

A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

March 14, 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, March 14, 2023

- I. Roll Call 5:30 PM
- II. Introduction by Chair, Kathy Born
- III. 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
- IV. Public Comment
 - Members of the public are invited to share their ideas or comments with the committee.
- V. Project Timeline Review and Approval
 - **Facilitator:** Anna **Goal:** Review amended project timeline, discuss and vote to approve
- VI. Cambridge City Manager Discussion - 6 PM
 - **Facilitator:** Anna **Goal:** Discussion and Q&A with City Manager Yi-An Huang
- VII. Form of Government Discussion - 7 PM
 - **Facilitator:** Anna. **Goal:** Review Collins Center Memo of Menu of Forms of Government and Discussion.

MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Friday, January 27, 2023

Subcommittee Members

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo
Jennifer Gilbert
Kai Long
Lisa Peterson
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard
Kathleen Born, Chair

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Friday, January 27, 2023. The meeting was called to order at approximately 11:00a.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, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present

Present – 6, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

Anna Corning began by noting that the meeting would be focusing on the Committee Work Plan and other major topics. She also reviewed the public forum at the Main Library that was held on January 24, 2023, and the turnout of residents.

Member Jennifer Gilbert had a clarifying question about the public forum and if the guests in attendance were people that were familiar with the Charter Review Committee or if people who were in attendance came to get information on the Charter Review. Anna Corning noted that about fifty percent of people were there to learn more about what the Charter Review Committee represented.

Member Jim Stockard shared that there should be more outreach for lower income residents, so they are aware of the Committee and to get more community awareness.

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered suggestions on locations on where the Committee could do more outreach, noting that the youth centers could be appealing to some residents.

Member Susan Shell suggested more transparency on the City website could be beneficial.

Member Kai Long shared that the meeting was very informative, and suggested meetings going forward be more targeted on specific matters.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo shared members from the community asked for more clarity on what the Charter is, and echoed comments made by Kai Long. They stressed the importance of reaching out to minorities and using City spaces that are comfortable for all demographics in the City.

Anna Corning agreed that the Committee does need to reach out to more to the community and offered the idea of informational mail using postcards that could have links, translated informational versions online, and direct residents to more information that is posted on the website.

Member Kai Long shared that the Committee should use more than words when reaching out to different demographics, using tools that are more accessible to those who need it. Break down the communication so it is accessible to a variety of people with different education levels.

Anna Corning stressed the importance of feedback from Committee members when it comes to doing community outreach.

Member Jennifer Gilbert agreed with having more education for the community and with comments made by Kai Long with using different tools to reach out to the different demographics of people.

Member Jim Stockard noted it would be important to have examples and scenario-based questions when speaking to the community about the Charter when it comes to Strong Mayor/Strong Manager and other forms of government. He also suggested reaching out to older students at CRLS who could relay Charter information to family members at home.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo offered ways the Committee could reach out to the school community.

Anna Corning noted that there is a meeting with the City Council in March where Committee members can come and talk with Council members and potentially request an extension.

Member Jennifer Gilbert offered ideas on outreach, suggesting using social media videos and possibly having a contest to help promote information, a way to create content that is about the Charter.

Anna Corning shared she could try and make a connection with staff at CRLS to brainstorm ways to get information out through students.

Member Kai Long stressed the importance of moving forward and asking big questions, answering them, and getting to decisions.

Member Jim Stockard suggested leaning more towards going out to other groups and committees in the City to get information out there to community members who may be hesitant to join forums and meetings that the Charter Review Committee hold.

Anna Corning noted that things are moving forward, and she has seen some feedback and communication from members from the CEOC and Ward 9.

Member Susan Shell shared that the more informed people are, the more informed opinion and point of view they will share.

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo offered the idea of having a tentative schedule about when things should be done by to help keep Committee members focused and on track.

Anna Corning stressed the importance of having a work plan going forward to have targeted conversations and shared that a workplan is something she can draft up to bring forward to the full committee.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo who made a motion to create a draft of a work plan to guide Committee members going forward and to propose the workplan to the full Charter Review Committee. The motion was seconded by member Jim Stockard.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo who made a motion that was seconded by member Jim Stockard to create a draft of a workplan to guide Committee members going forward and propose the workplan to the full Charter Review Committee.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:05p.m.

The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/429?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=87892f06d2f559fd22f927d34862856b

MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 7, 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 Makarious
Lisa Peterson
Ellen Shachter
Susan Shell
Jim Stockard

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, February 7, 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, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Present
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Absent
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Absent*
Mina Makarious – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Absent
Ellen Scachter – Absent
Susan Shell – Absent*
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 10, Absent – 5. Quorum established.
***Patrick Magee was marked present at 6:44p.m.**
***Susan Shell was marked present at 5:43p.m.**

Chair Born noted that there were seven written communications that were received from the public (Attachments A-G). Chair Born recognized member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo who made a motion to adopt the written communications and place them 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 – Absent

Mina Makarious – Absent

Lisa Peterson – Absent

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard- Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 11, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened public comment.

Suzanne Blier thanked Committee members for holding the public forums and noted she looks forward to Committee members speaking on the differences on what is happening with relative proportionality in other municipalities.

Anna Corning began the meeting by introducing Michael Ward, Patricia Lloyd and Elizabeth Corbo from the Collins Center who did an overview of their memo (Attachment H). After the presentation members from the Collins Center made themselves available to Committee members who had any questions or concerns.

Members from the Charter Review Committee went into discussion about elections and their takeaway from the presentation made by the Election Commission from the previous meeting. Members offered comments and suggestions, with some of the topics focused on rank choice voting, reviewing Chapter 54A, its repeal and how it affected Cambridge, voting turnout numbers, the possibility of having four-year and/or alternating terms for Council members, and even and odd year elections.

Michael Ward from the Collins Center shared that there are significant challenges with even number year elections on the same day as State and Federal elections. He noted that there are both State law and Federal law challenges that would have to be thought through. He shared that the Collins Center would look more into it to try and get a better understanding and provide information as it comes.

Member Nikolas Bowie stressed the importance of the role Charter Review Committee members have.

Anna Corning noted that she will pull some data from other cities and towns that have elections that fall on even years to see what the voting turnout numbers are compared to odd years.

Members Jennifer Gilbert, Jessica DeJesus Acevedo, Kevin Chen, Kai Long, and Susan Shell shared their concerns and challenges they took away from the Election Commissions presentation. A suggestion that was made was to have more outreach with public housing to engage and educate to get more voters out. One concern that was brought up was around ward based elections and ward representations, and the challenges that could come with it.

The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that New York currently moved to non-citizen voting for their School Committee, which has been successful. She also noted that some communities have been looking into Universal Suffrage, for a larger expanded group to vote, including younger people. She shared that it is based off the premise that federal aid and representation is built out on a census basis, which includes non-citizens and children, who are people that should be included in the voting process.

Member Kai Long had a clarifying question regarding the possibility of having a digital option for elections. Elizabeth Corbo responded noting that she's not aware of any. Michael Ward shared it is something that the Collins Center can look in to.

Member Jim Stockard offered comments around how to make residents feel more comfortable coming out to vote and was open to suggestions on how the Charter Review Committee could make that possible. He also offered ideas on ballot questions that could potentially help to get more residents out to vote.

Member Patrick Magee shared thoughts on how the community can engage with university type cities and towns, where the turnover population is always changing, and focusing on those specific demographics.

Anna Corning asked members to share their thoughts on the Saturday, January 24, 2023, public forum that was held on Zoom. Member Jennifer Gilbert stressed the importance that if the Charter Review members were going to meet with one ward, it would be important to meet with all wards. The Chair, Kathleen Born agreed and shared that it is good to broaden the Charter Review outreach to as many groups and community members as possible.

Member Kai Long shared that she and member Patrick Magee had interviewed former Mayor and City Council member David Maher and offered comments on what was discussed during the interview. Kai Long noted that she had also interviewed former City Manager Robert Healy and urged other members of the Committee to watch the interview to get his perspective.

Anna Corning shared that she is working on a draft project timeline to help categorize and add goals to future meetings and did a brief overview of what Committee members can look forward to at the upcoming meetings. She asked for the members to start thinking about making a tentative decision on form of government so the Committee can start moving forward.

Members of the Committee offered comments on Mayor versus City Manager form of government and how moving forward the Committee could possibly look at other options besides Mayor versus City Manager. One suggestion was looking at structures within the executive branch and having a document that would be able to summarize the different concepts and would be able to provide pros and cons of different forms of government.

Member Nikolas Bowie noted that having a chart or document on how Councils in Massachusetts oversee their executives would be helpful.

Anna Corning shared that the next meeting will be held on February 28, 2023 and will include a group of Mayors and Managers from different municipalities to speak to the Charter Review Committee members.

Member Kai Long asked if the Committee could possibly get more information from Department Heads or other staff on how they feel about a City Manager form of government, to get a more honest point of view.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35p.m.

The Charter Review Committee received seven written communications, Attachments A-G Attachment H – Memorandum from the Collins Center to the Charter Review Committee

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/441?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=0e93353afbb7a0e6697b7df30b769404

Suggestions and Concerns

Patrick W Barrett III <jbrealtyllc@gmail.com>

Thu 2/23/2023 2:48 PM

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

Dear Charter Review Committee,

I have not been able to attend the meetings of this committee but I have been following its work. Thank you all for taking this on as I know how much of an endurance run these committees can be. I have some questions and wanted to raise some concerns for the record:

1) The charter pre-dates the creation of the "aide" position for city councillors. I was hoping to add to the discussion the idea that these aides ought to be subject to the same rules and limitations that Councilors are to eliminate the temptation to use them as proxies that engage not only in prohibited political activities but to also prevent them from going directly to department heads as they often do. I believe this is a necessary "check" on their behavior. If the rules apply to a city councilor they should also apply to their assigns.

2) Has the committee considered term limits for Councilors? Many councilors have taken a seat on the council for years and years. I think there is a real concern that making a "career" out of the position does not promote brave leadership. I think this is the same as it should be on the national level which there is amazingly strong support for in the general public.

3) A councilor has invited citizens on the varying listservs to come to these meetings and advocate for extended school committee and council terms. I find the suggestion to be extremely unethical given the committee's work that is ongoing. Further I would like to at least voice my opinion that this is a terrible idea and strongly tie my objection to the bullet point above on term limits. It is exactly the type of thumb on the scale behavior that we should be strongly working to avoid. The Council, to my mind, should be functioning as a board of directors not state legislators and sometimes I think those waters get a bit muddy. Further, no councilor should be suggesting anything during this process.

4) The charter goes into some length to describe the behaviors and powers the Council has but does not say much on the topic of enforcement. Has there been any discussion about adding some "teeth" to help guide the general public or even the city administration in enforcing the existing rules should a councilor violate them?

I hope I can find time to attend one of your meetings sooner than later. Unfortunately I cannot attend on the 28th as I have a hearing of my own. Again, thank you all for your service and good luck.

Regards,

Patrick W. Barrett III, Esq
41 Pleasant St

www.linkedin.com/in/pwbarrett/

Emails sent or received shall neither constitute acceptance of conducting transactions via electronic means nor shall create a binding contract in the absence of a fully signed written

contract.

Menu of Forms of Government with Example Options for Modifications

Item	Council-Manager		Mayor-Council	
	Current Cambridge	Modified to be Closer to Mayor-Council	Modified to be Closer to Council-Manager	Traditional Strong Mayor
Mode of Selection of Mayor	Selected by Council	<i>Elected by voters (either separately elected from Council or highest vote-getter among Council candidates)</i>	Elected by voters	Elected by voters
Responsible for developing City vision and strategic plan	n/a	<i>Mayor provided leadership role in development and maintenance of vision and strategic plan</i>	Mayor	Mayor
Responsible for leading setting of annual City goals and budget priorities	n/a	<i>Mayor provided leadership role in facilitating the Council setting annual City goals and budget priorities</i>	Mayor	Mayor
Elected officials' role in department head hiring	n/a	<i>When there is a department head vacancy, the Manager must inform the Council and provide the Council a chance to offer input on priority policy goals related to the department before the search begins</i>	<i>When there is a department head vacancy, the Mayor must inform the Council and provide the Council a chance to offer input on priority policy goals related to the department before the search begins</i>	At discretion of Mayor
Appointed management executive with background in management	City Manager	City Manager	<i>Chief Administrative and Finance Officer (CAFO) (Appointed by Mayor, confirmed by Council)</i>	At discretion of Mayor
Accountability to voters /measurement of performance/ progress	Newly implemented City Council performance review	Newly implemented City Council performance review that can tie into / reflect items Mayor led goal setting	At the ballot every 2/4 years (via regular election or recall if applicable)	At the ballot every 2/4 years (via regular election or recall if applicable)
Opportunities for the public to have voice in budget priorities	Advocating with the Council	Charter can add a required public budget forum	Charter can add a required public budget forum	Advocating with the Mayor and Council