



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: April 24, 2023

Subject: Craig Kelley et. al. Zoning Petition

Recommendation: The Planning Board makes the following report with no positive or negative recommendation.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

On April 11, 2023, the Planning Board (the “Board”) held a public hearing to discuss a Zoning Petition by Craig Kelley, et. al. (the “Proponent”), to amend Article 4.000 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance to establish new use categories for “Shared Vehicle” and “Publicly-accessible, Privately-owned Electric Vehicle Charging System,” both of which would be permitted by-right in all zoning districts except for Open Space districts. In addition, the Petition proposes to amend Section 6.20 Off Street Parking Regulations by inserting a new Section 6.21(a) which states that “Electric Vehicle Charging Systems may be installed in any parking space conforming to the dimensional and other requirements of Article 6.000, or if not, are lawfully non-conforming.”

The Board heard a presentation from Craig Kelley and received written materials prior to the hearing from staff in the City’s Community Development Department (CDD). Following the presentation, public comment, and discussion among Board members, the Planning Board voted to forward this report to the City Council without making a positive or negative recommendation.

Board members supported the overall goal of the Petition to promote the expansion of both electric vehicle and shared vehicle use in order to achieve the City’s goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and agreed that there is a shortage of electric vehicle charging infrastructure available for public use. Some Board members believed that access to vehicles is an equity issue, and finding ways of making vehicles accessible without the need for automobile ownership can increase mobility and access for underserved populations. Further, in order to achieve the City’s mobility and climate goals, the Board expressed strong support for the City to study a possible policy framework that could include strategies like the activities described in the Proponent’s Petition. The Board acknowledged the ongoing planning studies on these topics being undertaken by the City and felt that these studies will assist in formalizing recommendations on possible regulatory changes to accommodate these types of strategies.

The Board did not reach consensus as to whether the Petition, and zoning more broadly, is the appropriate mechanism to achieve the intended policy goals. Board members acknowledged that zoning is just one aspect of a broader planning and policy strategy to address the issues that the

Petition discusses. Board members also expressed concern that there could be unintended consequences of both aspects of the Petition, particularly regarding the potential for increased traffic in residential neighborhoods and the availability of on-street parking. Board members raised questions about the potential ramifications of including specific vehicle types as land use categories in zoning, which is intended to regulate real property like land and buildings. More broadly, some Board members believed that the City's overall approach and focus on increasing EV infrastructure should occur in commercial and industrial zoning districts, rather than prioritizing changes in residential areas.

The Planning Board voted with six members in favor of transmitting the above report. Two members were absent.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary T. Flynn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Flynn, Chair.