units, but only 15 were home ownership units, and yet, um, certainly this Council and the community, and I know the City has been working on an increasing call for more opportunities for home ownership. So, can these goals be increased? Um, and I also hope soon we'll be taking a break.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** Thank you for that question, Councillor Nolan. Um, through the Chair, um, we certainly have heard loud and clear from the Council, um, that there is a desire to, um, to focus more on, on home ownership.

Um, there are--just want to note that, you know, there is a huge demand for rental units as well, and there is a lot that is in the pipeline. So, as we are looking, we've begun to take a, uh, a much deeper look at, uh, what our financial projections are and, and how they are, uh, being allocated.

This is something that we do with the, the trust on an ongoing basis. But we, we absolutely hear that desire to, um, to emphasize more and, and have greater focus on home ownership. We will certainly be, um, you know--it's certainly possible to, um, to, to modify that or to enhance that emphasis.

Um, it, it is, um--I just want to be sure that we don't do that at the, um, um, at the cost of the, the rental side because that is also an, an--a really significant need. Uh, but having heard the Council's desire on that, I will say that the one, uh, new position that is in this year's budget is for a, um, associate home ownership planner for, um--in a--in our home ownership team.

So that's going to be--that's going to really add to that group and, uh, we'll support the homeownership side

more. So, we certainly hear that, the Affordable Housing Trust has heard that, um, that priority and we certainly will be putting that into, um, our thinking going forward.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. I, I'm going to move on. At the last minute, Councillor Zondervan raised his hand. Um, let's try to keep this brief, and, uh, close the morning session. Councillor Zondervan?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be very brief. Uh, I appreciate the question, um, on homeownership, and, and the answer, as, as you know, the Council just passed the policy order calling for 100 units of affordable homeownership to be constructed every year for the next 10 years.

So you, you just indicated, um, Ms. Farooq, that you are hiring, uh, a homeownership planner, um, but how, how do we operationalize that kind of effort that is, is hiring one planner enough? Is there more that we need to do to make that kind of, uh, vision of reality?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER IRAM FAROOQ:** Yeah. Through, through, um, through your Chair, and Councillor, that's-- it's a--it's a big and challenging question because that is, um--you know, it's a tenfold increase, um, almost, um,

or, or eightfold increase in what is the current, um, output on the homeownership side.

So, it's not going to be as straightforward as just hiring a planner. I think that that, um, that hiring the planner is a--is a good foundational piece, but really, I think there is a lot more discussion that is needed on this topic so that, um, we can fully understand and, um, determine what, um, what and how the program needs to change.

There's a lot of--there's a lot of sub-questions in that, uh--in that policy order. So, I look forward to putting together, working with, uh, the multiple other departments that are going to need to be involved in this, uh--in that, in such an effort, uh, and come back to the Council with a response at a, at a future date to that policy order, and then, um, we will be able to have a more, um, more substantial discussion at such time.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor, and thank you, Ms. Farooq. I'm going to move to refer the Community Development budget to full--to the full Council with a favorable recommendation.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes  
Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent  
Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes  
Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes  
Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes  
Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent  
Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes  
Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes  
Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes  
**Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.  
We're going to, um, take a lunch break now, and we will  
come back in 45 minutes, um, so that would be 1:05. Um, and  
we will begin with the Library Department, and, uh, we look  
forward to everyone's questions. Have a good lunch break.

Welcome back, everyone. Um, just to repeat that, um,  
we have had our recess and we're returning to the Finance  
Committee Meeting. The call of this meeting is to conduct a  
public hearing on the City budget, covering the fiscal  
period of July 1st, 2021 to June 30th 2022.

Uh, we've already covered Cambridge Health Alliance,  
Public Works, Community Development, and Cable TV. And the



first department this afternoon is Library. Mr. Manager, do you wish to say something?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** No, I'm all ready to stop the--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. You looked like you had something on your mind, so I, I thought I'd invite you. So, we will have, um, the Library Department, uh, come forward.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** We would just take a roll.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Oh, but first, the Clerk has reminded me, uh, again, that we need to take a roll call. Mr. Clerk.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** This is for the members present for the afternoon session.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Present

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Present

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Present

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Present

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Present

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Present

**Present-8, Absent-1.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

So, in our list of questions, the first, uh, listed question comes from the Vice Mayor. Vice Mayor, this is the Library Department, and you have the first question.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you. I'd just like to give the opportunity to Dr. McCauley if she'd like to introduce, uh, any of the members of her Library staff that are here with her today.

**DIRECTOR MARIA MCCAULEY:** Through you, Chair, thank you so much. Um, yes, I'm delighted to introduce Joy Kim, our wonderful Deputy Director, Jason Yee, our Assistant Director, um, who's also pretty great, and, um, our amazing Bill Courier, who is our Manager of Finance and Operations.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, and welcome to all of the Library staff that are here today. Thank you for, um, bringing this budget forward. I, um, just had one question really, maybe two. Um, the first one is, I know that in last year's budget, we prioritized a social worker to work at the Central Square Library, and it was one of

the positions that we, um, moved up before the April deadline.

Um, knowing that we would have maybe some fiscal challenges. So, given that the Central Square Library has been closed, and I know we did hire a terrific, uh, woman to take on this position, I'm just curious, um, what, what has she been doing, um, during this time to help our vulnerable residents, in particular our unhoused community? And how, um, will she take that work forward into the next budget year?

**DIRECTOR MARIA MCCAULEY:** Thank you so much for that question, through you, Chair. Um, we have been so fortunate, uh, thanks to everyone's support to hire, um, Marie Mathieu. She started in March, so her position was not filled initially due to the pandemic.

Um, Marie has just been fantastic. Um, during her short time with us, she's been onboarding with both, uh, the library and library staff, as well as across the service provider community. So, she's, uh, reached out and met with over 20, um, groups, um, area service providers, and she's also been, um, tapping into the national network.

There's a whole national network of social workers and

libraries. Um, and she's been connecting, uh, specifically within, uh, the local--the local community of social workers, um, including the outreach team of the multidisciplinary outreach team first step. And she's been, um, doing direct service with library patrons who are referred to her by other library staff for specific issues around housing, benefits, etc.

And she has been working to build relationships with unhoused folks in the immediate vicinity of the Central Square Library, for example, people who are sleeping outside on the Pearl and Franklin Street sidewalks. Um, she's also working to create a formal process for patrons, uh, to schedule time to meet with Marie, or referred by other people, um, for example, library staff.

And she is also, um, you know--that is, um, it goes back and forth. So, she's also working on providing warm handoffs with other City programs. Um, and she's creating this, uh, process for patrons. Um, so she's already made, um, really wonderful strides and we're looking forward to how she builds out the program. So, you know, she's designing this from the ground up, um, and we're looking forward to keeping you abreast of, of her, um, good work.

Thank you.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you. Mr. Chair, through you to Dr. McCauley, it sounds like she's jumped right in and really trying to immerse herself into the community, which is wonderful. I think this has been a long overdue, um, position in the library. Something that's been very, very needed, especially, um, those warm handoffs to other services and those--um, it sounds like she's doing direct service in person as well.

So, I look forward to, you know, continuing to hear updates about her work, um, and the good that she's going to be able to do for the Central Square Library. Um, and speaking of the Central Square Library, I have one other question, which is, um, prior to the pandemic, I know, um, Bill kept me very up to date on what was going on at the Central Square Library, um, with some of the renovations that were happening.

I know there was some cosmetic renovations to the kitchen area, to the lounge area, to some of the other community rooms. Um, do we have a sense of when that work will start again and a timeline for completion? Because I, I, I know there's a lot of people that are really eager to

get back into that Central Square Library, but, um, I know this work is, is ongoing.

**DIRECTOR MARIA MCCAULEY:** Thank you. Through you, Chair, um, we--um, yes, we are--we have done a lot of work during the pandemic for these are the short-term improvements, so the kind of the beautification and, and refreshments of furniture. Um, so work that has been included includes a new soft seating for ground and children's floors.

We've replaced every table and study carrel on the ground, Children's, Lewis Room, and the Literacy Center. We have a new work bar seating area on the ground floor facing the MLK Plaza. We've replaced all patron chairs, um, in all areas of the library, including the Lewis Room.

We've replaced the staff desk in the Tech Center Computer Room. We've replaced public computer table and public computers in the Children's Room. Um, we've replaced the public computer tables and public computers in the Literacy Center. We've replaced the shelving and storage in the Literacy Center.

So that area's going to look really very different and very, like, I think lovely and more spacious. Uh, we've

replaced the oversized story time stair cushions in the Children's Room Story Time area. And if you recall, those were very worn down and heavily used. Uh, we now have new, colorful, fun-shaped soft seating in the Children's Room.

We've replaced and expanded the graphic novel shelving in the Children's Room. Uh, we, uh, replaced a bubbler, and we've painted--uh, we've done paint, paint, touch-up and minor dry wall repair throughout. I knew the bubbler seems like a little thing, but it's like a big celebration because it wasn't working for so very long.

Uh, we do have other things in process. For example, uh, we're working on, um, some signage and, uh, directional signage, refreshing some of the outdoor public display case and caps for bookshelves. So that is still in the works. And then we have upcoming to repair and refinish the Lewis Room kitchenette, to replace the Lewis Room carpet, am, and then just some additional wayfinding, uh, signage.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Um, thank you. Mr. Chair, through you, I, I feel like there was going to be a lighting study as well. Some, um, additional study to figure out how to--what we could do to change the lighting in there should be a little bit, um, less cost.

**DIRECTOR MARIA MCCAULEY:** Yes, yes, we do have lighting, uh, lighting recommendations as well. That was just part of the, um, initial, um, look at it, but we, um, are not prepared to do implementation yet.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** So, there are lighting recommendations, but, um, it's not included in this budget because they haven't been brought forward at this point?

**DIRECTOR MARIA MCCAULEY:** Yeah, so, yeah, I'm happy to talk about this now or for the Public Investment Section. But, um, there, there are plans on to, um, um, to, um-- really what we--what I want to--what I would like very much to happen is a complete overhaul of the Central Square Branch so that it can be just as dignified and beautiful, um, and a exceptional physically as, uh, the Main Library Branch, as the Valente Branch, as so many of our branches are.

Um, I think that the community deserves that, and, um, so my hope is that we--um, and I think that we, we, we are putting together a package for, um, an appropriation. And the first very first step is to actually do a proper building program study. And that is, um, to make sure that, uh, we know how the building will be used in the future.



You know, for, um, for example, uh, through a public process, we want to hear from users, we want to look at trends, we want to look at, you know, how to honor the past but also look forward. Um, and that has to happen before, um, really doing an overhaul with a physical design. Um, so, um, that is in the works. Um, so I was going to touch on that later on, but I'm, I'm happy to have addressed it at, at this point in time as well.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** So, Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please, Mr. Kale.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** So, we've been working with, um, Director McCauley, and we had talked about these two appropriations previously and now that we're, uh, pretty much done with this first round of changes to the Central Square Library, we'll be sitting down with her and, uh, we're working on, she said, on a recommendation and, uh, hopefully get that up to the Council, uh, for a review prior to the end of the fiscal year.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Oh, thank you, Mr. Chair, through you. So, as I understand it, because this

was one of my questions that I asked for the Public Investment Section, um, you know, what is the plan for the Central Square Library? I didn't see any capital investments, uh, for this year. So, it sounds like there will be an appropriation coming forward to do a study of the Central Square Library and the future use, excuse me, and that we will have that before July 1.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** That's our plan. Again, we're finalizing that, um, as well as the lighting. And I know that was on our list that we had communicated previously, so, um, that, that's our intention.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay. Thank you, because, um, you know, I think we've, we've said it a, a number of years in a row here that, um, the Central Square Library definitely needs a complete overhaul. And I think I'm, I'm happy that we've gotten these short-term fixes in place and, and will be ready on the day that the Central Square Library opens its doors again, which will be a very joyous occasion in the community.

Um, but that we should really be thinking about how we are going to be addressing this issue and making sure that the Central Square Library has a complete overhaul. It's

one of the most used, um, in the community. Uh, it's the most used branch library in the community, and it is served by, um, so many different neighborhoods.

So, it will--I'm excited that we are thinking about really moving this forward. So, I didn't see it in the Capital Investment this year, but I'm glad to hear that it is coming forward, um, as an appropriation soon. So those were my two questions. Um, thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Vice Mayor. Councillor Nolan, you're up next.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. I echo the excitement of the, the way that we're working through and improving our library offerings. I want to say, um, I do have a question about the expansion of hours, and I want to preface this by saying I am so excited and supportive of libraries.

My kids use them all the time. We use the branch libraries, I continue to use them. I am lining up in front of the main library often in the last few months, um, trying to get my book that I took out. And I'm very appreciative of the staff who has worked hard to make sure

that, that that happens during this pandemic.

I look forward very much, as, uh, Director McCauley knows, I've been--I, I know it is so needed in the community that I keep pushing for us to open even more because there's so many people in our community who use the branches, not just to peruse for books, but also for, you know, workspace. And so, I, I am fully supportive of all, uh, the libraries.

There was someone who asked me a question about why are you wanting to cut them back in my question because it is a public question and I, I do think it's, it's incumbent on us to ask the question I, I, I am asking, which--and I also fully support the idea of having more hours on weekends and on--and, and evenings.

My question is, given that it may be in the future, we, we, we never know, we are incredibly fortunate, and yet in the future, there may well be a time when it is more challenging to, uh, to develop city budgets that are balanced. Um, is this the, the time to increase hours as opposed to shifting hours so that the idea is--and my question is, instead of increasing hours in order to add the weekend or the night time, or you know, the five days a

week, would it make more sense to shift hours?

And that would be based on perhaps an assessment of use. I know that while some, uh, branches are, are fully used, other times, if you go in, I have often been there when my kids were younger, where we were the only ones in the branch library. Would it make more sense to shift it to an evening or another time when there would be more people there to not put as much stress on the staff?

Um, so, so that wrapped up is, is kind of my question of how are we thinking of this? And are we making sure--is there a plan to assess how this expansion goes? How will we measure if it's the best use of our--uh, of our resources moving forward? And I did put in a couple of stats, which I very much appreciated that there are other cities that are not fortunate enough to have as many branches, but they do have a higher circulation per capita.

So, I believe we can, um, still maintain a very high circulation per capita and yet perhaps rethink a little bit how we're organizing. So, so that was the question, I look forward to the answer, but again, this is not about me not supporting the libraries, it's about me fully supporting them and wanting us to do the best we can as a City to meet

the needs of our residents.

**DIRECTOR MARIA MCCAULEY:** Thank you. Through you, Chair Carlone, um, I am really thankful to work in a city where residents love and appreciate their seven libraries and are amazing library workers who are so very committed to the library's mission of welcoming all inspiring minds and empowering community.

And I'm so very excited, like all of you, uh, to continue the reopening of our libraries, including restoring all of our services at the Main Library, opening the hive maker space, and expanding branch hours. Since my first stay on the job four and a half years ago, I have heard from residents about the importance of expanding branch hours for increased access and more equitable service, especially for working families, students, and individuals.

Many patrons shared with us during our Strategic Planning Process in 2019, and subsequent Open Hours Study in early 2020 that they would really like to see us not only restore, but expand our branch hours. We started our expansion of branch hours, uh, with the opening of the Valente Branch in November, 2019 with six days of service.

The importance of expanding branch hours and investing in library staffing was also reflected in an order by city Council in November, 2019. This order requested funding for additional positions to be allocated to maintain the extended hour schedule that had been temporarily, temporarily in place at the O'Connell Branch, while the Valente Branch was closed for construction.

The order additionally requested an emphasis on full-time employment and a review of staffing at the other branches with the objective of maintaining equitable daytime and evening hours across other branches, including Boudreaux, O'Neill, and Collins.

Thanks to the City Manager and city leadership, we were able to increase the O'Connell Branch Library hours in 2020. And although the pandemic disrupted us, we look forward to expanding to five weekdays of service, fulfilling that commitment, and that includes three nights at all of six of our libraries, as well as offering Saturday hours at the O'Neill Branch.

These Saturday and evening hours are especially important for working individuals as we--as, as we've talked about. I also want to mention that a lot of

respondents also said that they wanted daytime hours as well. Um, I also want to just, um, speak to, um, uh, the point about other libraries and, you know, for us, usage is, uh, one metric, but I think also, um, satisfaction of our users is very important to us, and we want to listen, right?

When we're doing the Strategic Plan Process or, um, the, uh, the Hours Study, we really want to find out what it is that our patrons want and need for us. And we heard loud and clear, it's really about the hours and increasing, uh, branch hours.

Um, so the impact, um, of, um, we want to hear that users in the future are more satisfied with our, our hours, and we are also looking at how well we do in terms of access and equity. So not only would we be looking for feedback from patrons, we'll also be looking for feedback from our partners who are, um, our partners around issues of equity.

Um, and also there are a lot of other Minuteman Libraries, um, who, um, who do have, um, great circ stats. Um, and, um, I would say that those libraries are very different from the Cambridge community. Not only do we



have, um, an urban, uh, densely populated, uh, community, uh, we also have, uh, various levels of socioeconomic, um, status and, uh, more diverse, uh, patron base and population than those more suburban libraries. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Nolan?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes, thank you. Um, I really look forward to hearing about the results of those studies. And the reason I use the circulation, it was actually in the data you provided us in the budget book, so clearly that's one of the appropriate measures. It was something, um, I built on because you, um, you know, Cambridge was listed in that, so it seemed like an appropriate.

And there are other measures as well, and I look forward to us, um, looking into that. And I, uh, definitely, as I said in the beginning, I definitely appreciate the, the desire to increase access and I, I hope this will achieve that. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Councillors, uh, does anyone else wish to raise an issue? We don't have any hands up at this moment. Councillor Zondervan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, um, just want to really appreciate, um, the efforts by the Library Department to expand hours in our branch libraries. As, uh, Ms. McCauley said, it's, it's really important for our residents to have access to this vital service.

And, you know, it's, it's really a model for what we should be doing, which is looking at ways to expand our services, um, and, and to make them more equitable, because not everybody has access to, uh, a quiet place to study, uh, the internet, and home, um, or, or information that, that still lives in books. Um, it, it may be hard to believe, but not everything is on the internet yet.

Um, so I, I really appreciate, uh, these efforts, and, and I hope that we can continue to expand, uh, our library hours and, and make this incredible resource, uh, more accessible to our residents. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Um, I might add that in many ways, the libraries are the social centers of the city, and I realize the library has expanded its role, certainly over the last 30 years or so, to meet those needs. I often wonder why they're not--if one

were to start over, why they're not part of a school so that the school gets used, uh, more. I, I doubt there are facilities that are used as much as the library in any city. Um, are there any other questions that--

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Mayor Siddiqui.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mayor Siddiqui, please, um, you have the floor.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Thank you. I just wanted to, uh, just say that I really appreciate, um, Maria and Joy's partnership around the library fees, and of course, the City Manager and the last COVID--COVID has obviously put a wrench in all those things, and, you know, we were doing things fine free for this year, um, and as we now, we start an actual pilot, um, and look forward to working together on that.

So, I wanted to highlight that. And then also, uh, there were many occasions where our office partnered with you to get books out to the community. Um, and, you know, I think from many of the residents from, uh, you know, I think, uh, 364, 402, uh, 362, they really, you know, really, really appreciated, um, those book--those books that, uh, the city gave. So, want to just highlight those

two things and I appreciate that. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Madam Mayor. If there are no other councillor comments, um, I'm going to move to refer the library budget to the full Council with a favorable recommendation. Mr. Clerk.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The next department that we will discuss is Human Services, and, um, I'm going to switch the order. The Vice Mayor was very efficient in his number one, but I think I'm going to do this one in a different order. I'm going to start at the bottom. Councillor McGovern, um, you have the first

question for Human Services and Ms. Semonoff.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. McGOVERN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
Um, so, I mean, we talked about this last night, so, and I, I apologize, I actually had two questions and I must not have sent you the second one. So, if I'm going to ask you the one that we didn't cover last night, if you can't answer today, fine.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I'm sure we trust you that you really did have two. It's very clever.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. McGOVERN:** I got it right here. I just--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Go for it.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. McGOVERN:** So, uh, youth programs, um, and our youth--and our Youth Centers. So first and foremost, just I really want to--I'm a big fan of our Youth Centers, and I think it's really, um, similar to libraries where, you know, we have--when you think of a city our size, we have so many branch libraries.

You think of how many Youth Centers we have, you'd be hard pressed to find a city our, our geographical size that has as, as many Youth Centers as, as we have. And that just shows our commitment to our young people. And I think

that's great. Um, what I wanted to ask about though was, uh, and I didn't see anything in, in the budget is, you know, what are we doing to try and just sort of reimagine what goes on within our Youth Centers?

Obviously, you know, back in the day, when I was younger, Youth Centers were, there was a whole lot of basketball going on and, and, you know, and things like that. And I know that we've tried to, you know--there's, there's more computer time now, there's more things.

What are we doing and how can we sort of assess, reimagine, reinvent what goes on within our Youth Centers to make sure that they're not just fun places for kids to go, which is obviously important, but they're also helping prepare kids for the 21st century, and how do they connect more strongly to our schools so they're kind of more of an extension of, of our--so what are we doing around that?

And is there any budgetary allocations that are needed to, um, sort of make some of those adjustments and changes?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Through you, Mr. Chair, um, so I can start and then I may need to call on some of my colleagues to provide a little assist here. But let me just first say that as panelists with me today

are our three assistant directors, Michelle Farnham, Sue Walsh, um, Janice Alger, and our terrific fiscal and budget person, Giovan Alvarez.

We have in the, I don't know, peanut gallery, um, in as attendees, a whole lot of our other, uh, leadership staff who are here. Um, so there's been a lot that's happened both pre-pandemic and during the pandemic to reimagine some of what's happening within the Youth Centers.

And I would say that, um, two important pieces here, um, and I think it's worth another conversation at a--a longer conversation at another time. But, um, for the last several years, the youth programs have been working closely with the high school, um, around, um, particularly their deep support for black and brown students.

And, um, working with the deans at the high school around the depth of the relationship that many of our, um, Youth Center staff who are largely reflective of the students, um, who are at the Youth Centers, um, have developed with our teams. Um, and interesting relationships developing as our staff were in the high school and walking through the halls with some of the deans and the students

coming up pre-pandemic, um, and, you know, clearly deeply connected, um, to our staff.

And there's been the beginning of an effort led by, um, Melissa Castillo, who heads up our youth programs to work with the schools together with deep work being done with Leslie around creating student success plans, um, through the Youth Centers for students. And there's a lot more work that the high school's interested in, in pursuing that work with our staff.

Um, throughout the pandemic, um, you know, we've run a variety of internship programs through the Youth Centers, which were in-person opportunities. And the work that's been done by our staff, um, largely remote with some in-person outdoor gatherings during the deepest part of the, um, pandemic, um, to support our young people, um, and particularly to provide social-emotional support to our young people.

Um, I think I spoke about this perhaps at one other-- on one other occasion, um, but the work that's been done through the more Youth Center, um, with young women, um, particularly, um, and largely young women of color, um, uh, who have been writing poetry and who have been sharing



their poetry, we're about to run another, um, uh, summer program.

We ran the program last summer and then continued it throughout the fall and the spring. And, um, what this meant to a lot of our young people? The depth of the connection and the depth of the sharing among the young people has been critically important.

I think many of you know about our Boys II Men program, which has been around for a while, and the deepening of that program across this year and continuing this summer. And the individual who runs that program has become a major force in training, um, staff, um, through our community-based agencies as well.

Um, so, um, I guess what I want to say is we've learned a lot throughout the pandemic about, um, different ways of connecting with our young people, and I believe post-pandemic, the work with the schools and with Leslie on continuing the success plans. And this is largely at the high school level.

Um, we operated, um, this spring, um, a middle school internship program, um, that was operated by the Youth Centers, which is something we've never done before, but

to, um, begin to have young people at the middle school age level, thinking about their future, not that we don't have those conversations with young people within the Youth Centers, but an internship, we had 40 young people who wanted to be part of that, um, internship this spring.

And it was largely successful. And that's something which the staff are really interested in building on that model, both this summer, um, and into the fall. Um, and there's, um, another relatively recent change, which will continue to grow, is we've always run collaboration between the Office of Workforce Development and the Youth Centers, um, uh, program for 14- and 15-year-olds, um, uh, in which they essentially designed their own intervention, whatever it was.

And we've been working for the last two years with the National Design Museum, um, in, um, reinventing what that program looked like. And there are right now, um, last I saw, um, and I will forget the name, but it's Millie Boards, I think I went to look at some of these.

We've got, um, I think it's 12 different groups operating through three of the Youth Centers in which, um, young people are designing and creating and using the, um,

design principles to push their own thinking. So, I would say that there's been an enormous amount that had begun before the pandemic, and, um, that has, um, continued and will get modified as a result of what we've learned through the pandemic.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** No, thank you. Uh, thank you for that. I didn't know if, if any of the staff had any, any thought else, but I, I, I, I really appreciate it. I know there's, there's so much going on, um, in thinking about how we can--you know, as we move forward, just thinking about how we can continue to, you know, not obviously not only the social-emotional piece and the community building piece, which is huge.

But the--you know, having the opportunity to, uh, use our Youth Centers as a way of helping bridge the, the gap between, uh, you know, Kendall Square and, and many parts of the, the city and, and other things in, in ways in which we can, um, again, just sort of think outside the box and reimagine, you know, what the programming is. So again, I thank you, um, big fan, um, but also obviously always want to think about how we can get better and move forward. I

appreciate it.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Um, the next Councillor--Well, I do want to say that, uh, the areas that Councillor McGovern highlighted, uh, are in many ways, uh, the shining example of your office and what the office has succeeded in. And, um, I don't see how any city comes close, so you should congratulate your whole team on that. The next speaker is Councillor Nolan.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you, Chair Carlone. I did--we did go over some of this, uh, question earlier. I do have another question that, um, hopefully won't come as a surprise, but I, I just want to reiterate, I know everyone's been working really, really hard, and I know we want to get there.

I, I just hope that very soon the timeline that we talked about last night is going to be coming forward and it's, you'll surprise us with a quicker timeline than you think you could do, because we have storefronts, we have Youth Centers, we have so many spaces in the city where I know space is a problem.

I also know that the pipeline of teachers and high quality, uh, people is, and yet we've been working so hard

to develop a pipeline within our own group of young people who graduate, who, who we can compensate them properly and get a really--be a, a, a beacon for, um, uh, well, a truly universal pre-k with a, a hybrid situation.

So, I don't know if there's more to add to that, because we did talk about that, uh, last night. So, I don't know if, if anyone on the staff wants to add to that. That was my question, and then I had one more about coordination.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Um, I think that, um--through you, Mr. Chair, I want to be clear that I completely understand the urgency that the Council is presenting here. And I ultimately think that, um, the timeline for us to come back and present what are the major decisions that need to be made in order to move forward, I think is critically important.

And I just want to say that there are two different issues, um, and they're not unrelated. One is the, um, urgency that the Council is expressing about, just go get this storefront and set up a program in it. And I hear that piece.

Um, but the, um, creation of a universal pre-k program

for every four year old in the city and the work that needs to happen at the schools, as well as in the City to do that, I don't want to mislead--I will come back with a timeline, but I don't want to mislead the Council, um, to believe that um, we may well be able to move more quickly to do some pieces, but a full rollout of a universal pre-k for every four-year-old in the city, um, is, um, an enormous undertaking, which I welcome.

I am eager for us to move on that, but I just don't want the Council to believe that in two months I'm coming back with a plan for how in a year from now, we will have every four-year-old in the city in a universal pre-k. That's all. I just-- I don't want to leave this meeting, you may not be happy, but I don't want to be misleading you about, um, what that could look like.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. I appreciate that. And, and maybe the answer also is, we all know you were at a, probably, when was it, 15 years ago, the Capuano Center in Somerville started. Maybe it's really time for us to include that in our planning.

I also, as someone who fully supports, you know, the work we're doing in the public schools have also said

publicly, it's fine by me and, and there's a lot of early educators who think that this should not be part of the school district because three and four-year-olds have a very different psychological and emotional, uh, need.

And the--and the danger of it sliding over into the--and being run by the school department, they will do their best, but it--but the entire culture there is different. It's about learning. It's, uh, the test culture starts really early. So, I'm happy if this stays within DHSP, and if the answer is, we desperately need to find a place to build our own Capuano Center, which I know many of us have heard about and said for years, that serves 332 children in, in Somerville. It's a incredible facility.

You know, when we talk about the universal pre-k here, it's only a few hundred kids, you know, more. And, and so I'm just hoping we--I, I don't expect you to come out and say, yes, we're going to solve this in six months, but I I, I just do hope that--I, I know we're all working on it, and I stand ready to do whatever it takes to, to ramp it up.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Uh, my second question is, is just, just about something we've talked a lot about

also, and this is in all of DHSP. And, um, I apologize, I did not send this in advance, so hopefully, it can be answered, in that--in that, are we better capable to make sure that there's seamless coordination of information among the various programs between the schools and the afterschool and the--um, all of the programs that we serve, it's all the same kids, and yet I know over the years, we have sought to make sure that since it is all our kids, that there's a seamless sharing of information because I, I know it's been a pandemic, but it's even more important in this situation of Social-Emotional Learning to ensure that the staff who are working with kids are coordinated and are reaching out to families to understand where each child is.

So, I don't--that sometimes is a combination within the budget of, I know there had been many efforts over the years, and I just wondered if there was a, a status update on how that coordination of information goes, in particular, being able to share systems of the type of information, that would be helpful to staff working with our kids.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Through you, Mr. Chair, um, complicated question with a couple of



different answers. Um, I would say that, um, on the city side, um, we are closer than we've been before. We, I think, talked about last year that we, um, invested in a, um, uh, data system that's helping us internally, um, have much better information, and will allow us to share more information.

It allows us to report to ourselves on the progress we're making or not making, and who we're serving, um, at any given moment. And there's definitely high interest in, um, coordinating, um, information about young people between the schools, the city, um, the community agencies, um, the agenda for children, um, both, uh, on the, I think folks, no, there's two, correct--two co-directors, Susan Richards, who works, um, primarily on the City side, and Kari Milner, who works on the school side, have worked enormously hard to create a portal in the school system.

Um, what I would say is there's still more work to be done to be in a place, and there are serious questions about this, about sharing information and how that information sharing happens. I would say we are not there yet, but there's a huge amount of interest and effort being made.

Um, I will say that the pandemic has created--I mean, the, the good news side of some of what's happened as a result of the pandemic has created new partnerships and relationships around sharing of information.

I would say that the relationships between, um, both our staff and the community agencies with, um, the, um, family liaisons with Robin Harris and her team, um, the communication between principals and our staff, um, over the course of this year about young people that they were concerned about and linking our staff with families who, um, wanted and were, um, interested in more support, and we were able to provide that support in a number of different ways.

So as with many systems, some of this ends up falling, um, on individual people. And so, the ability and willingness of individual folks who lead different programs, different schools, we have some differential, um, uh, relationships that make it easier in some places than others.

But I would say that the--um, our ability to, um, reach further, um, and connect better, we were able to take advantage of the pandemic to do that in ways that we have

not always been able to do that before. And so, I think that's been seen by the schools as a great benefit, certainly seen by families as a benefit in our staff, so my hope is we will be able to continue to build on that.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. And as you know, obviously, we all always want to keep privacy in mind, and yet there are often families wanting this information to be shared, and it's stymied, and yet it prevents various people working with a range of populations from being able to provide the, the most. And this is, you know, if, if our IT and other budget, you know, needs to, uh, contribute a new program here, I'm not--I, I don't think we need to create a new one, but I'm really glad to hear it's in process.

I just hope that it, it continues, because particularly with the new year coming on, let's make sure we hit the ground running on that. Thank you, Councillor Carlone--Chair Carlone, and thank you, Assistant City Manager, Semonoff.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Vice Mayor, followed by Councillor Zondervan. Vice Mayor?

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Through you to, uh, Assistant City Manager, Semonoff, I had one question about Workforce Development programs and the, the future of the Workforce Development programs.

It sounds like DHSP had embarked with the, um, the Donahue Institute at UMass to come up with recommendations on how to better serve some of our, um, our young people and adults in Cambridge who aren't linked to a workforce development program, um, and those recommendations are going to be looked at.

I'm curious if there's a timeline that we can talk about in terms of when, um, we will see the, the output of that work. Um, as you know, this is something we've been--I think we've been talking about it every budget season since I've been on the Council, just the, the, the real need for Workforce Development here in Cambridge.

And, um, I think having some kind of timeline would really be helpful for us to frame the conversation and, and know when to kind of come back and expect something back from DHSP.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Well, this one's easier than universal pre-k, through you, Mr. Chair. Um, we actually, um, are working in the--with, um--let me

take one step back. Um, this was work that we undertook, um, before the beginning of the pandemic with UMass Donahue.

It was a wonderful collaboration between the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and the City to jointly, um, work with, um, the UMass Donahue Institute. We were doing this work at the same time that the, um, Cambridge Community Foundation was doing its equity work.

And it's not surprising that the conclusions from the equity work are very much, um, echoed in the, um, study. Um, my, um, hope is that within the next, um, 10 days, we will be able to share that report, um, put it before the city Council, um, and then invite the city Council later in June, along with the, um, CRA and the, um, various stakeholders, um, the workforce, um, jobs consortium, and, um, others to hear presentation from the UMass Donahue Institute on those, um--on that report.

And then I am imagining that, um, you know, this work is very much aligned with the Envision goals for Workforce Development. And I'm imagining that following the presentation for the, um, expanded stakeholders, the Council may well want to, um, look at that within one of

the Council Committees.

But, um, back in, um, 2019, um, then City Councillor, Siddiqui, and the City Manager convened a jobs consortium, um, and it was a really exciting event. And many of those players have worked together throughout the pandemic, um, to be able to deliver services.

But now we want to be able to take what we've learned, which is, won't be that surprising to anybody, but what are the things that we can now collectively do that will help jumpstart things for the populations who have been least well served to date, um, by an expanding economy, even if it's been contracting a little during the pandemic.

But, um, so I'm really looking forward. So, I, I think the timeline on that is we're hoping to be able to get this to the Council and be able to convene, uh, meeting up the stakeholders, um, before the end of June to hear about the report. And then we can work with the Council after that on what are the ways that the Council wants to be engaged by committee or otherwise.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair, through you to Ms. Semonoff I'm glad to hear that that's coming forward, uh, sooner rather than later. I

think what we've seen over the past, particularly over the past 15 to 16 months, is we, we really do need to connect our residents to higher paying jobs, more, uh, you know, jobs that have better benefits that, you know, we, we, we really don't have a safety net is what we learned over the last 15 months.

And in order to create that safety net, we really need to connect our residents to those good paying jobs with benefits. Um, so glad to hear that's coming forward. Um, the other question that I had was around you, you mentioned stakeholders, and, you know, one of the places that we can do really great jobs training is through our, our Technical Arts High School.

Are any of the recommendations that came from the Donahue, um, report, are those going to be included, um, you know, for ages 14 to 18? Or is this really the workforce development that you're looking at 18 plus?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Yeah, Um, through you, Mr. Chair. Um, this is really focused on the 18 plus. Um, and we know that--and I, I can--and I'm not giving it away any big secrets that the, um, 18 to 24-year-olds are a big focus of, um, who needs support.

Um, it turns out that, um, many of our American born black community members, um, um, are, um, a group that, um, could use way more support here, and low-income women with children. Um, those are the three--I don't think I'm giving away big secrets here to say that those are the three groups who, um, are um, probably the key focus of who's not able to move ahead right now, and who do we need to focus our efforts on collectively moving forward.

So, it really is the focus on the, um, 18 and up, which--um, but I do think that the work, um, as RSTA takes a look at, um, the sort of reinventing itself and what that looks like, it's certainly something that we're eager to, um, join them in that thinking.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay, good, because I know if you're--if we're really thinking about taking a whole holistic approach around connecting our young people, in particular, our at risk young people, really thinking about the RSTA program, retooling it, or, you know, finding opportunities for us to partner with somebody like a Minuteman to--that is offering way more opportunities for our young people who may not see college, um, as a--as a direct path right after high school.



And, you know, we should be providing those great opportunities, and, um, I think 14 to 18-year-olds is, you know, reaching back and making sure that we're really preparing our young people for, uh, success is, uh, critical.

So, um, you know, we'll definitely talk about that tomorrow night, uh, with the schools, but I look forward to the report coming forward. Thanks for the work that, um, you've done on this so far, and I look forward to digging into it. I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Madam Vice Mayor. Uh, we have two more Councillors, Councillor Zondervan, followed by the Mayor. Councillor Zondervan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, I, I'm always torn, you know, when we talk about this department, because you do so much amazing work, um, and, and I feel like it's, it's just too much. Like we're asking you to do everything from providing service to the homeless, to maintaining the golf course, and everything in between, and, you know, provide universal pre-k yesterday, please, um, you know, take care of our 18, 25-year-old and,

you know, everybody else. It's, it's just a lot.

And, and I really do worry that it's too much and that we're not--we're not able to get it done. And, you know, we, we've been talking about universal pre-k for years, and we talked about it last night, and, and you know, it, it is really frustrating 'cause it's like, why can't we just do it? Like, what is the holdup?

And, and I, I understand it's complicated and takes a lot of work, but, you know, let's just do it. I, I, I just--I don't get it. Um, I did notice that in the budget, we underspent, uh, in terms of actual versus, versus what was budgeted by, by something like \$55 million--by, uh, \$5 million. Did, did I get that right?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Close to that.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** So, what, what's the, the story there? I mean, again, you know, we're asking you to do so much and then we budget \$5 million, and, and that's not--that's not being spent. How, how does that happen?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Um, through you, Mr. Chair. So, there are, um, a, a number of different reasons why that's true. Um, and I, what I would also like

to say is we also spent, um, way more than that over and above what's here from different, um, buckets of money.

So, while we, as a department, underspent our, um, dollars here, a lot of the funding that we provided for services elsewhere are not reflected here. Some of them are, but a number of them were because we got federal money that allowed us to support things because the FEMA money.

So, some of the things that otherwise would have been funded, um, through the department were funded there. But I would say that largely what's reflected here, um, Councillor Zondervan, is, um, our programs that were unable to operate during the pandemic. Um, and, um, let me give you, um, an example.

Um, when we operate our community schools programs within each of the, um, schools, we typically contract with a number of programs that come in, um, soccer programs and science programs and, um, their vendors who we pay to provide. And because we were unable to provide those programs in that way this year, we didn't end up having those expenditures.

So that's an example. Um, the War Memorial, for example, we run the War Memorial Recreation Center, um, and

operate, um, uh, every afternoon, and evening, and on the weekends. We were unable to operate our program.

So, it's the underspending of our money, um, really reflects the, um, programming that we were unable to provide because of the pandemic when we were shut down in various ways. And some of the funding was replaced by federal funding that we otherwise would have been spending. Um, uh, but I would say primarily.

It reflects, and we could go through, um, you know, if you go back to the universal pre-k, we, um, had put money in because our expectation was a significant expansion of the scholarships that we would be able to provide to very low-income children to all the community programs.

Well, most of those community programs, first of all, they shut down in the beginning, and even when they reopened, they prioritized the families that they already had over the families that we had hoped to add to their program.

So, I think there's something like \$1million there that we were prepared to spend on additional scholarships, which we were unable to spend, although we were all of the time working to, um, try to get as many programs as

possible to accept our children. So that's just an example. It wasn't--it's largely the services--the programs that we were unable to operate during the pandemic.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, through you, Mr. Chair. That, that makes sense. Um, and I guess the, the hope is that we can continue to expand, uh, those programs now as we come out of the pandemic, um, because again, it's abundantly clear that we need, uh, all of it.

Um, you know, let's talk about, about housing. It seems like our, our approach to housing is really spread out across different departments. And we talked about it a little bit, um, last night as well, but, you know, it, it, it just feels like there's, there's cracks there that, that people follow through.

And, and we've asked about this a number of times to have a, a more coordinated, um, way to provide those services. You know, maybe having a separate department that's, that's, you know, in the Office of Housing Stability that's just focused on that specifically.

So, um, I, I don't know that you can necessarily answer that, but, um, I, I think it's something that we're

willing to think about, you know, maybe, um, having a, a comprehensive audit of all our departments and, and all the services that we provide to make sure that we're really doing it in, in the best possible way.

Um, specific question for, for you is around the King Open Extended Day, which is, again, you know, a great program, both of my kids come through it. I absolutely love that program, but, you know, it's, it's only in the King Open, and, you know, we talk about it every year, like, why can't we have more of that?

You know, the, the support services that we provide at the Kennedy Longfellow, um, you know, during the day school. You know, why can't we have more of that? So, it, it just feels like there's so many opportunities here to invest in our community, and, and when I see, you know, a proposed budget of, you know, \$69 million for the Police Department and \$45 million for Human Services, I, I just feel like we're not--we're not allocating our funds, um, in the best way to really support our community.

So I hope that we can continue to dig deep and, and really look at how can we expand these programs and, and fund them, uh, even if we have to reallocate funds from

policing, you know, and, and spend more money on supporting our community members from, you know, pre-k, all the way till they're 25, 30 years old, and hopefully, you know, thriving on their own and, and no longer needing any of our, of our help.

So, you know, thank you for all the, the great work you're doing. Um, it's, it's just not enough for me, so I, I'm going to vote no on this budget, not because of anything you're doing, but because of all the stuff that needs to be done that's, that's just not in here.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** Mr. Chair? Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, sir.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** Address one comment.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** I want to make it clear that there is not one penny in the Police budget. It affects the allocation to the Human Service budget. Totally separate in no factors, I just want to make that clear.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Madam Mayor, you are next.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And apologize, um, I didn't get all my questions in, uh, on time, uh, more of it's just comments. Uh, but, uh, wanted to appreciate the, the, the team over at Human Services for all the work around the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund.

Um, those early days, you know, are blur, but, you know, we had folks, um, from your team, you know, doing the, the language lines and so forth, so, you know, really wanted to appreciate that. Um, I had reached out to you about De Novo, Lawyer for the Day. Um, as I been mentioned and mentioned to other Councillors, um, my office is often in touch with the Legal Service agencies along with your team to see what the needs are and so forth.

So, I appreciate the increased rental assistance and the, the funding, um, to our legal aid, uh, organizations. I wanted to just look at, um, the CLC work. Um, you know, I know that in the description it says that we were able to provide, uh, folks with loaner laptops and so forth through the library, which, which is a good thing. We, we collaborated and got the--got Chromebooks to students who needed tech equipment, um, to connect to online program offerings.



And, you know, I think more of a question is, you know, I don't know how many laptops that was, but ultimately funding those Chromebooks, you know, we provide those Chromebooks in our school budget, um, you know, so wanted--it's more of a, I think I, you know, how do we--how do we provide these laptops to, I think, the students through the--through the Community Learning Center, who could really use them?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Through you, Mr. Chair. So, to date, we've done about 240 Chromebooks, and we have another 100 coming this summer, um, that we will be providing to students who need them. So, if you look at as a percentage of the students that we serve over the course of the year, it's close to 50% of our students will have received, um, Chromebooks.

Um, and, um, we were able, um, to--we got funding for that from a variety of sources, and we're able to spend some of our, um, additional, um, unspent funding to, um, enhance that. We also have given out 70 hotspots to date.

We have another 50 that we will be providing, um, this summer, um, so that, um, the need may well continue, um, as we move forward and, um, figure out exactly what our

programming with, um, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, what exactly our programming looks like, whether all of our classes are in-person or a combination of in-person and virtual, depending on the level, um, of English language, um, learning that.

Um, so we will continue to monitor, um, the availability of devices for students because it's really critical for them to be able to do that.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** And just to be clear, some of these are for devices to keep, or are they not--

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Some of these were devices to keep and some of these are loaners.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Great, great. Yeah, I think, um--I know Councillor Nolan had, had an idea around, I know they're seniors, some seniors who take their Chromebooks and they don't want them anymore.

So even thinking about how, you know, we get those Chromebooks, um, there's--so I think if there are folks who need Chromebooks, um, my goal would be that we at least let them keep--anyone who needs one, let them keep, um, given that it's related to the, the function, uh, for their, their classes.

So, I wanted to make that point. Um, and I think--I think that's it. I think on a point that Councillor Zondervan, uh, spoke about, you know, I think planning, uh, and setting up a plan, and talking through what it may look like to have something like the King Open Extended Day, you know, which school would be next, others, you know, I'd love to do that planning work with you all, um, to see, because I think it is such a great program, so why not have it?

And so, you know, I think, you know, we keep talking about it. Of course, COVID's impacted a lot of the planning, but I think it'd be something to, to talk about.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Through you, Mr. Chair. So, before we leave the Community Learning Center, can I just make one pitch? Because the, um, graduation, um, for the Community Learning Center is coming up, it's Thursday, June 17th, and I know the Mayor and the City Manager, um, have been there every year.

And I just want to encourage, um, last year's, um, graduation was, um, an amazingly powerful event. And so, if people are available, we will definitely closer to the time, send you the link so that you can come. But it's

really an astonishing, um, event, celebrating the hardest working students, um, in the City.

Um, but with respect to the King Open Extended Day, let me just say, we'd welcome opportunities to do broader planning around that. I actually think that, um--and the superintendent and I have talked about this before, and my hope is we will continue these conversations.

We have the ability to collectively do some of the work that's done at the King Open Extended Day with, uh, staff and programming who exist in the buildings. Um, and some of that depends on, um, different kinds of collaborations with principals, different kinds of collaborations with teachers, and perhaps the most complicated piece in any school, um, which is the robust sharing of classrooms.

But I actually think that thinking about the ways in which we can, um, without necessarily creating 130-kid program in one school as the next thing, what are the ways that we can actually build on? What is the critically important work in more than one school? And what would that look like? But I'm very interested, and I know my team is really interested in what are the ways, um, of, you know,

moving forward that we can better serve young people.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Yeah, great. I think, um, as we transition to the new superintendent that, you know, I look forward to those, those discussions, so thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mayor. Um, I'm sorry I let you speak before me because that's what I was going to focus on. Uh, my son went to King Open and there was a general teamwork in the program way back when-- Is that what allows it to succeed at the New King Open? Or is it the new facility, um, tied into that? Or it's just what you mentioned, Ms. Semonoff, that it's more of an attitude that everybody bought into?

The reason I'm asking is, it seems to me that any new school, i.e, Tobin, this could be part of the programming. Um, so what made it work there, and can we duplicate it?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Through you to you, there's--um, it's actually, um, all of the things that you described. Actually, you did a great job of, um, putting them together. I would say it helps to have a facility that has, um, um, more rooms perhaps, but it doesn't actually depend on that.

I would say the first and most important thing is it

depends on the leadership of the school, um, being invested in this, that it being a priority to collaborate between the school day and, um, out of school time staff, um, including those staff in a variety of ways.

And I would say this, and I mentioned this one, I was talking to Mayor Siddiqui, one of the most challenging things, and even at the King Open Extended Day, which is in so many ways, so much of it works, it's still challenging there, um, because you're asking school day teachers to leave their classrooms.

Um, we have some standalone classrooms, but we share classrooms with school day teachers. And all of you know how hard teachers work, and they don't often walk out the door the minute the school bell rings, but if we're going to welcome children into that classroom for us to be able to support them, we need to be able to get into the classroom.

So, I would say that there are many different things, but, um, first and foremost, I'm sure it takes, you know, great willingness on the part of City, um, or community staff to be eager partners. But it also takes a great desire on the part of principals and a willingness for them

and their staff to welcome us and use us in a manner which makes it valuable.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Can that be part of planning for any new school?

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Um, I think the answer is, it certainly could be. And one of the challenges of planning for a new school is you're planning for a longer horizon than the existing principal for that school.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** And so, as you plan--um, and maybe even the existing superintendent. Um, and so a lot of that depends on what are the understandings about what it would look like. But I, I actually think that there are many principles who, without fully understanding exactly what it would take to have a King Open Extended day, are eager to create these partnership. And so, I do think that there is opportunity here for us to work together.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mm-hmm. Thank you. I think you know that I was part of a Leslie College Private Endowment program that did that for the Old Haggerty

School, and the results were amazing, absolutely amazing. So, I, I think we all salute you on that. So, unless there are other questions or comments, and there doesn't appear to be--

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, there does appear to be. Yes. Mayor.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Sorry, I'm so annoying. Uh, one more thing. On the Workforce Consortium, uh, really, I think the, the, the second one we were supposed to do was a presentation of this report. So happy to work with your team on getting a second one on the books, uh, to have that further, uh, discussion that we were planning, uh, before COVID hit. So just wanted to say that. Thank you.

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER ELLEN SEMONOFF:** Wonderful.  
Wonderful.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. So, I think we're ready to move to refer the Human Services budget to the full Council with a favorable recommendation. Mr. Clerk.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes



Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - No

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-7, No-1, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** We are now going to move to the City Overview Financial Summaries Section. And, uh, I will suggest that Councillor Nolan, um, give her two questions.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. Um, I'm not sure I had, uh, spoken with the City Manager and, and Director, Kale. I don't know if they want to start out on one of my questions or if they want me to go.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** If this is regard to the investment policy. Is that one of your questions?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes, it is.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** I can start it off and then maybe you can supplement. So, I think we received the policy order that was adopted by the city

Council in late April with regard to looking at City funds that are invested, uh, to see if there is a policy recommendation that could be crafted to limit the amount of investment of city funds, um, with, uh, entities that, uh, deal with fossil fuels and for for-profit prisons.

Um, we have begun, um, the investigation and the exploration of that policy order. Uh, the thing that I think we've discovered, it's going to take a little more time to do it thoughtfully. And, um, we've had conversations with, uh, Councillor Nolan and the, uh, budget, uh, co-chairs to maybe come up with some language that would give us, um, uh, some additional time to basically, uh, continue that exploration and, uh, answer some questions that we might have, uh, with Councillor Nolan and the like.

So, um, we've crafted, uh, in collaboration some language that, uh, uh, we could put forward to basically give us, uh, about a six-time, six-month period, uh, to come back with recommendations from our Investment Advisory Committee and basically, um, continue the process to explore what the city Council order had asked for.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Kale.

Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes. And, and just to be--I, I know the entire Council passed this unanimously and also Mayor Siddiqui and, and you, Chair Carlone, were on that order as well. So, I'm happy to be included, and I'm also happy to make sure that everybody is included. I believe we had discussed, uh, Mr. Kale, a sentence that we would add to that investment policy in the book. Should I read it? Or do you want to, or?

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** No, you can read it, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. Can you all hear me if I change my--are you still hearing me?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, continue.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** And City Clerk has this language too, by the way.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Oh, then, should, should the Clerk read it, Chair Carlone, or do you want me to?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please read it, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. This would be

added to the section of the budget book that mentions the investment policy. Uh, it would read, "within six months of adoption of this budget, the Investment Committee will provide recommendations on any revisions to the investment policies to ensure that all city-owned investments follow the Council's directive to avoid investments with or in institutions, companies, or organizations, invested in or funding fossil fuel endeavors, or private prisons."

And to remind the Council, our investment policy is part of the budget book. It is reviewed annually just in the course of, of this, uh, review that we're doing now, and based on what had been in the policy order that was passed in in April, the idea is to add this sentence under the Investment Policy Section of the, of the book.

I don't know if, if other of the co-sponsors want to speak to it, but, but that's what, as Mr. Kale indicated, this process needs some more time and they would then come back with recommendations, whatever they would be on, on doing this.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Any other Councillor wish to speak on this matter?

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr.

Chair. And through you to, to Mr. Kale, um, do, do we buy any, uh, equipment from Hewlett-Packard?

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** Um, we checked yesterday and, uh, I believe we have not had a contract, um, with Hewlett-Packard directly since 2014, I believe. Um, that doesn't mean that, um, that third parties don't sell us, for example, print cartridges or stuff that were third party, but basically, we've had no contracts with them for several years.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Nolan, you have the--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. So, so that, I presume, will be added to the Investment Policy Book, uh, to the Budget Book. Right? We don't have to vote on it, it just--it happens?

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** Um, we will, based upon the Council making this motion approving, we'll make the amendment to the Investment Policy for the final adopted Budget Book, and then report back as requested

within six months.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. So, through you, Chair Carlone, do we make that as a--I know that Director Kale and, and Ms. Kincaid, we talked about it, but is that, that needs to be a motion from us saying this, this should be added? Is that correct?

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair, through you. So, this is the Finance Committee Meeting. So, I believe if, if that's the will of the Council, the appropriate motion would be to forward this as a policy order to the full city Council.

When this, um, the minutes from this, uh, meeting, uh, go to the Full City Council, that policy order, along with the rest of the, um, budget will appear and then Council can vote to adopt the policy order, which--and if I'm--if I'm understanding you correctly, Councillor Nolan, it's that the City Manager being hereby has requested to amend the, um, excuse me, Public Investment Section of the, um--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** No, the Investment Policy Section of Financial Summaries.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** The Investment Policy Section of the 2022 Fiscal Year Budget Book to read the

senates that, um, Councillor Nolan just read.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes. And will that be before the Council in time for the final budget vote if it's in June 7th?

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Yes. The final budget vote will come with this, from the--from the minutes of this meeting, which will be ready for the, um, the vote on June 7th.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. Then, then, do I make that motion here to forward it to the Council then? So, moved.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that motion, and again, I'll just say it one more time for the record so everybody knows what they're voting on, that the, uh, City Manager being hereby is requested to amend the Investment Policy Section of the FY22 Budget Book to include the, the sentence, "Within six months of adoption of this budget, the Investment Committee will provide recommendations on any revisions to the investment policies to ensure that all city-owned investments follow this Council's directive to avoid investments with or in institutions, companies, or organizations invested in or funding fossil fuel endeavors

or private prisons."

On that motion;

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Councillor Nolan, your second question.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. Yep, I will ask, uh, the other question, which was also forwarded, which has to do with the PACE program. It is mentioned once in the budget under the Finance Administration on Chapter 5, page 30, that we had passed an order on PACE, um, and I'm just was wondering if there's more detail in this proposal.



I know that the Finance Committee has been working on it, and I'm not sure if this should be included in the budget. And if it requires, then for us to understand what the, you know, proposal is moving forward, because this would have, uh, financial and budget implications.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** Through you, Mr. Chair to Councillor Nolan. Um, so we did get the policy order. We have been working on, um, investigating what the implications are adjoining the PACE program would be in forwarding something to the Council for, um, acceptance.

Um, we have met with representatives of Mass Development, and Community Development and have gone through that process. Um, I think one of the things that we're a little concerned about, you know, we have discussed this, is that the program does allow, um, multi-family residences, uh, five units or more to participate in the PACE program.

However, the PACE program does basically, when you sign up for it, um, basically the encumbrances against the property. So, when the property is sold, it follows the property, not the individual. Um, at the same token, if in fact you sign up for the PACE program and you basically,

uh, are agree to a lien against your property to basically do the improvements, if in fact you default on the, um, commitment, um, the lender of the monies that you had your improvements done with, um, can seize your property with foreclose on your property.

And I think we've been internally discussing while commercial industrial clearly, you know, participating in the PACE program has advantages, I think we're a little bit leery of, of putting residential homeowners in a position where if they sign up for the PACE and for whatever reason, can't meet their obligations to expose themselves for foreclosure that frankly are outside the city's control.

And I think, um, my understanding is it would be probably advantageous to join the PACE program without having the residential component. But it, it appears that the only way we could do that is if there's, uh, special legislation to eliminate the residential component of the PACE program.

And as I said, I think we're a little bit concerned that I think there's some examples in other states where residential property owners, uh, were foreclosed upon because they couldn't make the payments of the energy

improvements.

And I guess we're concerned that we never want to put residential individuals in that position where their property could be foreclosed by an outside entity who provided the funding for the PACE program. I think the manager may want to chime into it.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Before you do that, Mr. Kale, please explain to the public what PACE means.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** Um, I will, I will probably defer, since I'm--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** In your own words, in your own words.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:**--to know that acronym right off the--uh, let's say it's Property Assessed Clean Energy. Property Assessed Clean Energy Program.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** So, I, I guess through you, Mr. Chair, as, as someone who was treasurer for 14 years and is proud to say that I worked with many property tax owners to avoid taking their property, I think it's something the City of Cambridge should be very proud of. I will not recommend any program that allows someone

other than the City to take someone's residential property.

So as long as that's there, I will not make that recommendation. I apologize if Councillors failed, that's not appropriate, but I will not risk people taking Cambridge property based on joining this PACE, because at the end, I think it'll set a mock in the City of Cambridge none of us should be, be proud of.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. I appreciate that this is going into some more detail than I expected with this level question. I appreciate there are some questions. It would just be helpful then perhaps we should discuss this in some kind of committee to understand what we can do, because the goals of the program, the entire goal is to make it easier and financially feasible for building owners to put solar panels basically and clean energy into their buildings, which is a goal that we have had for, uh, many, many years in Cambridge.

So if, if we can't do it through this program, then if there's some other way we can do it, or if we can carve out. I mean, I just, I know we share the goals and I, I agree with obviously the City Manager saying we don't want

to be in a position where a property will be taken, and yet we also want to have the benefits of what this program promises.

So, if, if this can't, then it would be really helpful to have something, you know, some recommendation writing for how it is that we can achieve those goals in response to this. So, uh, that's--I'll, I'll leave it at that. And I see the City Manager nod in his head. I, I think, again, we share the goals, it's critically important we find a way to do something like this. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I think, uh, you've raised a good point, and I, I think it's highly complex, and this is probably not the place to talk anymore about it, but thank you for raising it. So, the next speaker is Councillor Zondervan. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to quickly follow up on, on the PACE discussion. I, I certainly agree that we're not going to make a lot of progress out of here, um, but I've been working on, on this program for many years, uh, also as, as Chair of CPAC.

And I would be happy to have a, a committee hearing in

the Health Environment Committee so we can, uh, dig into it more, and, and figure out exactly how we can make this work. I mean, I, I certainly appreciate and understand the concern, but, you know, banks can foreclose on people's properties even now if people don't pay the mortgage.

So not entirely clear why this will be terribly different from that, but, but again, happy to, to have a committee discussion about it.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you for offering. I, I think that is the most appropriate place. And thank you, Councillor Nolan, for bringing it up. Councillor Zondervan, did you have a follow up?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm all set.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please, Mr. Manager, go ahead.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DePASQUALE:** This is important to me. I think the difference is the City of Cambridge doesn't recommend to a property owner to buy, make a loan at a bank. We would be part of this recommendation. We

would be the one who accepted it, and that is a big difference to me. It's coming under our recommendation.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. I'm sure when we bring this--when it's--if it's brought to a Committee, uh, we'll look at all the issues as you've also represented. I don't believe there are any other hands up. So, um, thank you for the discussion.

I'm going to move to refer, let me get the wording right. The City overview Financial Summaries under Revenue Budget to the full Council with a favorable recommendation.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Um, the next

section, um, which is not in the order that we've been given. Excuse me for a second. Oh, I guess we covered Revenue as well. The Revenue Section, Financial Summaries and Revenue were one set of questions, so we're down to our last section, I believe, that is Public Investment. And the first person with questions is the Vice Mayor. Vice Mayor, you have the floor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm like so lucky today to get the first of everything. I keep trying to leave for one second.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Someone is very efficient. I don't know who. Yes, Vice Mayor, go right ahead.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** We are on Capital; is that right?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Public Investment.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Public Investments. Okay. So, we disposed of my first question, which was around the Central Square Library. My second question is around school buildings and capital investments. We, um, invested this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic in air scrubbers in each classroom to help with ventilation to



address the public health crisis, um, for an airborne virus.

These are really loud and they are only intended as a temporary fix. And this is not the last airborne virus that we will need this type of enhanced ventilation for our students and staff to be safe. What is our long-term plan to address ventilation in our public schools through the capital budget? I don't see anything, um, in this particular budget.

Um, I'm just curious if it is being discussed. Um, I did actually get to attend, uh, MIT. Their engineering team actually did a whole project on how to improve ventilation in five of our elementary schools, five of our, um, oldest, uh, elementary schools.

And they were really innovative and interesting, uh, in terms of how we could just use a small investment to increase ventilation in those school buildings. So, I'm curious how we're thinking about those older buildings, um, and increasing the ventilation through our Capital budget, if it's not--if this year will there be some kind of allocation? I just didn't see anything in the budget.

**ASSISSTANT CITY MANAGER DAVID KALE:** I guess Mr.

Maloney is--was in another meeting, he's trying to dial in, so I will answer it a little bit globally and hopefully by the time I finish, um, he will log in to give you a very specific answer. But I know that, um, Mr. Maloney is working and looking at all the school buildings and looking at the air exchanges and to make sure that, um, they're as adequate as they can be.

Obviously, in some schools there have windows, which has, uh, the ability to do air exchanges a little bit differently, more efficiently. Uh, with the schools that have HVAC systems, I know that there is some measurement that's taken place to make sure that they are, uh, behaving as, um, as well as they can and meet, meet the guidelines that they've established to the extent that they can.

Um, and I really would suggest, I don't really want to say two more because I don't want to misspeak and Mr. Maloney's been intimately involved in this, um, but I know it's on their radar. And, uh, maybe we'll give him a few minutes and then loop around after he joins the meeting just to make sure you have the correct information.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can certainly wait for Mr. Maloney and we can go to other

folks. Um, I did just want to say, if, if people haven't seen the MIT presentations, um, for example, the Cambridgeport School was actually built with a chase in the middle of it.

It could be available for us to improve the ventilation just by using the, this chase in between the walls. I just thought they got really inventive. They, they got in there, they got the blueprints, um, and I'm--I was excited by some of the things that they had discovered and, and put together, uh, for us.

So, I will--I'll yield back and we'll wait for Mr. Maloney, and, and I'm assuming that other--my other colleagues have some questions on this section.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Vice Mayor. By the way, what you just described is an old, traditional way of promoting ventilation, even in Asia, they use it quite extensively. Thank you for that. We, we hope Mr. Maloney can join us. Councillor Nolan is next. Councillor, your questions?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes, thank you, Chair Carlone. I think I'll, uh, merge a couple of my questions are very similar. Um, and it gets at that whenever

buildings require expenditures, uh, per our policies and our plans and our, um, commitment over the years to our, uh, climate resilience and sustainability and NetZero plans, any fossil fuel free system should be replaced.

And I asked whether that is happening, because it's difficult to tell how many projects are following city guidelines for the most sustainable use of materials. And I, I noticed that, that as I go through, it seemed as I was reviewing it, it is not clear from these projects that they explicitly call out that they're using the least toxic and most sustainable use of materials.

I noted a few in my questions like the floor covering, replacement works, whether steel bench replacement in parks is actually better than recycled plastic lumber from a fully loaded environmental cost and longevity of use.

We've certainly heard as a community, there was a lot of talk around this, around the, um, the question of, uh, fields that are replaced, whether it's, um, grass or not. I'm not getting into that at all, but certainly, the, the question was raised with the bench replacement, the building improvements of all types, whether it's school or

city buildings.

For example, if a chiller is being replaced, is it-- should it be instead be replaced with a heat pump? Because as we know, what we're trying to do is every single time that we have any of these capital improvements, what I hope is that the projects would make note of how they're contributing to the city's climate goals.

Um, you know, the, the boiler replacement, the Cambridgeport School. So, my overall question is that was not in there, I didn't see it, I hope we're following the policies, but I know we have changed dramatically our policies. I will say that it was the first time ever the School Department used not just a low VOC paint, but a no VOC paint is because I had worked with some people in the community to bring it to us.

So, I know it's very complicated as we change materials, and yet I really want to understand how it is that we can be assured that every single one of these projects is following the guidelines that the City has established over the years.

**DEPUTY CITY MANAGER OWEN O'RIORDAN:** Through you, Mr. Chair, I can--I can start, um, a response there. Some of

this obviously goes back to the schools as well, and Mr. Maloney perhaps can, can add, um, what he needs to add as well.

Um, so when we do, um, large internal rehabs of buildings, we, we certainly look to, um, make sure that any replacement, um, elements are, um, be it a pre-consumer or post-consumer recycled product as much as that's possible.

Um, and you brought up the idea of even let's say in our park benches, we generally have between 60% and 80% recycled product in our park benches. If you look at our carpeting, the carpets generally have, and I, I can't give you precisely as to what they, um, recycled content is, but it's certainly in the 40% to 50% range.

I will also tell you that we use, uh, low to no VOC products in terms of the glues that we use in our carpets. And indeed, we have moved to using, um, tape rather than, um, glues at this point in time as well.

Um, the other thing I think you should know is that on an, an annual basis, there are interventions that are made by, uh, the Department of Public Works in public buildings where we, um, you know, change out, um--change out to LED lights, but in motion sensors so as to preserve

electricity.

Um, obviously our HVAC systems, we continuously improve those as well so as to make sure that we achieve efficiencies there. And I know Ellen is online and who can actually add a little bit more to our program in this--in this regard. Ellen, if you wanted to just say a few words.

**FISCAL DIRECTOR ELLEN KATZ:** Sure. Thank you. Through you, Mr. Chair, um, in, you know, in a lot of the interventions that Owen was just mentioning, um, whether they're large, um, you know, complete renovations of buildings that Public Works is managing or whether they're smaller, um, rehabs, um, whenever there is HVAC work, um, we are moving towards electrification.

So, um, you know, and, and particularly in even a lot of the fire, um, station renovations that we have done through the Municipal Facilities Improvement Plan, you know, those projects are, they're not necessarily got rehabs, but there, but there's been a lot of HVAC improvements.

And so, for example, Lexington Avenue Firehouse, air source heat pumps were installed. Fire headquarters is in design that is planned to be all electric. River Street

Firehouse, we're going to look to be doing air source heat pumps in, um, in 2021 to '22. Taylor Square Firehouse, which, um, was recently had a major upgrade, um, ground source heat pumps and variable refrigerant flow system was put in with energy recovery ventilation.

And East Cambridge Firehouse, which was done a couple of years ago, um, an air source heat pump with variable refrigerant flow, sorry, with energy recovery ventilation. So, it's pretty much our, our standard operating procedure when we do go in and, um, make improvements to buildings. And I'll yield.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yep, that is--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Go ahead, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you, Chair Carlone. That is great to hear. It would be good to just even to mention that in the budget. I mean, I don't think I missed it because I really did look for it and I saw all the improvements and I just didn't see.

I mean, it, it is music to my ears to hear about, uh, air source heat exchange. As we know, you know, as we go forward with the--with the buildings, the, the kind of tragedy of the Tobin is it's already all electrified and



yet it has gotten to the point where it's going to be replaced, and we know embedded energy is an issue.

So, all of what you answered does answer the question. I just hope in future budgets then let's make that clear because then it ties together our serious investment in dollars in these improvements that also ties in with other policies of the City.

So, I'm, I'm--I had hoped that would be the answer, but you never know because sometimes, as you know, there's a few other things I'll bug you on, on individual, like that buyer truck that needs to be an EV because the F150 is coming out just next year.

Um, but, but that would be good to, to make it clear because it's not in the budget right now. Um, my other question actually is also on energy use. Do we do commissioning of our programs? And I know that I've seen many lists of the, the we have achieved.

I think at, uh, 6% of municipal energy used from the solar panels aren't installed. Have we commissioned our buildings overall, including our solar panels to ensure that we're actually getting the energy that we expected from them?

And, and again, I would hope so, we've made a big investment, but if, if so, then that should be, um, noted in, in, in our budget and other reports that we have, so that I don't have to bug you with these kinds of questions.

**FISCAL DIRECTOR ELLEN KATZ:** Through you, Mr. Chair, um, with regard to the solar panels that we've installed, um, we--and, and in response to also you had passed along some questions in advance.

So, the information that has been provided in that chart in the Budget Book regarding meeting, uh, and exceeding our goal of, um, generating 5% of municipal energy use through onsite solar, um, that--those--the data that are provided are actual data.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay.

**FISCAL DIRECTOR ELLEN KATZ:** We monitor the output, the generation regularly, and if we spot drop offs, we will then intervene and, you know, work with the facility manager or the department head to make sure that there's repairs done.

Another thing to add is that, um, the City Manager has approved in the Fiscal Year 22 Operating Budget for Public Works' \$80,000, which will go toward a contract to provide

preventive maintenance and servicing of all of the PV systems, um, that DPW manages so that, um, we can make sure that we're catching--that we're catching everything and doing it proactively. So that will help also to optimize their performance.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Great. Thank you. And yeah, it wasn't clear, I thought I saw some list, which the output was exactly what the plan was and when I saw that, I thought--but that might have been in, in, in another form. So, I thank you. I'm glad commission is the way to go so that we can identify if we're actually getting the benefit. I yield, Chair Carlone. And I thank you DPW for your work because you're pushing us forward. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Mr. Clerk, are there other hands up? Then I'll go on to my comments. My comments about Public Investment, I highlighted in the first meeting, and I won't go into detail, but we are woefully funding certain road and bicycle and bus stop improvements.

I know we have other areas of investment in this, um, but we have to expand those areas. And as far as new park construction, and when I say new, I mean brand new park

construction, we have \$0. And part of that is because we've not designated a future park or taken land that's a parking lot or it's a dilapidated building for a park.

And all the statistics show that neighbors are very concerned about traffic on Main Streets. And what I mean by that is, uh, where Councillor Zondervan lives, um, and Garden Street in my neighborhood and, and Councillor Nolan's neighborhood.

These streets are having too much traffic and we are woefully behind in parks compared to the national average. And certain neighborhoods are way behind, even our 50% of normal as the city or average, I should say. And some neighborhoods are one-fifth of what the average city has.

And we need to focus on this for all the mental health, environmental, flooding, resilience reasons that, and community building reasons that we're talking about. And just like all my fellow Councillors talking to the manager and his team about areas that they want to focus on, I'll be doing this with those of you who agree.

So, unless there are other questions, I think, um, we're going to move to refer the Public Investment Budget to the full Council with a favorable recommendation.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So, I'd like to say thank you both, Co-Chair Simmons, and I wish to thank everybody, uh, for their attention, for being efficient. Uh, we covered a lot of areas and, um, with very good questions, uh, organized questions.

Um, and I also, other than the high intelligence of the Council, I wanted to highlight how impressive the different department heads and their staff were with their knowledge and with their responses. Um, I think we're a very lucky city, not perfect yet, but on our way. So, I want to thank everyone. And with that, the meeting is

adjourned after we give a motion to adjourn.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1. Motion Passed.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Have a good day,

everyone.

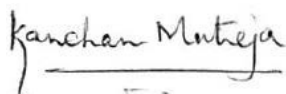
**COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS:** Bye.

**The Cambridge City Council Finance Committee adjourned  
at approximately 02:51 p.m.**

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, **Kanchan Mutreja**, a transcriber for Datagain, do hereby certify: That said proceedings were listened to and transcribed by me and were prepared using standard electronic transcription equipment under my direction and supervision; and I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of the proceedings is a full, true, and accurate transcript to the best of my ability.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 25th day of January 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kanchan Mutreja". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that serves as a separator between the signature and the printed name below.

Signature of Transcriber