



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

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Thursday, March 4, 2021

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting

The Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee will conduct a public hearing to discuss with neighborhood groups their successes and challenges and how the city can better support them, as well as ideas related to the Envision plan.



**NEIGHBORHOOD AND LONG TERM PLANNING, PUBLIC FACILITIES, ARTS AND
CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE - MARCH 4, 2021**

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Hello, Patty.

Madam Clerk: Hi, we're asking all panelists to please keep their camera and microphone off until you are called on to speak. Thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: All right, I think we'll be starting in just a minute. Yeah. Um, all right. Uh, now that the time of the Meeting has come, I will, uh, this is, uh, Councillor Patty Nolan. I'll be calling the Meeting to order. We are asking everyone to keep muted unless they're speaking. However, it, uh, is certainly more friendly and more like a Round Table to have your cameras on. You're welcome to do that. You're not required, but certainly feel free to have your cameras on. Um, during the whole Meeting, I am calling to order the Neighborhood and Long-Term Planning Public Facility Arts and Celebrations Committee. The call of the Meeting is that we'll conduct a Public Hearing to discuss with neighborhood groups their successes and challenges and how the City can better support them, as well as ideas related to the Envision Plan and those issues. The Governor's Executive Order issued on March 12th, 2020, has authorized the use of remote participation at meetings of the City's public bodies in response to the threat posed to the public by the COVID-19 virus, and issued guidelines for the City's use of remote participation. In addition to having members of the Council participate remotely, we have also set up Zoom teleconference for Public Comment. Please be aware that Zoom is only being used for Public Comment. Neighborhood groups who have been, uh, confirmed their participation will be in the Zoom, as panelists. In order to watch the Meeting, please tune into Channel 22 or visit the Open Meeting Portal on the City's website. If I could ask the Clerk to please call the role of Committee members present?

Madam Clerk: Councillor Nolan? Councillor Nolan?

Patricia M. Nolan: Present and audible.

Madam Clerk: Councillor Carlone?

Dennis J. Carlone: Present and audible.

Madam Clerk: Present. Vice Mayor Mallon? Absent. Councillor Carl -- Councillor McGovern?

Marc C. McGovern: Present and audible.

Madam Clerk: Councillor Zondervan?

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Present and audible.

Madam Clerk: The quorum is present.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you. Clerk Crane, please let me know if this is just as audible. I put on my earbuds. And I also want to note that I noticed that Mayor Siddiqui is joining us, and also...

Madam Clerk: Councillor Nolan, sorry to interrupt your, your audio was much better before. It's hard to hear you now.

Patricia M. Nolan: ...back to the regular. Sorry. I want to note that Mayor Siddiqui has joined us, and I saw that Councillor Toomey is also in the Meeting. I'm not sure if other, uh, Council members are present. Um, the, uh, um, we're also joined by assistant City Manager, Iram Farooq, and, uh, her staff, uh, Melissa Peters, I'm not sure if there's other members of her staff. We'll start the Meeting with an opening statement, um, that I was to understand what the Meeting genesis is. We will then have a short presentation from A CDD on their work with neighborhood groups. And then we'll, we'll be open for discussion on the topics that you were sent, uh, in advance. And then, as is customary, um, we'll have Public Comment before we adjourn. So, I want to thank all of you for being here today. And I want to start by appreciating and recognizing the work that everyone here is doing. It's entirely volunteer. It's often a thankless task, and you do it with the intention of benefiting the Committee, the community, and the City. We have heard that groups sometimes don't feel heard or supported by the City, and we acknowledge that there are often tensions in groups, among groups, and with groups in the City. The goal of this meeting is to better understand what resources the City can provide. And as noted in the Policy Order that led to this meeting, one of the hopes is to share best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Some neighborhood groups have seen a lot of success in their outreach and DEI efforts, and if there are some practices to share that will be helpful for all of us. These efforts are not the only focus of today's meeting. The Policy Order was broad in asking for this Committee to quote, host a meeting to discuss ways to strengthen community bonds and understand whether the City could better support groups. And the Policy Order also ask that the agenda include how groups quote might want to learn from each other and share as best practices in any areas, recruitment, outreach, engagement, et cetera, and quote, share successes as well as challenges. So this meeting and hearing is an opportunity to hear from each other, listen to each other, and to elicit ideas and suggestions for improving how the City supports neighborhood groups. Providing a welcoming environment, being aware of implicit biases and doing effective outreach to the range of people who live in every neighborhood is an important element of a successful neighborhood group. And it is one, I hope groups who have utilized specific strategies will share today. No one at the City or any member of the Council is an expert in this work. By having this forum today, we all hope the numerous neighborhood leaders and attendance can share with each other and continue to improve their work. And we'll get a better sense of your work challenges, successes, and ideas. And we may walk away from this meeting with specific ideas for resources the City might provide. DEI workshops, places to meet, advertising meetings, et cetera. I want to acknowledge there has been some concern about this meeting, about the agenda and about invited groups. I wanted to be inclusive and did not want to exclude groups or pick and choose. So I included all groups, including Citywide groups who were listed on the CDD website under the neighborhood groups page that would included ABC, Cambridge Residents Alliance, the Association, Cambridge Neighborhoods, and CCC. One topic for future meetings, should there be any, might be whether including all groups make sense or there should be separate meetings. I just want to explain why it is that there's this broad representation.

And I also ask that any other neighborhood groups not listed be referred to us in a couple words, so I'm grateful for that. We reached out to groups in coordinating on the time of the Meeting and to have a good turnout. I'm happy that 14 groups are represented today. A few quick housekeeping notes before I turn it over to C-D-C-C-D-D and then you. Be respectful in your comments and no personalization as you talk, as is customary for Committee meetings, the Public Comment period will occur after discussion, so we will have to leave time for that before adjournment. Committee meetings are set at two hours, so we'll be keeping an eye on the time. Please keep yourself muted when not speaking. Please stay on topic and discuss what's on the Agenda, as tempting as it might be to raise other issues this is not the call or point of this meeting. And with the number of groups present, just to be clear on our, um, how we'll unroll unfold after hearing from CDD, we'll do a go around asking each group to say their name and organization and start with something they believe has worked for their organization and a challenge they think might benefit from hearing from other organizations or City resources. I will call in each group to speak. It's basically in order to ensure every group is heard after that, for the second prompt of ideas you might offer for how the City might support your group or all groups, please raise your hand on the Zoom, which is done by clicking on the participants list and clicking on the raise hand icon at the bottom of that list, and we'll make sure every group can contribute. So that's it for me. And now I'm going to turn it over to assistant City Manager, Iram Farooq, or, uh, her staff, Melissa Peters for a very quick overview of just how they work with neighborhood organizations. And then really the bulk of this meeting will be for all of you to share.

Iram Farooq: Thank you, Chair Nolan. Um, we, um, from CDD are delighted to be here and principally here to listen. So I'm not going to say much, and without further ado, just turn it over to, uh, our Director of Community Planning, Melissa Peters.

Melissa Peters: Great. Thanks Iram. And through you, Madam Chair...

Patricia M. Nolan: Can I just acknowledge that, uh, Vice Mayor Mallon has joined us?

Melissa Peters: ...great. So the community planning divisions, a team of eight planners and urban designers. Um, and our work covers Citywide neighborhood and Open Space Planning. Uh, we normally have three neighborhood planners, but we're currently staffed at two, and, uh, we're joined by two of those two today. Gary Chan and Daniel Wolf. I believe they're currently listed as attendees. Um, but if, if they can, uh, be promoted to panelists, they can turn their video on and, um, at least put a face, uh, to the name. And I know many of you know them. Um, so each of our neighborhood planners are assigned, uh, a specific neighborhood and are meant to be the point of contact. We really see our neighborhood planners as liaisons between the City and the community, providing a key link, uh, to City Government and resources. So the key work of our neighborhood planners is to develop plans for our mixed use District, neighborhood, and corridors to shape future growth and development, and to have ongoing interaction with the

community. Um, as well as provide residents with resources and information about planning initiatives affecting the neighborhood, including not only plans, but development activity and infrastructure projects. Historically, we conducted neighborhood planning studies for the 13 traditional neighborhoods. Uh, lately our focus has shifted away from the residential neighborhoods, and we've been developing land use plans through areas of the City experiencing significant growth. Uh, so as you all know, we recently completed a, the OI District plan. Before that, we did the K2C2 for Kendall and Central Square. Um, and very shortly we'll be starting a planning process for the Cambridge Street corridor between Inman Square and Lechmere. Um, we've been re-imagining our engagement with the residential neighborhoods. We think it's critically important to continue a version of the neighborhood planning studies that allows for constant communication with neighborhoods, to understand the issues that are important to them and, and to have a pulse on the community. I have a few slides, uh, to talk through our current thinking and certainly welcome any feedback, um, on what the neighborhood groups would find more useful. So, Naomi, I don't know if I can share my screen.

Naomie Stephen: You're good to go, Melissa.

Melissa Peters: Okay. Can folks see the PDF that says Neighborhood Planning Initiative? Excellent. Um, so firstly, our, our goals for the initiative. We, we really believe in proactive planning, and I always say we need to know what the issues are before they become problems. Um, we see the community as the context experts, um, and really need to understand what their issues are and, um, have our pulse on the community as I previously mentioned. Um, we also see this new program is, is building relationships and trust between the City and Government. And I know trust, um, needs, the amount of trust is different between different communities in Cambridge, um, and that's on the City to, to rebuild that trust. Um, and to do that, we need to have a constant pre-presence with the neighborhoods, um, have, um, constant interactions, open dialogue, um, and not only, um, engage with them on a specific project, but also engage with them in, in a fuller sense that, um, we're like constantly engaged in providing a fuller picture of the City and, and their needs. Um, also focusing on community building and, and not only between the City and its residents, but also between neighbors. Um, and then certainly, um, we want our neighborhood planning process to be an inclusive engagement process. So, um, this includes be not only the neighborhood groups who we see as a critical stakeholder and, and obviously they have a, um, um, a community infrastructure and social network that's important, uh, to engage with. Um, but that they're one of many groups of stakeholders. And our goal is to make sure that re um, what we hear as feedback is representative of our diverse community. So we envision three components to our neighborhood planning initiative. The first is action planning, which is a streamlined version of the neighborhood planning study. We envision this to be a more, quicker, more nimble process where we still can understand the priorities of the community and come up with actions to help address those issues. The second is a community building toolkit, which is a set of ongoing activities that aim to strengthen

connections with the neighborhoods. I'll give a few examples on the next slide. Um, and then lastly, neighborhood resources, um, which are not unlike things we already do for the City, but provide, um, you know, useful information and resources to keep this, uh, residents informed. So some examples of community building toolkit and, and certainly this is a sampling of what we, um, aspire to do. Um, include things like kitchen table conversations or meeting in a box where really we're taking a bottom up approach where in, uh, conversations, um, in the neighborhood can get fed to the City. Um, we're envisioning a placemaking, uh, program. Um, and, you know, one of those things would be a placemaking kit where we would have play materials to loans so that it could augment, um, block parties or, or a program of Play Streets could be developed. Um, and then certainly having community liaisons. Um, this CDD has recently hired a community engagement Manager and will be hiring, um, outreach workers, uh, for our own version of the community engagement team that DHSP has. Um, and we see that as a way to, uh, continue to have, um, relationships, um, with the different communities in Cambridge. And then lastly, neighborhood resources. Um, so what we'd, we are planning to do is kind of revamp our website so that there's a webpage for each neighborhood and on that would be all the relevant information for that particular neighborhood. So, neighborhood snapshot on demographics, zoning information, so folks know what can be built as of right, what would need a special permit, um, different amenities and resources or the use centers, parks, um, development activity going on in the City. Um, and then certainly as we currently provide the list of community organizations, um, meeting locations available for public use, um, we did a, a survey that we sent to leaders of those organizations listed, um, a few months ago to update that information. And we, we plan to do that, uh, annually or more frequent if needed, uh, to make sure that information is updated. Um, and then certainly planning primers. So, um, planning 101, um, making sure, uh, folks have information of how, uh, certain things work. Um, we think that could be a good resource for folks as well. Um, so I will leave it there and certainly welcome any comments and really looking forward to, uh, this conversation.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you so much. Um, I saw, uh, I was going to go to the neighborhood groups, but did Ms. Uh, Councillor Carlone, did you have a question or?

Dennis J. Carlone: Yes, a quick question. Uh, Chair. Um, did I hear correctly, Melissa, this is a new program, uh, or is this really an expanded program on previous work that community development did?

Melissa Peters: Yeah. Uh, through you Madam Chair, it's, I think you could refer to it as an expanded program. It's, it's, uh, focusing less on land use and development in the residential neighborhoods, but more on community building and, um, beyond, you know, those action plans. It's, it's focusing more on, um, information and, uh, community building activities.

Dennis J. Carlone: Great, thank you. That's all I wanted to ask.

Patricia M. Nolan: Great. Thank you. And now, since we promised that this really was a kind of a round table for us to all again listen to and hear from, uh, I have a list of all the groups who, um, are SVP and I'll just say in, in order, what would be, uh, expected group? group. And then, um, you just start off by talking about question, question successes had challenges from neighborhood groups, um, or, or from the City. So the first Neighborhood Association, I, Charles, Neighborhood Association, Charles and or...

Charles: (inaudible). So, uh, (inaudible) Inman Square Neighborhood Association. Um, we have members from number of neighborhoods in the first (inaudible). We don't have any defined orders, so anyone who wants to claim that they're part of Inman Square can join. Uh, we focus mostly on sending information about the neighborhood, about the City in general or about the businesses. We like to start meeting with what we call the Business Spotlight, where we had wonderful business owners who talked about their business. Now let's see what they (inaudible). We frequently conversed about the President of the Eastern (inaudible) Association (inaudible). Um, we also do huge (inaudible) in the City to help us discuss and learn about (inaudible) initiatives. We talked about lots of controversial things including the, um, the inventory design, the (inaudible), as well as, um, (inaudible). So we, we focus pretty hard on being as inclusive association. We have diverse membership of our group (inaudible) members. I think we are about half mentors and we have, uh, board members in their 20s, 30s, 40s, (inaudible). I will tell you who are in trouble. Um, we have email list, we also have Facebook, so we can try and reach out to all kind of people. In the past, we've also been posting for people who don't know our group. Um, we try to moderate audiences as best as we can to make sure they stay polite. Um, we have one occasion when we had (inaudible) discussing the, um, (inaudible). A couple of members who were being rude to our guest and also (inaudible) to our guests (inaudible), um, on times when (inaudible) discussions (inaudible) but (inaudible) be as factual as soon as possible. Our membership was very (inaudible) but at the same time we were respectful as we could be together, and we would also (inaudible) steer conversation, make sure we remain respectful. Um, (inaudible). Only (inaudible) we have (inaudible) people from different (inaudible) which is the (inaudible) that is necessarily one companies. (inaudible) I had a friend (inaudible) for us. Um, but we're not sure why people may be able to join us now. We (inaudible) and we would love to (inaudible) any kind of talk about how we can reach out to those people that told us that people of color from the (inaudible) board. Um, I mentioned we have some people of color, but we're largely (inaudible) not myself (inaudible). Um, we also learned, the board had learned to try not take positions on things and we learned this the hard way. Um, we had a somewhat position on the redesign, and that was really controversial. We also recently signed onto something that we thought was fair, but it also ended up being controversial. So for those reasons we largely focused on being informational. Thank you. Bill, do you want to add anything to that?

Naomie Stephen: Bill has not joined us on Zoom.

Charles: Hello. All right, cool. Thank you (inaudible).

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you. (inaudible) Association and then (inaudible) and then any group (inaudible) association. So (inaudible).

Rebecca Bowie: My name is Rebecca (inaudible) representing the (inaudible) Association. Thanks for having us for (inaudible) meeting. Um, some things that we've been working on that work. Um, we've been, we've been really trying to forget on expanding our membership and being more inclusive (inaudible) organization. Um, we started a DEI committee that is helping us, um, to focus on those issues and to call to a friend to make sure that, um, we aren't forgetting them. We do a lot of work on trying to reach people. So we have our standard (inaudible) conversation, which we've been trying to moderate in a more inclusive way. Um, and we also started new (inaudible) for just announcements only for people who don't want to be in the conversation. Um, we're trying to have (inaudible) social media presence, um, and we are, uh, we (inaudible) and, um, (inaudible) we're asking people, um, to campus. (inaudible) actually help from some businesses, (inaudible) how to connect with more people. And then during the beginning of COVID we organized (inaudible), um, mutual aid to form volunteer, volunteer (inaudible) a few people who (inaudible) for. Um, (inaudible) working on these things, I don't feel like any of them is (inaudible) success, same thing also as challenges, especially in terms of how we, how do we find new people, how do we contact new people. We obviously have channels that we always use and those channel reach the same people, and so what do we do differently? We can reach the rest of our community and also just how we do things differently and with attract (inaudible) people want to (inaudible) what we're doing. And then we have the thing that we have been doing and those (inaudible) that people have been doing, but what we're doing to be in the kind of place that more people (inaudible) different people want to be (inaudible) increment.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you. (inaudible).

Speaker 2: Hi. (inaudible). So we (inaudible). So we've been around the literacy for the family and also for the ladies. And (inaudible). And then (inaudible) cooperated. So we have several (inaudible), and then we also have (inaudible). So we have several (inaudible) and then we also have (inaudible). Um, for the Neighborhood council meeting, (inaudible) and also (inaudible). So I think (inaudible), the pretty impressive think to do. Um, here's also so many (inaudible) from (inaudible). (inaudible) starting in December 1970 (inaudible). So we're able to keep this really, um, impressive established record of what's going on specifically in Neighborhood Council but also (inaudible). One thing that I added recently regarding (inaudible). So a couple of years ago (inaudible) agreement. Um, it is massively people to have them. Um, it helps people feel safe and safe, safer and also (inaudible). So I'm a big (inaudible). Uh, in terms of things that we are looking to for the future, haven't you? I have realized I've been (inaudible). And I think that's next through the question of who's coming to meetings and why, and, and what does, uh, community (inaudible) look like for people? Because we're (inaudible) at meeting on Tuesday night (inaudible) for a family who has (inaudible). Uh, so (inaudible) for a long time, uh, that there are different ways

that people (inaudible). And it's also been true that (inaudible). And that's (inaudible) everyone to come in, uh, (inaudible). So (inaudible). Uh, and then the last thing (inaudible). Um, how we think about who belong, uh, and how think about, um, you know, about (inaudible) community element. So it's a lot, um, it's something that we've been thinking a lot for a long time and I'm, I'm (inaudible). And then I, I will hand it over to Joel (inaudible).

Joel: Uh, this Joel. I'm here. Kate, unless you're...

Kate: (inaudible).

Joel: I'm sorry, Kate.

Naomie Stephen: (inaudible).

Joel: Okay. So (inaudible), thanks for that. And lemme say I'm, um, so (inaudible) to embarrass anybody (inaudible) speaker who sitted next to her and she was smiling. (laughs) (inaudible). And now being a neighborhood leader elsewhere in the City. So that's why we said we've been around for a long time. Um, uh, Kate and I have been involved for decades. But, uh, let me look into the history of a lot of it, just really interesting, colorful, but we certainly as far as she was describing, uh, for problem as everyone seems to with outreach and, uh, there has been an effort, it has been continually to seem to enjoy about diversity. It's challenging because, uh, the neighborhood is, is not particularly diverse, although we have had members involved. So part of the neighborhood council is about, is running Citywide programs. So we do try to have board represent the families who involved in programs and that's helped (inaudible) wide boards. Um, but we largely have been, over the years, responsive, I'd say to unwelcome development, or sometimes welcome development that we've been engaged in. Uh, and usually to the benefit of both sides, you know, of course we have Harvard, uh, one of our, is one of our neighbors who have Leslie actually in the neighborhood, wholly in the neighborhood. And over the years it's been both a challenge and an opportunity. And, uh, the only issues of course is that those of us have been active, uh, historically are aging. Uh, some of us very interested in passing on towards and looking forward to having people join us. Uh, but it's, uh, you know, it can be time consuming. I know we have to talk a lot about the, the, the council order, but, uh, certainly we think we've been very good and responsible participants over the years. We stepped in and negotiated directly with Harvard in time when they were building, uh, enormous amounts of social footage neighborhood and felt the need to be doing that on our own. Very satisfied and now we did get a little bit negative feedback from the City on that for seeming to, uh, step outta bounds if you'll, but we felt we needed to protect ourselves. We didn't see that the City was necessarily doing the job and then they (inaudible) partnership and we (inaudible) partnership and same (inaudible) over the years. So we have been, I say often in a defensive role in terms of development and, um, when possible work with developers recently had a little success with a single lot (inaudible) this benefit. So I think really our future challenges is, um, really getting blood, uh, get as much diversity inclusion as, as we possibly can. And I find it very interesting to hear about what other neighborhoods are doing. I

congratulate the folks Inman Square for just creating something or nothing (inaudible). You're pulling folks from all different directions that (inaudible) Square been doing the same thing as well for the last co, last couple of decades. So I guess I'll leave it at that, uh, for now. Thank you.

Kate: I won't, I won't be covering anything really that, uh, (inaudible) Joel said because we have so many groups. But I'm just going to say that even as Joel touched upon times where there were disagreements and perceptions that people might find it hard to be consensus, uh, or negotiate compromises. It struck me that over the years, by being very persistent and taking time and committing disability, uh, when speaking to another, that we've actually navigated a lot of these groups that look (inaudible) and (inaudible) multiple issues related to zoning and development and so forth. But I wanted to just add that I think if an organization begins, assuming that they have to have an adversarial relationship with the City, if they miss the chance to have some of the, um, some of the opportunities to struggle with an issue and find a path so that the outcomes (inaudible) all, and some of the discussions we had over the reorganization of Sacramento Field are a good example of that. And part of what we needed was to have the City understand we needed more time and we needed more information, then we could as easily get by ourselves. And we found individuals within the City who had knowledge in areas where we needed it. And we didn't have a formalized partnership to do that, we just have asked people to represent themselves at some of our meetings and found when we spoke together. Uh, I think assuming an adversarial stance in advance makes it hard. Uh, and sometimes you do have to be adversarial, but we have very good luck negotiating (inaudible). But I think the independence of the organization is important. The other thing that is part of what we've been thinking about recently is that because the advocacy neighborhood council was formed at a common history when the definition that was given then by the circumstances, and over many years since it's (inaudible), those definitions don't really fit. They're a little different now. So we've been talking amongst ourselves about issues of how a small group of, a group of oriented people want to be active, find ways to actually represent a neighborhood where those (inaudible) elective process and (inaudible) our board. These are all things that are, they're needing review because history has taken us forward. Anyway, enough for now.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you. Uh, next, uh (inaudible) Association and then we'll have (inaudible) Association (inaudible). So Tom.

Tom Stallman: (inaudible) from (inaudible) Neighborhood Association, possibly (inaudible) Association, (inaudible) I think. Um, so (inaudible) I am not sure. Um, we formed when (inaudible) hospital, uh, about close in 20 years ago now, started planning on an enormous, uh, increase in their (inaudible) footage. And, um, um, we decided that it was better to, um, negotiate with hospital as a group (inaudible) neighborhood than to going individually. And that's certainly the power of neighborhood associations. If you, if you're confident that you're representing your neighbors, uh, you can do a lot more as an association than you can do as an individual. Um, it's important to ask participants what they're thinking about, about (inaudible). Um, uh, and listen, and listen to them, listen to everybody who

comes. Uh, food is important, we found, uh, to make sure that people are well fed when they come to meetings. Um, but it's also important, and I think, um, uh, (inaudible), uh, mentioned this, it's difficult to get people who quite frankly don't have leisure time to spend their evenings, uh, eating, eating some food and talking about neighborhood problem when they have more important things to do, feeding your families, helping your children with homework, whatever it is. So whatever you can do to help people participate, even if it's going to their home, to help them participate, to be proactive about it is, is useful. Um, I'm, I think they have, some people (inaudible) which (inaudible), but it's so important to have, uh, an agreed upon set of standards, um, back to each other and respecting each other. And if, if (inaudible) organization doesn't, doesn't have that (inaudible). Um, the last comment. Um, we look at the City, I think (inaudible) information, for good information about, uh, uh, the neighborhood or the contents of the neighborhood. And the City can help by giving us information as, as quickly and accurately as possible. Um, so thanks for listening, and I look forward to hearing from the rest of you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you, Tom (inaudible). And then (inaudible) for Susan.

Susan: (inaudible), I think from (inaudible) Square (inaudible). And, um, just but (inaudible) been around longer than I have with the organization. But, um, I think we probably started the redline. I got 3 points of history that I think the organization began with. Um, and I'm not sure which is (inaudible) one, the redline came to (inaudible) Square is one which (inaudible) with the other. And when the long funeral home, uh, present such an outrage that, uh, the organization from the end pushed back against that one. And to talk a little about both the organization is as unlike a lot of organizations in the City, obviously with (inaudible) and mostly from Cambridge, but we, because we're right (inaudible), and the juncture of (inaudible) and Neighborhood (inaudible), even North Cambridge, uh, we have a lot of mixed, uh, injured people. A lot of people who live and work in (inaudible) as well as Cambridge, we also work (inaudible) residents of the, of the Duke town. But in fact, this isn't as well. Pretty much from Harvard on up to the (inaudible). We put our map every few years, it has the extent of all businesses, the institutions, the cultural and historical things to see (inaudible). It would be interesting to see what happens when we do it again, because there would be our holes there. Um, we also, I think, uh, (inaudible) could mention this, but didn't, so I will. Both a lot with (inaudible) and also with the association (inaudible) to do things like put on the City council candidates form probably (inaudible) in the City. And we have worked with Leslie to use their auditorium to do that. And we usually have an auditorium and, uh, we have to run, there's so many candidates (inaudible) there. We run three separate forms for tables. All in one evening, we had it, uh, videoed by CCTD, so it's available for (inaudible) rebroadcast. Uh, and we really do try to ask, ask serious questions that we've (inaudible) as many as possible and filter through them from the neighbors and said, said something. Um, I think, uh, we have worked very well (inaudible) meeting through there (inaudible) cost, (inaudible) cost to us. We used to be at the Senior Housing Center over (inaudible) and (inaudible) now. Since

then, I think some other organizations have, have had meeting rooms available there and had asked me to put in touch. Um, we think of ourselves as an adversary often or someone who can speak for the neighbors to the City. But in these cases we've also worked very low with the City. I mean, throughout the (inaudible) process, throughout a lot of the issues we've been considering, (inaudible) included, we've had speakers come in. I think we've been respectful of speakers, um, and we've tried to talk through issues there. We've also (inaudible) the Economic Department to help us, the Economic Department to help us, uh, revise the data on our map. Um, we use, I've used the, the CD to prep huge maps of our neighborhood because it's kinda interesting (inaudible) at where people are, where the streets are, be able to focus on, you know, where (inaudible), where the network is and where streets are. Um, like everyone else, we reach, we reach out via our (inaudible). We have a Facebook page, we have website. Um, we have a lot of people who are on those things who have never come to a meeting, in a Zoom meeting. We don't know much more about some of them than their handle or their name. Um, but we try to be open to as many people and consider those people, all our members in a sense that we want to try and hear what they have to say and offer them a chance to hear what's going on, uh, and weigh in on it. Uh, but like very many of the (inaudible) we struggle to get, particularly when we're talking about seats, people sitting in chairs in a room, we struggle to get new people, young people, renters versus homeowners, working people versus retired people. It's all better time, we don't many even with the wealth that we may have relatively to be able to afford that kind of time. And, and it gets to the point in life, I think, where you actually care about the City and not just about put, put on the table and getting your kids homework done. So the main things the City could possibly help us with, I think we need to be careful that the City actually does respect what we do though. Thank you.

Rebecca Bowie: And just to fill in a couple of things. Um, the, uh, Porter Square Neighborhood has done before (inaudible) seven, and I know that there'd be (inaudible) organizing event. And one of the, uh, the, one of our key members who lives around, who lives, lives in the (inaudible), and she was literally next to the City line. And she was, um, she brought up a very interesting one, defining the neighborhood, which I think, uh, Charles was talking about earlier. But it's not like, there's not a school around her (inaudible). It was at that time was, she had a piece of trash from Dunkin' Donuts in your yard, you live in Porter Square. And that was, that was a useful way to think about it. But, but it's, I think the, the, those neighborhoods that have these kind of the Cambridge Summerbridge kind of issues, um, you know, we had different kinds of success de-- depending on who's been there and have a vivid memory. Like I have a standing one of our meetings telling us we were full (inaudible) because (inaudible) history proved her wrong actually, but (laugh). But, um, the, I know there was that particular thing. And then the, the next, uh, the thing that really galvanized the current, um, uh, incarnation was that 95 when the, the shopping center was going to be redeveloped. And the, um, it was a WO shopping center and they wanted to, um, the, they needed, they needed, um, the zoning inception was, and, and, and all was they needed something from the neighborhood, so they were going to be

cooperative and we were going to listen and they actually kind of delivered invoice. And it also didn't hurt that kind of all the whole shopping center was having some (inaudible) it needed to be friendly. And, uh, and that was a really good, uh, process. And I think that we gave, I mean that the, the, our cooperation got them the, the, the CBS building and house the CBS, um, on (inaudible) one of my neighbors who, who for many years and still kinda (inaudible), forgive me, for the loss of 31-sacred parking places that, um, were removed from that parking lot because of that development. Um, but I, I think there wa-- there was that and then there was the Porter, Porter Funeral Home thing. And the, the, um, I think, um, working in, in these neighborhoods things can, can take my, our view. I think people, so my observation that people kind of come in and they tour (inaudible), tour their project or two, it's usually people galvanizing as well do something to stop. Um, you assume they want to prevent or, or, you know, have some influence over. And, um, you (inaudible), if you were-- I was the president at the time for those two things, you go to enough meetings and, you know, (inaudible) get just exhausted and there's only so much you can do. And it's, um, I, I, the thing I think Joel was saying, not, I would happily pass it towards you, the Newton ratio, only they would show up. And I think, um, um, it's, it's a hard thing to do. I have, I have wondered what-- I think at the beginning -- the only thing I would stop here, at the beginning when we were all galvanized around the, the, the Project Memorandum Agreement with the City (inaudible) association, things that were going to be happening there and how (inaudible) was going to go, we had meetings for a couple of years, the same folks, a, a very solid core people came every meeting. We were very tight on that. And I think at that moment, it really was possible to say who we spoke for and we represented the neighborhood because it was, you know, the a lot of stuff. I think it's been more difficult ever since then because, um, I would admit it, I take the (inaudible) funeral, and that, that was a whole thing there. But, um, I think one of the dynamics I, I noticed it's hard to do that and that, you know, all the, the, um, people would come and sit in chairs, you don't get (inaudible) the same way. And the fact that these, that, that, all of these meetings (inaudible) communications that happen that never come to our meetings because the (inaudible) all those, all those apps on their phones (inaudible), there is communication happening.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thanks a lot, (inaudible).

Rebecca Bowie: (inaudible) for lack of the (inaudible).

Patricia M. Nolan: (inaudible) Association Cambridge.

Gray: Hello, my name is Gary (inaudible) and I'm not president of the Association (inaudible) Cambridge. Um, my remarks are as briefly as I can. Um, uh, my group, ACM, was founded about 30 years ago and has evolved into being sort of a forum for people who are acting in other neighborhood groups and other community groups. Um, I think, you know, there may be, um, issues of concern to people in Inman Square or Central Square that they might discuss in their own neighborhood associations. They might be similar to concerns that people having fresh or (inaudible) other places. So we can be a forum where people from

different neighborhood and community groups can communicate with one another about common issues. And people from, interact in our group, come from all sorts of perspectives. Like from myself, my main, um, avenue of kind be a responsible citizen in Cambridge has been for the past five years as a member of the advisory board to the Cambridge Commercial, Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities. And similarly, there are people who were acting Asian from all sorts of other perspectives. If you want to know about our challenges, challenges that we face. Um, for years and years, we used to meet at the North Cambridge Senior Center on mass staff, and it was closed down for renovations for a few years ago, for a few years ago. And then when it reopened, we were told that we couldn't be there anymore. Um, the Port Square Neighborhood Association also used to meet there. As well there would be occasional groups, occasional meetings for other community groups, (inaudible) variety of topics, whatever. Um, and none of these groups can meet there anymore. And that's really unfortunate. So if the City could make it easier for groups like us to meet in City buildings where we used to meet and not take our meeting places away from us, that would be helpful.

Patricia M. Nolan: That's, that's great. Thank you, Gary. And Harvard Square (inaudible) Association, (inaudible) there was not told (inaudible) represented them.

Nicole Williams: Marilee is going to start, um, then I will do and then (inaudible) back up.

Patricia M. Nolan: Okay. Is Marilee in the Meeting?

Sumbul Siddiqui: She's in the Meeting, but--

Nicole Williams: Marilee is on. Um, Marilee just needs you to activate your microphone or camera.

Marilee Meyer: I confirm, I confirm somehow. Okay.

Nicole Williams: All right. Let's go.

Marilee Meyer: Okay. You can hear me. Um, I'm Mely Meyer for the Harvard Square Neighborhood Association, and because everybody uses Harvard Square, everybody is invited to become members. We have regular meetings (inaudible) 150 participants and have a (inaudible) Harvard. HS&A, (inaudible), Harvard Square, and the (inaudible) of Harvard Square Defense Fund in 2017 landmarking the kiosk and working to preserve a very strong building.

Patricia M. Nolan: Marilee, I'm just (inaudible) happy at a little bit of history, but really the, the idea is to just to talk about (inaudible), talk about (inaudible) success (inaudible) and challenges,

Marilee Meyer: Right. Oh, okay. Well, the, um, I guess (inaudible), um, has been involved in of (inaudible) and we were very much involved in the, um, Conservation District of Study of Harvard Square and, and Preservation Guidelines, um, for developers working with, um, the Business Association and other groups and officials. Um, and we have been a design committee, uh, that is,

um, looking at the Staples building, um, the redevelopment. And our Literature and History committee is researching the history of enslavement in, of the City. And, um, I (inaudible) all that because we're (inaudible) of 2017 and, um, (inaudible) the, um, the idea of, um, the idea of getting younger people and, um, we've been, we've been really quite diligence and, uh, um, active and, uh, have a fairly good outreach and we are, um, talk a lot with other organizations, et cetera. Um, but our numbers barely, uh, give, um, comments to the State Council. And because of this, it's really imperative that the neighborhood groups in general, um, became independents and autonomy by holding City officials accountable. Um, by that, that I think was an underlying, um, concern of these, these kind of, uh, um, thought, um, moving forward. I'll pass it on to Nicole Williams who has a more in depth, um, on ideas. Thank you.

Nicole Williams: Hi everybody. Thank you Marilee. Um, so, um, I just wanted to address some of the, the, I'll go straight to sort of some of, some more of our successes and our challenges and opportunities. So, um, one of our main desires for Harvard Square Neighborhood Association is to actually have a more diverse, um, square, uh, representative, ethnically diverse, with more Black and Brown businesses. We're fighting really hard to, um, make sure that happens. It is an uphill battle, we do need the City support in that (inaudible) second of the diversity behind the City. Um, we, uh, in terms of some of our successes, we also, um, worked very well with Boston, calling us, you know, you know, people were literally ready to fight. Um, and we were able to navigate that process and really have enabled interest in mind all the stakeholders. It wasn't, um, perfect. We got through it. Um, and, and so, and we felt that it made difference in terms of some of the specific things that we could use. Our, our our our, um, board is actually 30% (inaudible). Um, we have, um, close to more than half women and we have 25% renters. Um, so I think we're pretty representative. Um, certainly we need more. Um, and the topics that we focus on, we really lean need to make sure that we're inclusive as possible. Um, in terms of what we could use more from the City, uh, one idea is to have an ombudsman in situations where there's, you feel like there's an impasse or we can't get through, or you can't connect, because honestly, a lot of times we lean on each other as neighborhood association organizations for support. Um, and sometimes having an independent ombudsman really could make, uh, some headway in, in areas that could be really sticky. Another thing, uh, we could use is more transparency and objectivity from the City in presenting proposals to us, especially when it deals with development and, um, related, uh, projects. We feel that it comes from a different lens and we would like to have a little bit more transparency and objectivity in that. So we have this conflict, um, from the Data Association. I think that's it. Elena? Is Elena on?

Madam Clerk: Elena, please activate your microphone and camera.

Patricia M. Nolan: Is Elena --

Naomie Stephen: Elena (inaudible), are you able to --

Patricia M. Nolan: Yeah. Unmute yourself if you're talking, Elena

Madam Clerk: Elena is on, and unless so, maybe we can move on.

Patricia M. Nolan: Yeah.

Madam Clerk: Unless you want to raise your hand when you feel (inaudible).

Patricia M. Nolan: Let's, let's move on. Let's get from the, from the Cambridge Neighborhood Station and then the Cambridge (inaudible) Community and then (inaudible). Okay. Think it's either Fritz or John or Nick Cambridge.

John: (inaudible) Okay. Yeah. (inaudible) Cambridge (inaudible) Association since (inaudible) in 1975, a little younger than than the, than the (inaudible). Um, much. Uh, and I'll, uh, in interest the same time, we'll not recite the history.

Patricia M. Nolan: Can we hear your challenges and strengths.

John: Yeah. Uh, well, also some of the lessons I think come from our, from our from, uh, past. In fact the bylaws are still in use. And, uh, diversity and inclusion, we, uh, part of the MCNASDNA, it was insured by a large founding and continuing membership that was required in the (inaudible) efforts of our first president, Joe Lorenz, who worked in members of different political fashions and demographic groups to join them participate. One of our main techniques was to ask for and receive referrals of new members from City Councillors. Also for decades, proceed according to committee, was reserved for a renter. Joan passed away in 1994, and sadly we were not able to clone her and had been challenged to maintain diversity since we recognized an urgent need to, I have to turn the piece, sorry. I've got a technical problem here. Uh, bear with me. Uh, uh, an urgent need to engage younger residents who have shown low interest in participating. Successes, including specific surviving the 45 plus years. And one important, uh, aspect of our rules is a two third tool for, um, membership votes for all major decisions, which has been an important way to maintain unity with the associations rather than fragmentation. The last few years of social media driven political polarization and fragmentation have been difficult. And the last year without, in-person meetings has been an incredibly difficult environment for neighborhood organizing, organizing, by far the worst since we were formed. We do not, uh, do well with that without in person meetings in Cambridge. Suggestions for improvement, provide a space for regular association meetings in one of the City buildings. Our neighborhood think we've heard that from another, another participant. The NCNA now relies on small hospital for meeting spaces, Councillors to help by referring interest constituents to participate. Uh, a long time since the Councillors done that for us, that can also offer a proposal for a systemic reform that I believe would do more to invigorate neighborhood associations than anything else I've heard if that would be appropriate. I could do an hour later.

Patricia M. Nolan: It's not very long. You can summarize it, but otherwise (inaudible).

John: (inaudible) with.

Patricia M. Nolan: Yeah.

John: (inaudible) said, um, Cambridge could, uh, reform its charter to, to follow the practice of, of Boston in most other large cities in Massachusetts. To have this district Councillors, to have (inaudible). Because one of the real problems we have, so all the Councillors are running Citywide. And having a neighborhood, uh, neighborhood based politics would do a great deal to strengthen our neighborhood ties. Uh, um, so that, that's, uh.

Patricia M. Nolan: Right.

Madam Clerk: I think that would be, that would be a systemic change, so I think will, will, will, will help to solve a lot of the problems we identified.

Patricia M. Nolan: Right. Thanks (inaudible). Anything you want to add, Fritz?

Fritz: Always. (laughter) We, we are, um, about one-fifteenth of the, uh, land mass of Cambridge and one eighth of this population. So you can imagine how dense, densely populated we are and how much, uh, open space we have to, uh, help our tree canopy and to help it read. So, uh, we're actually founded in a rather adversarial environment when, uh, something, uh, was temporarily out the window and Harvard came up with 107 foot, uh, building right next to Memorial Church, about three blocks from some beautiful, uh, large houses and so forth. Uh, we have a membership of about 600 people, uh, and since we range all the way from Harvard Square to in the square and down to Central Square, uh, you can imagine the diversity of our population. Uh, but we're a volunteer organization and, uh, and, uh, the people that we work with are the people who volunteer. So, uh, and of course the, the dead horse in the living room, we've all been dancing around here is, is COVID-19. Uh, it's extremely difficult to gather people together. We've had some wonderful gatherings. We have traditional gatherings. We have probably the best, uh, candidates night, which, uh, we will do again, uh, this, uh, October, probably in anticipation of November elections. Um, but it's very difficult to get people out their cocoon right now. We're, we're optimistic, we're looking forward. Uh, we have a regulator that has been (inaudible) for a while, is awakening again as the COVID vaccine, uh, spreads through the City. So I think there's a lot that can be done for us. Uh, I think there's a lot that people have been trying to do to us. Uh, and that's going to stop. Uh, but, um, I'll, I'll pass the baton to our, uh, Membership Chairman, Elizabeth (inaudible), uh, who can wrap it up.

Elizabeth Hoeh: So, um, I do wish that this has been truly a meeting of neighborhood groups and have not included other civic organizations. I think it's, the group is too large, not really have a chance to, to draft. Um, I just want to say neighborhood groups are as diverse and unique from one another as neighborhoods are. And what the group have in common is the desire to improve and protect the quality of livelihood by the residents who have chosen to live there. In order to do that, it is critical that they remain independent and free from City interference in their functioning. I hope the CBDs new approach will truly engage neighborhoods and residents. Many are highly intelligent and vast

knowledge and are deeply committed to the City, and yet they have too often been ignored or dismissed as adversaries and their (inaudible) as suspects. The City needs to find ways to have real conversations with its residents, engage them early, really listen to their concerns, resulting projects to prove to be far more beneficial to the City, the neighborhood, and the developer. Um, and I think one way that the City might be able to help, uh, neighborhood associations is to, uh, somehow do an annual mailing to all residents, making them aware that neighborhood groups exist and how, how, how they can connect with their, with their group. (inaudible). Thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Great. Thank you. Um, this is rich discussion and we're already at little bit after 6:00, so we're living halfway through the (inaudible) and some of you have incorporated the co, specific ideas I have for the City, which is, which is fine, but I'll make sure I come to (inaudible) that. Um, the Cambridge (inaudible) Community Neighborhood and then ABC and then the (inaudible) Neighborhood Association.

Elizabeth Hoeh: (inaudible) really a absolutely first meeting. So, um, didn't know what was-- (inaudible) didn't have an gender or anything, (inaudible). But it's interesting, it's interesting to know that there are all of these (inaudible). I think we're just a housing community. (inaudible). We're much smaller than any of the, um, community organizations. And I'm not sure (inaudible) here. Um, (inaudible) some other community (inaudible) with only 75 people (inaudible). And (inaudible) more numbers if you can.

Patricia M. Nolan: Yeah.

Elizabeth Hoeh: (inaudible). I'm not sure (inaudible).

Patricia M. Nolan: Yeah, we would. Just being inclusive (Inaudible) neighborhoods so we can move on. Thanks for that. And I encourage you to join other member association (inaudible).

Rebecca Bowie: (inaudible) add to what, uh, Diana had said though. They may be small, but they're mighty, they have meetings, they have more (inaudible), they're a truly progressive type of workers.

Patricia M. Nolan: I'm not just listening, there's lot different groups, so-- And again, but some of them (inaudible) the City and some of them (inaudible) a little bit. So we want to understand everyone else's strength to contribute. All right. Next one, uh, is (inaudible) and (inaudible) Social Club and they're very tiny little group.

Alanna M. Mallon: Thank you. Um, my name's Alan (inaudible) ABC. (inaudible),so we have a lot to learn. We are statewide group, (inaudible), we're all volunteer community group, (inaudible). So we're (inaudible). One of the (inaudible) organizations (inaudible) groups and processes, even ones that claim (inaudible) represented (inaudible) were able give people special representation for some kinds of views and some kinds of people. So we're very interested in the question of how (inaudible) sites can ensure that the views they see are

representative and aren't being gatepassed. I recommend the whole neighborhood to defend us (inaudible) issues here. Um, in terms what we've done well, we've had our most successful diverse dependent when we do informational events, particularly one with (inaudible) speakers like say Councillors or authors. Um, (inaudible) our role in event is to facilitate rather than to kind of take a stand as a group. We tend to get the best turn out and the best participation. We have a slack work, so we gather (inaudible) meeting together, which has been really successful sessions. Our community (inaudible) from the younger side. Um, and it's also been really helpful with the pandemic. I think Cambridge City with the vast majority of people are just totally uninformed with what's going on. Also education is huge part of our mission. But our biggest challenge is when it comes to consistency. You know, we try to do things like follow up with every member who signs up or (inaudible) book clubs or social events to help people, guys to know each other. But when there's an election season or a major policy conversation going on, it's hard to have the, the (inaudible) to keep up a consistent presence, which I think would really important for being welcoming or inclusive. Um, in terms of what we can like from the City but we certainly appreciate our meeting. At times, the biggest thing we've asked for is more independent outreach, doesn't go through any group or any mass. You know, when it was designed flight infrastructure map in the fall, I saw (inaudible) every time I walked inside the park, you know, handing out a survey. And I thought that was great. I loved that. I thought that's a great example of the kind of dependent outreach would bring in people who aren't nearly as well connected, which is the majority of the City. Um, James, do you have anything else you wanted to add?

James: Yes. Thank you. Um, I'm also glad that we're included in this. And I think to be clear too, from the, from what folks from many the groups have said is as from what most Peters described at the beginning of the Meeting, that, um, getting people involved in participation, fair participation, it requires a lot of planning efforts, you know, something approaching what the election commission does. It's, it's a lot more than simply a matter of opening the doors and saying everybody is welcome. Um, often while some people respond specifically to neighborhood concerns, often for some people it's specific issues, something like climate change or housing that will, uh, cause people to come out of their homes either physically or by Zoom and participate in a meeting. Uh, for the groups that are, uh, have said they're looking for more young people, my impression is that, uh, issue, an issue oriented basis is often something that does appeal to younger people, although certainly not all young people are the same. The other point I want to make briefly is that, um, groups can see and, and individuals can see issues differently. Issues like traffic and parking can be seen at times as a very, very local problem, in a very personal issue. Uh, and other times, any group, whether Citywide or a neighborhood association, um, needs to and does, I think, recognize that things like traffic and housing also have to be addressed on a, on a broader Citywide basis and not just, uh, look at as the way they affect an immediate neighborhood. Thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Great. Thank you. And, um, Linden Park, too small, not more small. Linden Park and the Buena Vista Vista Social Club Canada President's Alliance and CCC.

Jim Gray: Uh, thanks you. I'm Jim Gray, president of the Linden Park Neighborhood Association. Um, briefly, we're a small group of, uh, 55 homes, uh, in the development between Cardinal Medeiros and the railroad tracks that define the word with East Cambridge and Kendall Square. And I think in terms of things that have gone well for us, like a lot of groups, we've had to sort of fight for our survival and fight against huge development. Um, on the other hand, I think one of the strengths is we have some people with really exceptional skills and have been willing to put in a lot of time and effort. I mean, if we added the pro bono hours, uh, it would just be astronomical. One of the suggestions, this is the headline for now, is the City could provide some sort of neighborhood advocate to help people who don't have, you know, professional level expertise in, in negotiation, uh, do the same thing. So that's on the, on the sort of challenge side, and I think it was good thing that helped us come together. Um, but a challenge side are similar sort of issues where internally we don't see things the same way. Um, so (inaudible), and we potentially option direct access would change (inaudible) idea on the the third hand are your neighborhood. That would all would love it. So the point is, the challenge is how to really come together and talk about it when we don't all agree. Um, and this is a place where I think, you know, we can learn from, you know, historical ways together as we mentioned, simple partners by way to have, um, you know, sort of rules that go beyond the, you know, Robert's rules of orders, but really help people feel heard and understood. Uh, and we, you know, met at the MIT lab, I work there and I know people who have taken this suggesting category briefly as an headline, um, people who take the, the human interaction of essential partners and really listening to each other, uh, in order to make a decision, but they can combine it with the best technology. So, you know, for groups who are interesting, uh, recognizing that we're not in the same world that we used to be after COVID and the social media and the younger generations, uh, you know, live on it, there may be some creative ways. So I think, I think the headline for the suggestion there would be to really think innovatively and creatively about what will help build community in small groups and small neighborhoods, and then between neighborhoods. So I think is, is strong and, uh, have a lot of resources in Cambridge. So that's, I would say that's the quick version. If we get to the, the more detail than those, uh, of the people in my group are here, and we'll have more to say. I'll say briefly, one, one of the sort of concern was people have trouble with figuring out the zoning sometimes of what constitutes what we can build, what we have to, uh, get special permission for. So sometimes we advocate for those issues would help too.

Patricia M. Nolan: Great, thank you. And you said other people talk once we get through what list?

Jim Gray: Yeah. Matthew and Jason. I mean, chime in now guys, if you want to say something now. Um.

Jason: Hi. I'm also on the Linden Park, um, board. And I would just echo everything Jim said. And thank you Pat for organizing this.

Patricia M. Nolan: Great. Well, it, it was the whole Council who organized it. Um, I just happened to be the chair of this committee. If Bernice from (inaudible) another very small organization, but I did look at the CDD website and said, it's not only a listern, it's a neighborhood organization. So (inaudible), you want to add anything about your challenges and your successes?

Linden Park: This is so easy for me. Um, it's, it's not really an organization, it's a neighborly listserv, which I would not underestimate the effect of that at this time, especially. Lets neighbors know what's going on. Uh, everything from restaurants offering would take out right now and restaurants would be supporting to when they used to build places to arts events and, uh, performances in the neighborhood. Uh, for those of you who may not know, Buena Vista is a, is a one block street that runs between, um, Upland Road and Walden Street, um, and has inexplicably become a major highway for rush hour traffic, trying to avoid, uh, Mass Avenue, uh, going north, um, pretty, uh, pretty hair raising, in fact, trying to cross that street during the, um, rush hour. But, um, it has this, uh, organization has one major event, which is organized by Ruth Riles as so many things are. And that is the end of summer potluck block party. Um, and everyone from the area, uh, comes to that and it's really wonderful. And of course the group has the vis-a-vis, uh, name of Buena Vista Social Club, which makes you want to listen to (inaudible) music. That's it.

Patricia M. Nolan: Okay. Just so you know, people, I didn't just as a Buena Vista, it was on the CDD website as an organization. So we might want to see a team, (inaudible) maybe we'll review the list, but we have, uh, two more groups who are present. And again, this was a somewhat lottery, um, assignment at Cambridge Resident Alliance, and then, uh, Cambridge Citizens Coalition. So (inaudible) said they might be.

Tom Stallman: Hi, Ms. Nolan. Can you hear me?

Patricia M. Nolan: Yes.

Tom Stallman: Great. Uh, so, um, the Cambridge Residents Alliance got started in 2012, and I think our success, um, includes bringing together over a thousand people across the whole City. At that time, there wasn't any cross City organization, uh, that was bringing together large numbers of people. And we do that is by explaining complex issues so that anybody can understand and take action. And, uh, doing that has enabled us to have, um, a number of, uh, policy successes, like passing part, (inaudible) passing increases, and inclusionary housing. And I think one important one was improvements to the planning board process, like requiring CDD members on large projects and having a community meet or meeting held by the developer before they go to the planning board. And then we were active in initiating Citywide planning effort that led to envision with all of its, uh, fault witnesses, which I think we were supposed to start to discuss today but it doesn't sound like we are going to. Um, we have a pretty good turnout

at both in-person and virtual meetings. Um, and we have continued to meet virtually, uh, during the pandemic, although a little more sporadically challenges. Um, we do want to be inclusive of all people participating, um, in the organization. And we do find that sometimes on a lister it can be difficult to moderate it. Um, how do we ensure equity and where exactly to draw the line on a given statement. Um, we also find that finding a, a meeting space can be a challenge and a significant expense. And like others, we are always working to improve our outreach for diverse populations. Um, I do look forward to hearing more about the new CDD community plans and liaisons because of the time, um, thing, situation. I'm going to go on to put our ideas of how the, um, City can help neighborhood groups out now. Uh, so one is apply free or low cost meeting places, um, schools, libraries, senior synergy centers. Uh, it would be great if there was one common application for all the spaces and if there was some kind of yearly allotment. Um, we'd love some kind of biannual outreach mailing, especially to lower income, um, folks and, uh, to tenants that inform the neighborhood groups. Those are the folks that are harder to reach. Um, and also the younger folks that change apartments sometimes as often as every year. Um, and so I think that mailing to them would be really helpful, a huge expense if this group is going to do it itself. Um, we would love it if there could be help with funding, childcare and treatment services at our meetings, um, because that has been, been our financial capacity, our, um, logistical capacity to pull off. But I do think that, that if that would, um, help on the outreach questions that we got and we'd love it if the City could create a pool of people who can do that work that we get from, uh, we would like assistance too, um, when COVID diminishes to get to a format for both simultaneous in-person meetings in the future, I think the City's going to be facing that itself, but we neighbors will be facing that. And it's clear that, um, virtual meetings have increased participate many people. So we figure out how to do both. Um, because they need to create a way that people can subscribe to the community meetings that they were hold right now. It's really hard to find out about those, um, meetings, um, a tiny little part of the CDD website, but most importantly there's not subscription there is for planning. And then, um, we'd love it if developers had a certain amount of time that they had to bring just in their proposals before it got discussed at a City Council meeting. It really puts the residents at a disadvantage if there's not a couple of business days. I'm thinking of the recent Northwest Airway changes. And I, I, we were not happy with the, uh, City staff rewrite a low quality petition for that developer for CCF. So those are part of the ways of like leveling the playing field between developers and uh, residents. Thanks. That's it.

Patricia M. Nolan: All right. So I, um, have a CCC and, uh, the Highlands had been here or not. And then I have, uh, one more note. So if I, (inaudible), I think it's Suzanne (inaudible). If you want to say hi and your challenges and successes.

Suzanne: Hi, and thank you. I feel a couple other people (inaudible) if they, uh, Elizabeth was going to speak first and then, and --

Patricia M. Nolan: Yeah. Okay. You're, you, we did limit it to three, can't have four.

Suzanne: Okay. Great. Well, uh, I can go first and, uh, the Katiti just had, uh, uh, vaccines (inaudible).

Patricia M. Nolan: Um, if you can tell me, (inaudible) uh, Elizabeth.

Suzanne: Uh, Hoeh. H-O-E-H.

Patricia M. Nolan: Great. Sorry. (inaudible).

Elizabeth Hoeh: Okay. I don't know how to get, I'm not (inaudible) my camera on.

Patricia M. Nolan: You're familiar with your voice, we hear you.

Elizabeth Hoeh: (inaudible) because as you'll hear from my comments, I'm pretty old anyway. Um, my name is Elizabeth Hoeh and I've lived in Cambridge for almost all of the last, uh, 48 years. Most members of CCC, which is still a very new organization. I got involved after spending time working on specific issues. In my case, it was, uh, traffic safety, particularly around pedestrians and, uh, bicyclists in my neighborhood because there are cars obviously on our streets these days. CCC bring residents together to work on issues that affect the whole City. The common thread in many of the problems we face is rampant development that displaces residents, destroys already minuscule spaces and tree canopy forces out local businesses and clogs us with cars. Um, in my long years in Cambridge, City government seems to become classified and more inward turning, frankly. I tell my friends who spent lots in public service, I have the people who work for the City and, but believe that in government as it, and learn from each other. That's it. Thank you.

Suzanne: Great. (inaudible) now. And, uh, again, I'll be, uh, brief. And actually, I'm presenting the Cambridge Citizens Coalition. And we grew out of a collectivity of City neighborhood, originally called Livable Cambridge. And now the neighborhood groups of Cambridge Rising (inaudible) many first meetings, Charles and Ruth, uh, uh, among us. Uh, we sent you a list of things that we would love to see that was, uh, these groups, uh, in terms of problems. I can remember some of the first meetings at least of the group that I ended up having to form, passing around a wooden spoon. And we had a timer, and so it tried getting a little bit more sophisticated, but our interest is really in, in, um, bringing together the whole of the City in part around neighborhood groups. And part more broadly, we decided as neighborhood groups that it really didn't make sense for us to be political. Uh, and so we made a very, uh, sharp decision on that. And so there are a number of us who really wanted to see some more change in the City. And we formed a separate group of CCC. We represent really the whole of the City. Many of us are neighborhood leaders and other leaders in the community. Uh, we really are looking toward government transparency and sound policy, issues of environment, smart housing policy, gentrification. The Donovan petition, um, uh, that, uh, to end exclusively single family housing, uh, but in ways that would not increase land values was one of the things that we've done, infrastructure, et cetera. Um, and we, we really want better neighborhoods and, and we work with

many different groups and with this City. And frankly, we really all have equity since many of us dedicated our lives too. And diversity across the City and inclusion, I would say it's a real pleasure to be part of this group. If we could dream big, it would be in some way to become a, a means of wearing the old mantle of the Cambridge Civic Association and really focusing on some of these broader issues.

Patricia M. Nolan: Great. Is there anyone else from CCC or we.

Speaker 1: I'm going to speak, I think, uh, Councillor Nolan at Ship and Page.

Patricia M. Nolan: That's why our page.

Speaker 1: Well, thank you Councillor Nolan. Um, just briefly, I joined the CCC because I saw it as a Citywide group that could bring a lot of elements of the City together. As you may know, I'm head of the King Public Library Foundation. And diversity equity inclusion is incredibly important to us. I'm particularly interested in first time home buying opportunities and for the ability of marginalized communities to gain wealth and stability by having skin in the game. And so that was my particular interest. And, um, affordable housing, of course is, uh, front and center in the City's deliberations right now. So I, I welcome a chance to get engaged. And thanks (inaudible).

Patricia M. Nolan: Great. So that is what I had for the list of, um, respondents, I will say. I, I will very briefly, uh, Doug Brown, who had hoped to be here representing the Fresh Pond Residence Alliance, which is probably one of the busiest groups around, given the development nature, had something come up. And he said he couldn't, uh, be here, but he did send me a, a note. I, I won't share all of it, but for some of their, um, successes they believe they've had is to serve as an important information source for neighbors seeking details about, uh, City and developer efforts and working with some other neighborhood associations. He said what they most struggle with in Fresh Pond, uh, is development fatigue. There's just been so many projects that it's just been very challenging for the organization to be involved in all of them. Um, and interesting, one of the things he said that, um, would really be helpful if, if he was dreaming about the City, uh, could provide. It includes something many other people have mentioned, which is providing a space to meet or don't charge us to hold meetings in, in, in public buildings. Um, and then the other, um, East Cambridge planning team could not be here either, but one of the, uh, successes that they pointed to that they think is ironically enough come out of that pandemic is that they have dramatically increased the, um, amount of participation in their meetings because they actually stream it on CCTV, they have an arrangement with CCTV so that you don't even, and what was explained, they said, we were concerned that even having Zoom, and it requires internet, it requires a computer. Whereas CCTV, uh, programming just requires someone to have a tv. So I thought that was an interesting, uh, uh, initiative that they took. And they, and it, as they said, they might even continue it after the pandemic because it has been very helpful for people, particularly, uh, people with small children, which they recognize they're trying to reach out and, and include more of. So I am so excited to hear from all of you. I hope that was

helpful. Um, to all of you, we have just, there's, uh, nine people, I believe, or eight people signed up for public comment, and they will each get two minutes. So I need to reserve about 15 or 16 minutes, uh, for the end of the Meeting. So we have another 10 minutes. And some of you included in your remarks, some of the ideas you have for how the City might better support you. I just want to open it up. And I think what I said was, anybody who, if you know how to raise your hand or if you do it like this, and I see you, um, there's a couple people who've have raised their hand.

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Madam Chair?

Patricia M. Nolan: Yes. Uh, Councillor Zondervan.

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Thank you, ma'am. Just wanted to note that, uh, another group that isn't here tonight is the Democratic Socialist, um, Cambridge Neighborhood Group. So and as well as our evolution. So, you know, there, there are some other organizations similar to the ones that have spoken that, that aren't represented here tonight.

Patricia M. Nolan: Yeah, that's great to know. And as I said, when I approached this, I just went by the groups that were listed on the, there's a, if you don't know, there's a page on the CDD website of neighborhood associations. And that lists all the neighborhood associations, and there's a section for Citywide ones. So I think it sounds like Councillor, and we should reach out and make sure that other groups like our Revolution, Democrat Socialists, if, if they are our groups, that should belong on that page, and then it should be put on that page. But to be clear, I didn't make the decision. I, I went by with what was, um, what was published.

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Um, what I see in the, um, is that, uh, Rebecca Bowie and Phoebe wants to talk, and again, if you don't know you, if you click on participants, which is the bottom of your screen, then the panel comes up. And on that panel there's a little button that says Raise Hand. And I will just go by that and call on people, especially these are people who are at the beginning and probably didn't even get a chance to say how the City might improve. So that's great. So I don't know who was first, Rebecca or Phoebe. So go ahead. Phoebe, you go first and then Rebecca. And if I mispronounce your name, let me know.

Phoebe: It's, uh, yeah, it's Phoebe.

Patricia M. Nolan: Phoebe, I'm sorry.

Phoebe: Got it.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you.

Phoebe: No problem. Thank you. Um, yeah, I just wanted to, um, plus one the Ombuds person. That's an idea that we've thought about, um, or I have thought about for years because there is this disconnect that's kind of outside of the world of what many community groups do, which is like the, the personal, when folks

have personal problems related to something going on in the neighborhood, they're left up to their own skills or non skills. Um, and there's no place to go really. So sometimes people come to, uh, neighborhood Council meetings, but it's really specific to them. And a neighborhood Council meeting often is a much broader, uh, scope. So there's like a slipping through the cracks elements there that I think would be really, um, well suited to some person who just has this knowledge and can sort of connect people. Um, and then the other thing that I wanted to, um, just put a note in is I'm interested in practices around, um, you know, not just equity and inclusion, but uh, specifically how to manage and think about and deal with issues that come up. Because they're going to come up things related to our races, related to our genders, and there are so many different, um, ways to sort of interact badly in those spaces. Um, so I'm, I'm interested to see for something like the City who has a lot of, um, like sway and resources help us bring in maybe some, some new ideas about how to, how to be together, particularly when we look different, when you have a more diverse group, you're going to have a lot more things going on in the group that you're going to need to interact with and, and figure out. So, um, and then the last thing I want to say is, I mean, I, the context often is like, how do we get people to come to us? But over the years, I have learned it is more about how do we go out, uh, and not necessarily include people in our group, but understand what people are working with, um, and dealing with in different ways. Um, and for, like, one quick example of that is, you know, during COVID times, we with other community groups put together a food pantry. And so we are now, you know, interacting with people in ways that we never did before. Um, and that's because a need was, a need was indicated and we, we were lucky enough to have enough resources to like make the connections with other groups, but if it was just us here at the community center and neighborhood Council, we would not be able to do this. So you know, that's another thing that, that I'm keeping in mind. It's like sometimes it's not about getting people to come to your meeting, it's about finding out what they need. And, but then that brings into question like, what, you know, what is a community group? What are you doing? Like, all these different pieces that are complicated. Um, so I just wanted to, to shout that out. Thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Oh, sorry, Rebecca.

Rebecca Bowie: Um, thank you. I just, I want to emphasize that I think this is really, really important work making our neighborhoods and our neighborhood associations more diverse and more representative of our neighborhoods, um, I think has obviously benefits for us to be able to be, um, closer connected to our community, but also benefits Citywide of just making sure that residents feel connect, are connected. Um, and so I really hope that this is taken seriously and that this is going to happen sort of beyond this meeting that these conversations can continue. I have a long list of things I could say that I want to prioritize. A couple things that I think would be really easy for the City to do and would make a really big difference for us. Um, including some people have mentioned publiCity through your existing channels in your daily update in your webpage, in social media, in mailings. Um, I heard CDD say they have a community

engagement team, like I would love to be working more closely with them. Um, and then I think some sort of, I know the City hires a lot of consultants, somebody a consultant or some sort of training. We've been looking into it, but it's very expensive. Um, that could help us learn how to do best practices in DEI work and civic engagement. Um, and then I think people also have mentioned a lot meeting spaces. We pay \$40 a meeting for our space and we were told in some of our surveys that some people feel shamed when we pass around the hat and ask people to contribute. And it's like, I mean, that's when we have \$100 budget, \$40 a meeting is a really big deal, and if we want to feel more inclusive and not ask people for money, I would love if the City could step up and help us with some of that. Um, and then also making sure that our meeting spaces are well accommodated for people to participate. That we have microphones, that we have chairs, that we have screen and projectors, a quiet space. Um, and then just also want to highlight that there are, um, I think the City could play a really important role in making sure there are neighborhood associations in places where, um, you know, the whole City is not represented here right now. And in helping groups to start up where there aren't groups. Um, and also just helping people participate in general. We found some people struggle to engage with us because they struggle to engage with the City because they're brand new to everything. So how-to guides, introductory things, what does it mean when we're talking about the planning board and the City Council and all these terms we're throwing around could also be really helpful in bringing in new people. I'll stop my list there. It does keep going though, and I really do hope this conversation continues. So thank you for your time.

Patricia M. Nolan: I really hope it does. I don't see other panelists with their hands up, uh, which says to me we still have a couple minutes. If, if any of the other committee members, Jim Gray, just put his hand up. Um, and then I was going to say if any of the Councillors wanted to say a minute or two, uh, of on the committee and Councillor Zondervan had had his hand up. So, uh, Jim Gray and then...

Jim Gray: Yeah, I wanted to just briefly, uh, fill in on some of the headlines that I mentioned before, um, which picks up on several things that people have said, which is, um, the, the context would be, you know, we're dealing with issues here that are not common to each neighborhood or the City, but around the world, around the country for sure. And we can be real leaders and inspire not just each other, but, but you know, beyond our, our walls. And there's incredible economic diversity as we all know, uh, amazing riches and real poverty. So what we will do creatively can have a huge impact. So I think I want to underline, um, forgive me, I was going to say Phoebe, but Phoebe, is it, I think you said your name was, you know, essential partners or other groups who really know how to get people to interact in a deeply human way to, together with the innovation of, uh, places like MIT to use technology in exact opposite of the problems that we have with social media. Um, but creatively to use CCTV when that's the right technology, but also use advanced technology to make connections that we just couldn't otherwise. So we have the opportunity to have the best of both worlds in Cambridge, more than

any other place, literally on the planet. And I think we need to think with a real vision and come together where we know we can and want to. So that's, that's kind of the feeling I want to leave in terms of what, what I want to communicate.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you so much. And I will, there's just a couple minutes before we have to go to public comment, and I noticed that, um, three of the committee members, Councillor Zondervan, McGovern, and Cardone had their hand up. So if you all want to very briefly comment and then I'll, we'll have to go to public comment so that we can end on time.

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Thank you Ma'am Chair, and thank you for, um, chairing this meeting. We're, we are talking about very important topics and unfortunately we, we haven't really gotten to the, to the heart of the matter yet. Um, I think Phoebe just touched on it, which is that, you know, as we try to increase diversity and, and try to have a more real conversation with each other about diversity, equity, and inclusion, that conversation is inherently much more difficult and much more challenging than the conversation has been thus far. And, and so we're really in need of support for, for civic groups across our City to, to help navigate these, these challenging issues. And, and we've seen a couple of recent incidents that, that have gone really awry. And unfortunately because we don't have any real infrastructure to help, uh, the community deal with these types of issues, they, they linger and they, they don't get resolved. And, and that makes it even more difficult for us to work through our, um, you know, equity issues in, in the City. So I think this is a really, really important conversation and we really need to think deep about how we as a, as a City government can provide support and resources to our, uh, civic groups and, and to our residents to, to be able to participate in our democracy. That's, that's really critical to our survival. And, and we've seen that, uh, quite starkly with, with COVID. Um, so I'll leave it there, but thanks again.

Patricia M. Nolan: Yeah. Thank you. And Councillor McGovern and Councillor Carlone. And then we'll go to the, uh, the folks who have signed up for public comment.

Marc C. McGovern: Uh, Councillor Carlone, you want to go? Okay. Um, thank you, uh, Councillor Nolan, I just want to thank everybody for, for participating. I, I think it was a, a good first initial discussion. We heard a lot of good ideas, um, ways in which the City can try and support your work. I just really do want to assure people that I know there was some confusion and some angst around, you know, what this was all about. And I just do want to assure folks that this is not about, um, trying to take over any of these organizations or stifle any of these organizations. But, you know, the City has a hard time being an inclusive, uh, uh, inclusive in our meetings, right? We, we know that our meetings are not always inclusive in our boards and commissions are not inclusive. And we have a ridiculous budget and ridiculous outreach and, and we still can't get it right. And so, uh, it must be just incredibly difficult for your groups to, to, to be able to do that. And so if there is a way in which the City can help you, um, I think we should. And I just want just to reassure folks that that is what this is about. And,

and if there are folks concerned about that, this is some way that the Council's trying to, you know, take over your groups, that is not what this is about at all. Um, you do great work, you're all volunteers, you have no budget. Um, and there are ways in which we heard tonight, you know, something's a little more straightforward, like helping with space, which I think, you know, should be, we should probably be able to tackle that reasonably well, I guess I won't say easily because nothing's easy, but reasonably, reasonably quickly to talking about hiring an ombudsman and doing more sort of, you know, infrastructure work to, to help you. And so, um, again, I just want to assure people, I really want to thank people for participating. We heard a lot of good ideas and, um, that we're here to help and, and to support your work. Thank you. And I would, I just real, real, real quick, sorry. And I, the reason why I think it's important too is, um, you know, you, everyone has mentioned some groups are maybe further along in being more diverse than, than other groups, but everyone has mentioned how important that is. And it's important for us as the City too, because we count on the neighborhood groups to be representative and to speak, you know, for the neighborhood and the City goes to the neighborhood groups. And so if we can help you be more, um, more diverse so that you better represent your neighborhoods and that's going to look different for each neighborhood, because each neighborhood looks different, um, then we have an obligation to help you do that. Um, uh, and that will help the conversations, I think go, go better, um, and lead a better outcome. So thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Councillor, Carlone.

Dennis J. Carlone: Uh, a couple of things. One is in the '70s and '80s, I know I don't look at, but I was there. And there were neighborhood groups sponsored by the City. And it was because of development in East Cambridge, my project, and development in north Cambridge, primarily in the air life studies. And the City had funding, uh, supporting the ne those two neighborhood groups which were worried about gentrification or at least the slow gentrification. There were also planners at every meeting of those two groups. And obviously three plan, uh, staff of three planners is not enough to, but if we're going to supply equipment and maybe materials, um, the planner could bring it to the Meeting from community development. It's a great name, community development. So it just seems to me this is very doable. Nobody mentioned money, but I think that's the untold, I think guess one group did, that's the untold thing. And \$1,000, \$2,000 of materials and supplies and space is easy to do. In the past, the City was worried about it because it became a political, uh, negative session in some neighborhoods. And as long as the rules are, let's focus on the community issues, as you've all said, let's talk about all the things that are important and report it. I, I still think it can work and, uh, I certainly would vote for that. And I pretty sure the majority, if not all of the Council would as well. Thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you so much. I, um, uh, Mayor Siddiqui has raised her hand, and then as soon as Mayor Siddiqui comments, uh, will go to public comment, we may have to extend the Meeting by five to 10 minutes. So Mayor Siddiqui.

Sumbul Siddiqui: Thank you. So one thing that this has brought up for me, I, I, you know, there's some great suggestions. I, I'm thinking about the, the groups that aren't, you know, classified as neighborhood organizations, right? And particularly around what's happening in I life with, uh, IQHQ, and there's, you know, there's friends of Jerry's Pond, there's, there's a I life study group there, there, you know, there's other groups and a question has been raised that, you know, there's so much happening in that area and, you know, there there's need for some kind of neighborhood advocate, neighborhood, um, Ombuds person, um, even though necessarily maybe it's not even coming to City Council, but that, that need to help liaison is really important. So I'm definitely hearing that more and more, um, from, you know, groups who may not be, you know, organizations per se as listed on this, uh, site, but may, um, need some support and may need their questions answered. So I just wanted to highlight that. Thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you so much. And, uh, I'm sorry, but I missed that Councillor Mallon had had her hand up, and so we'll hear her and then I, I do think I'll ask my colleagues to indulge and extend the minute by eight minutes so that we can make sure we get to public comment. Councillor Mallon, I mean, Vice Mayor Mallon.

Alanna M. Mallon: Thank you, uh, Chair Nolan, and thank you to everybody for being here tonight. I think this is a really rich conversation and I think we have a lot, um, that to think about. I'll be quick. The one thing I wanted to ask Phoebe and Tom Stallman is they both mentioned that they, their groups use something called a communication agreement, so that they both said it was critical to the conversations that they had. I'm curious about those communication agreements. What happens if somebody violates them? Could those communication agreements be shared among this group to see if it would, you know, be worth it to proliferate across the City? I think, um, just speaking a little bit about, more about that Phoebe or Tom, um, how that works for your group and what happens if somebody violates it?

Um, yeah, I'll say quickly. Uh, communication agreements, depending on what your group is trying to do, can look all sorts of different ways. Sometimes they're called norms, there's different words for them. Essentially, someone needs to be, um, trained in a facilitative model or, or at least come into a facilitative mode. So you're not a part of the Meeting in that case because you're holding the space with the agreement. If someone violates the agreement, uh, the, the basic practices, you know, the agreement that's been violated. Um, you say, you know, you ask the group, you know, how do you want to move forward? So it's, it's a very, um, collaborative process. It isn't, it doesn't look like Robert's rules necessarily, which is more hierarchical. This is more of a, more like a circle model. Um, and I certainly, they can be shared, so you would want to understand how they get used. Otherwise it would not necessarily work, because everyone in the, in the room needs to agree that, that if it's a pass rule, everyone agrees that you're going to use that pass rule. Um, and if someone doesn't agree, then you work on a communication agreement. So it's a, it's a little slower than maybe some of the

other processes people use, but I find them to be really useful. Um, and so I can talk more about it at some other point, but, uh, I highly recommend them.

Tom Stallman: And, and we, we do use Robert Robert's rules. Uh, but it, it's usually when, when, um, quite frankly, communication, uh, somebody feels they're not being listened to or, um, the, the disagreement level starts to rise, then you, then you go to a, um, Robert's rules. And Robert's rules protects people and protects their opinions. Um, Mayor Siddiqui knows, knows this. If she's, if she's, uh, if she runs (inaudible) Robert's rules, it's actually a pretty good communication agreement. It's an old one, but it's a pretty one.

Phoebe: Thank you. Um, and thanks for both of you for, um, you know, really talking about how you use them within your own group. I think it's an interesting concept to think about a communication agreement for neighborhood groups, and that way things are clear. And then if somebody is in violation of that communication agreement, then that's also there. I think there, where we have run into some issues, we've seen is where there's no real clear norms or communication agreement, and then it's like, well, what do you do now? So thank you both very much and thanks to everybody for being here tonight.

Thank you so much. I know it's evening, everyone has other things to do, however we do a public comment. I need a roll call to extend the Meeting by 10 minutes in order to hear from the, uh, eight people who signed up. So, uh, deputy clerk, if you could call roll?

Madam Clerk: I'm extending the Meeting 10 minutes. Councillor Nolan?

Patricia M. Nolan: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Councillor Cologne?

Dennis J. Carlone: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Vice Mayor Mallon?

Alanna M. Mallon: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Councillor McGovern?

Marc C. McGovern: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Councillor Zondervan?

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Yes.

Madam Clerk: And the Meeting is extended by 10 minutes on the affirmative vote with five in favor.

Patricia M. Nolan: Okay. And just so people know, we're now moving to public comment. We will only be calling on people who signed up for public comment before then you, each of you will have two minutes to speak.

Madam Clerk: The first speaker is Fred Meyer, followed by Lauren Crowe.

Sumbul Siddiqui: Fred eyer, please unmute yourself.

Fred Meyer: Yes, I just did. Uh, I don't think I'll need two minutes. We're considering changing the neighborhood name in, in, (inaudible) uh, I've heard about 20 names suggested, and it seems the only way we can fairly decide is through proportional representation, uh, voting like we use for elections here. And, um, we could use, uh, help on the, the, either the election commission or others teaching us how to implement it. Uh, if the election commission doesn't want to get involved, we could probably borrow, uh, the computer software from Robert Winters, who's been very helpful. Um, and that's, that's really it. I, I won't bore you with the, uh, list of the names unless you're interested, but that's a way to, uh, build consensus. Uh, some of the names are simply geographical, like the north of Harvard neighborhood or the Oxford Street, Francis, a neighborhood and all are about people. And, uh, like Mariah Baldwin was significant in the neighborhood. So if the City could help us with that. Also, if we're going to have a ballot, we need to be able to verify the signatures on the envelope. So we need current lists of registered voters within the boundaries of the neighborhood. That would be helpful. Thank you.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you.

Madam Clerk: Lauren Crowe. Lauren Crow is not in the Meeting. Justin Saif. You have the floor. Please unmute yourself.

Justin Saif: Hi. Justin Saif, 259 Harley Street East Cambridge. Helping neighborhood groups to improve in terms of inclusion, equity and diversity is a vitally important issue for the City. While Cambridge clearly has some neighborhood groups that do a great job, some neighborhood groups reflect the views of only a very small handful of people. And often those few people do not reflect the diversity of Cambridge. These groups do not reflect their neighborhoods, or if they erect artificial barriers to membership, such as attending several meetings before becoming eligible to vote. They need to take steps to improve if they're to have an official role in City decision making. This lack of representation often manifests itself, as we all know, and housing and development issues. And given the skyrocketing cost of housing, which is very consistently the most important issue for Cambridge residents, according to the City's own scientific surveys, um, the lack of representation is a very important matter. Uh, I also want to say that I'm disappointed that ECPT chose not to send a representative as I think they could have learned a lot from many of you. Frankly, it makes me sad for my neighborhood friends that we don't have a positive neighborhood group to join like many of you do. But to be clear, neighborhood groups that have hostile environments that they take no affirmative steps to remedy and whose board members continue to deny the nature of obviously hostile acts should be removed from the City website and play no recognized role in civic life. The City must not require its citizenry to participate in toxic groups in order to have a say in neighborhood affairs. It tells some residents that they are second class citizens who matter less to the City, and the City should never allow that situation to occur. And it must take firm steps to remedy it when it does. One

final note, as a parent with young children, I would just echo Lee Ferris and encourage all of these groups in the City as well to continue offering Zoom access to participate and not just view their meetings even after the pandemic ends. Thank you very much.

Madam Clerk: The next speaker is Christopher Schmidt, followed by Elizabeth Gilmore.

Christopher Schmidt: Thank you. Christopher Schmidt, 17 Laurel Street. Uh, I wanted to thank the chair and other members of the committee for pulling up together this lovely group of people today to give their comments on many of these things. Uh, there's so many neighborhood groups that I am looking forward to working with more now that I didn't even know existed before. Um, I think it actually, uh, speaks a little bit to the fact that the groups that I didn't know existed, uh, are, are the ones that I'm most excited to work with. Uh, I think that, you know, um, it's, it's really been the case that unfortunately too much of my experience with neighborhood groups has been led by negative interactions with, with board members, with other members in, in various spaces, um, members who take very strong, uh, aggressive stances towards, uh, other members of the community. Um, and, and I think that those stances are, are not even always visible to the people who take them. So, uh, I, I really, really am excited to, you know, um, be in the neighborhood where I believe that, you know, our neighborhood group has made steps that, that have made me feel more comfortable participating, uh, and, and seeing other neighborhood groups that are doing the same thing, um, is, is just, is just awesome. It's really, really heartening and uplifting. Um, I think that, uh, you know, there's, there's a couple speakers here who I think commented on, on the efforts that they have put forward and the successes they've had in, uh, integrating DEI, you know, efforts and successes. Uh, I think that carrying those forward and, and helping other groups implement them, um, hopefully, or, or if not, uh, you know, at least offering them is, is a great idea. Uh, and I hope that the City continues to work with some of those groups to, to carry out those best practices and, and bring them forward. Um, meeting space is a huge problem in the City. Uh, lack of community space that is, uh, you know, freely available is a major problem for every group that I've ever worked with. Um, I really, really do think that this is an area where the City could help do more. Um, and, and I also think that, you know, even a nominal fee becomes really, uh, you know, uh, an issue for, for many of these groups that are, uh, aiming for maximum inclusion. So, um, really thankful to the, to the hard work that's been done, uh, by, by some groups and, and hope that we can carry that forward and bring it forward. Um, and, and that, you know, if groups are unwilling to make changes in order to adapt to, uh, uh, improve their DEI that, that they don't get special seats at the table. Uh, I think that that's important because of, yeah, I just do. Thanks.

Madam Clerk: Elizabeth Gilmore.

Sumbul Siddiqui: Elizabeth Gilmore has left the Meeting. Jonathan Baron, please go ahead.

Jonathan Baron: Um, thank you for holding the Meeting. I'm actually gonna waive my time.

Madam Clerk: There are no more public commenters.

Patricia M. Nolan: All right, excellent. We extended for 10 minutes and we only need three of that. I, I just wanna close it out by thanking all of you. I also wanna thank the City staff. It was very good for me to see what it is that you're working on. Thanks for presenting those slides. I assume at some point they will be available. I believe they will probably just for all of you to know, they'll, the, if they're not already, they will soon be posted on the website under meeting materials. Um, the, the fabulous, uh, deputy City clerk is nodding her head, so she may already have posted them there. And, and Assistant City Manager Faruk, and, um, Melissa Peters, I really thank you for bringing that together to start up this conversation off. I know all of you probably have ideas that you weren't able to talk about. I know some of you came with some specific ways, particularly for that last question posed about how the City could help you. I encourage you to spend, uh, the list either to the, to me or the clerk, or the council officer or the City council. I will make sure they're gathered in one list, and then we can, um, make sure that they're forwarded if they don't get them already to the, um, uh, to the community development department who will, I'm sure review them. And, and this is the first of a meeting. I think there's future meetings that we will be holding on a variety of issues. But I wanna thank you. I don't, um, anticipate that this conversation will end here. And also, as several have mentioned there, there's, there's sometimes harder conversations to have that, um, will go on throughout the City. And I wanna encourage all of us to step into those. And also, once again, thank you for the work you do because so many of you are spending hours and hours, including this time right here, right from a 5:00 to 7:00 on a prime day to spend time with here. Um, before I call to adjourn, I see that Councillor Carlone has his literal hand up. So...

Dennis J. Carlone: Uh...

Sumbul Siddiqui: Councillor Nolan, Councillor he had his hand up first as well.

Patricia M. Nolan: Pardon? Who did?

Dennis J. Carlone: That was what I was going to say. Councillor Toomey had those five minutes left.

Patricia M. Nolan: Oh, sorry. Oh, I didn't know that. Uh, Councillor Toomey.

Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.: Thank you. Uh, Madam Chair, I'm not a member of the committee, but I did want to, uh, uh, attend by Zoom. And I just want to thank the chair for hosting this committee and all of the, the panelists who participated this evening. Uh, I certainly learned a lot of, some of the organizations, uh, that are in existence, and I just want to thank everybody for participating and looking forward to the next step as we move forward for more civic engagement from our community. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you so much, Councillor Toomey, for taking your time out to do this. You have so many other things you're involved in as well. Uh, Councillor Carlone then, or will you just flag in Councillor Toomey. Okay. Then I will, uh, call, uh, uh, we have to have a roll call to adjourn.

Madam Clerk: A roll call to close public comment, Councillor.

Patricia M. Nolan: Yes. Oh, to first, first, I wanna encourage all of you, if you did have written marks or you have specifically you have ideas about how the City and or groups can talk with each other. Please definitely send them on because we will be having another set, uh, another type of this meeting. And I just wanna have all the best material I can. Uh, first we'll have a roll call to close public comment, and then we'll have a roll call to adjourn.

Madam Clerk: I'm closing public comment. Councillor Nolan?

Patricia M. Nolan: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Councillor Carlone?

Dennis J. Carlone: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Vice Mayor Mallon?

Alanna M. Mallon: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Councillor McGovern?

Marc C. McGovern: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Councilor Zondervan?

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Yes.

Madam Clerk: And public comment is closed on the affirmative vote with five in favor.

Patricia M. Nolan: Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Sumbul Siddiqui: So moved.

Madam Clerk: On adjournment. Councillor Nolan?

Patricia M. Nolan: Yes.

Councillor Zondervan?

Madam Clerk: Councillor Carlone?

Dennis J. Carlone: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Vice Mayor Mallon?

Alanna M. Mallon: Yes.

Madam Clerk: Councillor McGovern?

Marc C. McGovern: Yes.

Quinton Y. Zondervan: Yes.

Marc C. McGovern: And the Meeting is adjourned at 7:06 on the affirmative vote with five in favor.

Patricia M. Nolan: Thank you all so much. I wish we were in person in the chamber to say thank you in person to you all.

Madam Clerk: Bye-bye. Good night.

Patricia M. Nolan: Bye-bye.

CERTIFICATION

I, Chloe Brown, a transcriber for Intellectix, 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 1st day of October 2024.

Chloe Brown

I. Communications

- 1. A communication was received from Heather Hoffman, regarding Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committee meeting on March 4, 2021.**