



ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Thursday, October 30, 2025 **5:30 PM** **Sullivan Chamber**

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5:32 PM
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Catherine Zusy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5:35 PM

MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 30, 2025, Recessed
Reconvened Thursday, November 13, 2025, Recessed
Reconvened Tuesday, December 2, 2025, Adjourned

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Ordinance Committee was held on Thursday, October 30, 2025. The meeting was Called to Order at 5:30 p.m. by the Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

- Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote
- Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Siddiqui – Absent*
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Councillor Toner – Present/Remote
- Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote
- Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Mayor Simmons – Absent*

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Councillor Siddiqui was present and remote at 5:32p.m.

*Mayor Simmons was present and remote at 5:35p.m.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss two Zoning Petitions by the Cambridge City Council, the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition, CMA 2025 #235, and the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition, CMA 2025 #234. The Vice Mayor reviewed the purpose of each zoning petition. Present at the meeting was Melissa Peters, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, Evan Spetrini, Senior Manager,

Zoning and Development, Daniel Messplay, Director of Community Planning and Design, Drew Kane, Senior City Planner, and Megan Bayer, City Solicitor.

Vice Mayor McGovern stated that this meeting would be recessed and reconvene on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 5:30p.m. for Committee discussion and that today's meeting would be a presentation from the Community Development Department (CDD) and public comment.

Vice Mayor McGovern noted that there were 21 speakers currently signed up for public comment and that the purpose of this meeting was to give the public the opportunity to provide their feedback. The Vice Mayor shared that per Council Rule 23D in the event there are 20 or more speakers signed up for public comment, the amount of time allocated would be two minutes. The Vice Mayor shared it would be important for speakers to have three minutes.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to allow three minutes to speak during public comment.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Melissa Peters who provided opening remarks related to the proposed zoning. Evan Spetrini and Daniel Messplay gave two presentations titled “Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition” and “Cambridge Street Zoning Petition”. The presentations were provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Also included in the Agenda Packet were the two Zoning Petitions.

Vice Mayor McGovern opened Public Comment. Each speaker was given three minutes.

Joseph Adiletta, 68 Walker Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to proposed zoning on Massachusetts Avenue.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to proposed zoning changes.

Liz Byron, 21 Field Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to proposed zoning on Massachusetts Avenue and spoke in favor of solar energy and more housing.

David Halperin, 14 Valentine Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of the proposed zoning changes.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to proposed zoning changes.

Elizabeth Gombosi, 42 Irving Street, Cambridge, MA, urged the Council to vote against both proposed zoning changes.

Francis Donovan, 42 Irving Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to both proposed zoning changes.

James Zall, 203 Pemberton Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke I support of proposed zoning changes.

Allan Sadun, 237 Elm Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in general support of the petitions and provided suggestions.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to both proposed zoning changes.

Jana Odette, 176 Larch Road, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to both proposed zoning changes.

Helen Walker, 43 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed zoning.

Neheet Trivedi, 41 Magoun Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of the proposed zoning changes.

Tom Evans, 255 Main Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of the proposed zoning changes for Massachusetts Avenue.

Jason Alves, 544 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and concerns related to the proposed Cambridge Street zoning changes.

Cathleen Higgins, 345 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA,

Jaimie McNeil, 52 Church Street, Cambridge, MA, Local 26, spoke in support of both proposed zoning changes.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to both proposed zoning changes.

Helena Martins, 33 Porter Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to proposed zoning on Massachusetts Avenue.

James Williamson, Churchill Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments related to zoning.

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of the proposed zoning changes.

Chico Sajovic, 324 Huron Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in support of the proposed zoning.

Ruth Ryals spoke in opposition to the proposed zoning on Massachusetts Avenue.

The Vice Mayor provided closing remarks and addressed some of the concerns that were raised during public comment. The Vice Mayor also provided a brief overview of the process which the City legally needs to follow as it relates to proposed zoning changes.

**The Vice Mayor recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to close public comment.
Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Wilson – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Simmons – Yes
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

**The Vice Mayor recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to recess the meeting.
Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Yes
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Wilson – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Simmons – Yes
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Ordinance Committee went into recess at approximately 7:28p.m.

On Thursday, November 13, 2025 the Cambridge City Council’s Ordinance Committee that recessed on October 30, 2025 reconvened at 5:30p.m. by the Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and remote participation via Zoom.

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

Councillor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Toner – Absent*
Councillor Wilson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Mayor Simmons – Absent

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Councillor Toner was present and remote at 5:35p.m.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss two Zoning Petitions by the Cambridge City Council, the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition, CMA 2025 #235, and the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition, CMA 2025 #234. The Vice Mayor reviewed the purpose of each zoning petition. Present at the meeting was Melissa Peters, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, Evan Spetrini, Senior Manager, Zoning and Development, Daniel Messplay, Director of Community Planning and Design, Drew Kane, Senior City Planner, Brian Gregory, Urban Designer, Erik Thorkildsen, Urban Designer, Megan Bayer, City Solicitor, and Franziskus Lepionka, Assistant City Solicitor.

Vice Mayor McGovern noted that there would be no public comment at this hearing and that this meeting was for Committee members to have a discussion with City staff and to bring forward questions and comments related to the two petitions.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Melissa Peters who provided a detailed overview of the two separate petitions and the studies that were conducted associated with them, while noting that each petition has a different path for adoption.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Evan Spetrini who provided a summary of the two Planning Board Reports and reviewed what was discussed during the Planning Board meeting. Evan Spetrini added that both petitions had favorable recommendations that were voted unanimously.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Zusy who had clarifying questions related to the height limits on both Massachusetts Avenue and Cambridge Street and asked about previous height limits and sidewalk widths before multifamily zoning. Evan Spetrini responded and provided clarification to height limits and shared information on previous height limits before multifamily zoning was implemented, noting that the pre-multifamily height limits are the same as today's nonresidential limits. Drew Kane shared information on sidewalk widths, with Councillor Zusy, adding that wide sidewalks are important for the community. Councillor Zusy explained that her main concerns are related to open space requirements, design review, parking, and permitted uses, adding that experts have shared with her how important design review is for projects. Evan Spetrini provided a detailed overview of open space requirements for both petitions and provided additional information related to public and private open space areas. Councillor Zusy shared concerns about permitted uses becoming nightclubs, pointing out that it could cause conflict within these dense neighborhoods. Councillor Zusy shared that concerns have been raised related to parking being less available with added cars in neighborhoods from developments, adding that having nightclubs could bring in even more parking concerns. Councillor Zusy commented on how design review is important to improve projects and shared concerns about removing the review process. Melissa Peters responded to the concerns raised by Councillor Zusy, noting that even though a formal design review was not included in this process, the planning team did intentionally incorporate enforceable design standards into the zoning, adding that these design standards were in response to similar concerns Councillor Zusy has raised. Melissa Peters pointed out that this proposed zoning can help with broader city goals, create economic feasibility, and create development that is functional for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked if the proposed zoning changes in the corridors would affect the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) and affordable housing development and if there were any incentives the City could offer to help AHO projects. Melissa Peters explained the benefits AHO developers will have even with the proposed height increase in corridors. Melissa Peters pointed out that there is a balance to try and maintain the success of the AHO while also creating opportunities for market rate housing. Vice Mayor McGovern asked if the inclusionary zoning requirements would apply, Melissa Peters confirmed that they would. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler highlighted the importance of ensuring that affordable housing development continues in the corridors as other opportunities for housing become available. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler shared support for nightlife and bringing vibrant bars and restaurants to the City because it will incentivize them to use other forms of transportation, pointing out that the City should not be encouraging people to drive to bars and that previous zoning required parking for establishments. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler added that no parking requirements would improve safety and shared that he looks forward to continuing the conversation.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who shared her excitement about the proposed zoning but noted that Central Square has been a topic of discussion for many years as it relates to

rezoning which should be addressed soon. Councillor Nolan asked how the City could help to incentivize or protect small, local businesses as development increases. Jeff Roberts shared that there are always challenges that come with zoning and protecting small businesses, pointing out that zoning is to regulate land use and not tenant use. Jeff Roberts explained that there has been a mix of results with incentives in the past. Jeff Roberts shared that the proposed zoning would allow taller buildings to provide more support for ground floor use and that the Economic Development team are there to help connect businesses and developers. Councillor Nolan shared concerns related to open space and buildings under eight stories and pointed out that an increase in green space would align with the City's climate goals. Councillor Nolan asked why certain recommendations that came out of the two studies were not included in the proposed zoning, such as courtyards and permeable surfaces. Evan Spetrini pointed out that all new construction needs to meet the citywide green factor standard which would apply to building under the eight stories. Evan Spetrini added that with the green factor standard almost all new projects would need a form of green landscaping or cooling element to meet the requirements. Vice Mayor McGovern added that developers are expected to comply with the full zoning ordinance.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Azeem who shared that these proposed zoning changes would only offer some improvements with the current zoning. Councillor Azeem reviewed the possible choices the Committee could make moving forward with the petitions. Councillor Azeem asked if the AHO and Affordable Housing Trust have built up a decade long list of sites for future development. Melissa Peters responded by sharing that the AHO pipeline is strong, but funding and development conditions do play a role in how quickly sites can be built on. Councillor Azeem offered comments on building height and building code and questioned if the zoning would make it difficult to develop taller buildings. Melissa Peters pointed out how economic factors may play a role in how high developers decide to build and added how different changing factors, such as materials, technology, and building code, also play a role in developers' decisions. Councillor Azeem had clarifying questions related to suggestions made by the Planning Board related to open space and design and questioned if those suggestions would fundamentally change the proposed zoning. Megan Bayer and Melissa Peters clarified what would be considered a substantial change in the petition and what suggestions would not require the petition to be refiled. Jeff Roberts provided an overview of how publicly beneficial open space is described in the zoning code. Megan Bayer and Jeff Roberts agreed that changing "visually accessible" to "publicly accessible" as suggested by the Planning Board would not require new filing. Councillor Azeem offered suggestions for other minor changes that he believes would not require refiling. Councillor Azeem asked if the suggestions made by the East Cambridge Business Association on bicycle parking and ground floor retail would require refiling. Melissa Peters and Jeff Roberts confirmed it would because they would both be major changes. Councillor Azeem shared he would like to move forward with the two petitions with minor amendments and create new petitions to address bike parking and retail.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who noted that many of his questions have already been answered and asked the City Solicitor to provide an overview of what type of amendments the City Council could make to the petitions without warranting a refile, so the public had a better understanding. Megan Baye provided a detailed overview, and examples of what kind of amendments could be made and what kind of amendments would be considered a fundamental change. Councillor Toner shared he would be in support of moving the petitions forward and open to possible amendments which would give the opportunity for public comment.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Siddiqui who shared concerns about small, local businesses being displaced under the proposed zoning changes, noting that residents have also shared concerns about losing neighborhood stores. Councillor Siddiqui asked if there were any tools or resources the City could use to help small businesses that will need to relocate. Melissa Peters shared that the Economic Development Department within CDD is currently looking at different strategies on how the City may be able to support small businesses, and shared possible options, while adding the importance of

keeping small business in their communities. Megan Bayer pointed out that there are legalities associated with how municipalities can be involved with tenants and landlords but shared her Office will look further into it. Councillor Siddiqui shared that her main concern is to try and focus on having developers' assist businesses during displacement, adding that other states use resources like community benefit agreements. Councillor Siddiqui noted that it will be important for the City to provide a good understanding to the community on what the City can and cannot do related to this matter. Vice Mayor McGovern offered the suggestion of putting in a Policy Order requesting a legal opinion on how the City could move forward with this concern. Councillor Siddiqui agreed and thanked the team for all the information that was provided.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Wilson who asked if CDD could clarify for residents the difference between a corridor and a square. Melissa Peters responded and shared where the corridors and squares are as they relate to the two petitions. Councillor Wilson asked if Envision Cambridge still aligns with the City's goals and priorities because there have been many changes since it was last updated. Melissa Peters noted that the vision for Envision Cambridge remains the same and added that there does need to be some flexibility because of different economic trends and the impact COVID had. Melissa Peters shared that housing goals are still falling short. Councillor Wilson emphasized how important it is for the City to try and protect small businesses when making zoning decisions. Melissa Peters explained how the proposed zoning uses incentives for ground floor space and is not a requirement for developers. Melissa Peters and Megan Bayer pointed out that making amendments to ground floor space on Cambridge Street would require the petition to be refiled, but making amendments to Massachusetts Avenue would be possible because that requirement is already in effect in that area. Councillor Wilson shared concerns about businesses along Cambridge Street being affected and urged the City to provide more community engagement that involved residents, neighborhood groups, and business associations. Councillor Wilson asked the Vice Mayor what the next steps would be with the petitions.

Vice Mayor McGovern reviewed different timelines and possible options the Committee could go forward with if they would like for these petitions to pass within this City Council term, noting that the petitions expire January 28, 2026. The Vice Mayor shared that he would be in favor of scheduling an additional Ordinance hearing to continue the discussion and to have public comment. Councillor Wilson and Councillor Nolan shared their support to schedule an additional hearing. The Vice Mayor offered comments on Envision Cambridge and housing goals and what is being built versus units permitted on paper, sharing that there should be a better distinction between the two. Vice Mayor McGovern shared that although Cambridge is a dense city many residents live within a quarter mile of a park which provides open space. Vice Mayor McGovern asked for clarification related to parking requirements and PUD's. Jeff Roberts explained that PUD's would most likely be included to support ground level retail.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Absent

Councillor Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson - Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Azeem and Councillor Zusy who both shared their support for scheduling an additional meeting. Councillor Azeem said in the future he would be working on adjustment to bicycle parking and retail to file separately from the petitions.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to recess the meeting. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Absent
Councillor Siddiqui - Yes
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent
Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Wilson - Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Simmons – Absent
Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Ordinance Committee went into recess at approximately 7:32p.m.

On Tuesday, December 2, 2025 the Cambridge City Council’s Ordinance Committee that recessed on November 13, 2025 reconvened at 5:30p.m. by the Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote
Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
Councillor Toner – Absent*
Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote*
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Mayor Simmons – Absent

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Councillor Toner was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 5:35p.m.

*Councillor Wilson went from remote participation to in person at 6:18p.m.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to continue the discussion on two Zoning Petitions by the Cambridge City Council. This meeting will be a continuation of the meeting that was held and recessed on October 30, 2025 and reconvened and recessed again on November 13, 2025. Present at the meeting from the Community Development Department was Assistant City Manager, Melissa Peters, Director of Zoning and Development, Jeff Roberts, Senior Manager Zoning and Development, Evan Spetrini, Director of Community Planning and Design, Daniel Messplay, and Senior City Planner, Drew Kane. Present from the Law Department was Assistant City Solicitor, Franziskus Lepionka.

Vice Mayor McGovern reviewed the timeline and possible options the Ordinance Committee has related to the two petitions, noting they could stay in Committee for more discussion or the Committee could move them forward to the full City Council.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Melissa Peters who introduced staff and offered a brief update on the two zoning petitions and possible revisions based on previous discussions and feedback with the Committee.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Evan Spetrini who gave a presentation titled “Massachusetts Avenue and Cambridge Street Zoning Petitions”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Also included in the Agenda Packet were all the documents from the previous meetings held on October 30, 2025 and November 13, 2025.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to suspend the rules to reopen public comment.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Absent

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Vice Mayor McGovern opened public comment.

Allen Speight, 33 Antrim Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition.

Joe Adiletta, 68 Walker Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Louise Venden, 10 Roger Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Adria Katz, 41 Second Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments related to impacts to the Community Benefits Fund as it relates to the petitions.

Mary Jane Komacki, 103 Avon Hill Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions on the two zoning petitions.

Jack Silversin, 103 Avon Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were opposed to the two positions.

Itamar Turner-Trauring, 139 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the two zoning petitions.

Shamil Modi, 271 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the two zoning petitions and shared concerns.

David Halerpin, 14 Valentine Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the two petitions and shared concerns.

Hallie Speight, 33 Antrim Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Helen Walker, 43 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Marilee Meyer, 10 Dana Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the to zoning petitions.

Nonie Valentine, 10 Roger Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Susan Makowitz, 20 Oak Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Gordon Moore, 9 Rutland Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Bei Wang, 94 Amory Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Shelley Rieman, 201 Franklin Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Phyllis Bretholtz, 66 Antrim Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition.

Lee Farris, 269 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Patrick Barret, 907 Main Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the two zoning petitions and shared concerns.

Neil Miller, 425 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the two zoning petitions.

Kathy Dalton, 6 Arlington Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the two zoning petitions and shared concerns.

John Pitkin, 18 Fayette Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Nancy Seidman, 9 Cleveland Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

O Robert Simha, 303 Third Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition.

Liz Werby, 7 Wright Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Suzanne Blier, 5 Fuller Place, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Ethan Frank, 632 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the two zoning petitions and shared concerns.

Stephen Jerome, 2 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

James Williamson, Churchill Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in opposition to the two zoning petitions.

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the two zoning petitions.

Jason Alves, East Cambridge Business Association, offered comments that were in support of the two zoning petitions.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who made a motion to close public comment.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor McGovern - Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who shared his support for moving the two petitions out of Committee. Councillor Toner asked for more information related to the pros and cons of using PUDs in Inman Square. Melissa Peters explained how a large property owner is a main factor with PUDs, which does not apply to Inman Square. Melissa Peters added that a PUD could provide some public benefits but would require buildings with more height and would not align with the current petition and it would have to be reviewed in a separate petition. Councillor Toner asked if ground floor retail was not successful, would there be a possibility of switching that space to residential. Melissa Peters shared that the possibility of switching has been discussed amongst staff but does not think it would be possible due

to the layout of development. Melissa Peters added that there could be another petition to address retail along Cambridge Street, Inman Square, and Porter Square.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who shared her appreciation for the presentation and including the possible revisions that could be made to the two petitions. Councillor Nolan shared concerns related to community outreach and the importance of residents providing public comment and feedback. Councillor Nolan noted that although she supports the two petitions, she does have some concerns related to height limits. Additionally, Councillor Nolan raised concerns about moving forward with the Cambridge Street Petition only to make changes in the near future. Councillor Nolan had clarifying questions related to the 18 story height limit in Porter Square, noting that she does not support buildings that tall, and asked if it would only apply within a PUD and require a special permit through the Planning Board. Melissa Peters confirmed that higher PUD developments would have a different permitting process.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who thanked staff for their work and shared support for addressing the concerns and issues that have been raised, such as removing hotels as of right use. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler noted the importance of creating more affordable housing and that there has not been any negative feedback from developers. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler highlighted that having strong retail relies on having more residents and foot traffic, which these petitions would help to work towards. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler shared support for moving the two petitions out of Committee and having additional discussion in City Council, especially around concerns in the Cambridge Street Petition.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who made a motion to extend the meeting to 8:00p.m.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

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

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Siddiqui who shared that she agrees with much that has already been said by Committee members. Councillor Siddiqui asked what the timeline would look like if the City Council were to move forward with a separate petition that focuses on concerns on Cambridge Street, such as active floor retail. Melissa Peters explained that it could take anywhere between 3-5 months depending on when the Planning Board and Ordinance Committee hold hearings. Melissa Peters emphasized that if the City Council provides a clear Policy Order that outlines exactly what the Council is looking for related to goals and outcomes, CDD would be able to draft language in January to begin the process. Councillor Siddiqui pointed out concerns about affordable housing and the AHO and asked if AHO projects would be exempt from language proposed in the petition's related to height and design standards. Melissa Peters confirmed that the AHO will be exempt from the 75,000 square feet limit and can waive design standards. Melissa Peters added that affordable housing will still be supported by public funding and will remain competitive, and that inclusionary zoning will help to ensure more affordable units at market-rate developments. Councillor Siddiqui recognized some of the frustrations that have been shared by community members and emphasized that communication is important. Councillor Siddiqui

shared that she is more comfortable with the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition and has concerns about the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition, due to ground floor retail requirements. Councillor Siddiqui shared support for moving both petitions forward and having more discussion on how to address Cambridge Street concerns.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Zusy who thanked staff and shared support for upzoning the major corridors and not increasing density in residential neighborhoods. Councillor Zusy spoke strongly about keeping the two petitions in Committee, noting that residents may not understand all the impacts the zoning changes will have and that there should be more outreach. Councillor Zusy shared that her concerns with the two petitions are related to 6-7 stories as of right without Planning Board review, projects over 50,000 square feet, the need for more open space and clarification on public open space, protecting existing retail, nightclubs, theaters, and breweries as as of right use, and infrastructure. Councillor Zusy provided a detailed overview of her concerns related to infrastructure improvements as new development continues to be built, how updates to infrastructure are funded, and ongoing infrastructure issues. Melissa Peters responded by explaining how the City reviews infrastructure with housing growth and demographic projections. Melissa Peters responded to infrastructure funding questions, adding that upgrades happen project by project. Melissa Peters pointed out that the City does long term planning to ensure that infrastructure can handle growth. Councillor Zusy followed up by expressing strong concern about growth on Cambridge Street and creating more density that will affect infrastructure and if there will be a need to dig up Cambridge Street in the future to update infrastructure needs. Melissa Peters affirmed that the City will be proactive as it relates to growth and infrastructure. Melissa Peters pointed out that zoning changes do not set the pace for development and that growth will happen gradually, which allows the City to update infrastructure when it's necessary.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Wilson who thanked CDD and the Law Department for all their hard work. Councillor Wilson shared concerns about ground floor retail and retail heights, adding that she feels the process is being rushed and the need for more discussion and community outreach. Councillor Wilson asked CDD what their recommendations are on how to move forward with the petitions with the concerns that are being raised. Melissa Peters provided an overview of the 18-month planning process that resulted in the two petitions, which were designed to support housing goals in Cambridge. Melissa Peters shared that the petitions were created to reflect community input while also aligning with the City's goals, noting that there is always room to make improvement. Melissa Peters offered comments related to the concerns on active ground floor retail, sharing that it could be implemented south of Porter Square only. Melissa Peters shared that she recommends that the Committee discuss the proposed amendments presented at the meeting and move the petitions out of Committee to be voted on in the near future. Melissa Peters explained that a small, second petition could be filed next year to address concerns, such as active floor retail. Councillor Wilson recognized the workload of CDD and thanked Melissa Peters for her response. Councillor Wilson pointed out the goals of Envision Cambridge, and that much has changed since the 2019 data was presented. Councillor Wilson shared that she still has her concerns even though there was an 18-month process, additional time is needed for both the City Council and the community.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Azeem asked for clarification on projects over 75,000 square feet and approval from the Planning Board, noting that there have been comments related development by right. Melissa Peters confirmed that anything over 75,000 square feet requires a special permit from the Planning Board, which is discretionary. Councillor Azeem added that the proposed zoning is not much different than the current zoning and that he would support passing the two petitions with the proposed amendments.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who made a motion to extend the meeting to 8:30p.m.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

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

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Vice Mayor McGovern thanked staff for their work and highlighted that capturing and reflecting all of the community input into zoning language can be challenging, but the City is always looking at ways to improve the process. Vice Mayor McGovern shared support for moving the two petitions out of the Ordinance Committee. Vice Mayor McGovern asked clarifying questions related to hotels and residential height limits and asked if the proposed language in the petitions could be amended or if it would require a refile of the petitions. Jeff Roberts offered clarification to proposed language on hotels and previous zoning, while Melissa Peters reviewed options on how the Committee could address the concerns that have been raised. Councillor Toner asked for additional clarification related to hotels and FAR, noting that the petitions include language to make hotels as of right. Melissa Peters explained that with the petitions, hotels would be able to go back to how they are treated in the current zoning. Jeff Roberts explained how the current zoning language related to hotels is different throughout the City, and the goal with these petitions was to make it more unified and consistent. Franziskus Lepionka agreed with Melissa Peters and Jeff Roberts and noted that any changes to keep the current zoning would not fundamentally change the petitions. Councillor Toner shared that he was in favor of having hotels to bring people to the City.

Vice Mayor McGovern shared that he would like to start moving forward with the proposed amendments and asked Evan Spetrini to summarize them.

1. Institute stronger Active Use mandates south of Porter Square (require Active Uses in buildings taller than 4 stories)
2. Insert text to guarantee required Publicly Beneficial open space is physically accessible to the public
3. Delete the BA-5 district from the zoning ordinance text
4. Clarify “active” office uses only include:
 - a. Medical office
 - b. Office of an accountant, attorney or other professional
 - c. Real estate, insurance, or other agency office
5. Exclude Active Use GFA from the Special Permit threshold
6. Maintain existing FAR and height limits for non-residential uses including institutional uses and hotel/motels

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Toner who made a motion that the Ordinance Committee recommend to the full City Council that City Manager direct the Community Development Department to draft language to amendments to the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition and the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition recommended by the Community Development Department.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

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

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Community Development Department to draft language for amendments to the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition and the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition recommended by the Community Development Department.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion that the Ordinance Committee recommend to the full City Council that the City Manager direct the Community Development Department to amend the hotel language to revert hotels back to the original zoning. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

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

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to direct the Community Development Department to amend the hotel language to revert hotels back to the original zoning.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Siddiqui who suggested moving the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition forward with a favorable recommendation and continue to discuss concerns related to Cambridge Street. Councillor Siddiqui shared that she would work towards creating a Policy Order on the concerns related to Cambridge Street.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Siddiqui who made a motion to forward the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Wilson – No
Councillor Zusy – No
Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 6, No – 2, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Siddiqui who made a motion to forward the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition to the full City Council with no recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes
Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Siddiqui – Yes
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Toner – Yes
Councillor Wilson – Yes
Councillor Zusy – No
Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 1, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Wilson who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

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

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:27p.m.

Attachment A – Communications from the public

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

October 30, 2025

[Oct 30, 2025 5:30 PM - Ordinance Committee - Committee Meeting](#)

November 14, 2025

[Nov 13, 2025 5:30 PM - Ordinance Committee - Committee Meeting](#)

December 2, 2025

[Dec 2, 2025 5:30 PM - Ordinance Committee - Committee Meeting](#)

A communication was received from Evan Spetrini, Senior Manager, Zoning and Development, transmitting a presentation related to the Massachusetts Avenue and Cambridge Street Zoning Petitions.

A communication was received from Evan Spetrini, Senior Manager, Zoning and Development, transmitting a Planning Board report relative to the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition.

A communication was received from Evan Spetrini, Senior Manager, Zoning and Development, transmitting a Planning Board report relative to the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition.

A communication was received from Evan Spetrini, Senior Manager, Zoning and Development, transmitting a presentation relative to the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition..

A communication was received from Evan Spetrini, Senior Manager, Zoning and Development, transmitting a presentation relative to the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition.

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to the transmission of the Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petition.

A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to the transmission of the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition.