

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE – CITY MANGER

COMMENTS FROM COMMUNITY MEETING, CITY COUNCIL INTERVIEWS AND WEBSITE

Below please find the comments we collected from the Community Meeting, the City Council interviews and from the website. At the end there are also a few comments that were sent directly to the City and forwarded to our attention. All of the comments appear exactly as they were received by GovHR USA.

Community Meeting

Jay Ash

- Thought Jay Ash seemed more like a political candidate than a professional manager. Also thought he relied on Chelsea past experiences than his vision and knowledge of Cambridge.
- Jay will give direction to the council and it will be good advice. PF and Louie will take direction. Louis is status quo. No matter what, union work on housing and construction will be very important factor in wide economic improvement/growth.
- Thanks to the candidates and the committee – an excellent forum. I’m most impressed with candidate Ash – the depth of his experience and the breadth. Clearly he’s learned a lot in Chelsea and Boston and we in Cambridge would benefit from that. Plus we need candidate DiPasquale in the Finance office!
- Was concerned that so many of Jay Ash’s responses referred to his work in Chelsea which has had a different set of challenges than Cambridge. When asked about “national models” he could not cite any. Also he did not address the question about affordable housing. At times it felt like he was giving “canned answers” rather than really listening and responding to the questions.
- Ash – very Chelsea focused. Not specific – he barely answered any of the questions with specifics – everything sounded canned. Did not answer the transportation question adequately; does not realize the impact the stressed redline has on the community.
- Of the three candidates, it’s a very difficult choice between Jay Ash and Louis DiPasquale. The former very impressive, experienced, thoughtful. Mr. DiPasquale a very seasoned Cambridge staffer and resident. Knowledgeable about the city.
- Three white guys...Jay Ash – politician says the right thing. I wanted to see more passion. He felt canned.

- Jay Ash was a city manager; handles himself well – might actually leave for public office at some point; well spoken but may not handle contentious issues a lot. Talks as if everyone's a "he" and speaks of "lower levels" – classist.
- Jay Asch – seems personable but did not answer questions with much depth. Wish he'd spoken more about his ideas and thoughts than his resume.
- I think Jay Ash would make a good City Manager. His experience would bring some new blood yet his experience would be helpful because he has state and city experiences.
- #1 rank – good experience; gave concrete examples; vision for change. Score 9 out of 10.
- My vote is for Ash! Highly connected to other levels of government and agencies. Relationships are very important to Cambridge attaining its goals. Highly respected – excellent track record in Chelsea. Finally, the right values for Cambridge. He has the capacity to be an effective and strong leader for Cambridge.
- Didn't really answer most questions. Seems like he would do the same things he did as Chelsea City Manager.
- Jay Ashe seemed fairly vague in his answers. I liked his "inside scoop" newsletter he talked about. No women or people of color!
- Score 6 out of 10 with 10 excellent. Experience, dynamic, cross political boundaries. Impressive economic turn in Chelsea. Full equality across community character, transparency and communication approach to early leadership (research, listen, discuss). -/ diversity awareness and plan lacking.
- I found Jay Ash to be a bit concerning. He clearly loves to talk fast. Even when he was told the time remaining was tight, he talked too long on the next question. He also offers nothing over Louie.
- Jay Ash – my choice – progressive, inclusive, can change Cambridge.
- Jay Ash very impressive experience, depth of understanding, clarity of expression. With his record in Chelsea, he's had a trial by fire.
- Cambridge needs a fresh set of eyes. I am concerned that Lois Depasquale is relying too heavily on the wisdom of the way we/Cambridge has always done things. Jay Ash has the experience and management vision to take Cambridge to the next level. We have to do things different if we want to continue growing and changing.
- Jay Ashe – he seems to be rambling on and on and doesn't really answer the questions. I'm not sure what he wants to do in Cambridge. It seems like a guy who lives right across the river and wants to run our city. Should know more about Cambridge.
- Jay Ash – didn't answer questions – too slick. Talked like he was running for political office not City Manager. Not a good fit.

Louis DePasquale

- I think Mr. DiPasquale was truly the most qualified candidate to take the city to the next level. We are lucky to have him as a candidate.
- Qualified, committed (live, sleep, eat); able to work with Council; knowledge of city, neighborhoods, agencies, youth programs, etc.
- Louis DePasquale has rock solid integrity, deep experience in Cambridge government, a genuinely humble and collaborative spirit, and profound leadership skills. His commitment to the city of Cambridge is irreplaceable. As a parent who has had the privilege of having a child on his baseball team, I would absolutely trust him with the city's future. We would be lucky to have him as City Manager.
- Too much of an insider. We need new blood. But I liked him more than candidate #1. Why were there three white guys? Where are the women candidates? People of color? Ethnicity?
- Louis DePasquale – I love him, what can I say? I believe and know his passion for Cambridge. He cares. He's smart, has vision, experience and is a team player. Please vote him city manager. I personally cannot think of a much harder job than to manage Cambridge! Good luck!
- Wallace D Pasquale -- Cambridge local; talks to the issues; often funds issues but not necessarily working on them – not sure what he would do; says he gets involved in issues early on. You should have included a city manager of color in your deliberations.
- My comment is that the last presenter knows us, been with us. I believe strongly that he can do the job. I think he has a vision for the city.
- Louis DePasquale – while one can view Louie's Cambridge only experience as a limiting qualification, his knowledge of and passion for Cambridge is palpable and heads above the other candidates. I am confident that Cambridge residents will be his priority rather than a stepping stone to a better job and he was the only candidate who mentioned education issues – a key for me!
- I think Mr. DiPasquale has done an excellent job in Finance and should keep that job.
- #2 Rank. Good intentions; looks to others for direction; too status quo. 7 out of 10.
- Louis DePasquale know the city so well. His enthusiasm is boundless (within budgetary restraints). We need him.
- Admirable service in Finance for the City but perspective is too narrow. Not really the candidate of the future.
- Rank of Candidates: #1 Mr. DePasquale; #2 Mr. Fetherston; #3 Mr. Ash
- Understands and loves Cambridge. Very focused on money as the key to doing everything.

- Mr. DePasquale is the only candidate to be considered for this position. He is Cambridge from head to toe. Thank you for the opportunity.
- Louis DePasquale is the one for this position. Knows the system and is a man of his word – a proven asset to this wonderful city.
- Louis DePasquale is great but what about renters? It's not all about homeowners.
- I am very impressed with the City Manager recruitment process. It was very helpful to have a chance to listen to the candidates express their views on a variety of topics. I was unsure how this process would work but was very informative in the way the candidates answer their questions. Two candidates stood out in my opinion with the skills necessary to lead the city. Mr. Ash and Mr. De Pasquale differ in one key leadership style that being inclusive with public engagement with the latter being the best choice.
- Louis DiPasquale is passionate, experienced and has leadership qualities that I am impressed by. I will support him to be the next City Manager. I am Ronald Benjamin, 172 Cushing Street, Cambridge MA a candidate for city council.
- Score 10 out of 10 -- +/- enthusiasm, commitment; context of decisions. Clear city council/department head collaboration. Plan/ideas for housing and transportation, school, ped/bike; commitment to IT, customer service and outreach process and commitment to professional development, transparency and social equity, diversity and love for city.
- Louis DiPasquale is in my view far and away the best candidate for city council. He has the love for the city the commitment to listen and the proven expertise to succeed. Today's forum showed that.
- As a resident, I really hope the City Council chooses Louie DiPasquale.
- Highly competent but no vision for change in Cambridge; lack of sensitivity to magnitude of change in Cambridge – gentrification.
- Here Louie!
- How can you not hire this guy!
- Clear vision, experienced, knows detail of city issues. Touched on priority areas in detail. Passionate about Cambridge. Has gotten things done. Can hit the ground running as City Manager. Clear choice.

Paul Fetherston

- Paul Fetherston – his fiscal management answer was lacking in depth and specifics. Asheville appears to be a small city and located away from other cities. Is Cambridge too big and too different for Paul to be able to manage?
- Mr. Fetherston seemed more thoughtful and honest like in his response to the question about a “divisive issue”. The communities in which he has worked are more similar to

Cambridge, that's a plus. He had a better response on affordable housing compared to Jay Ash.

- I appreciate his progressive outlook. He has a gentle demeanor – seems like a good listener and advocate for the people who make up the community. He didn't talk at us like the first candidate. Doesn't seem like he could be bought.
- It feels that Cambridge is ready for a refreshing change. Mr. dePasquale and Mr. Ash are very familiar with the City of Cambridge. DiPasquale is very close to Rich Rossi. I feel he will continue Mr. Rossi's legacy. However, Cambridge is currently undergoing a lot of change. I feel that an injection of new thoughts and ideas from other communities would be very beneficial. I wholeheartedly support Paul Fetherston.
- I liked that he was concise – find a suit that fits him. Thoughtful – pep – vibrant
- Mr. Fetherston – you had a problem with city employees destroying a large number of trees improperly. You promised to replace them. More important – how does this error happen. What steps did you take to ensure that it will reoccur? What success did you have?
- Was an assistant manager but was really an executive planner – not a manager to me. Honest about contentious issues – honest about a lot of things; not well spoken; speaks of lower levels – classist. Has woman Police Chief; would inform council but not be a decider. Honest.
- I appreciated his answers much more even though he didn't come across as polished. Paul answered more thoroughly and thoughtful than Jay and clearly did more homework on Cambridge policies, initiatives, etc. Really liked his answer to the last question on role of city manager and relationship with city council.
- I think Mr. Fetherston is not qualified to be City Manager – his experience is too different from Cambridge's.
- #3 rank. Expressed ideas but offered no good examples. Too theoretical. 3 out of 10
- He is not ready for Cambridge.
- Very good – understand Cambridge; has a progressive vision and has thought deeply about the issues facing the city.
- Paul Fetherston is a breath of fresh air. Not as polished but some good answers. I especially liked his comments about corporate responsibility and affordable housing.
- Score 2 out of 10. – National experience; -/ expressed confidence; poor public speaking – body language and response time; approach vague ideas – few solid examples.
- Paul Fetherston seems sincere but not yet ready to be City Manager.
- Not ready for Cambridge
- He knew more about Cambridge than Jay. His core beliefs are more aligned with Cambridge. Thoughtful. It also seems that he is a nice balance of progressive/new and conservative (in a good way!)

- Recognized Cambridge for what it has accomplished which is nice but didn't explain how his experiences would allow him to lead Cambridge forward. Generic answers.

General Comments

- I heard several statements from the candidates that stressed the importance of the following relationships: City Manager and City Council, City Manager and Department Heads, Department Heads and the public and City Manager and the Public. I would like to hear more from the candidates regarding the relationship between employees of different departments. Better collaboration would help eliminate resentments, misunderstandings and duplicate work. A city of Cambridge citizen and employee.
- With the housing cost why aren't there any programs such as rent to own programs for the residents of Cambridge.
- Many talk about diversity in the work place. How important is it to you especially the diversity to head departments.
- Please vet carefully the people who have worked with each of the candidates to confirm how open, collaborative and visionary each person is. I'm concerned that by relying on each one's ability to "present" himself we/I cannot totally trust what it's like to work with and under each person.
- I personally believe that large scale development in Cambridge has been allowed to go too far. At root of the problem in my opinion is the "Plan E" style of government for the City of Cambridge which allows a non-elected official unhindered control over the appointment of boards, board chairs and so forth. As an alternative, I suggest that we switch to a "strong mayor" form of government so that our elected councilors and Mayor would actually govern and be beholden to various electorates on a section by section basis. This would better serve the interests of Cambridge citizens and residents and better help curtail large scale development.
- Two questions I would like to be asked: (1) Other than an increase in affordable housing, what is the most important thing you would like to change about Cambridge? (2) SF, Seattle, NYC are all undergoing extreme gentrification that is making it harder and harder for low middle income people to live in the city. Will Cambridge be the same or can it be different?
- I liked all three candidates for Mgr. I would like to see the City Manager live in the city and also the Police Commissioner, Fire Chief and School Supt have to live in the city.
- All 3 candidates were excellent. I was disappointed with the questions. They were too broad and too general – thus – so were the answers.

City Council Meeting

I don't think the questions are sharp enough. It would be more helpful to have follow-up questions in some cases. There were times that the answers were non-responsive to the question. Right now I am feeling somewhat disappointed. I had hoped that we would have 3 AMAZINGLY good candidates. I instead feel we have 3 candidates who are good in some areas and less good in other areas. I had hope we could "steal" 3 city managers from successful communities and then pick the best.

Website Comment – After Community Meeting

My husband and I were born and raised in the City of Cambridge. We have been residents for 79 and 80 years respectively. We are proud to call Cambridge our home. Our grandchildren are fifth generation Cambridge residents.

We just finished watching the candidates at the public forum this evening. We felt it imperative to give our input on the next City Manager. We were quite impressed with the candidates and felt that the process as explained prior to the forum by the consultants was very informative.

While we believe that all of the candidates will bring positive attributes to the City, we would like to extend our support to Mr. Louis DePasquale. Mr. DePasquale is invested in the City and is knowledgeable about the inner workings of Cambridge. He is a native Cantabrigian who is invested in the community and is a voice for ALL people in Cambridge. What struck us the most in his presentation is that he is a team player. After viewing the forum, it is very clear that he has a passion for the City and will continue to work to keep the City of Cambridge in the stellar financial position that it holds.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer our input on a subject that is of vital importance to the future of the city.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any additional comments or questions.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Courtney
27 Brookford Street
Cambridge, MA 02140

Comments Sent Directly to City

To The Honorable City Council:

I have had the great honor of participating in the search process to hire a new Cambridge City Manager. I not only participated in the first screening and interviewing but also attended the two following forums in which the candidates responded to a comprehensive array of questions.

At each forum, the skill and knowledge of each candidate was revealed more and more. As a result I feel that Mr. Louis DePasquale is the most qualified candidate for the position of City Manager.

As the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC) Director, I evaluated the candidates' skills and competencies to tackle the issues that will be most critical going forward, especially those that impact CEOC's participants – developing and preserving affordable housing, and the need to engage with and hear the voices of those not usually heard in City Hall and those who do not yet know that government is there for them. Mr. DePasquale spoke specifically and from the heart on these issues. His suggestion of a Civilian Committee as a way to reach out to the neighborhoods and his knowledge of the City will greatly enhance such a process of engagement.

His work around affirmative action to create diversity in his departments is the kind of initiative that he can institute in all City departments. His recruitment of CRLS students while still in high school, employing them during the summer and offering them employment after graduation, gives Cambridge youth the opportunity to gain employment and economic security in order to stay in Cambridge. He has also worked to assist staff with their professional development so that they could move into more advanced employment, again supporting their economic development.

Finally, Mr. DePasquale spoke to the fact that the successful initiatives that maintain Cambridge as a great city stem from our strong financial position. Of the three candidates, he surely has the most demonstrated experience and the proven track record, given Cambridge's strong financial situation.

For these reasons I think that Mr. DePasquale is the most qualified for the position of Cambridge City Manager.

Thank you again for the privilege of participating in this process.

Elaine

Elaine DeRosa
Executive Director
CEOC

This may be the most important decision the City Council will make this year, or perhaps in many years. Please consider carefully and wisely with the long view in mind. I think that the choice should be of a smart and knowledgeable manager who understands and has had experience in the peculiar politics of Cambridge or a similar city, and who will be able to manage the city council and school committee when they micro manage. Jay Ash and Lois DePasquale seem to me best suited (according to the Chronicle article), but you have seen and heard. If none of them has the strengths necessary, please postpone the decision. I trust your experience and judgment.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Dorothy King
100 Trowbridge St
Cambridge

Friends on the City Council,

I just wanted to drop a quick note to all of you letting you know that I have worked closely with Jay Ash in his role at the State, and I have found him terrific to work with. He is creative, no BS, and very much someone who I think would represent all constituencies in Cambridge well.

I haven't worked as closely with the other candidates, and I'm sure they are terrific as well. I just wanted to let you know that, from my perspective, as a lifelong resident and innovation community builder here in Cambridge, I believe Jay would be a terrific leader for Cambridge going forward.

Regards,
Tim

As a 30+ year resident of Cambridge, I strongly support Jay Ash's candidacy for City Manager. He is a highly qualified candidate with tremendous experience leading complex city operations, is a skillful negotiator, is a 'doer', and, importantly, he has a style and personality that will work in Cambridge.

Kevin McCall
1187 Lakeview Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Council Members,

I've researched the three candidates vying to become the next Cambridge City Manager and feel strongly that Jay Ash is best equipped to manage the demands of this important role.

I've had first-hand encounters with Jay in his role as Secretary of Economic Development for the Commonwealth and have found him to be a thoughtful, fair, and decisive leader. He has the skills both to establish and enroll others in a vision for the future, and to align budget and personnel to execute on that vision. We are lucky to have someone of his calibre and prior experience prepared to take up such an important role in our city.

I am a mother to a 3 year old and 5 month old and my husband Michael Davies and I plan to educate and raise our children in Cambridge and live here for decades to come. I've been a member of the Kendall Square Association board and have been fortunate to work and live in Cambridge for several years. We are deeply committed to building an even more thriving and equitable Cambridge and appreciate your thoughtful consideration of Jay Ash for City Manager.

Best Regards,
C.A. Webb
160 Hancock Street

Dear Members of the City Council,

I went to the public meeting Tuesday night to hear the three finalists for Cambridge City Manager and am writing to give you my thoughts.. In my view, Jay Ash is clearly the best candidate for Cambridge City Manager and frankly, it would be a big loss to the city if he is not chosen. Paul Featherston is not yet ready for the challenges of a city like Cambridge and while Louis DePasquale has been an admirable public servant by helping to sustain the City's stellar financial performance, he has a relatively narrow perspective, both in terms of his life long work on budget and finance and the fact that he has spent his entire working life in Cambridge.

As some of you know, I am a former Planning Board member and chairperson who served during the period 1999-2006, when, like today, Cambridge experienced tremendous growth. During my time on the board we revised the city's non-residential zoning, developed the Article 19 Urban Design Special Permit process, and permitted much of the residential development in Kendall Square that has helped make this a much more lively area with a diversity of uses. I was also one of the founders of the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance, a collaborative of environmental/open space, housing, transportation, and planning organizations that promotes balanced solutions to community growth and development. I am a planning consultant with over 20 years experience working with municipalities all over the country and in Massachusetts. (I have not worked in Chelsea, however.)

What should we be looking for in a new city manager? In addition to proven experience with the basics of city management -- finance, public safety, service delivery -- our city today needs a city manager with the values consistent with the Cambridge community, a broad view of the opportunities and challenges facing us in the 21st century, the ability to balance the many

perspectives of an activist citizenry, and creative thinking to help the city achieve community goals and keep Cambridge livable.

- Jay Ash combines the values and experience that I think would best serve Cambridge in the future. In the presentation and Q & A that I heard on Tuesday, he was explicit about his values and how they were expressed in his work in Chelsea and as Secretary of Housing and Economic Development: commitments to expanding affordability and equity, communication and transparency, economic opportunity, more transportation choice, and community character and livability. He is highly respected for his success as the planning/economic development director and city manager in Chelsea, both for the basics and for bringing housing, economic development and livability improvements to a city with many challenges. (I know about lots of different community engagement and transparency initiatives and he mentioned some things he had done in Chelsea which I hadn't heard of before -- which I think shows creativity and a willingness to innovate, particularly in seeking out diverse opinions.) He is very well connected to decision makers in other levels of government and state agencies, which can be crucial in helping the city achieve its goals. His comments on the years he spent working on Chelsea's portion of the Urban Ring are a case in point. While Cambridge is a unique and very important part of the region, it is 6.5 sq miles and 107,000+ people in a region of some 5 million. We need a manager with strong regional understanding and relationships. Finally, we need a manager for the future, not just one who is defending past successes. The first smart phone arrived only about ten years ago and today we are talking about autonomous vehicles and how they may transform cities. Unforeseen change is inevitable. Our next city manager should have the broad perspective to work with the citizens, the city council, and city staff to position Cambridge to retain its unique character and livability as it continues to be an innovative leader.
- My impression of Paul Featherston was that he is not yet experienced enough to meet the challenge of being city manager of Cambridge. Because of my work, I happen to know something about both Asheville and Boulder, and it seemed to me that he missed opportunities to provide examples of some of the innovative approaches and difficult challenges in those communities. He seemed surprisingly unready to answer some of the questions put to him.
- Louis DePasquale has been an admirable public servant and Cambridge has benefited tremendously from the excellent management of public finance over recent decades. While the idea of having a lifelong Cambridge resident and city employee become the next city manager may have some appeal, at the Tuesday night meeting, he presented a somewhat narrow perspective, returning always to budget and finance as the central issue. We all, of course, want to continue to benefit from the city's financial success, but we need someone with a broader perspective. He did not seem to me to be the candidate of the future.

I apologize for the length of this message. I think Cambridge is lucky to have a candidate like Jay Ash to be our next city manager, and I hope you will agree with me!

Larissa Brown