

A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

January 31, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m.

REMOTE ONLY – VIA ZOOM

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this meeting will be REMOTE ONLY via ZOOM.

The zoom link is: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/83253118929>

Meeting ID: 832 5311 8929

One tap mobile +13092053325,,83253118929# US

Agenda Items – Tuesday, January 31, 2023

- I. Roll Call
- II. Introduction by Chair, Kathy Born
- III. Adoption of Meeting Minutes from meeting January 17, 2023 and November 22, 2022
- IV. Meeting Materials Submitted to the Committee to be placed on file
 - Communications from Committee Members
 - Communications from Council Members
 - Communications from the Public
 - Other Meeting Materials
- V. Public Comment
 - Members of the public are invited to share their ideas or comments with the committee.
- VI. Review Collins Center memo on budget article with example changes
 - **Facilitator:** Mike/Libby and Team & Anna **Goal:** Review and discuss opportunities to make changes to the budget process
- VII. Elections Presentation and Q&A
 - **Facilitator:** Elections Commission & Anna. **Goal:** 15 minute presentation and 30 minute Q&A

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kathleen Born, Chair
Kaleb Abebe
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo
Mosammat Faria Afreen
Nikolas Bowie
Kevin Chen
Max Clermont
Jennifer Gilbert
Kai Long
Patrick Magee
Mina Makarios
Lisa Peterson
Ellen Shachter
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 2023. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this meeting was remote via zoom.

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

Kaleb Abebe – Present
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Absent *
Mina Makarios – Absent *
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Ellen Schachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 11, Absent – 4. Quorum established.

*Patrick Magee was marked present at 5:35p.m

*Mina Makarios was marked present at 5:34p.m.

Chair Born opened with the Adoption of the Minutes from the January 3, 2023 Charter Review Committee meeting as amended to add Kaleb Abebe's name on the first page under Committee Members. Member Ellen Shachter made a motion to adopt the amended minutes, the motion was seconded by member Jim Stockard.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Chair Born noted that there was one written communication received from the public (Attachment A). Chair Born recognized member Jim Stockard who made a motion to adopt the communication and place it on file, the motion was seconded by member Kevin Chen.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Anna Corning began the meeting by sharing with members that there have been four interviews completed so far with past City Employees, which included former Deputy City Solicitor Arthur

Goldberg, and the two most recent City Managers, Richard Rossi and Louis DePasquale, and former Mayor and City Council Member Henrietta Davis.

Member Jim Stockard summarized the interviews he had with Arthur Goldberg, Richard Rossi, and Louie DePasquale, who all shared they believed the City functions well with the current government system. Some concerns that came up was having the budget process start sooner and possibly having the City Council set a goal setting type meeting to help prepare for the budget. Some commented that the City Manager should be appointing Department heads, while the City Council appoints members to Boards and Commissions. One thing they were all in favor of was having as much public engagement as possible.

Anna Corning reminded members of the upcoming public engagement forums on and that she was trying to plan meetings with the School Committee and City Council in the future. After updates, Anna Corning introduced David Kale, Assistant City Manager for Finance, who was joined by his team, Michelle Kincaid, Assistant Finance Director, Taha Jennings, Budget Director, and Angela Pierre, Deputy Budget Director.

David Kale began the Finance team's presentation titled, "City of Cambridge Budget Presentation" (Attachment B), pointing out that the City of Cambridge's budget is a direct reflection of its priorities and values as a community and is shaped by many sources of input. Other members from the Finance team also spoke, sharing that the majority of Cambridge's revenue comes from real estate taxes, Massachusetts law dictate the annual budget's high-level timeline as well as the City Manager and the city Council's role in the process, and the budget process is a year-long, structured and collaborative effort by the City Council, department heads, and the budget team.

After the Finance presentation, many members from the Charter Review Committee offered questions and concerns about the City's budget. Some topics that were brought up were Harvard and MIT's contribution to the City as nonprofit, how decisions get made about where and how much funding goes towards a certain area, funding for schools, increasing funding towards other City departments, statutory laws on budget, the Council's power when it comes to denying an item on the budget, and the City's free cash. David Kale and his team were available to respond, noting that the budget is a tool to implement city programs and policies, it's not always the first step on the process of addressing an issue, other planning and steps must happen first and then the budget makes sure the resources are available to make it happen.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Patrick Magee who made a motion to extend the meeting fifteen minutes, the motion was seconded by member Kai Long. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent

Nikolas Bowie – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarious – Yes
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Ellen Shachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 13, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

John Hawkinson highlighted comments that were made during the January 3, 2023, meeting regarding free cash and read a paragraph from the tax rate letter regarding the FY23 budget.

Anna Corning read a Q&A that was submitted through the Zoom during the meeting from a member of the public:

I'm still a little confused about how exactly the public is participating in the free cash conversation. Maybe I missed it, but exactly at what meeting is public comment available to weigh on this in particular? Is it just on the one Council meeting where the Council approves how free cash is used in the budget to balance the budget, but not the specifics on how it's used? If I'm understanding correctly, there are no public meetings specifically about free cash usage, it's more like one small part in the budget that the council is voting on.

Members from the Finance team responded, noting that whenever the Finance team goes up to Council for approval to use free cash that would be an opportunity for the public to weigh in. Whenever free cash is looked to being used it must go before the Council and would be on the Council Agenda.

Elliot Veloso, First Assistant City Solicitor for the Law Department, commented on a question member Ellen Shachter raised regarding the power of the City Council denying an item in the budget and whether they can raise one. Due to it being a legal question that the Finance team was unable to answer, Elliot noted that the Law Department can research this issue and bring it back to the Committee after their review analysis.

The Chair, Kathleen born thanked Committee members and the Finance team for participating in the meeting.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:45p.m.

Attachment A – Written Communication from John Hanratty
Attachment B – “City of Cambridge Budget Presentation”

Clerk's Note: The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/400?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=8220c78dba0a14ff69347230a003e9d5

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, November 22, 2022

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, November 22, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30 p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was remote via zoom.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosammat Faria Afreen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathleen Born (Chairperson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nikolas Bowie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max Clermont	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kai Long	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrick Magee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mina Makarious	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lisa Peterson (joined at 5:40pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter(joined at 5:40 pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Shell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	13	0	0	2
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

13 members recorded as present. 2 members recorded as absent.

The Chair brought forward the following Communications to the Committee to be placed on file:

- Communications from Committee Members
 - Communication from Member Susan Shell
- Communications from Council Members
 - N/A
- Communications from the Public
 - Communication from Alan Sadun
 - Communication from Josiah Someone
 - Communication from Robin Chen

Chair Born recognized a motion from Member Jim Stockard to place the Communications on file. The motion was seconded by Member Kai Long.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosammat Faria Afreen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathleen Born (Chairperson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nikolas Bowie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max Clermont	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kai Long	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrick Magee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mina Makarious	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lisa Peterson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Shell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	13	0	0	2
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

The motion to place the Communications received by the Committee on file passed with 13 members voting in the affirmative and 2 members recorded as absent.

Chair Born invited Anna Corning, Patrick Hayes, Elizabeth Corbo, and Michael Ward to begin the discussion. Anna Corning started with an overview of the materials sent to members regarding selection of a decision-making process. She said that most members were interested in using the ‘Fist-to-Five’ method of voting and explained some details about the method. At Ms. Corning’s suggestion, the committee practiced a ‘Fist-to-Five’ vote and took a vote to approve the use of this decision-making process with the following results:

Fist-to-Five Vote to approve use of this decision-making process:

0/fist-none
 1-none
 2-none
 3-none
 4-Four
 5-Nine

The practice vote to approve the ‘Fist-to-Five’ voting method for decision-making passed with 4 ‘Four’ votes and 5 ‘Five’ votes.

There was some clarifying conversation on when the 'Fist-to-Five' vote would be used. Elliot Veloso (Cambridge Law Dept.) explained that 'Fist-to-Five' would be used to gauge consensus during discussions, then when there is a final decision a roll call vote would be taken in accordance with Robert's Rules. Ms. Corning further clarified that this method will be used for tentative matters/gauging consensus on matters. Ms. Corbo stated that anything requiring formal action or adoption could be decided by a formal vote. The discussion concluded with Ms. Corning stated the wish of the committee to use 'Fist-to-Five' as a discussion tool and retain the use of formal voting for procedural and formal decisions.

On a motion from Member Jim Stockard to adopt the 'Fist-to-Five' voting method (as amended) as a decision-making tool. The motion was seconded by Max Clermont.

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

NAME	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT
Kaleb Abebe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jessica Dejesus Acevedo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mosammat Faria Afreen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathleen Born (Chairperson)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nikolas Bowie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kevin Chen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Max Clermont	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jennifer Gilbert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Kai Long	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrick Magee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mina Makarious	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lisa Peterson (joined at 5:40pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Shachter(joined at 5:40 pm)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Shell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jim Stockard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VOTE TOTALS	13	0	0	2
	YES	NO	PRESENT	ABSENT

The motion to adopt the 'Fist-to-Five' voting method (as amended) as a decision-making tool passed with 13 members voting in the affirmative and 2 members recorded as absent.

Ms. Corning stated that the amended proposal would be forwarded to members and posted online to the Charter Review webpage.

Member Kaleb Abebe suggested the Fist-to-Five vote for the adoption of the Committee Ground Rules. Ms. Corning called the vote as follows.

Fist to Five Vote to adopt the Committee Ground Rules:

0/fist-none

1-none

2-none

3-none

4-One
5-Twelve
(2 members absent)

Ms. Corning next led a review of the submission of values from members. Member Mina Markarious explained that the writing group attempted to capture sentiments that were broad and pertinent to the group goals specifically in its initial draft.

Members discussed the draft values document. Member Acevedo explained that the writing group used the headings from the collective key words received from members to create a concise vision statement. She asked members if there were sentences or words that were preferred, stating that the writing group would welcome that feedback on the draft. Ms. Corning explained that the writing team will use the conversation to prepare a second draft of the values to be voted on in the next meeting. Member Stockard asked if the group needed to acknowledge the statement sent by Member Susan Shell (and shared with the committee by Ms. Corning, as Ms. Shell was absent from the meeting). Member Max Clermont stated that Member Shell's statements should be considered in the same manner as other submitted thoughts. Chair Born stated her belief that there is a way to make statements about past wrongs while avoiding raising tensions without glossing over what has happened through word crafting. Member Peterson stated that without Member Shell in attendance, her statement should be referred to the next meeting when Member Shell is present and can articulate her concerns.

Ms. Corning moved the discussion on to the Community Engagement Working Document. The Committee discussed ideas for public engagement including a revised website, newsletter, virtual/in-person forums, and mailers to support public engagement. Chair Born stated that there is a 7-member planning committee and suggested that their first public meeting be to discuss a thought-out plan for community engagement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jameson Quinn commented that they are working on a piece regarding voting systems in Cambridge and other comparable cities and asked for help accessing raw ballot data from recent elections.

The meeting was adjourned at appx 7:35pm.



EDWARD J. COLLINS, JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
JOHN W. McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

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mccormack.umb.edu/centers/cpm
collins.center@umb.edu

Memorandum

TO: Cambridge Charter Review Committee
FROM: The Collins Center Charter Project Team
DATE: January 13, 2023
RE: Sample Charter Finance Article Language

OVERVIEW

In order to assist the Committee with its preparation for a discussion surrounding finance and budget, the project team wanted to provide the Committee with examples of language that could be found in a modern charter, as well as some examples of innovative provisions that may align with some of the Committee's articulated values and emerging themes.

EXAMPLE OF MODERN CHARTER LANGUAGE

Provided below is the outline of a generic modern charter finance article. The City's current charter has the equivalent of Section 6-3 (flagged with blue text), but the remaining provisions are not included. This illustrates how sparse Cambridge's current charter is regarding financial management and budget development, although it does not mean that the City does not engage in a similar process in practice.

ARTICLE 6 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

SECTION 6-1: FISCAL YEAR

- confirms the fiscal year of the City (which is established by state law as July 1-June 30)

SECTION 6-2: ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

- establishes the timeframe for any initial budget meeting(s) and any required participants

SECTION 6-3: SUBMISSION OF OPERATING BUDGET; BUDGET MESSAGE

- establishes the process for budget development and the timeframe for budget submission

SECTION 6-4: ACTION ON THE OPERATING BUDGET

- establishes the protocols for adopting the budget, including holding of public hearings, ability to modify, reject, timeframe for adoption and posting requirements

SECTION 6-5: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

- establishes the protocols for creating and adopting the capital budget

SECTION 6-6: INDEPENDENT AUDIT

- authority and protocol for independent audit process

SECTION 6-7: EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF APPROPRIATIONS

- restatement of prohibition of expenditures beyond appropriations

ADDITIONAL CHARTER FINANCE LANGUAGE

In addition to the more standard provisions above, some cities and towns have enacted finance provisions that shape the budget process in different ways. Below are some examples of these provisions for the Committee's review. Please note that most of the municipalities below have a government framework that is different than Cambridge, and references to roles such as "mayor," would need to be examined closely and aligned with Cambridge's City Manager structure, if it is kept.

WATERTOWN: BUDGET HEARING AND GOAL SETTING:

The president of the city council shall call a meeting of the city council prior to the commencement of the budget process, but not later than October 30, to review the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure forecasts, and other information relevant to the budget process. The president also shall invite the city's state legislative delegation and representatives of the school committee and library board of trustees to attend this meeting. Subsequent to this meeting, the city council shall meet to set policy goals with input from the city manager and the community. Based on these goals, the city manager will develop budgetary goals and the city budget.

AMHERST: PUBLIC FORUM

Not later than March 15, but before the Town Manager submits a proposed budget to the Town Council, the President of the Town Council with the cooperation of the Town Manager shall call at least 1 public forum on the topic of the proposed budget. This forum is intended for the Town Council and the Town Manager to present priorities, context based on prior years' budgets, revenue and expenditure forecasts, and other relevant information, and to solicit feedback from the public.

CHELSEA: LONG TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST

The city manager shall annually prepare a long-term financial forecast of city revenue, expenditures, and the general financial condition of the city. The forecast shall include, but not be limited to, an identification of factors which will impact on the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure trends, potential sources of new or expanded revenues and any long or

short term actions that may be taken to enhance the financial condition of the city. The forecast shall be submitted to the city council and shall be available to the public for inspection.

FALL RIVER: SECTION: PUBLIC ACCESS TO FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS.

Copies of the annual budget, capital improvement program, long term financial forecast, debt management plan and the annual independent audit shall be made available on the city website and for public inspection, at the same time they are made available to the council, and when the council receives the independent audit report. Copies of such documents shall also be filed in the office of the city clerk and the main public library.

FRAMINGHAM: STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (SIFOC):

There shall be a strategic initiatives and financial oversight committee (SIFOC) to advise the mayor, council and school committee on the status of Framingham's long range strategic plan in accordance with Article III, section 11(b), the state of the municipal economy, sufficiency of municipal revenues, and other fiscal matters that may from time to time be referred to it by the mayor, council or school committee. The Committee shall be comprised of nine (9) members appointed to staggered three-year terms, three (3) chosen by the council, three (3) chosen by the school committee, and three (3) chosen by the mayor, including its chair. Members shall be residents of the municipality and shall not hold any other elected or appointed office in the municipality and shall not receive any compensation. Each appointing authority shall select at least one member with expertise in finance and one member who is a member of the local business community. SIFOC will report annually to the mayor, council and school committee and shall file all of its reports with the city clerk

Cambridge elections

Gloria J Korsman <gloriakorsman@gmail.com>

Mon 1/23/2023 12:48 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review committee members,

I understand the Charter Review committee is reviewing Cambridge's charter, the basic laws that structure how the city is governed, how elections happen, and so on. The Charter Review committee will make suggestions on what to change, potentially including Cambridge's election system.

A council that represents residents city-wide has enabled measures where every neighborhood contributes and benefits. My concern is that the Charter Review committee might propose that Cambridge switch to neighborhood-based elections, also known as "wards". Instead of having Council members represent the entire City ("at-large") as is the case now.

Here's why I think ward-based elections are a problem. Even if the council is a mixture of ward and at-large councilors, that still means most of the councilors will be elected, but we would risk creating a system that suffers from

- Less focus on city-wide benefits
- Ward-based councilors are more likely to focus on the narrow interests of a particular subset of their ward, which could come at the expense of city-wide programs. Short-term, local complaints could win out over broader support for long-term benefits that span many neighborhoods.
- Less competitive, leading to less democratic accountability and less political engagement: In Somerville, 4 out of 7 of the ward councilors ran unopposed. In state and national elections in our area, most candidates ran unopposed. In Cambridge's current system, in contrast, councilors are up for a real fight every election cycle, which forces them to keep in touch with voters.
- Ward boundaries are arbitrary, leading to fights over boundaries rather than policies: Gerrymandering is an issue across the US, as geographic boundaries are manipulated to get certain candidates elected. In neighboring Boston, the fight over ward boundaries became embarrassingly heated.

Councilors should not be elected based on arbitrary ward boundaries: they should be elected based on how well they represent a particular segment of the city's residents, geographical or otherwise. In a ward system, many more perspectives would go unrepresented, since geographic dispersion means they would not be able to win in any individual ward.

Thank you for considering my views.

Best wishes,
Gloria

Gloria Korsman
91 Montgomery Street #2L
Cambridge MA 02140
gloriakorsman@gmail.com

Pronouns: she/her

I reside on the ancestral land of the Massachuset people, which was taken from them. [Know whose land you live on.](#)

Opposing ward-based elections

Julia Renner <julesmrenner@gmail.com>

Mon 1/23/2023 11:21 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Hello,

I am a Cambridge resident at 197 Green St #4, and I am writing to express my opposition to switching to ward-based elections. My concerns include:

1. Ward-based elections are likely to lead to a focus on ward-level interests, rather than citywide interests.
2. Ward-based elections are less competitive, meaning less accountability and political engagement. Unlike ward-based and many state and national elections applicable to Cambridge, Cambridge City councilors must engage with and appeal to voters every election cycle, rather than running unopposed.
3. Arguing over ward boundaries, as has happened in Boston, distracts from democratic debate over policy and concerns relevant to our citizens.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for your continued engagement with Cambridge residents.

Best regards,
Jules Renner
197 Green St #4

I love proportional representation!

Joshua Hartshorne <joshua.hartshorne@hey.com>

Tue 1/24/2023 9:41 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

Nothing makes me prouder to live in Cambridge than the fact that we have proportional representation. Majoritarian rule is ... better than a dictatorship I suppose, but still a crappy system.

Proportional representation means that any coalition that constitutes 10% of voters can get a seat at the table. Coalitions can be regional, without any fighting over ward boundaries. They can be based on issues. They can be based on race or class. They can be based on horoscope or favorite color. It's up to the voters to decide! And that's awesome.

In majoritarian rule, 51% of the voters get 100% of the seats at the table. That's democratic, but let's agree that it's not very democratic.

Please don't do away with proportional rule.

(I feel less strongly about wards, but if you are going to have proportional representation with wards, we'll need a city council with 5+ members for each ward, so probably 50 overall. That seems pretty unwieldy. And you have to fight over ward boundaries. Which is just extra, unnecessary fighting, when you could just have proportional representation at the city level.)

Josh Hartshorne
114 Inman

--

Sent with [HEY](#)

About ward-based elections

Benjamin Batorsky <yksrotab@gmail.com>

Tue 1/24/2023 11:52 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee,

Hello, I'm emailing because I understand the Committee is considering proposing a new voting system for council members representing individual neighborhoods versus the city at large. I can't quite fathom why this is being considered. I think there's a lot of opportunity for the system to pit neighborhoods against each other and slow down the government's ability to get things done. I'll note the current system has yielded incredible results in terms of progress on infrastructure and responsiveness to resident concerns. I'd hate to see that progress slow down, and I can't quite understand what would suggest that changing a working strategy is a good idea. This seems like a massive restructuring and a step backward. Let's keep a good system in place and not experiment with dividing our community.

Thanks for all your work.

Thanks,
Ben

Charter Review

Michael Copacino <mhcopa@gmail.com>

Tue 1/24/2023 8:39 AM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

To whom it may concern,

I was told by a member of the Cambridge Bikes group that there is some consideration to changing Cambridge's city government from an all at-large to a ward based system. Please keep the system as is. I greatly appreciate having 9 counselors who I can reach out to with problems and different people tend to have different specialties which make it easier for me to find multiple people to help on an issue. Furthermore as I experienced when I lived in Somerville, ward based positions are frequently uncontested while At-Large positions had competition every year.

Thank you for listening

Mike Copacino

elections

Willett, Walter C. <wwillett@hsph.harvard.edu>

Mon 1/23/2023 9:59 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Committee members,

I understand that you will review our city charter, which is good to do periodically, and I appreciate your donation of time to this effort.

One issue to be considered is our election system and the alternative to make this ward-based. I would like to strongly support staying with our current system for many reasons. One important reason is that this helps to ensure that all groups have a voice at the table, and that the interests of our city as a whole take priority. This been important building a sense of community that helps make Cambridge a special place to live. Our City election is the only one that I consistently enjoy because our system encourages many committed people to run for office, and I can vote for those who I think are the best candidates rather the trying to hedge my bets on who would be most electable. Please, please don't push to change the special way we elect our representatives.

Walter Willett MD, DrPH
72 Chestnut St.
Cambridge, MA

Comment on council seats

Luis Mejias <lmejias@gmail.com>

Mon 1/23/2023 8:11 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Charter Review Committee Members,

I applaud the Charter Review that is currently underway. Specifically, I appreciate the work to review what works and what doesn't work with our city's organizational structure.

I'd like the comment on the idea of ward-based councilor seats vs our current and more effective at-large council arrangement.

Nationally and even at the state level, our representative form of democratic government is dangerously on the precipice of falling apart. Gerrymandering and hyper-partisanship is making it next to impossible to work together to solve the big problems. At the local level, the ability to block necessary and effective change will mean nothing would get done. That's what would happen with a ward-based city, especially in a city without a mayor form of government.

In effect, our city would fail to be unified and instead be a series of tiny fiefdoms, with the real possibility of being divided into haves and have-nots. If Cambridge had a strong mayor form of government, with the mayor elected citywide, perhaps ward-based councilors would be worth discussing. Even then, a combination of at-large and ward-based would be the only option. But barring changing to a strong mayor form of government, ward-based should not be on the table at all.

Our city is small enough as it is, there is no need to further divide us and destroy our ability to tackle our shared problems, such as lack of housing and safe and efficient transportation.

Thank you,
Luis Mejias
18 Plymouth St

Keep Cambridge's current system of RCV and at-large councillors

Kathleen Francis <knf9478@gmail.com>

Mon 1/23/2023 1:32 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Hello,

Thank you for the important work your committee is doing to review and update Cambridge's charter. As part of that work, I encourage the committee to maintain Cambridge's existing system of at-large councillors rather than switching to a ward-based system.

At-large councillors must be responsive to needs across the city of Cambridge, rather than fighting for the preferences of a narrow area. The problems that Cambridge faces right now -- housing shortages, improving non-car transportation options, etc -- require an approach that spans the whole city, so it's important to have city councillors who are responsible to stakeholders in all areas. In addition, our competitive, ranked-choice voting elections ensure that we elect the best people for the job.

Thank you for your work and for taking this into consideration,
Kathleen Francis
56 Hancock St, Cambridge, MA

Please keep city council elections city-wide!

Eric Colburn <escolburn@gmail.com>

Mon 1/23/2023 1:23 PM

To: Cambridge Charter Review Committee <CharterReviewCommittee@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Committee Members:

I'm a longtime Cambridge resident (I lived most of my childhood on Alpine Street, went to college in Cambridge, now own a house on Cedar Street, and sent both of my children to CRLS), and I am writing to urge you to keep our city council elections city-wide rather than moving to a ward-based system. City-wide elections are more fair and more democratic, and they tend to discourage local corruption and manipulation of ward boundaries. I am very happy to be able to vote for councilors who represent me well even if they live in a different neighborhood. We all use the whole city; there is no good reason I can see to elect representatives from particular neighborhoods.

Thanks,
Eric Colburn
48 Cedar St.
Cambridge, MA