

A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

March 28, 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 28, 2023

- I. Roll Call 5:30 PM
- II. Introduction by Chair, Kathy Born
- III. Adoption of Meeting Minutes from meeting of February 28, 2023 and March 14, 2023
- 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. Cont. Review and Discussion Menu of Forms
 - Facilitator: Libby & Mike **Goal:** Overview and Discussion, clarifying questions
- VII. Form of Government Discussion
 - **Facilitator:** Anna. **Goal:** Round Table Discussion, Sharing of Opinions from Members to answer the question:
 - i. *Should the head of the executive branch be an elected official (strong mayor) or remain an appointed position by the city council (city manager)?*
 - ii. Sub questions to help guide discussion:
 1. What are some of the challenges in the current council-manager structure? Would these be impacted by an elected executive

branch? Does an appointed city manager impact those challenges?

2. What are the strengths of the current Cambridge government? How does the city manager support those? How might an elected mayor support those?
3. What are the core values and elements the Cambridge community wants to see in its government? How does an appointed manager represent those? How might an elected mayor represent them?

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 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 28, 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.

Clerk of Committees Erwin 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 – Absent
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarious – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 14, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes from the January 31, 2023 Charter Review Committee meeting. Member Jim Stockard made a motion to adopt the minutes, and the motion was seconded by member Ellen Shachter. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowier – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 14, No- 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born noted that there were four written communications that were received from the public (Attachments A-D) and recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt the written communications and place them on file. The motion was seconded by member Kaleb Abebe.

Kaleb Abebe – Yes

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowier – Yes

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Absent

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Yes

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 14, No- 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born opened Public Comment.

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Lee Farris shared that it would be nice as a user or resident that when the newsletter goes out there would be a link that would go straight to the documents that are being described in the newsletter, it would make it easier for the reader.

Patrick Hayes shared that he and Committee members went to a Harvard Square Business Association meeting recently to spread the word about the Charter Review Committee.

Member Jim Stockard shared discussions he has had with community members, some of whom voiced their concerns and noted that they were not in favor of having the option to allow older youth to vote.

Anna Corning asked for feedback on the draft proposed timeline (Attachment E) that was sent to Committee Members and shared that she would like to have it completed before the Special Meeting with the City Council on March 22, 2023. She noted that the proposed timeline is a way to set goals and have topics for future meetings.

Member Ellen Shachter had a clarifying question on the timeline around the drafting of language for the Charter. Anna Corning was able to provide more detail and feedback on what the proposed drafting language should look like as the Charter Review Committee continues to move forward.

Member Kevin Chen had a clarifying question regarding the proposed timeline would work around community engagement. Anna Corning shared that the way the Charter Review has been engaging is a good way to continue, but members should think about offering public forums or workshops that are more structured around specific topics.

Member Mina Makarious suggested that as the Charter Review moves forward with drafting new charter language, it may be beneficial for the City Solicitor's Office to review all of the proposed language.

Member Jim Stockard asked for clarity on when the Charter Review Committee should be requesting an extension from the City Council. Anna Corning noted that it's mostly up to the Committee if they want to continue to volunteer meeting and noted that it would be up to the members of the Charter Review Committee to determine a proposed timeline to bring to the City Council when asking for an extension. Anna Corning suggested that members should think about if they are comfortable extending the timeline and could ask for the extension at the Special City Council meeting in March.

Member Ellen Shachter suggested that the Charter Review Committee members use specific questions to bring to the community groups to target what the Charter Review is asking for feedback on.

Michael Ward from the Collins Center introduced the panelists that were invited to join the Charter Review Committee meeting. They included Alex Morse, current Manager of Provincetown and former Mayor of Holyoke, Joe Curtatone, former Mayor and Alderman of Somerville, and Eileen Donoghue, former Manager and Mayor of Lowell and former State

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Senator. Panelists made themselves available to answer questions and concerns of Charter Review Committee members.

For the remainder of the meeting, Charter Review Committee members and the panelists went into discussion about strong mayor versus strong manager, with panelists offering their personal experiences in those roles. Charter Review members engaged with the panelists and spoke on topics that included risks and responsibilities that come with mayor and manager, the role of city councils in the two different forms of government, accountability, the leadership part of the position and the type of visibility that comes with it, community engagement and goals, limitations with community engagement specific to the type of role, the disconnect with diverse citizens and accessibility to information, lining the community needs with the budget, the budget process including more engagement from the Council or the community, and racial and social representation within government,

The Chair, Kathleen Born thanked the three panelists for attending the meeting and shared she was excited about the conversations that took place.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30p.m.

The Charter Review Committee received four written communications from the public, Attachments A-D.

Attachment E – Draft proposal timeline

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

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/456?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=ff06191c9981904379b832d74b03383a

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 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, March 14, 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.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Absent
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarious – Present
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Absent
Kathleen Born – Present
Present – 12, Absent – 3. Quorum established.

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Chair, Katleen Born recognized member Kevin Chen who made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from February 7, 2023 and Subcommittee meeting minutes from January 27, 2023. The motion was seconded by member Kai Long.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie -Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent 3. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Lisa Peterson who made a motion to adopt and place on file one written communication received from the public (Attachment A). The motion was seconded by member Patrick Magee.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

Jim Stockard – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent -3. Motion passed.

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Anna Corning, Project Manager, shared that she would like to hear opinions on the proposed timeline (Attachment B) and adopt it at the meeting. She noted that she tried to incorporate the two main items she heard as feedback from members, which included dedicated time to review drafted charter text, and dedicated time slots for topic-specific public forums. Anna noted that the plan would be to propose this timeline to the Council at the meeting being held on March 22 with the understanding that the Charter Review Committee would ask for an extension through the end of the year. Anna opened discussion to members about edits and concerns around the proposed timeline.

Member Ellen Shachter had a clarifying question around summer meetings and the possibility of some members being away on vacation. She noted the importance of making sure there is a quorum for summer meetings so the Committee is able to meet. Anna Corning noted that there will be a summer break where meetings will not be held and shared she would be reaching out to members to confirm their availability.

Member Susan Shell had a clarifying question on how the timeline would be affected by an extension and what it looks like moving forward. Anna Corning noted that the timeline is the framework behind asking for the extension with the goal being to discuss the extension at the City Council Special meeting on March 22, and shared that the timeline currently goes to mid-November, and members should think about if they are able to continue to make a commitment to participate.

The Chair, Kathleen Born shared that it would be good to end in November because it is an election year and it would be good to have the current City Council members present when the new Charter Review language is complete and ready to be submitted. The Chair encouraged members to look at the proposed timeline so they have a good idea of what will be happening in the upcoming months and future meetings.

Member Kai Long offered comments and positive feedback around the proposed timeline and is in favor of moving forward with it, and believes November is a good end date.

The Chair, Kathleen Born recognized member Ellen Shachter who made a motion to adopt the proposed timeline. Member Patrick Magee seconded the motion.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Kaleb Abebe – Absent

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes

Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes

Nikolas Bowie – Absent

Kevin Chen – Yes

Max Clermont – Yes

Jennifer Gilbert – Yes

Kai Long – Yes

Patrick Magee – Yes

Mina Makarious – Yes

Lisa Peterson – Yes

Ellen Shachter – Yes

Susan Shell – Yes

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Jim Stockard – Absent

Kathleen Born – Yes

Yes – 12, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Chair, Kathleen Born reminded Committee members of the Special City Council meeting being held on March 22nd and encouraged some members to join in the meeting, but also stressed the importance that Charter Review Committee members that do attend have to be less than seven to stay away from a quorum.

Anna Corning introduced City Manager Yi-An Huang who thanked the Committee for inviting him to join the meeting. The City Manager offered opening remarks about his transition from his previous employment to his current role as City Manager, and shared his background on what led him to become a City Manager. He shared that he recognized the opportunity to come into the City to build off of things that are already strong, and work towards strengthening areas in the City where it was needed. The City Manager noted that he believes the conversation with the Charter Review Committee is very important, and he is excited and happy to share what he has learned, seen, and experienced since taking the role of City Manager.

Member Kevin Chen began by asking the City Manager if there were a Mayor position that had been opened with the City, is that something he would have applied for. The City Manager shared that he would not have applied for a political role like that, he does enjoy reading about politics, but does not see himself as a politician. The City Manager noted that what excites him about the role of City Manager is being able to build a strong organization and a culture where he is able get things done.

Member Ellen Shachter offered comments and asked the City Manager what he believes is the appropriate interface with the people in the community and the position of City Manager. The City Manager responded by sharing he believes that it is very important to have all levels of engagement within the community and noted that there is always room for improvement on how the City continues to be accessible, engaging, and receiving feedback.

Member Susan Shell had a question for the City Manager regarding his relationship with the City Council around legislation and also questioned how the City Manager, within his own office, sets up the various divisions and demands and prioritizes what needs get met with first. The City Manager began by noting that it is a unique governing structure. He shared that he believes the Councillors got into their roles because they wanted to make an impact and shape their community. He noted he believes his role when he is working with the Councillors is to try and come to a consensus and shape policy together through dialogue, even when everyone is coming from different perspectives, and achieve those positive impacts for the City together. Organizationally within his Office he aspires to have short term plans where his team can see what they are working on currently and how it will impact decisions going forward to make long term investments. He noted that the Councillors exercise a great deal of power and influence on the City Manager, which is applied over time, and noted how affordable housing is a great example of that.

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Member Kai Long questioned the City Manager on how much in his job description is engaging with the public or how much within the perimeter of the job would be with the public. The City Manager responded by sharing that it was the responsibility of the Council to hire someone who they believed would be beneficial towards the City in all aspects, including community engagement. He shared that when he came into the position, he had the desire of setting up structures that have not been in place, with an example being the City Manager annual review. He commented that he worked with the City Council to create the review, which had just been finalized, and it offers the opportunity to achieve goal setting and feedback from the community and other City Departments. Kai Long had a clarifying question regarding the review and was interested in knowing if the review were something that would continue to apply once City Manager Huang is no longer in the role of City Manager. The City Manager responded by sharing that it could be something that becomes permanent but should be flexible as time changes and the City evolves.

Member Lisa Peterson asked the City Manager if he was able to provide specific recommendations that members in the Committee could think about to try and change Charter language to accomplish more public participation. The City Manager noted that there are some larger challenges the City is trying to solve and recognized that more public representation, participation, and engagement is important.

Member Jennifer Gilbert offered questions around issues that are more regional and national, and asked how, with our current form of government, where does the City stand with other cities and towns, and how does Cambridge contribute to some of these major issues like climate change, housing, and transportation. The City Manager offered comments, noting that it is understood that regionally that these are issues that need to be collaborative on.

Member Patrick Magee had questions around the amount of Awaiting Reports that are on the weekly Council Agenda and suggested that when City Councillors are elected, they try to set their policy setting earlier in their term. Patrick Magee shared that by doing this it would help to set the stage and allow staff to know and focus on what the two year term would look like. He offered additional comments and asked for the City Manager's view on a suggestion like this. The City Manager shared that there should be a goal setting exercise between the City Council and the City, which has been missing. He shared that this year the City and the City Councillors will plan out what that goal setting looks like moving forward. The City Manager agreed with Patrick Magee and believes that there is a need to be clearer about overall direction, and where the staff time and efforts need to be focused.

Member Mina Makarios asked the City Manager from his perspective, or anything he has heard from the City Council, on what the Charter Review Committee should be working towards to help the Council function better as an advisory board. The City Manager noted that ultimately the Councillors are held accountable by the voters. He shared that having a more citizen base that are working with Councillors and paying attention to legislation could be beneficial moving forward. The City Manager offered additional comments and noted that he enjoys working with each Councillor and getting different perspectives from them when making decisions.

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Member Jessica DeJesus Acevedo submitted questions to the City Manager and was unable to speak during the meeting. Member Acevedo wanted to know what the City Manager's leadership style was, what is the most difficult part of your role, how are you ensuring policy and legislation based on social media, and how are we supporting the BPOC and small businesses in our city to remain in the city from your position and lens post-COVID and ARPA rollout. The City Manager shared that he focuses on trying to assemble a good team that will focus on tackling an issue, and he is trying to look at and build into the City a diverse group of people. The City Manager noted that when involving groups of people, he wants to make sure they feel free to speak and have input, and that they are listened to when they do speak.

Member Ellen Schachter had clarifying questions around decisions that come down to risk and the ability to take risks, noting that it is critical to take risks in order to go forward, and asked where does risk fit into the role of City Manager. The City Manager noted that there are many risks that come with his role, sharing that there are a lot of different risks and at the end of the day there should be an assessment of what type of risk you are taking and looking at the different scenarios with that risk, the impact, and the reward.

The Chair, Kathleen Born thanked the City Manager for taking time to be with the Charter Review Committee around a clearer mission for the Mayor, which is something the Charter Review might accomplish by deciding if they go with directly electing a Mayor through rank choice voting. The Chair, Kathleen Born asked for the City Manager's thoughts around the possibility of the Mayor having a different role with establishing priorities. The City Manager noted that there is some value in having a different role for the Mayor, sharing that it could be more attractive to voters.

Anna Corning thanked City Manager Huang for participating the Charter Review meeting and making himself available to answer questions and be open to discussion. The City Manager thanked all the Charter Review Committee members and thanked them for the important work they are doing.

Anna Corning reminded members that the goal is to meet a working consensus on the form of government topic by the end of the next meeting and asked members to submit any questions or concerns they had around the topic to help them reach the goal of getting to a consensus.

Member Jennifer Gilbert shared their concerns around the discussion about the form of government and noted it should be thorough and thought out on how members engage in discussion on the topic of form of government. Anna Corning suggested she can brainstorm with The Chair and the Collins Center to help break down the questions and frame them into building block questions that will help get to a decision in a thoughtful way.

The Chair, Kathleen Born offered her concerns around the decision of form of government and noted she had relistened to some of the interviews and meetings that were conducted throughout the last few months to help with her thought process.

Member Mina Makarious agreed with the Chair about her concerns. They shared that learning about the different leadership styles has been beneficial and wants to make sure that the

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Committee is conscious of the option to not make any changes to the overall form of government in the decision making process.

Anna Corning introduced Elizabeth Corbo and Michael Ward from the Collins Center who gave a review of their memo (Attachment C) which was a menu of forms of government with example options for modifications. Members from the Committee shared their questions and concerns around the memo and the team from the Collins Center made themselves available to respond.

The Chair, Kathleen Born extended the meeting by fifteen minutes. Members of the Committee agreed to the extension. No roll call was taken.

Members of the Charter Review Committee, the team from the Collins Center, and Anna Corning continued their discussion around the memo. Many members of the Charter Review offered clarifying questions around the memo and the team from the Collins Center and Anna Corning were available to provide more detail and examples around the questions.

Anna Corning thanked members from the Charter Review for their thoughtful questions and discussions during the meeting.

The Charter Review Committee adjourned at approximately 7:50p.m.

Attachment A – Written Communication from a member of the public.

Attachment B – Adopted Project Timeline

Attachment C – 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/462?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=92987b32666239a03ed7d617bcfad620

COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Re: Follow up for Eileen

Patrick Magee <pmag123@gmail.com>

Tue 3/14/2023 4:14 PM

To: Corning, Anna <acorning@cambridgema.gov>

Thanks Anna.

Would you be able to send my question and Eileen's response to the entire committee?

Thanks,

P

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 14, 2023, at 4:04 PM, Corning, Anna <acorning@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

Hi Patrick,

Below is the response from Eileen in regard to your question. Let me know if you have any follow up.

Anna

From: Michael Ward <Michael.Ward@umb.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2023 3:15 PM
To: Corning, Anna <acorning@cambridgema.gov>
Cc: Elizabeth Corbo <Elizabeth.Corbo@umb.edu>
Subject: RE: Follow up for Eileen

Got this back from Eileen: "To answer Patrick's questions, yes, the 5 new members of the council did change the demographics as follows; one African American was elected and one woman out of the 5 , resulting in 3 persons of color out of the 11 councilors (there had previously been 2 on the 9 member council, and 2 women on the 11 member council's where there had previously been 1 woman on the 9 membe council.

The majority of the councilors on the previous 9 member council did come from similar geographical neighborhoods that did skew richer & whiter.

I hope this answers the questions. Feel free to let me know if there are any other questions."

Feel free to pass along.

-mjlw

From: Corning, Anna <acorning@cambridgema.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 8:55 AM
To: Michael Ward <Michael.Ward@umb.edu>
Cc: Elizabeth Corbo <Elizabeth.Corbo@umb.edu>
Subject: Fw: Follow up for Eileen

CAUTION: EXTERNAL SENDER

Hi Mike - Would we be able to ask Eileen a follow-up question from Patrick?

COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Thanks

From: Patrick Magee <pmag123@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2023 7:36 PM

To: Corning, Anna <acorning@cambridgema.gov>; Kathleen Born <kathyborn@gmail.com>

Subject: Follow up for Eileen

Hey Anna,

Would be possible for you to follow up with Eileen with a question for me? She stated that after the consent decree went into effect, 5 of the new councilors elected, had never served in government before. Can you ask her what change this had on the demographics of the council? Also, since I'm not overly familiar with the political landscape in Lowell, did the majority of the councilors in the previous council come from similar geographical neighborhoods, that I would guess skew richer and whiter? I'm happy to clarify if needed.

Thanks,

P

Sent from my iPhone

COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sample Districts

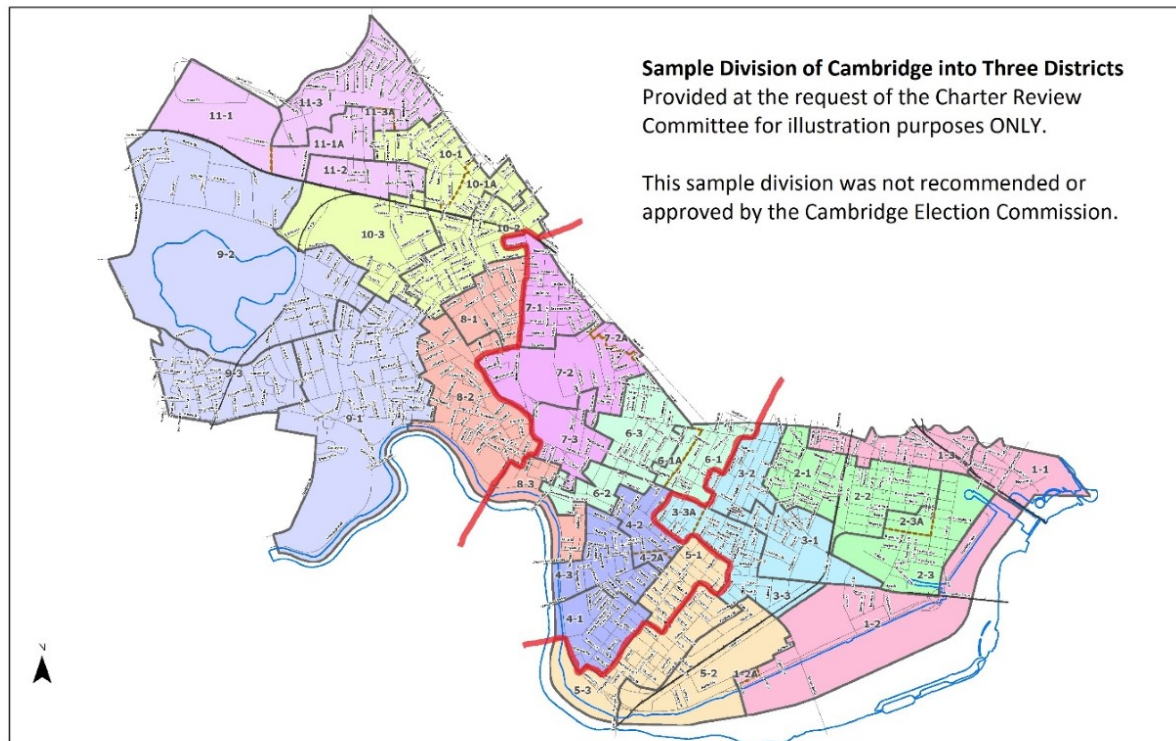
Waxman, Lesley <lwaxman@cambridgema.gov>

Thu 3/16/2023 3:22 PM

To: Corning, Anna <acorning@cambridgema.gov>

Cc: Ford, Tanya <tford@cambridgema.gov>; Marquardt, Charles <cmarquardt@cambridgema.gov>

Per the request from the Charter Review Committee, below is an illustration of a random possibility for dividing Cambridge into three different districts. There are many ways Cambridge could be divided randomly into 3 districts without considering required guidelines or criteria. This map was not considered, recommended, or approved by the Cambridge Election Commission.



Lesley Waxman
Assistant Director
Cambridge Election Commission
51 Inman Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
(p) 617-349-4361
(f) 617-349-4366

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Just Some Thoughts

vanbs <educatorvanbs@gmail.com>

Mon 3/13/2023 8:08 PM

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

Good evening Members of the Charter Review Committee:

I hope you are doing well.

I hope the Charter Committee is aware of the history of Cambridge City Council and the reason for separating politicians from city management. Given the monetary transactions that exclude city employees from accepting certain 'Gifts". That exclusion does not apply to politicians and or those seeking election or re-election from individuals, developers and corporations, all within the law; however; when I donate \$100, I am contributing to creating flyers and other costs; I am not seeking accommodations that are favoring a specific agenda.

Is the Charter Review Committee representative (as much as possible) of the diversity in age, education, landlord, renter and income of members of our community?

Below is an email I sent to some of our Neighborhood Associations, our City Council and our City Manager. I was asked to share my comments with you.

Best to all.

Respectfully,

Ms. Bonds / Valerie

Valerie A. Bonds
Retired Educator
812 Memorial Drive
Cambridgeport
Cambridge, MA 02139

Good afternoon Everyone,

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

I hope you are doing well.

The failure to support a community's desire to keep Starlight is another reason we need to as a community carefully review changes suggested in Charter E;

- who and what qualifies someone(s) to be recommended and later appointed to a board determine exactly how campaign contributions influence decisions.
- Also, removing the mural from the Middle East is also opposite the desire of a large segment of the Cambridgeport community and Residents throughout Cambridge.

Respecting the inevitability of change does not mean removing connections to our culture and our community.

There must be more input into decisions that go against the grain and who really decides what is best for our community.

It is my belief that Elected officials and those seeking election or reelection do their due diligence to the wards known for voter turnout.

Ms. Bonds
Retired Educator

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Charter reform to address Policy Order Process

Young Kim <ycknorris@gmail.com>

Tue 3/14/2023 8:51 AM

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

Cc: City Clerk <cityclerk@Cambridgema.gov>

Dear Chairwoman Born and Members of the Charter Review Committee,

Recent Policy Orders (POs) of City Council points to a broken process in City Governance. I hope you can address this issue in your review of the Charter.

1. There needs to be a clear delineation of responsibilities of City Council (CC) and City Manager (CM). CC should be the policy makers; CM the executor. For example, CC should not introduce POs such as the AHO Amendment or the recently passed Accessory Parking amendment. CC should ask the CM to report back the effectiveness of the Affordable Housing Overlay zoning ordinance (AHO) and ways to improve it. The CM should confer with the Zoning staff and if amendments to AHO are needed, the Zoning staff should draft the necessary language to be included in CM's report.
2. There should be rules for a CC member to recuse himself/herself on voting on a CM report.
3. Once a PO is introduced, there needs to be a procedure to track their execution in timely manner
 - o Policy Order to study the economic impact of the Cycling Safety Ordinance implementation has not been completed; yet the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Dept is continuing their quick-build projects.
 - o Status of the Advisory Board for CSO implementation ordered by a PO is still unknown
 - o Policy Order POR 2023 #11 is still awaiting report from the City Manager as of the last regular City Council meeting on 3/6/2023 and the next regular City Council meeting is on 3/20. Yet the family of Mr. Valentine announced reaching an agreement to sell the property to Just A Start for affordable housing.
 - (AR 23-3: Report on determining the feasibility of purchasing the property located at 37 Brookline Street, former home of Peter Valentine, with the intent of utilizing this as a community arts space. Councillor Simmons, Councillor Zondervan, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Azeem (O-4) from 1/23/2023)
 - o Some Policy Orders awaiting CM report are removed from the waiting list at the start of the new City Council term without any voice from the community

I am more than willing and happy to discuss this issue further, Please acknowledge receipt of this email

Thank you,

Respectfully yours,
Young Kim

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Boston continues to show why ward-based councilors are a bad idea

Itamar Turner-Trauring <itamar@itamarst.org>

Fri 3/24/2023 8:45 AM

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

Dear Charter Review Committee members,

Boston's redistricting process continues to show how broken ward-based councilors are, and how much better Cambridge's current system is.

As a Cambridge resident, I do not really know what ward I'm in. If it changes, that's fine, the election commission will tell me—and it still won't make any difference to who I can vote for. And it won't make any difference to the results of the election.

Meanwhile, in Boston, we have a city councilor, Frank Baker, who worries he is going to lose the next election because some ward lines were redrawn on the map. So now he's bankrolling a lawsuit: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/03/23/metro/boston-city-councilor-frustrated-with-redistricting-is-bankrolling-litigation-against-it/>. This quote gives the gist of the issue, and explains very well why ward-based councilor elections are such a bad idea:

Supporters said the map would strengthen political opportunities for people of color in a city long run by white voters and white elected officials. But critics objected to the domino effects those efforts had in other parts of the city. The new map, for example, splits between two council districts the Anne Lynch Homes at Old Colony, a Southie housing development named after US Representative Stephen Lynch's mother — a move critics argue could muffle the political voice of its residents.

And the map carved up Baker's current constituents, severing a cluster of majority-white, high-turnout precincts in the southern tip of Dorchester that he argued was the "core" of his district.

"That's the most glaring thing," Baker said recently. "Everyone is talking about the core of their district. Adams Corner is my core and they split it right up the middle."

The argument for redistricting makes sense—but the fact this redistricting was needed at all is a symptom of a broken election system. Hopefully representation for people of color improves going forward, but it clearly was a problem for many years—because of ward-based councilor elections. Under Cambridge's system this wouldn't have been an issue. Plus, it's quite possible that the Boston redistricting will both improve the situation *and* disenfranchise some people at the same time, because given a fundamentally broken system there's only so much you can fix by redrawing lines.

Any demographic change can result in the ward districts making less sense, they're only redrawn rarely, and it clearly can be a contentious process where personal ambitions and fair representation can be very hard to disentangle. Is this the sort of political fight you want Cambridge to have in the future?

Representation shouldn't be based on where arbitrary lines are drawn on a map. This is no way to run a political system, and no way to elect people. Fair and equal representation should be a built-in property of the election system, and ward-based councilors fail that minimal requirement.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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Itamar Turner-Trauring

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Letter to the Charter Review Committee

Susan Fleischmann <susan.fleischmann@gmail.com>

Fri 3/24/2023 8:15 PM

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

3-24-2023

Dear Members of the Charter Review Committee,

First, thank you so much for all of your hard work on the City's Charter. You have spent many hours and much brain power, and it is most appreciated!

I am writing in opposition to introducing strong mayor governance in Cambridge. My concerns lie in two areas: management and politics.

Management is a professional skill that is often taken for granted. Experience in project management, human resources, budgeting and fiscal oversight are not skills inherent to anything other than....managing.

The skills required to be a successful elected official have very little overlap with the ability to be a successful manager, in my opinion. A strong mayor might be challenged when weighing the needs of the City at-large with the particular interests of their most vocal constituents. Attention to those who reliably vote may take precedence over those who may not. Whether consciously or not, actions will be taken with the next election in mind.

The current system enables the City to seek a skilled, experienced manager, who is by design disengaged from electoral politics. It provides continuity that does not fluctuate based on the electoral calendar.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Susan Fleischmann
5 St. Mary Road

--

Susan Fleischmann

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Cambridge Charter Review

Kon, Mark A <mkon@bu.edu>

Mon 3/27/2023 9:14 AM

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

On Mar 27, 2023, at 9:07 AM, Kon, Mark A <mkon@bu.edu> wrote:

Dear Committee Members,

I would like to add my voice strongly to support the position of the Cambridge Citizens Coalition on the current rethinking of the government structure in Cambridge. I want to say that decisions often have many unanticipated consequences, and should be made with the highest gravity. With this among other reasons in mind, we support the following measures:

1. Keeping the current 2 year terms for City Council. We want to keep the Council responsive and accountable to the Citizens of Cambridge - given the current votes on radical changes to permanently change Cambridge, there needs to be a year-to-year level of accountability for votes taken within the City Council.
2. Keep the City Manager System. This system should only be changed if there are serious deficiencies exposed.
3. Create a more diverse Combination District with a City-Wide-Based council: two Councilors from each of the 3 precinct-defined areas, and three Councilors chosen city-wide.
4. Maintain a council-elected mayor for the present, to be changed only if there are any deficiencies exposed.

Please feel free to get in touch with me (by email or at the phone number below) if you would like to go over any of these issues with me. Thank you very much -

Mark Kon

=====

Mark A. Kon, Professor
 Department of Mathematics and Statistics
 Boston University
 111 Cummington Mall, room 260
 Boston, MA 02215
 USA
 Tel: 617-460-1232
 Email: mkon@bu.edu
 URL: <http://math.bu.edu/people/mkon>

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

March 28 meeting comments

Hadley, Shelagh <shadley@bu.edu>

Mon 3/27/2023 10:41 AM

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

1. Please keep current 2 yr. City Council terms, NOT 4 yr. terms which would be far too long. We citizens need to maintain accountability from our elected council.
2. Please keep the current City Manager system, to allow our new C.M. time to prove himself.
3. Please create a new combination of district-based and city-wide-based council – 6 district councilors (2 from each of 3 Precinct-defined areas) and 3 citywide Councilors. The current system results in some areas (such as my own) being woefully under-represented, and seems unfair. We all need adequate representation!
4. Please retain the current Governance structure, with the council electing its own mayor.

Thanks for all your work!

Shelagh Hadley, longtime Cambridge resident owner and taxpayer

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Charter Committee Revisions

John Trever <jtrever@gmail.com>

Mon 3/27/2023 10:55 AM

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

Dear Committee Members,

I favor the following charter revisions.

1. KEEP CURRENT 2-year CITY COUNCIL TERMS (No to 4-year terms).
2. KEEP CITY MANAGER SYSTEM (Give our new City Manager enough time to prove himself).
3. CREATE A COMBINATION DISTRICT-BASED and CITY-WIDE-BASED COUNCIL - 6 district Councillors (2 from each of 3 Precinct-defined areas) plus 3 citywide Councillors.
4. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE: Keep the current Council-Elected mayor

Kind regards,

John Trever

156 Richdale Ave, Cambridge, MA 02140

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Charter review

Phyllis Simpkins <phyllissimpkins52@gmail.com>

Tue 3/28/2023 8:35 AM

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

I am writing to express my support for the following:

- continuing 2 year city council terms; this is enough time for residents to evaluate their effectiveness
- continuing the city manager system to ensure a system of checks and balances
- continuing the council elected mayor system

With a relatively new city manager, the city should allow him time to do the job for which he was hired, rather than the urgency to "change the rules." I look forward to following this committee's process moving forward. Thank you.

Phyllis Simpkins
249 Huron avenue

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- >
- > Sent from my iPhone

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Public Comments for Charter Review Committee Meeting, 3/28/23

Hope Turner <hope.r.turner@gmail.com>

Tue 3/28/2023 9:07 AM

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

Hello,

My name is Hope Turner, and I'm a Cambridge resident. I will not be able to attend the Charter Review Committee Meeting on 3/28/23, but I would like my comments below to be included in the meeting please.

I strongly believe that the city manager should be elected by the people of Cambridge. Direct accountability to voters is vital for a healthy democracy. I don't believe we can call ourselves a progressive city until we democratically elect the person who ultimately makes the decisions. Although our current City Manager has been more responsive to the City Council, this may not be true for the next City Manager. Residents deserve protection against abuses of power that inevitably happen in a government that does not directly elect its chief executive.

Thank you,
Hope

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

3/28/23

To: Cambridge City Council, City Manager, City Clerk

Re: Cambridge Council and Governance Changes

I urge the City Council to retain the current 2-year City Council term and to reject the proposed 4-year term for the Council. It is my opinion that too many members of this Council are already far too unresponsive to current citizens and residents and a change from a 2-year term to a 4-year term will make this unacceptable situation even worse.

I also urge the City Council to retain the current City Manager system because we finally have an outsider City Manager not beholden to the same decades-old system and outdated considerations that has strangled City Government for far too many years. It is not surprising that some current members of the Council want to change their approach to keep matters out of balance.

Also, now that we have a new City Manager, I support keeping the current Council-Elected mayor, to keep the current system as is.

Believe me, no one is more surprised than I am that I now think the current structure of government in Cambridge might actually begin to work for residents and citizens.

Robert Camacho, 24 Corporal Burns Rd., Cambridge, MA 02138

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Letter on City Governance Structure

Blier, Suzanne <blier@fas.harvard.edu>

Tue 3/28/2023 11:37 AM

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

Dear Ms. Born and Members of the Charter Review Committee,

Thank you for the great work that you are undertaking and the thought with which you are addressing these important issues. I have attended when I can.

Today's meeting seeks to have a working consensus on the question: *Should the head of the executive branch be an elected official (strong mayor) or remain an appointed position by the city council (city manager)?*

I work with a group of civic-minded volunteers across the city. We have spent some time studying this and other issues. I support the views of our group for:

1. Keeping the current City Manager system for the present (Giving our new City Manager enough time to prove himself). **RATIONALES:**

- a. We are making already a number of changes with the city manager system that should be allowed to play out for a few years at last.
- b. We should give our new manager a chance to show what he can do in meeting the new Council goals and demands.
- c. If at some point we do move to a strong Mayor system (an elected Mayor), we would need to prepare the way and likely set up a system like Boston where the mayor could not also run for Council.
- d. We feel that the City Manager system offers more checks and balances.

1. This allows key oversight on financing and achieving Council policy changes.
 2. This helps limit political intervention in the functioning of the city.

2. Most of us support keeping the current Council-Elected mayor. **OTHER VIEWS:**

- A minority of us (myself included) favor an elected mayor within the city-manager structure. Those of us who would like to have the voters elect our mayor within the current city manager system would like the elected mayor to set the term's agenda both with Council and with the city manager. One concern raised with this approach is that it might promote conflict between the mayor and the city manager, but if both agree on the goals for the term at the outset for that term, my view is that this is unlikely to be a problem.
- Another minority supports a Strong Mayor system (without an appointed City Manager) to make the mayor more accountable to the voters.
- **Important Note:** Any mayor vote should be a separate vote from the Councillor vote (but on the same ballot), thereby allowing voters to select their #1 (and other choice) candidates independently, but also be able to vote separately for mayor, through the current proportional voting system, keeping the same number of 9 Councillors (including the mayor). The reason is that voters here often base their choice of #1 vote on the person they most feel needs their votes to get elected. The choice of mayor is different, and each councillor who seeks to also run as mayor, should be encouraged to set out their proposed agenda and goals for the term, allowing voters to compare them.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Cordially,

Suzanne Preston Blier
5 Fuller Place

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

against a strong mayor

Marilee Meyer <mbm0044@aol.com>

Tue 3/28/2023 1:13 PM

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

While ideally I would like to vote for a mayor, given the atmosphere of the current council, I feel we need checks and balances which could be ignored with a direct vote. A mayor being chosen from the 7 councilors lessens the chance of council manipulation at large. We can already anticipate the campaigning for Mayor and the potential agenda supported by special interest groups. If those lobbyists also gain a 4-year term in their preferred candidate, we will be facing a stacked court and Cambridge as a whole municipality loses. It will be hard to bounce back from ideology dominating practical, feasible and sustainable decisions for EVERYONE. W have a hard time with that now. Please maintain the current system.

thank you for your hard work on this. I hope you get your extension for something this fundamental.

Marilee Meyer
10 Dana St
02138
mbm0044@aol.com

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Public Comment Online Form Submissions

3/26/2023

Steve Wineman

I live at 26 McTernan Street. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the question of strong elected mayor versus city manager. I believe the city of Cambridge would be far better served by a strong elected mayor. There is no perfect system, and there are too many examples of politics impeding good governance at all levels. That said, an elected executive would be directly accountable to the residents / voters of the city, and would therefore be more likely to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of the people. Let's move to a democratic form of governance.

3/27/2023

Amina Sheikh

I'm writing regarding the discussion around the role of city manager; over the last few years, I've reached out often to City Councilors. More often than not, they reply "we can't do anything about this issue because it's under the city manager's control." It's incredibly disheartening and undemocratic to have major decisions made by someone who isn't elected and is thus not accountable to voters. (On an unrelated note, I saw in the last minutes that someone had heard opinions against allowing youth to vote; as a parent and educator, I wanted to share that I strongly support allowing youth to vote in local elections.)

3/27/2023

Steven Miller

We need to preserve the best of the current city council system while created a more direct method for voters to select the person with executive power. Might it be possible to have an elected mayor who has significant power but needs Council approval for a broader range of actions and policies than is typical in a "strong mayor" system?

3/28/2023

Tom Lindsley

I would like to keep the current system of 2 yr terms for members and council members electing mayor

3/28/2023

Marilee Meyer

In an ideal world, it would be nice to have the mayor to be elected directly by the people. But, if a qualified councilor candidate decides to run for mayor, will they also be able to run for council if unelected mayor? Or if not, then the citizens would be deprived of a good candidate.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Could you kindly review the attached paper and include it for discussion at some point?

marie elena saccoccio <saccocciom@yahoo.com>

Tue 3/14/2023 5:26 PM

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

 1 attachments (331 KB)

WhichPeople Race and Class in the Dev of Cambridge.pdf;

Dear Committee Members:

I must admit, given the number of meetings for various issues in the city, I have not been able to attend many of these meetings. In fact, I intended to at least view the one at the main library but then discovered the meeting was not available via zoom. I really did not see much discussion about the meetings so nothing drew my attention to the issues. I state this since I attended an ECPT presentation and two of these meetings and it seems to be a fait accompli that our Plan E was born out of a need to remedy rampant corruption in the city.

I have attached quite a fascinating article with an extraordinarily different idea about the birth of Plan E. Rather than viewing it as a remedy to rampant corruption, it can also be viewed as a way of controlling the vote since some of the neighborhoods were overwhelmingly and densely populated with immigrant workers and minority groups who could easily have controlled much of the city via their sheer vote numbers. There was corruption before and after Plan E. Plan E does not protect from that.

Please consider the attached article. To be sure, the landed gentry and academicians feared control by a bunch of factory workers, mostly immigrant and minority. I would love to hear Prof, Bowie's read on this.

Marie Elena Saccoccio, Esquire
55 Otis Street
Cambridge, MA 02141
BBO#552864
4th Generation East Cambridge

Which People's Republic?

Race and Class in the Development Of Cambridge

for all you gave

Bill Ackerly
Jim Biggs
Pat Driscoll
Oliver Farnum
Jean Garside
Karmu
Miriam Kramer
Dotty Lee
Lester Lee, Sr
Elizabeth Ramos
Camilla Savignano
Ruth Shea

Which People's Republic?

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to produce this copy*

Introduction

the memories of a people are all the more important for being unconscious.

-A.L.Rowse

Last year, after racial tension at the predominantly middle-class Agassiz School ended in the abrupt departure of principal Peggy Averitte, mayor Frank Duehay called for a citywide “conversation on race and class.” Around the time this was to have begun, the city’s Development Department called on people to “Come Discuss the Cambridge of the Future,” in response to the 1997 citizens’ Growth Management Petition. The city thus initiated two civic conversations which were to happen separately. Yet what the city needs most urgently to discuss is their common theme: the place of race and class in the development of Cambridge.

Development, of course, is always about race and class. Someone decides where everyone else is going to live and work, and under what conditions. When government defines the *highest and best uses* of the earth, it also assigns *people* their places in society. The physical and social structures which embody the institutions of class and racial privilege are in some sense *set in stone*.

Real estate development requires that the earth be divided into lots and units for sale at the highest possible rents. The process may imposed in a city where people already live, under such terms as *urban renewal* or *community development*. But the redevelopment process always acts to dissolve real communities. Thus, our real estate and progressive élites buzz with the words ‘diversity’ and ‘sustainability,’ even as they persist in policies which uproot the poor and working class communities of Cambridge, and which cultivate, in their stead, the University City.

For those who are gratified by it, such a course of development may feel inevitable, beneficent, and irreversible. It did not always seem so. For much of the century, educated and prosperous Cantabrigians were haunted rather by the fear that they were about to be overwhelmed by hordes of lower-class people, coming from God knows where. This is a specter which was fading exactly thirty years ago, as noted by the striking Harvard students :

A class substitution process is underway. ...this transformation involves the gradual exclusion of working people and many students, their places being taken by highly paid professionals. ¹

To see this you don’t need a college degree. You need only live here and read the

1 Harvard Strike Steering Committee, *Cambridge: Transformation of a Working Class City* (1969), p.1

Cambridge Chronicle. Of that we will do a lot in the following pages.

The critical reader may notice a fuzziness in our *definition of race and class*. This is a little careless, but social classes and races do have fuzzy borders in the real world. Who really ‘knows’ where middle-class ends and working-class or professional begins? How many races, ethnic groups, or nationalities are there in the United States and what, exactly, is the difference between an ethnic group and a minority?

Without slighting the uniqueness of each human group’s experience and heritage, this essay depicts *class* as the main social factor shaping the local development process and its impact on various neighborhoods. It’s only fair to admit that this fits the writer’s tendency to underplay racial and ethnic conflicts *among* working class people. A fuller discussion, dealing with the labor movement, public schools, or police-community relations, would have to be more race-conscious.

Individuals are not quoted in these pages to be judged. They appear mostly in those public roles wherein they represent persistent collective themes in our story. Are people’s individual lives, then, historically insignificant? Just the opposite: there are not enough bricks in the sidewalk to commemorate the people whose lives and deeds made this city what it is. I pray that their spirits will continue to walk comfortably among us; for when they can no longer do so, our community is finished. I am sure that for some, these will be the first words they have ever read telling this story. They must not be taken as last words. This writing aims to convince, certainly. But we can’t recover repressed social memories by passive conviction. We need to question actively and engage in controversy to break the spell of ‘received ideas,’ to remember in such a way as to get a concrete sense of possible futures. This is what we need today to defend and strengthen working-class Cambridge. All of us, of whatever background, occupation, or community, who *need to change history*, need to remember *actively*.

Bill Cunningham
6 Newtowne Court
June, 1999

The city charter

Until 1940, under the ‘Plan B’ charter, Cambridge elected its mayors as Boston and Somerville still do. According to the founding myth of the present ‘Plan E’ government those ‘Plan B’ mayors were corrupt and inefficient. The appointed city managers have

run a quality, professional government which has brought prosperity.

There is no mystery about the political intent behind Plan E. Its supporters have always understood that it works by making government less dependent on the voters.² For the people are not to be trusted very much, and the less the executive has to worry about what voters think, the better policy it makes.

Who, in the 1930s, couldn't be trusted to select their city's chief executive? There can be little doubt that it was the predominantly working-class Irish. The literature of 'municipal reform' was not embarrassed to use caricatures of "Mick" politicians to make its points. Yet many of the reformers were themselves Irish. They did not look like the caricatures: it was really a question of class.

The decades before the Depression had been a period of rapid growth and development, which took place under strong mayors, most of them Irish Democrats. In less than twenty years, Cambridge went from seventh to second industrial city in the state, a position it retained through the late 1960s.³ Like other cities, Cambridge was 'built' out' in those years to assume its twentieth-century layout and social structure. Then as now, the city was destined for prosperity by its location, desirable for industry and housing; the seat of two of the country's richest universities and of the state's largest county. None of this has hurt the city's bond ratings.

All working-class groups shared to some extent in the bustling industrial economy. But it would be an insult to say the Irish Democrat era was roses for everyone. It was certainly not for Afro-Americans. There were Black GOP Aldermen in the nineteenth century; William H Lewis rose to Assistant US Attorney General in the Taft administration. The Agassiz school was headed by a Black woman.. After Sgt Arthur Robinson retired in 1914, two generations passed before another Black police officer attained that rank.

Immigrant groups, too, were treated with contempt. Italians were described in the press as dangerous and disreputable. The city's Superintendent of Streets wasn't "allowed to employ" them.⁴

2 It does this essentially by putting the city administration under the control of an appointed city manager. In the conditions of the time this was also the effect of at-large voting by Proportional Representation. Though formally very democratic, PR disproportionately rewards slate-voters, which working-class Cantabrigians were usually not. 'Middle-class' voters were more likely to vote on the basis of a platform, others were more likely to vote for only local politicians they knew and trusted - often only one per office.

3 Unless otherwise noted, the facts and quotes which follow are drawn from *East Side, West Side Cambridge 1900-1920*, (CTOC, xeroxed,1975)

4 The 1914 collection of manuscript essays by sociologists and social workers, *Zones of Emergence*, (1962), reveals the reformers' conscious attitudes toward immigrants, eg: "The Jew in the Port is dirty, hard-working and successful" (p.77)"As a whole the Lithuanians are a primitive and childlike people"(p.79) "The punishment of a colored child is felt to be discrimination...Yet the colored child is not the equal of the white child in comprehension, execution, and order"(p.82)...

Throughout the early part of the century, local civic leaders, newspaper editors, and professors expressed alarm over the growth of working class populations, and particularly of immigrants. In 1909, a *Chronicle* editorial welcomed the new brick apartment buildings in mid-Cambridge, as a barrier to the “inroad of workmen of foreign extraction.” In 1910, reform leader John H Corcoran (whose name we will encounter again) lamented that Cambridge’s “best class” were “mere people of moderate means, householders” and that even they were being replaced by “tenement and apartment house dwellers.”

In 1911, one Dr J H Marcy advocated construction of a “broad boulevard” between, and parallel to, Prospect and Windsor Streets, “as a check on the spread of the foreign population of Cambridge... it would be of great value to stop the spreading of these people, who [sic] we do not want to engulf Cambridge.” Dr Marcy was also active in getting MIT to relocate from Boston on land newly reclaimed from the Charles River. As another real estate man noted, “the presence of Technology will help to establish the character of the adjoining property.”

Wooden three-deckers were popular among Irish and other immigrants, but a “menace” to professional-class housing reformers.⁵ The ‘philanthropic’ Cambridge Housing Association, led by Professors Ford and Killam, wanted their construction stopped. As Prof Ford said, “The filthy habits of the newly arrived immigrants tend to make the conditions very undesirable.” The City Council obliged by outlawing new three-deckers. To confine the construction of new apartment buildings, Cambridge passed one of America’s first zoning laws.

But as long as City Hall was run by Irish Democrats, some folks would be uncomfortable. They tried to dilute the growing Democratic power through charter reform. The Plan B city charter of 1912 largely failed in this intention, though it did streamline local government. A dozen more charter reform proposals over the next 15 years found little support outside the ranks of the Republican Party.

The Depression of the 1930s brought new urgency to the reform movement. Sharp declines in industry and employment quickly eroded the property tax base. The city had to shell out big time for welfare. Tax rates climbed steadily; so that by 1933, tax delinquencies were running at 30%. The tax rate rose about 30% between 1928 and 1935. This was not due to waste, but to rising welfare expenses. In 1930, the city spent \$411,932 on relief; in 1939, it would spend \$3,611,050. After 1932 the tax base lost 5 million dollars of valuation every year. Tax-exempt property had more than doubled since the late twenties. The State had cut local aid disbursements in half.⁶

Though reform mayor Richard Russell had ended the long reign of Edward

5 Robert W DeForest, Lawrence Veiller (Ed) *The Tenement House Problem*, 2 vols (1903)

6 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/21/35 Pp 1B, 6B; 3/7/40 p.15. The reader should bear in mind that in the 1930s there was no inflation.

Quinn, he was unable to carry out policies sufficiently draconian to deliver tax relief in this depression. In exasperation, the Industrial Association brought together 'good government' leaders in 1932 to form the Cambridge Taxpayers' Association (CTA). Some of them later helped found the Cambridge Civic Association (CCA).⁷ CTA was chaired by our old housing reformer Prof. C W Killam.. (Also president of the Cambridge Club, and on the Planning Board.) In a 1934 speech he declared,

Cambridge should determine what class of residents it welcomes within its borders and take steps to replace those that are a burden upon the taxpayers with others who would help toward a civic future in keeping with its cultural traditions. [And he questioned] whether any city is under any obligation whatever to provide homes and municipal services, fire, police, sewer, water, lights, and education to all classes of the population.⁸

This is one of the men reform mayor Richard B Russell named to the newly established Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA)!

Now mayor Russell was not one of your 'cheap pols.' He resided on Brattle Street resident and graduated from Harvard and Harvard Law, and his father and grandfather before him had been mayors and his father governor besides.⁹

After Russell left to become a Congressmen, the propertied reformers mounted a big campaign for a freeze on city hiring and capital spending, called the Four Year Plan. North Cambridge banker John Lynch "heartily endorsed" the Plan as a candidate, but as mayor failed to carry it out.¹⁰ Still, the reformers backed him for reelection against Jack Lyons, who had never accepted the Four Year Plan. When Lyons beat Lynch and became mayor, his frustrated opponents turned again to charter reform.

The Plan E Association formed in August 1938, with Harvard's Dean Landis in the chair. Executive secretary Prof. Chandler W Johnson drafted a city charter featuring a nine member at-large city council, elected by Proportional Representation, and with an appointed city manager. This was no new idea. Almost the same plan had been advanced ten years earlier by another Harvard professor, *Lewis J Johnson*.¹¹ The legislature quickly gave its OK, so Plan E could go on the ballot.

The 1938 Plan E campaign wasn't based on any claim that Mayor Lyons'

7 John H Corcoran, CTA Secretary, would be the first Plan E mayor.

8 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/23/34 p.1B

9 Mayor Russell furnishes us a clear public example of 'class racism' among the Irish. Russell badly wanted to get rid of Frank Lehan, a popular ward politician who had served as Treasurer since World War I. The City Council balked at all his replacements. Finally, to win over the vote of pro-Lehan city councillor Charles Shea, Russell nominated Shea's brother, William. Charles, rankled at the Mayor for firing his sister from a petty City Hall job, voted against his brother anyway. After this vote, the Mayor met Shea in the hallway and blurted out, "You dirty Irish rat!" *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/21/30 p.1; 5/22/31 p.1 (When Lehan was finally removed by pneumonia, his funeral procession may have been the longest in Cambridge history. *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/10/31, p.1)

10 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/18/35 p.1; 6/4/36 p.4; 7/30/36 p.1

11 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/9/28 p.5

administration was corrupt.¹² His 1938 tax rate was no higher than Russell's in 1935 - \$41. But Lyons' priority was creating jobs, and he had taken on over a million dollars in new debt for public works.¹³

Opponents described Plan E as "a plot on the part of Harvard to grab off the city" (councillor McNamara). All 'ward politicians' and most trade unions were against it.¹⁴ And in 1938, it was beaten 21,722 to 19,955, most heavily in the working-class neighborhoods. The next year, mayor Jack Lyons was reelected over former mayor Russell by a margin of 6,467. Russell, who backed Plan E, took only wards 7 and 8.

But in his second term, Lyons lost ground on his left. He fought with the unions over public housing projects. Then Plan E forces got more aggressive. They crowded City Council meetings. They brought a lawsuit against the 1940 budget. The CTA's Paul J Frank complained that the city payroll increased from 1,532 to 1,828 in four years: "Cambridge is mortgaged to its teeth." The local banks united to warn Lyons to stop borrowing, or "higher taxation will have grave results."¹⁵

Finally, the mayor was indicted in connection with work on what is now called Neville Manor, and was removed from office. The 1940 tax rate jumped to \$46.30. Plan E passed that year, 25,875-18,323 -- although with 7,513 blanks. A few months later, Lyons went to jail for bribery and conspiracy in contracts.¹⁶

Thus the *finale*: Plan E as a victory over political corruption and inefficiency. But how corrupt was Jack Lyons? Facing a time of inescapable fiscal crisis, his policy was to create jobs even at the cost of taking the city deeply into debt. This *policy* was the crime his opponents held most against him. After all, Lyons was not the only Plan B mayor to have been tainted by scandal. Another 1930s mayor had given a million-dollar contract to the fifth-lowest bidder, which contractor had then paid the mayor's cousin a huge architect's fee. But this was Richard Russell, Brattle Street reformer and Plan E leader.¹⁷ The very man Jack Lyons beat in the 1940 election!

The defeated 'ward politicians' started calling themselves 'Independents,' to contrast with the Cambridge Civic Association (CCA), child of the Plan E Committee,

12 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 10/20/38 p.8

13 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6/2/38 p.9; 6/23/38 p.1; 7/7/38 p.12; 8/11/38 p.12; 6/27/40, p.15; 7/5/40, p.1

14 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 10/13/38 p.1; 11/3/38 p.10.

15 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/27/39 p.1; 5/18/39 Pp 14, 20; 4/11/40 p.1; 3/14/40 p.1

16 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/20/41 p.1; 1/12/67 p.6

17 Mayor Russell was accused of favoritism in the construction of the Rindge Tech High School building. The bonding was done by principal owner of the contractor (US Realty and Improvement -NJ) The architect, Ralph H Doane, who was the Mayor's cousin, received a fee of \$90,000 at the same time as Russell told city workers to "voluntarily" forego wages in the fiscal crisis of the early Depression. *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/24/31, p.1; 2/12/32, p.1; 7/1/32 p.1. The completed building was found to have many defects, including 47 roof leaks. *Cambridge Chronicle*, 9/8/33 p.1

which called itself the ‘party of good government.’ Years later, CCA president Hans Loeser would boast that Plan E had given Cambridge one of the lowest tax rates in the Boston area; in 1940, Cambridge’s was second only to Revere.¹⁸ But apparently these rates still weren’t not low enough, because Loeser’s CCA backed the demolition of low-rent neighborhoods on the ground that they were a net tax burden.¹⁹

It’s doubtful that either events or the voters would have permitted Lyons’ budget policy to continue, had the old charter remained. Anyway, the Independents eventually accepted city manager government and focused on getting managers to their own liking. Today there are a thousand more people working for the city than under the profligate mayor Lyons.

Cambridge didn’t actually hire a professionally trained city manager until 1968. The first manager, “Colonel” John B. Atkinson, was a shoe capitalist.²⁰ As the “Colonel” was about to move into his office, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Nobody has yet blamed Plan E for this. But the Plan took the credit for what the war actually did: ended the city’s fiscal crisis. Atkinson cut the tax rate five years in a row.

Blitzing the Slums

In hindsight, the urban highway and renewal programs of the 1950s and 60s were ‘tragic mistakes.’ By 1967, they had ‘involuntarily displaced’ perhaps four million persons throughout the country.²¹ Hundreds of communities were ruined. In cities like ours, universities and cold-war Research & Development firms were the intended beneficiaries. There was more than a casual relationship between these policies and the ‘civil unrest’ of the 1960s. One recalls the nicknames, ‘Urban Removal,’ and ‘Negro Removal.’ Even in cases where plans were never actually carried out, just the threat could devastate neighborhoods.²²

The Cambridge plan entailed the eviction of thousands of residents. It would

18 *CCA Bulletin*, March 1959 p.1

19 see p. 15 and 16 below

20 State A.F.of L. president Nicholas P Morrissey protested at Atkinson’s swearing-in, saying that his Bata Shoe Co was an “exemplary sweatshop.” *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/8/42 p.6

21 National Commission on Urban Problems, Sen.Paul Douglas, *Building the American City*, Washington DC (1968) p.82

22 Anderson, *Federal Bulldozer* (1964); Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (1974), esp.Pp 967-76(1971). Wolf, *Land in America* (1981): “The most common corridor... passed through ‘poor neighborhoods,’ where land was cheap and where, inevitably, inner-city neighborhoods, whose residents had little political power, would be destroyed. ...Typically, once designated, the proposed highway corridor was allowed to remain untouched for years, sometimes for decades, while incremental disinvestment and abandonment within it occurred. ...: p.226

have *smashed working-class neighborhoods throughout the city*, including

- One-fifth of Riverside demolished, in addition to another quarter taken by Harvard
- One-fifth of Area 3 demolished, besides
- the Inner Belt highway's three-block-wide swath of destruction, continuing through Area 4 and Cambridgeport.
- East Cambridge isolated by the Inner Belt;
- the Route 2 extension through Porter Square and Alewife, taking several hundred homes and isolating North Cambridge;
- the whole vast industrial zone around Kendall Square torn down for NASA

Were these only the plans of right-wing real estate profiteers, advocates of the 'free market' and social darwinism? No, these were the policies of 'progressives' and liberals, draped with the ideology of housing reform and modern city planning.²³

These renewal policies were being discussed in Washington in the midst of World War II. At the same time, a revised zoning code was promulgated in Massachusetts, allowing more intensive development, encouraging smaller apartments and more high-rises. The annual cap on zoning variance petitions was removed.²⁴

The head of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Dr James J Lawler, in 1941 warned that the "flight of the affluent" was causing the city to "decline into blight." City manager Atkinson warned that "Cambridge [was] changing from a university to an industrial town because of the increase in industry, and after the war the low-income population will increase." But he saw the chance to attract higher income residents through the state's new zoning and transportation plans; he recommended "razing of large old houses." for high-rise development.²⁵

As early as 1940, MIT's Dean McCormack carried out a survey of the Western Avenue "slum," using 'cliffies' and volunteers from the League of Women Voters, "to determine whether low cost housing can be successfully built there by private business." He reckoned that proposed revisions of the zoning law would lower standards enough to allow the job to be done.²⁶

Massachusetts put redevelopment statutes on the books to facilitate postwar projects. Sure enough, the John Hancock Insurance Co proposed a massive scheme for

²³ Goodman, *After the Planners* (1971); Grigsby in Wilson (ed) *Urban Renewal* (1966), p.24:"The residential real estate market works only once. It creates, alters, maintains and improves, and eventually discards assets, but seems incapable of providing for their replacement on the site."

²⁴ *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/13/41 Pp 7-16; 3/12/42 p.2

²⁵ *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/13/41 p.16; 7/22/43 p.1; 7/27/44 p.4. Cambridge even put in a serious bid to get the new UN Headquarters located here!

²⁶ *Cambridge Chronicle*, 2/8/40 Pp.1, 8

“John Harvard Town”, for the heart of the Black community along Western Avenue.²⁷ However, the state redevelopment laws got tied up in court. So the Western Avenue “slum” resumed teeming, and John Harvard went off to fry other fish.

The state highway master plan of 1948 called for a road through Cambridge. The Planning Board named the route in 1951: nine hundred working-class homes were to be taken along Elm and Brookline Streets.²⁸ But the state didn’t appropriate any money to carry out this plan, so the Inner Belt was on hold.

City councillor Ed Crane never liked the highway plans, but delighted in university expansion, and wanted to “blitz the slums” with urban renewal. Crane was a Cambridge townie who went to Harvard, then helped found the CCA. He helped engineer the 1952 replacement of city manager Atkinson by John J Curry, and thereafter was Mister Big in the 1950s.

On September 27, 1954 Crane alerted the City Council ‘that the recent court approval of the state housing act and the new federal law opened the way for large scale redevelopment plans. He called this “a signal for action.”²⁹ City manager Curry promptly named a blue-ribbon committee, led by banker and merchant Paul Corcoran, brother of the first Plan E mayor. The Corcoran Committee³⁰ reported in May, 1955.

We suggest that considering Cambridge’s convenience, natural and historical assets and good municipal structure, the city’s rental market is being undersold.

Cambridge is not big enough geographically to maintain a competitive tax rate when the rate is based on buildings where the dwelling units rent for \$26....

Moreover, the sort of people who found these to be “not attractive homes” were leaving the city.

In the past 25 years 2400 dwelling units have been built... this is too slow a replacement rate... We suspect that those of us who live in the environment of the quality of housing which can be bought for a \$16, \$18, or \$20 rental in Cambridge in 1955 could be somewhat puzzled about just what the American heritage is.

Housing renovation was already “economically a satisfactory undertaking,” but the urban renewal program was “a heaven sent opportunity” to tackle the city’s problems more comprehensively.³¹

CCA President Robert Conley hailed the Corcoran Report as “a turning point in

27 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/7/46 p.1

28 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/5/51 p,1

29 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 9/30/54 p.1 The 1949 Housing Act talked about “redevelopment.” This became “urban renewal” with 1954 Act, which added generous incentive subsidies.

30 Committee members: Bowden (County Bank); Townsend (Chamber of Commerce); Burns (Housing Authority); city manager Curry; city councillor Watson; Assessor Guiney; Spencer & DeLoria (Building Dept); Smith (Health Dept); Furtune (planner); *Cambridge Chronicle*, 10/21/54 p.13

31 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/12/55 p.2

the city's history."³² That same month, City Council approved urban renewal 6-2 (the 2 were independents Lynch and Sullivan). Washington approved the city Planning Department's "workable plan," which was required for federal funding, in September.

Three months later, rent control ended in Massachusetts.

Federal rent controls, established on America's entry into World War II, had continued for eleven years. Referenda in 1950 and 1952 showed that Cambridge residents supported it 5 to 1. But it ran against the logic of urban renewal. After rent control became a State program, it had to be renewed annually. In 1953 and 1954, the City Council voted 8-0 and 8-1 to retain it.³³

But in January, 1955, a vote on extension was approved by only four councillors (all Independents); three CCAers voted against. When it passed the Legislature, at a rowdy meeting, the City Council again accepted it, 8-0. But this time the state law was allowed to expire, on January 1, 1956. In his 1956 budget message, city manager Curry warned "rent gougers who blindly seek to take undue advantage of the expiration... such action might bring higher assessments on their property."³⁴

Some threat. Any higher property taxes would be passed right along to the tenants. Here was an answer to the Corcoran Committee's complaint about the low-rent tax base. The Cambridge Tenants Council and others filed rent control bills in the 1956 legislative session. But no city councilor supported them.³⁵

The institutions of urban renewal now quickly took shape. Four disgruntled members quit the Planning Board. Jose Sert, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, became chair. Sert was also designated planning and design "consultant" to the University. Harvard set up its own Planning Office, 'to work closely with the city manager and his urban renewal Assistant'-- Mr Draveux Bender, of Brattle Street. ³⁶ The central urban renewal agency would be the five-white-guys Redevelopment Authority (CRA).³⁷ The citizens' interest would be represented by a group of academics and bankers called the Cambridge Advisory Committee (CAC).³⁸

32 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/26/55 p. 12

33 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/2/53 p.1; 4/29/54 p.1

34 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/14/55 p.1 [Edward Sullivan (Ind) and Hyman Pill (CCA) absent for this vote]; 2/9/55 p.1

35 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 9/20/56 p.8

36 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/12/56 p.1

37 CRA: Paul Corcoran; Prof Chas. Haar (Harvard Law); Thos. Murphy (Boston FinCom); Thad Beal (R.M.Bradley)

38 CAC:PCorcoran; chairman, R McKay (Treeland, located on Harvard land); MIT's Killian, Harvard's Pusey; George (N Avenue Savings Bank); Judge Good; Walton (Eastern Gas & Fuel); Minamara (Harvard planner); ex-Wellesley Pres Horton; Greene (Camb Gas & Light); Morss (Simplex); Stevens (A.D.Little); Storer (R.M.B real estate); Percoco (Rubber Workers; brother on Planning Board). *Cambridge Chronicle*, 8/7/56 p.1 •In 1967, the CAC would name as Executive Director, Paul J Frank - who had 25 years earlier been Executive Secretary of the CTA![see above, Pp.5-7].*Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/18/67, p.4.

A Harvard student, who would soon become a leading liberal intellectual, explained what was about to be attempted in Cambridge, and why:

The University today is in the position of a man about to be eaten by cannibals... At the moment, the cannibals are in the form of the Boston metropolitan area... The fully matured product is visible in a slum-surrounded university like Columbia or Chicago.

It is hard enough to find good teachers. Inducing them to live in slums is next to impossible.... The only alternative is to attack the existing pattern, to develop a new pattern through urban renewal.

Harvard cannot be fitted to a slum community, and Harvard cannot move. The same applies to other institutions. ...the entire operation presupposes, however, that the city wants to get rid of its slums. This is not always true, and it is especially unlikely when it is a small city, run by the voters and not the business interests... While people do not like to live in slums, they would rather live in slums than gutters, Tearing down a tenement means displacing families...[thus] the politicians become proponents of the status quo.

Perhaps the most encouraging sign is the Rogers Block project. Displacing 133 families, 357 people, this clearance program... is now nearing reality, which means that the slums will be replaced by industry.³⁹

Perhaps the most encouraging sign is the Rogers Block project. Displacing 133 families, 357 people, this clearance program... is now nearing reality, which means that the slums will be replaced by industry.⁴⁰

The site of the demolished Rogers Block remained vacant for eight years, until it was bought by MIT. The 'industry' which arose there was called Tech Square.

The CAC's Review Committee of landlords and developers produced, in 1961, an outline for the future development of the city. They recommended:

- Build university-linked research, high-tech, and headquarters operations.

Among traditional industries, retain only the candy factories.

- Extend rapid transit to Porter Square; make Mass. Ave. a "grand mall,"

Central to Porter; develop "an international center midway between Harvard and MIT" (that would be Central Square).

- Urge Harvard to invest in real estate. "...confer with Harvard corporation, offering the Houghton [present King School] area as a place for tax-paying real estate investments."

- "Encourage building of high-rise apts" and "row houses similar to [Harvard's] Holden Green and Shaler Lane" for "middle-income families."

39 Christopher Jencks, "Urban Renewal Tries to End Danger of Local Blight," *Harvard Crimson*, 2/25/56, p.3 This article was reproduced and given wide circulation by the CCA. Its author is now renowned for his subsequent anti-racist, anti-imperialist career.

40 Christopher Jencks, "Urban Renewal Tries to End Danger of Local Blight," *Harvard Crimson*, 2/25/56, p.3 This article was reproduced and given wide circulation by the CCA. Its author is now rightly renowned for his subsequent anti-racist, anti-imperialist career.

- And for East Cambridge: “new, attractive Middlesex County buildings.”⁴¹

Amazing how clairvoyant these guys were! At a City Council meeting some years later, Al Vellucci told Harvard’s L. Gard Wiggins, “I believe you have a master plan.” Wiggins protested, “We’re just not that smart - we haven’t got a plan.”⁴²

Yes - and no. You might not be smart, and still have a master plan. You could be part of a plan you inherit - like your class and your skin.

Road to ruin

The federal Highway Act of 1956 meant that projects like the Inner Belt would be 90% federally funded. Here was great news for the Boston newspapers, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and Governor Volpe. Harvard and MIT? They said nothing.⁴³ The CAC welcomed the news, *not despite, but because of the mass evictions it would entail*. For the neighborhoods east of Central Square were nothing to write home about:

These blighted areas swallow up 54 percent of the municipal tax dollar and in return produce only 6 percent of the tax.⁴⁴

Mark Fortune, the city’s Planning Director, told a Chamber of Commerce luncheon meeting that, forget the loss of 3000 residents and \$3-1/2 million taxable, the Elm Street - Brookline Street route would

trigger the redevelopment of the eastern end of the city.... It makes possible the rebirth of Central Square in terms of retail and office building development.⁴⁵

Far from choking on their luncheon, the Chamber’s Board *unanimously* agreed. They even did a “survey” of East Cambridge businesses, which (surprise!) favored an

41 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 2/9/61 p.1; 2/16/61 p.2. Review Committee members: Harding U Greene (chair); Beal, Berg, Corcoran, Skinner, Vappi, Newsome.11/22/56,p.3

42 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/2/67 p.2

43 Fellman and Brandt: *The Deceived Majority*, Rutgers, 1973 Pp59, 65,6. Rep. John Toomey testified at a state hearing, ‘in 1959, at a private session at...the MIT faculty building,he had conferred with Pusey and Stratton. “the purpose was to stop me from opposing the inner belt highway on Brookline and Elm Streets... Dr Stratton told me they would never build it on the railroad because they [MIT] had enough power to stop it.” *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/8/62

44 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/23/56, p.9 Two years later the CAC “expressed fear” about inaction on the Belt and Route 2 extension. “no other route offers so many advantages.” CC 9/11/58, p.1; The CAC’s Economic Development Committee said that “22% of our city’s residential area” was in such bad shape that it had to go. (Belt Route Seen Good for Central Sq Area”) *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/13/58 p.1

45 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/23/58 p.1.

East-Central Belt route, 73-37. ⁴⁶

The Belt was always more than just a road. We remember the 1911 “boulevard” to “check the spread of” immigrants. In 1928, it “might be a broad highway” to segregate industry and the “criminal class” from the better residential areas.⁴⁷ But over sixty years, the route, and its rôle as a social barrier, was practically unchanged.

The City Council was in a bind. The Planning Board wanted the Brookline-Elm route, and the Feds considered the Inner Belt to be *part of* the urban renewal plan.⁴⁸ Most of them wanted urban renewal, but couldn’t bring themselves to endorse that route. They couldn’t agree on another route, either. So they were happy to shift the onus to their ‘professional’ city government. In 1959, the Council voted 7-1 to forward the Planning Board’s report to the state. Independent councillor Watson ‘argued in vain that submission of the Planning Board’s report in effect was endorsement of the Brookline-Elm Street route...’⁴⁹

In 1961, State Rep John Toomey got the Legislature to grant veto power over highway routes to affected cities. The political anguish was only prolonged. CCA President Vorenburg wrote to legislators that his group didn’t want the veto.⁵⁰

In 1958, the CCA declared that the Elm/Brookline Belt would be “of great advantage to Cambridge” --

Understandably, many families and property owners who expect personal loss have protested... If defense of the proposed location is not as loudly voiced, however, Cambridge as a whole may stand to lose. For the route will cut across Cambridge somewhere...

Its 1959 election platform reiterated “enthusiastic support” for urban renewal and “active support” for that route. These were the years when Mayor Ed Crane would say: “As Harvard and MIT grow, so grows the city of Cambridge.”⁵¹

Max Kargman told the Cambridge Council of Realtors (chowing down at the Harvard Faculty Club), they were “blessed with a fine Board and a favorable urban renewal climate.”⁵² Kargman was then erecting Riverview, the City’s first urban renewal housing development. But the climate began to change when they demolished Boston’s West End. The general middle-class public, which had been subjected to so

46 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 9/25/58 p.10

47 see page 4 above; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6/8/28 p.17

48 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/3/58 p.9; *CCA Civic Bulletin*, Feb 58, p.3; Apr 58 p.4; 9/4/58 p.3; feds “insist all urban renewal projects be coordinated with the new highway program.” *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/24/58 p.1

49 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/22/59 p.1

50 according to Rep. Toomey and Sen. McCann, in *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/16/67 p.1

51 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 2/19/59, p.1; *CCA Civic Bulletin*, 2/58 p.3; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6/25/59 p.12. All the while, Crane adamantly opposed the Inner Belt.

52 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/10/60 p.16. Kargman became the region’s biggest developer of FHA subsidized housing and a big contributor to the Democratic Party.

much pro-renewal propaganda, now watched a living neighborhood wasted by a 'clearance' program to put up hideous luxury high-rises.⁵³

It turned out that urban renewal in the Riverside neighborhood was also going to be a 'clearance' program.⁵⁴

At first, the neighbors had welcomed renewal. In 1955, the Houghton [King] PTA and Riverside Neighborhood Association (RNA) had held a joint meeting on the theme, "Let's Get Urban Renewal for the Riverside Area." In 1957, a "non-denominational" group of community leaders petitioned to put the entire neighborhood under urban renewal. (*Non-denominational* was 1950s talk for *diverse*.) At St Paul's, Msgr Hickey told his parish that President Eisenhower and Pope Pius were "on our side" to "complete the urban renewal program."⁵⁵

Harvard was just then pushing rapidly into the parish. Leverett and Quincy House were brand new, and the huge Peabody Terrace development was on the way. The University even tried to buy the Corporal Burns playground from the city.⁵⁶ Now came the disillusionment. Hearing that "(e)ntire blocks would be cleared for new residential structures...", five hundred residents jammed a public hearing at the Community Center. The CRA reassured another meeting at the Western Avenue Baptist by explaining that it would be "two, three, four years before some families will have to move."⁵⁷

Dorothy Sullivan of Howard Street had been one of the 1957 pro-renewal petitioners. Now she opposed the Houghton plan. Enricius Evereteze of the RNA commented, "It seems that the city no longer wants to tolerate the people of color who are so well integrated in the Houghton area." The 'Houghton maximum plan' envisaged 'relocation' for 800 of the neighborhood's 2000 families!⁵⁸

In February, 1962, the spotlight shifted to Area Three. City officials, the CAC and the Chamber of Commerce testified at City Council for the 114-acre Donnelly Field plan. 150 residents rejected the bait of funding for the new Harrington School. The crowd at the next public hearing was still larger and angrier.⁵⁹ But the Council voted

53 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/8/59, p.12

54 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/14/60 p.7

55 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/10/55 p.9; 6/20/57 p.1

56 *Harvard Crimson*, 11/5/56 p.1 Pusey: before WWII, Harvard had fewer than 2700 undergrads.

Since then, it had always had more than 3700. "...there are now actually fewer rooms available than 25 years ago..."

57 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6/22/61, p.1; 7/6/61 p.1; 7/20/61 p.11

58 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/17/61 p.10; 8/24/61 p.12; 10/5/61 p.10: Riverside had 400 "nonwhite" families; 38% of residents lived in the same building ten or more years; 1/2 the structures were owner-occupied.

59 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 2/5/62 p.1; 2/22/62 Pp1,2. The AFSCME (AFL-CIO government workers union) spon-sored a plan to build 142 apartments, whose rents would be about double the neighborhood average. But Local 602, the Cambridge City Workers, opposed it.

5-4 to take the land, anyway. On May 14, an anti-urban renewal crowd of 300, in the *Chronicle's* words, 'nearly raised the roof' at City Council. When a renewal proponent referred to "blight" in his neighborhood, councillor Vellucci declared: "Homes are not blight!"⁶⁰

Pearl K Wise, the first woman ever to serve on the Cambridge City Council, listened. Legend has it that Al Vellucci took her on a tour of his neighborhood before the decisive vote. He must have remembered that she had voted against urban renewal's first housing development.⁶¹

On May 28, 1962, 'Hurling accusations of unfair practices, social arrogance, and class ignorance' against the CRA, Wise voted with the Independents Goldberg, Sullivan and Vellucci against the Donnelly plan. The Houghton and Cambridgeport plans were shelved immediately. A month later, urban renewal was cancelled for the entire city.⁶²

The CCA Board was stunned. In response to their accusations of betrayal, councillor Wise read aloud from a CRA circular which warned,

"If the urban renewal program is defeated in Cambridge, it can reasonably be expected that families dislocated by Boston's ten renewal projects would move into Cambridge..."

"This is incredible," she said. "I welcome people into Cambridge from Roxbury, from Beacon Hill, from Milton, from Randolph, or wherever they may come."⁶³

Thus was the unity of interest between the Riverside and Donnelly neighborhoods realized in the act of a uniquely courageous politician. That she arose in its ranks was the CCA's glory; her fall was its shame. Expecting to lose CCA endorsement, Pearl Wise never ran for reelection.

One of the CCA city councilors resigned in disgust.

And the new Harrington School got built anyway.

60 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/17/62 Pp1,2

61 Nine modest structures were demolished for Max Kargman's "moderate income" Riverview. Wise had wanted a guaranteed \$80/month rent maximum for one-bedroom apartments; Kargman said they would rent for \$165. (Vellucci ridiculed Wise's effort to keep the rents down and voted with the Council majority to approve the development.) The lowest rent turned out to be \$210 - rather immoderate for 1962! *CCA Civic Bulletin*, Oct 58; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/7/59 p.1

62 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/31/62, p.1. councillor Trodden (Ind) was absent for the decisive vote; 6/14/62 p.1; 6/28/62 p.1

63 *CCA Civic Bulletin*, June-July 62, Pp1-3. "The [CCA] Board [said] Mrs. Wise's attack on the good faith of the Redevelopment Authority... hinders the needed development of an improved relationship between those affected by urban renewal and those administering it." *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6/28/62 p.5

The Space Age

Though urban renewal died, yet it lived. University enrollments doubled during the 1960s, and MIT in particular became a major purchaser of industrial real estate. The redevelopment effort now focused on the industrial economy.

We are told that the Kendall Square area was “an ugly and decayed industrial wasteland” crying out for redevelopment. The Feds decided this would be a good place to locate the space agency, NASA. MIT’s President Killian thought so too, opining that Kendall Square was “as blighted industrial-wise as the Rogers Block was residential-wise.” A Brattle Street progressive later called it “a whole area of inferior blue-collar jobs.”⁶⁴

The Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers and 93 existing businesses didn’t think it was all that bad. Businessman Edward S Simpson flatly denied that the area was declining. There was even ‘a well financed plan by industrialists to have NASA locate elsewhere.’⁶⁵

Despite ten years of intensive urban renewal planning and propaganda, there had as yet been no mass exodus of factories. Lever Bros.’ departure accounted for half the 15% decline in industrial employment between 1956 and ‘64. Twelve thousand Cantabrigians still worked in the city’s blue-collar industries.⁶⁶

Councillor Tom Mahoney observed how this could quickly change: there might be “1, 2, or 3 Tech Squares going up to support NASA.” The NASA installation itself would be devastating: “(W)e’re certainly not interested in that,” said Councillor Vellucci, “with its displacement of 3300 jobs.”⁶⁷ But mayor Crane ‘Quoted a NASA official as saying they might as well move out to route 128’ as go elsewhere in Cambridge. Vellucci still talked about elsewhere -- such as, “To hell with NASA.” But the Council approved the site, and the CCA congratulated those who voted for it. ⁶⁸ Alfred Cohn, the CCA’s new president, conceded that NASA might be “a burden to some of our businessmen, yet it may bring us the kind of employment and investment which is most desirable for Cambridge... The pattern of the future is set by

64 *Cambridge Progress 1990* p.6A; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/28/64, p.1; Ackermann, *You the Mayor?* (1989), p.117; see also the CCA’s *Cambridge Book 1966*, which contrasts “the disordered sprawl” of the old industrial districts with the new “physically compact and trim” research facilities. “Industry has assumed the features of a university...” p. 31

65 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 8/20/64p.1,2; 8/27/64p.10; 9/29/64p.1

66 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/9/64 p.2

67 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6/4/64 p.2; 6/11/64 p.2

68 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/24/6, p.1; 10/22/65 p.1; 9/22/66 p.2

NASA and Technology Square.”⁶⁹

Mayor Dan Hayes, a North Cambridge businessman and landlord, was no CCA fan. But he shared Cohn’s enthusiasm. NASA would be “a gigantic magnet for the location of related... industries [and] will greatly enhance our local universities.” He hailed the high-rise Central Plaza office project as the “forerunner” of a boom which “in five years will transform the city into a great metropolis.”⁷⁰

Spaulding & Slye got interested in the Central Plaza project because of Central Square’s convenience to the two universities, NASA and the Inner Belt. That was also the big selling point for a new apartment building at 101 Western Avenue. Paul Corcoran, concerned “how best to capitalize on” NASA, hoped the Feds might fund a Central Square “rejuvenation” study.⁷¹

All this talk about ‘rebirth’ and ‘rejuvenation’ conjures up a thoroughly decrepit Central Square.⁷² Actually there were four department stores, four supermarkets, two appliance and several big furniture stores, lots of drug stores, barber and beauty shops; restaurants, pubs, shoe and clothing stores; two bowling alleys, retailers of meat, fish, baked goods, and candy. There were flourishing churches, the *Chronicle* office, and WCAS radio. Factories bustled on its eastern edge.... What, exactly, needed to be fixed?

If Central Square was to be fixed by NASA and the Inner Belt, why invest in its future as a working-class shopping center? Business leadership was already showing indifference to the traditional local customer base. The Businessmen’s Association repeatedly brought in petitions for parking lots at the expense of local working-class housing. The first time, some city councillors ‘expressed concern’ that 75 families would have to be evicted. But they approved, and kept on approving.⁷³

69 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/21/66 p.1. A year later, CAC Chair McLaughlin told the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce: “the community has a right to the use of that [Kendall Sq] land in accordance with the value of that land. In the replanning of Cambridge, much attention is going to be given to the proper use of industrial land... the yardstick of judging has been set by the Technology Square development.” 11/30/67, p.4

70 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 7/21/66 p.2; 2/2/67 p.16 Central Plaza stands at the corner of Mass Ave and Prospect Street.

71 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 6/23/66 p.1; 3/3/66 p.11; Fitzgerald said NASA itself wanted the Elm/Brookline Inner Belt. Fellman & Brandt, p.71

72 “Planning experts expect many-storied office buildings to be the economic salvation of Central Square and the solution to redevelopment problems in that area.” *CCA Civic Bulletin*, June-July 1957, p.2

73 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/18/54 p.1; 13/15/55 p.1; 7/4/57 p.1; 12/31/59, p.1. In the 1960s, parking lots just for Central Plaza displaced 2 houses, 4 multi-family dwellings; and two decades later, a row of small shops.

Progressive paradoxes

For Al Vellucci, it was a political consequence of Pearl Wise's exposure of CRA racism, that "a Negro" should be appointed to the CRA. Wise was the only CCA councillor who agreed. CCA-endorsed council candidate Tom Coates indignantly rejected Vellucci's idea as implying that "Negroes" couldn't rely on city officials, that they were "less than first-class" citizens.⁷⁴

Coates went on to become the first Black city councillor. The first Italian and Jewish councillors had also run on CCA slates; and the first women. The CCA supported the construction of public housing, and campaigned on issues like police abusiveness toward Afro-Americans. These were creditable positions, 'progressive' in the best sense -- but always subservient to the imperatives of redevelopment.

And like redevelopment, these fine policies were often confined to neighborhoods other than those inhabited by CCA voters. Take the location of public housing. A lot of it was built after World War II, but none in 'CCA neighborhoods.'⁷⁵ The CCA rank and file were undoubtedly puzzled at the hostility and distrust of working-class people. "Blue-collar and no-collar people are by no means our best readers," wrote a woman from a 'CCA neighborhood' to the paper. She thought we needed to be "educated" about the beneficence of the CCA, universities, and urban renewal agencies.⁷⁶

At the same time, a pro-development 'Independent' like Mayor Hayes needed a way to channel class resentment away from the universities. He found a way in the 'hippies' who were then moving into the Inner Belt area.⁷⁷ Some of these hippies might actually be local working-class youths, but mostly they seemed to be *déclassé* outsiders, who could be scapegoated like a despised ethnic group, but without the political liability. The famous 'War on Hippies' was the centerpiece of Hayes' 1967 reelection campaign: "undesirables... worthless... intolerable...." But he was careful to deny that the colleges attracted their presence. Al Vellucci was right in there too,
74 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/28/63 p.1; 4/4/63 p.11. But referring to the class and race biases of urban renewal, Abid Haneef (North Cambridge Planning Team) later said that the CRA "represents only one faction of the city" *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/27/69 p.2.

75 The one proposal to build in a "middle-class" area was defeated. Vets' leader Channing Beucler said, "The tactics employed by the opposition in bringing race, color, and religion into this fight compel the veterans to expose these vicious tactics. ...of the three councillors voting against the housing in the Lakeview area, one is a banker dealing principally with mortgage loans, another is a speculative builder also in the real estate business..." *Cambridge Chronicle*, 8/12/48, p.2. (The CCA took no position on this; only one of the 3 opponents was a CCA councillor.)

76 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/24/66 p.10

77 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 9/21/67, p.10

berating those “hippies, transient beatniks, gypsies, and other undesirable persons.” With great fanfare, local police raided some ‘digger’ apartments.⁷⁸

There was something else about these hippies. They looked like the young people who had stood with Allston residents, blocking bulldozers at an urban renewal project in August, 1965. The cops had laid into the kids and American flags with dogs and clubs; many homes were demolished; but the “eviction day riots” had brought the project to a halt. In 1967 came Tent City: residents took over an urban renewal site, stopped the Boston Redevelopment Authority’s South End master plan, and a tenant-based movement temporarily reversed the gentrification of that neighborhood.⁷⁹

Having got the local highway veto power repealed in 1965, Governor Volpe set Cambridge a deadline to decide where to put its section of the Inner Belt. The crisis spawned new grass-roots organizations: *Neighbors United* and *Save Our Cities*. In mass meetings they discussed tactics from letter-writing to “direct action.” Volunteer planner/advocates tried to help by working for a ‘realistic’ Albany St. route compromise; rank and file activists continued to oppose any and all routes.⁸⁰

The approaching deadline forced MIT to publicly oppose a possible railroad/Albany Street route: it would violate “national security,” shaking up delicate labs in the “arsenal of democracy.” MIT emphatically did *not* oppose the Elm Street/Brookline route. The CCA was still ready to look at “reasonable alternatives,” despite the fact that its own Board had voted to “oppose any Inner Belt construction in Cambridge.”⁸¹ Some of the group’s elected councillors were far more in touch with constituents. Tom Mahoney said, “We are being pressured to choose a route...But Cambridge doesn’t have to accept the assertion there must be a Belt route....” His old friend Ed Crane was, as usual, more blunt: “Kill it and damn it.”⁸²

Vellucci often opposed “any and all Inner Belts,” but could also complain that delaying a decision on the route was costing millions in urban renewal matching funds. He wasn’t above baiting the west side and the CCA by proposing Memorial Drive as an alternative route (provoking the so-called ‘Save the Sycamores’ protest).⁸³

On the Belt route, as in Kendall Square, factory owners did not gracefully accept the blight label. Dynatech, Simplex, Boston Woven Hose, and NECCO actively opposed any routes which would displace them.⁸⁴

78 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 9/28/67 p.1; 10/5/67 p.1

79 see King, *Chain of Change* (1985); Lukas, *Common Ground* (1986), esp.Pp427-437

80 Fellman & Brandt, p.131; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 9/9/65 p.2; 4/7/66 p.3; 11/11/65 p.8; Neighbors United was started by Cambridgeport residents Bill Ackerly and Ansti Benfield; SOC was led by Catholic clergy.

81 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 10/29/64 p.4.2/24/66 p.1;12/2/65 p.1

82 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/31/66 p.14; 3/3/66 p.1)

83 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 2/24/66 p.2; 3/19/66 p.13/31/66 p.14

84 Fellman, p.73; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/13/66 p.1

Taken aback by growing resistance, Volpe ordered a restudy. Certainly not out of sympathy; after all, as he told the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, “If you want an omelet, you have to break a few eggs.” Now, however, Washington’s own eggs would be broken: two neighborhoods on the Belt Route were chosen to be a Model Cities demonstration project.⁸⁵ Though designed as a ‘sandbox’ to divert inner city activists from political confrontation, the Model Cities program was used by the activists to ‘Beat the Belt.’⁸⁶

At this point, Volpe entered the Nixon Administration as the first US Secretary of Transportation. Former DPW Commissioner Frank Sargent became Governor. Hard to imagine a worse scenario, yet highway opponents weren’t fazed. They trashed the Feds’ new ‘joint development concept,’ intended to bribe cities by granting them air rights to development over the new highways. Even the undemonstrative mayor Walter Sullivan found himself in one of those 1960s protest marches against the Inner Belt.⁸⁷

The movement against the highways was spreading to the suburbs; part of a larger Movement which made it “hard to believe that an army of engineers in peace time would have the power to bulldoze 5000 family dwellings for a highway.” Governor Sargent said on TV that it had been a terrible mistake. There would be no Inner Belt.⁸⁸

There would be no NASA, either. Kendall Square had been cleared, and one building already erected, but Nixon decided to put NASA in Houston, instead.⁸⁹

85 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 10/6/66 p.4; 2/2/67, p4; 4/20/67, p1;11/23/67 p1

86 •Assistant city manager Justin Gray - a man of rare democratic integrity - lobbied intensively to get Model Cities into Areas 3 & 4. •The guy who conceived the Model Cities idea, George Sternlieb, described it this way: “In effect, we are telling people: ‘Here is a nice new program. Go play with it and don’t bother us too much.’ ...We’ve got to have a sandbox.” When asked if he were joking, Sternlieb replied, “I am saying that for real... I don’t want those people climbing up over the walls, and that’s a tax I am willing to pay.” *U.S.News & World Report* 7/26/71

87 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 9/19/68 p.11; 1/23/69 p.1

88 Ackermann, p.217; Lupo and Colcord, *Rites of Way: Transportation Politics in Boston and the US City*

89 This building was turned over to the US Dept. of Transportation and named after Frank Volpe. Several local politicians were among the incorporators.of the new Charlesbank, which had its offices in the Volpe building and in Central Plaza. *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/28/66, p. 2

The return of rent control

Four years after scrapping its 1962 “maximum plan,” the CRA was back in Riverside, this time proposing to displace only 101 households. The RNA wasn’t interested. Too many neighbors were displaced already. Jeremiah Conway spoke of the Irish driven from ‘Kerry Corner’ by Harvard expansion. Lucille Crayton said, “It looks like they’d let us stay here. There’s only a few colored left....I’m fighting to the end.”⁹⁰

There were a few too many people of color, however: since the Houghton School was 50.5% ‘non-white,’ it violated the new State racial imbalance law! School committeeman Frank Duehay advised Riverside residents that a planned new Houghton School could “restore racial balance” by being big and attractive. But the new school needed federal funding, conditioned on neighborhood acceptance of urban renewal.⁹¹ All calculations were continually subject to correction because of Harvard’s insatiable appetite for the neighborhood’s land. By the time the King School opened, two more blocks were cleared for Mather House.⁹²

The university had devoured most of the Irish neighbor, and was now staring in the windows of the Afro-American. This was the situation in 1969, the year of the Harvard Strike; and when a militant young welfare mom named Sandra Graham led Riverside residents in the famous disruption of Harvard’s 1970 commencement.

*

‘Crisis’ brings to mind a sudden, sharp event, followed by a state of ‘normalcy’ In Cambridge, however, a housing crisis *is* normal; by 1964, it was getting worse. A State commission noted that the supply of low-income housing was decreasing even as demand was increasing. Two years later a realtor stated flatly, “There are no longer any low-priced or moderate rentals now available in Cambridge.” A CRA survey of

90 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 3/3/66 p.1 The RNA, based on working-class homeowners, had unwritten rules to share leadership among Riverside’s ethnic groups, especially Irish, West Indian, Afro-American and Italian. Riverside Planning Team (RPT), was part of CEOC, the new ‘poverty agency:’ staff organizers recruited low-income residents, mainly tenants living near Western Ave; students also joined. Federal policies in the 1960s politicized “the poor’ vs. ‘the working class.’ The RNA faded away after the same officers got themselves elected to both groups in 1971; The RPT ended a few years later,when its funding did.

91 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/11/65 p.24 The new King School was built despite the rejection of the CRA plan. But it turned out so big, about thirty households had to be evicted to make room for it. The architecture closely resembled Harvard’s Peabody Terrace, right across Putnam Ave. A ‘King Open School’ program was installed, which attracted professional-class families from across the city.

92 Ten years later, when Harvard announced plans to develop Ten Mt Auburn Street, Civic Affairs officer Jackie O’Neill (Tip O’Neill’s daughter-in-law) told concerned neighbors that the area would see no further developments for many years. The Inn at Harvard and the DeWolfe St project were on the drawing boards even before Ten Mt Auburn was completed!

apartment vacancies supported this observation. By 1967, the 'Housing Crisis' was the talk of the town.⁹³

However, not a single local politician raised the issue of rent control. The favored approach to high rents was rather to subsidize them. 'Leased Housing' was the 'Section 8' program of the era. Cambridge had got 400 of these, but landlords took up only 16 of them the first year, and by the second they had taken only 74. The Cambridge Housing Authority's Eddie Martin explained, "In this city, landlords tell you flatly they don't need government money." Moreover, CHA had managed to build only 200 of 1500 new public housing units allotted it by the Feds.⁹⁴

In the summer of '68, CEOC released a survey of some 2000 elders, which found that over half "face[d] an existence in which they cannot afford the basic necessities of life." CEOC staff organizers tried to persuade people not to bring the rent control issue into the citywide housing meeting they were planning. They felt it would be too divisive.⁹⁵ But the largely elderly crowd of 900 who jammed St Mary's parish hall for the Sept 14 Housing Convention remembered the 1950s. Every neighborhood caucus brought rent control resolutions to the floor, and a committee was formed to draw up an ordinance.

The newly founded local Peace and Freedom Party (PFP) had already written a rent control ordinance and began a campaign to put it on the 1969 ballot. The radical PFP believed that the Feds were funding CEOC to further their master plan to make Cambridge an exclusive war research center. They were wrong, in that the Housing Convention's rent control committee had escaped CEOC's control. It turned out they were right that lobbying couldn't persuade the City Council to pass rent control. The rent control drive received support from an unexpected source. Assistant city manager Justin Gray and city planner Ellen Feingold reported, "The city's effort ...to meet the need for housing for low income families has been almost nonexistent..." "The city does have the power to institute rent control and such controls are necessary."⁹⁶

Boston and Brookline had already passed weak rent regulations, but in Cambridge, the petition campaign quickly ran into resistance. Councillors Goldberg and Hayes tried to deny PFP a routine table permit because they distributed

⁹³ *Cambridge Chronicle*, 12/3/64 p..24; 3/24/66 p.14; 11/10/66 p.4; 5/14/67 p..28; Cambridge members of the Commission on Low Income Housing: landlords Malcolm Peabody, Marvin Gilmore; Rep. Mary Newman. The realtor was Sally Martin.

⁹⁴ *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/4/68, p..2; 8/22/68, p.2; 7/10/69, Pp1,2

⁹⁵ *Cambridge Chronicle*, 8/1/68 p.1; 1/29/70 p..2. CEOC's first Executive Director, Daniel E Clifford, had served on the CAC staff, adding credence to accusations that the poverty program was linked to urban renewal. *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/20/67, p.1

⁹⁶ *Cambridge Chronicle*, 10/3/68, p.10. City manager J L Sullivan never endorsed these views; in fact, Fr Butler quit the manager's housing committee, saying that it was a hoax designed to evade the rent control issue.

“inflammatory literature.”⁹⁷ With an eye to funding sources, the Board of Riverside’s Community Center ordered both the PFP and CEOC to stop holding ‘pot party’ rent control meetings there. (You had to have been at those meetings to appreciate what a howler that was.) In each case, a militant protest reversed the decision.

A woman’s murder in one of Harvard’s neglected off-campus buildings led to the first tenant union. Others followed at Linwood Place and Columbia Street in Area 4. An elderly evictee was found living in a laundromat on River Street after her apartment building on Mass. Avenue was demolished.⁹⁸ The great Harvard strike erupted; besides an end to complicity with the Viet Nam War and a Black Studies program, the students demanded rent control and stopping Harvard expansion in North Roxbury and Riverside.⁹⁹

The rent control threat led Carl Barron to set up the Cambridge Property Owners Association (CPOA). Suddenly, landlords snapped up the rest of the Leased Housing quota.¹⁰⁰

In July 1969, after a dance of amendments and motions, the City Council voted 5-4 against the Housing Convention’s rent bill. The crowd’s rage compelled the councillors to leave by the rear exit. In September, city solicitor Philip Cronin told the Election Commission not to place the 10,000-signature PFP petition on the ballot. Protesters broke through police barring the Commission’s next meeting; 41 were arrested. Next week, a crowd blockaded a family’s eviction at 73 School Street. PFP went to court to force the rent petition on the ballot but they were denied.¹⁰¹

97 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/23/69 p..2

98 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/16/69 p.1; 1/29/70 p..2

99 •The RNA caught Harvard violating its pledge not to buy property east of Putnam Ave. Negotiations led to sale to Harvard of a lot owned by ex-mayor Hayes, on which 2 Mt. Auburn was built. •A year later, Sandra Graham and the RPT briefly disrupted Harvard commencement, demanding the ‘Treeland’ site for housing. In negotiations, Harvard said the site was “too good for” low-income housing; several years later, Harvard underwrote construction of River-Howard Homes. •The “Wilson report,” *The University and the City*, addressed the issues of the 1969 strike. It rejected ‘Harvardization,’ saying, “Diversity and even conflict are relevant to the intellectual life Harvard wishes to maintain.” Thus “diversity” appeared on the local scene as a positive virtue; but Wilson’s coupling of “diversity” with “conflict” was certainly more robust than current usage!

100 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/14/68 p.1; 7/24/69, p.1; Besides combating rent control, the CPOA advocated zoning Mass Ave for high-rises, to produce more taxes and housing. *Tenants’ Newsletter*, 7/29/71 p.2

101 Cronin called the petition illegal on two grounds: its declaration of housing emergency - not confirmed by “impartial experts;” its appropriations clause - improper (despite sever-ability). Judge Leen’s decision in the *mandamus* case took no account of Cronin’s reasoning, but was based on an *amicus* brief written for the real estate lobby by Harvard Law Prof. St Clair, saying essentially that, despite the 1966 ‘Home Rule Amendment,’ the State Constitution didn’t permit municipalities to enact rent control without State permission. •In *You the Mayor?* (Pp.133,153,161...), Barbara Ackermann unaccountably tells us that the rent control referendum actually took place, won overwhelmingly, and helped the CCA win a Council majority! Purportedly in response to Leen’s ruling, the Council voted to file a home rule rent control bill, a vote supported by rent control *opponents* Ed Crane and Daniel Hayes. *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/4/69 p.1

A few months later, Fr Butler of Cambridgeport's Blessed Sacrament said that 200 of the 800 families in his parish had moved away in one year, the majority because of high rents.¹⁰² Model Cities activist Janet Rose warned legislators that if they didn't pass something quickly, "tenants will make their own rent control." And indeed, the spring of 1970 saw the militant new Cambridge Tenants Organizing Committee (CTOC) urging tenants to resist rent increases, and blocking evictions in the streets around Central Square.

Republican governor Sargent signed the statewide rent control enabling act on Aug 30, 1970; the Cambridge City Council accepted it without debate.¹⁰³ Effective Oct 17, rents were to be 'rolled back' to March 1970 levels. But city manager Corcoran warned tenants they would be evicted if they did this. City solicitor Cronin, acting as temporary administrator of the program he had recently ruled off the ballot, promptly declared rent control *wasn't* in effect; but, just in case, he also proclaimed "a general adjustment of rents to the current level of rents."¹⁰⁴

CTOC became a citywide organization in a defiant campaign to "Roll Back Rents Dec 1." The city fathers watched in dismay as a mass of young renters were swept into the political life of the city. Corcoran conceded that law's effectiveness as of Dec 1. But on that morning thousands of tenants awakened to notices that their landlords had got 'hardship exemptions' from rent control! Some were demoralized by these shenanigans; others were only radicalized.¹⁰⁵

With William Corkery as permanent rent administrator, closed administrative hearings and a rigged formula for 'fair net operating income' began cranking out huge rent increases. Hundreds of tenants were *priced out of their homes - by rent control*. To cap the irony, Cambridge tenants were rescued from 'their' local law when it was superceded by *President Nixon's* 1971 national rent and price freeze.¹⁰⁶

On Dec 20, 1971 five councillors suddenly introduced an order to repeal rent control. Three of them would leave office in ten days; three were Independents and two CCAs. The vote was to be Dec 27. Eight hundred people jammed into the chamber and
¹⁰² *Cambridge Chronicle*, 1/29/70, p.1

¹⁰³ The Council's 7-2 vote for Ch.842 concealed a bad omen: four of the seven were not really rent control supporters. Coates, Clinton and Sullivan voted to repeal it 15 months later; Moncreiff said he was sorry he ever voted for it. This helps to explain their indifferent attitude toward the apparent sabotage of the law over the next several months.

¹⁰⁴ The account which follows, except where noted, follows that in "Rent control - a stormy past," *Tenants' Newsletter*, 12/1/73, Pp1, 4-7, and the author's memory.

¹⁰⁵ During these same months, the Walton brothers went public about their beating by Cambridge cops. More cases emerged, which mobilized a big part of the Black community. Police actions at evictions and in breaking up tenant meetings led to a united front which wanted to fire Police Chief Reagan; hire minority cops; and ban police at evictions.

¹⁰⁶ City manager Corcoran went on the road to oppose the law he was charged with administering. He testified in Lowell and Pittsfield when rent control was being considered in those cities, saying that building activity had "ground to a halt," though in fact a *dozen* projects were underway just in the Harvard-Central area. *Tenants' Newsletter*, 9/1/71 p.5

hallways. Since everyone had a right to speak for 10 minutes, the ‘people’s filibuster’ would talk, sing and shout, until New Year’s if necessary, to stop the ‘lame ducks’ voting. Finally the Council agreed to adjourn to Rindge Auditorium, two nights later. Two thousand people showed up at Rindge, but their mikes were never switched on. As soon as outgoing mayor Vellucci banged his gavel, councillor Danehy called the question, and the Clerk started the roll call. Amid deafening chants of “no vote!” councillors fought for the podium. As a crowd surged against the stage, councillors Clinton, Coates, Crane, Danehy and Sullivan huddled behind a cordon of uniformed police and voted; so the vote was 5-0 to end rent control.

The politicians never forgot those weeks. CTOC struggled to organize a citywide rent withholding. Mayor Ackermann told the *Boston Globe*, “the radicals are in control.” The new City Council met in auditoriums to accommodate the crowds, which insisted that its first order of business was to reaffirm rent control.¹⁰⁷

This same month, the new CCA-majority School Committee moved to dump Cambridge native Lawrence Frisoli as Superintendent of Schools. Again, Rindge Auditorium was stuffed with people. The public hearing crackled with ethnic and racial tension, intensified by live broadcast on Channel 2. Frisoli was accused of racism; indeed, he had recently ordered the director of the official Civic Unity Committee - a Black woman - arrested in his office. Frisoli’s supporters accused the CCA of something very similar. As former councillor Maher shouted to the crowd:

Just look at some of the names of the people they’re going after - Corkery, Cronin, Corcoran... The Protestants are taking over!

Though the tenant movement had nothing to do with the struggle going on around the school committee, these names were linked through the *rent control* issue, an issue that *divided* CCA-endorsed elected officials. The CCA Board would say only that the Corcoran administration had “subverted the intent of the Rent Control Ordinance,” causing “chaos for *both* landlords and tenants.” Rather than advocate rent control, these usually frugal folks now advanced a proposal to spend three million tax dollars to buy land for housing.¹⁰⁸

The CCA was divided by a progressive paradox. Rent control might help people whom liberals sincerely wanted to help, but it would also obstruct the growth of the University City. CCA activists included tenants, but also landlords and developers. Politically, as a PFP leader was told on a 1969 visit to the CCA office, rent control might only serve to keep in Cambridge ‘the kind of people who vote for Walter

107 Two months later, Judge Haven Parker (a Republican and a Ward 7 city councillor in the 1930s) voided Corkery’s procedures and guidelines. Rents were effectively returned to their March 1970 levels. [*Ackerman v. Corkery*, 1971]

108 *CCA Civic Bulletin* Nov 68 p.1; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 10/9/69 p.2; *CCA Civic Bulletin*, Dec 70 Pp.1,4. In 1970 the tax rate went up by 20 percent - much faster, incidentally, than the 1940 tax rate increase that helped bring about Plan E.

Sullivan.’

Why, then, would Independents like Sullivan oppose such a law? First, many of their friends were landlords. Then too, with the decline of political patronage under Plan E, they needed favors from institutions like Harvard. Politically, they saw that young tenant activists were ‘issue-oriented,’ and so might be attracted to other issues, and to CCA platforms which cobbled together issues with their votes in mind. Thus, Independents class-baited rent control as an ‘elitist’ issue.

On February 7, 1976, ABT Associates hosted an invitation-only meeting of CCA and other progressive leaders, to talk about the strength of tenant and other community movements. This was not about how to help these movements secure their goals, but how to co-opt them to achieve ‘progressive’ electoral majorities.¹⁰⁹ As former CCA director Jerry Cole, a firm opponent of rent control, explained,

The question is whether the professionals or the long-term, primarily middle class of the city - the ethnic and working and middle class, who have city jobs, who climbed the civil service ladder, either they’re going to run the city or the professionals are going to run the city.¹¹⁰

After 1972, Rent Board chairs and directors were always recruited from the CCA. As a landlord representative on the Board for 22 years, former CCA president Alfred Cohn was able to decisively shape policy. (One of the Board’s first acts decontrolled university-owned apartments rented by Harvard and MIT ‘affiliates.’ At the same time, young professionals began to predominate within the CCA itself. Some of them were rent control tenants, some with leftish or feminist ideals. By 1977, candidates for city council had to support rent control to get CCA endorsement.

CTOC, Hard Times and the other radical tenant groups, little concerned with elections, had shunned the *bourgeois* CCA. But these groups broke up and in 1977 a ‘Rent Control Task Force’ was organized to endorse city council candidates. Tenant policy leadership passed largely from radical organizers to liberal academics.¹¹¹ So it was that this reform, having been originally forced upon a reluctant ‘liberal establishment’ by radical leadership and popular pressure, evolved into a partisan issue. The incestuous relationship between media and elected politicians ensured that public memory of rent control’s disreputable origins was soon repressed.

I’m now going to skip over the story of the late 1970s and the whole of the 1980s. I can get away with this because we have already grasped the class and race
109 M.-E.P: liberals should “build bridges to CTOC...get them involved.” B.A.: “none of [our] organizations is broad-based. There are other organizations dealing with these issues - make them part of our movement.” A.I.: “get neighborhood leaders who aren’t interested in elections... make them work for us.”

110 transcript, courtesy E. Davin

111 The Rent Control Task Force was active only for city elections. It became the year-round Cambridge Rent Control Coalition in 1982, and Cambridge Tenants Union in 1986.

basis of Cambridge's development policy by investigating its origins. But to be perfectly frank, I just didn't have the time to research and write any more. So it's fast-forward to the present.

An age of diversity

inclinado sobre el río de su consciencia se pregunta si ese rostro que aflora lentamente del fondo, deformado por el agua, es el suyo.

- Octavio Paz

Bent in reflection over the river of consciousness, we wonder if these faces welling up from the depths, distorted by the flowing current, are yet ours. We don't talk and think just the way they did thirty and sixty years ago. Our accents and our cultures clearly aren't the same. Yet we still have their undemocratic city charter, and development policy is more than ever based on the Universities.

In North Cambridge, an office park is developing in the fragile Alewife flood plain, Harvard is engaged in the big new Sackler project in MidCambridge, and the city is presenting East Cambridge with another huge office park.¹¹² All the neighborhoods have their backs to the wall. But all are fighting back in their characteristic ways, and still remain something of the neighborhoods they've 'always' been.

Though we have temporarily lost rent control, the same diverse neighborhoods still live and mingle in Central Square; and though many faces have changed, working-class Cambridge is still here. Leading citizens are therefore still complaining about a 'distressed' Central Square business district.

If empty storefronts are the indicators of distress, Central Square has been distressed only to the extent that government or developers have made it so. Brookline Street suffered from the Inner Belt threat until 1970. MIT turned the Simplex site into a wasteland until they could proceed with University Park. The developer Schocket boarded up the block at Mass. Ave. and Essex Street for several years, after evicting all

¹¹² David Vickery, who as assistant city manager for development presided over the rezoning of Alewife, now works with Spaulding & Slye to develop it. Another former development chief, Cathy Spiegelman, has served Harvard in the same capacity ever since. Former CCA city councillor David Clem is today the biggest developer of East Cambridge.

the businesses for a project that never got off the ground.¹¹³ What the perennial distress calls about Central Square boil down to, is simply that commercial landlords always want more rent.

City Hall recently spent several million dollars on Central Square sidewalk improvements, crowned by an arrangement of bricks and concrete called ‘Carl Barron Plaza.’ This bordered the Holmes block, a score of largely ‘ethnic’ small businesses catering to a working class clientele. As the barren Plaza neared completion, however, the Development Department announced the imminent eviction of these businesses and their replacement by a luxury high-rise, which ‘made “a perfect fit” to the city’s overall planning efforts.’¹¹⁴

The developer had discussed its plans with the usual insiders. Before the small businesses themselves were informed, the plan was approved by the landlord-dominated Central Square Business Association (CSBA), whose leaders indignantly noted that current Holmes tenants were paying ‘below market rents.’ It was also approved in principle by the Central Square Neighborhood Coalition (CSNC), a small group of professional-class activists who were mostly CCA members.¹¹⁵

Although opponents collected 3,000 signatures against demolition of the Holmes block, inundating public hearings and the CSNC itself with their protest, the media depicted a community more or less evenly divided. The racial and class impacts of the Holmes development were obvious and often voiced, but elected officials declined make an issue of this.¹¹⁶

Opposition to the Holmes project was depicted rather as public incivility, than as a normal expression of political diversity. The *Chronicle* and *Tab* saw Save Central Square as thugs, and gave them no credit for the modification undergone by the original proposal. Real dissent was not to be encouraged or even tolerated: “If the public isn’t going to behave, then the decision makers, elected or appointed, are simply going to have to make decisions on their own.” It was not to be respected: “These people are very resentful about the end of rent control... So they lash out to

113 In a slap to truly needy places like downtown Haverhill and Brockton, Cambridge actually sought federal Urban Development Action Grant funds for the abortive Schocken project!

114 Development Dept chief Susan Schlesinger in *Cambridge Tab*, 6/2/97 p.3. Roger Booth said approvingly of the new luxury residents: “It becomes their neighborhood.” *Cambridge Chronicle*, 5/15/97, p.1

115 John Clifford in *Cambridge Tab*, 8/11/97, p.21; *Central Square Beat* (CSNC), 7/97, Pp1,2 *Cambridge Tab*, 6/2/97, p.3

116 CSBA president and Holmes advocate Carl Barron showed his appreciation by giving to the campaigns of *all nine* incumbent city councillors in 1997. Only councillor Ken Reeves became actively involved in the controversy, saying his “...role is to try to facilitate a dialogue to see if there is some middle ground between the developers and the community,” *Bay State Banner*, 8/14/97 p.10. He organized a meeting to give minority residents a chance to speak out, but rather than middle ground, found only the same solid opposition already voiced by Save Central Square and its petition against the demolition.

hold onto a part of their lives. It's like they don't want to give up their childhoods." It was hopeless -- "kamikaze politics."¹¹⁷

The modified project was duly approved, with the Planning Board and Development Department expressing satisfaction that 15% of the 'units' would be 'affordable,' defining the city's commitment to diversity in concrete terms. Holmes was no sooner approved, than another swell idea came up. Let's tear down the nearby '7-11 block' of small businesses to build a huge new main library.¹¹⁸ Because it would be near the subway and 'densely populated' neighborhoods, this would be great for the environment and poor people. Also convenient for luxury apartment dwellers at the Holmes site.

A few blocks to the east the city and state are ready to spend another \$4 million on 'Lafayette Square Park.' It was so tacky to have a gas station right across from MIT's University Park. The idea was hashed over with the usual 'decision makers.' The eyesore was already boarded up by the time the general public were invited to comment on the plan. Some "residents" were afraid the new park might attract crummy people.¹¹⁹ This must have been an incentive for Forest City, the developer of University Park, to sign on to the proposed new Business Improvement District.

A BID is a business association that assesses fees to area property owners within a defined geographical area, according to Arnold Goldstein... The BID then pays for services beyond those provided by the city, such as enhanced cleaning and security, and can collectively market the area to polish what some merchants believe is a lackluster public image of Central Square.¹²⁰

In any case, the new image is already being marketed. Prospective guests of the new University Park Hotel are assured that they'll be "located in the heart of Cambridge academia" -- the east end of Central Square! -- where "you'll find many restaurants reflective of the diverse cultures of the city."¹²¹ Naturally, the diverse types who toil in the kitchens will depart at 2 A.M. by the service exits to go home. Home won't likely be nearby; for, in the words of a progressive realtor,

Housing in our city is priced to reflect the benefits of our cosmopolitan

117 "Civility Down for the Count?" *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/2/98 p.1; Bob Boulrice in *Cambridge Tab*, 3/30/98, p.17; Robert Winters in *Cambridge Chronicle*, 4/2/98, Pp1, 13; Clifford Truesdell in *The Tech*, 11/14/97, p.13

118 "A new library at the 7-11 site, just across the street from City Hall...the perfect complement to the city's most vibrant district" *Cambridge Chronicle*, Editorial 6/18/98, p.16 Some Holmes supporters came out publicly to support this one too. At this writing the site of choice has shifted to the Post Office building or the YMCA. Across Mass. Ave, the YWCA and Schocket have dusted off a proposal from the 1980s to build a luxury building in Temple Street.

119 *Cambridge Chronicle*, 11/26/94 p.7; Architect James Flajnik says, "The [new] buildings' mixed uses and site improvements will complement other enrichments currently underway in Central Square." *Banker & Tradesman*, 10/6/97 p.13

120 *Boston Globe* "City", 12/14/97 p.10. Goldstein is chairman of the Central Square Management Planning Committee and vice president of the CSBA

121 *In a class of its own*, University Park Hotel brochure (1998)

environment [including] access to hundreds of restaurants representing cuisine from around the world... [that's] why Cambridge property owners went to war to protect, to liberate, their property and its unencumbered value."¹²²

The 'war' referred to was a relentless anti-rent control media campaign culminating in Question 9 on the 1994 state ballot. The general public has never realized how politically shallow and legally questionable the victory of Question 9 really was.¹²³ How could they? After that election, the very politicians and activists who had long presented themselves as its champions, shunned rent control as a political liability. The new CCA leadership wanted nothing to do with it.

Progressives instead backed the expenditure of 16 million tax dollars, in four years, to help a relatively small number of households stay in Cambridge. They also obtained passage of 'inclusionary zoning,' offering developers zoning rights to build bigger luxury buildings if they included affordable apartments. The new apartments would be for people displaced from their neighborhoods by rising rents, leaving their former homes to 'higher and better' users. Whether or not this plan 'worked,' the net result would be urban renewal: gentrification mitigated by tokenism.¹²⁴

As the population has become less working-class, city government has become ever more professionalized. Some city councillors used to come straight from the working class -- Al Vellucci, Sandra Graham, Danny Clinton. Today all nine are professionals or professional politicians.¹²⁵ The current city manager, Robert Healy, has already served far longer than any of his predecessors. Long terms of office lead straight to the 'old boys' network' -- whose smooth operation is in fact, such a valued

¹²² Alan Savenor in *Cambridge Chronicle*, 12/22/94, p.29

¹²³ A concerted anti-Cambridge-rent-control barrage of 5 years, virulently supported by all the Boston media, preceded Q.9; the campaign against it began just two months before the election. With a 10-1 funding advantage, and the statewide organizational framework of the real estate industry, Q.9 won an official plurality of only 46-44%. Even this result was corrupted by the state's strange decision to omit all reference to the content of the 1994 ballot questions on voting machines. However, Question 9 lost the aggregate vote of the 148 cities and towns which used paper ballots! A lawsuit challenging this election procedure was rendered moot when the real estate lobby substituted a two-year 'protected tenants' law for Question 9. -see Cunningham, *Secret of Question 9* (1996)

¹²⁴ A small controversy about the consequences of rent decontrol shows how the category of 'diversity' can be misleading and even worse. Skip Schloming of SPOA pointed to statistics showing that post-rent-control tenants were less likely to be white than their successors. Roger Herzog of the Development Department admitted this was probably true, but that the new non-whites were mostly Asian students. *Boston Globe*, 1/31/98, p.1; *Cambridge Chronicle*, 2/19/98, p.3. Atlantic Marketing Research: *Impacts of the Termination of Rent Control* (1998)

¹²⁵ This is not a criticism of any of the councillors *as individuals*, any more than one condemns all 'white males' by pointing out that the institutions which run society are overwhelmingly led and advised by such creatures.

feature of our current arrangement.¹²⁶

Three years ago, the city council offhandedly scrapped the one democratic institution which grew up under Plan E. 'The Count' used to bring people from every faction and neighborhood together for the week-long process of counting and transferring PR ballots. This civic ceremony was replaced with a computer program to make election results available nine, rather than eight weeks before the winners take the oath of office. The *Globe* and the *Chronicle* promptly congratulated Cambridge for choosing professionalism over foolish sentimentalism.

To compensate, we have a new civic ceremony: public officials wringing their hands in ritual despair at threats to Cambridge's precious (and supposedly unique) *diversity*. Meanwhile, these very officials interact daily with real estate developers to figure out how to wring the highest possible rents out of the soil of Cambridge. Coincidentally this entails digging up the roots of social diversity, the city's poor and working-class communities. It turns diversity into mere *ambience* - in the words of CCA Councillor Davis, "a marvelous *potpourri*" of restaurants - tinkling with the chatter of grad students and software engineers from every country on earth.

Concern about racism remains at the core of what it means to be a progressive. But race is also a class question, and most progressives in Cambridge are of the professional class. This is why the 'diversity' ideal is so ambiguous, and perfectly expresses the progressive paradox in Cambridge. At the King and Agassiz Schools, Afro-American principals were forced from office after conflicts, mostly with professional-class parents, over policy differences which largely corresponded to class differences.¹²⁷ When the Commonwealth Day School planned to move into the Brattle Street area, professional-class neighbors went xenophobic. Discrimination lawsuits against the city administration largely involve competition over professional-

126 CCA president Ken Carson warns "Those who attack Mr Healey should consider the harm they are doing to our chances of attracting a successor of superior quality." *Cambridge Chronicle*, 2/18/99, p.17. Try to imagine an argument like this being used to stifle criticism of Tom Menino, or any other democratically elected mayor. •At the same time, former CCA president Phil Dowds and councillor Katherine Triantafillou, who quit the CCA last year, have become outspoken critics of Plan E.

127 The King School provides the earliest and least publicized of these conflicts. In 1971, the King became one of two schools to house an Open School program (the Tobin was the other). At first, the Open program had a fairly high percentage of local, working-class students, but over the years professional-class parents came to dominate the program. After Charles Stead became King principal, the Open's differences with the 'regular' program grew. Stead openly tilted against the Open program, which his supporters felt had far better resources than the 'regular,' bilingual, and special needs programs at the King. The Open parents responded by lobbying separately from the rest of the school at School Committee budget hearings. One of their own, Henrietta Davis, was elected to the School Committee on the CCA ticket. Stead was supported by councillor Walter Sullivan and other Independents. Beyond this, the murkiness and depth of the dispute is supposed to be related to the principal's unique personality: he was eventually removed from office after he failed to take seriously a false bomb threat. But the supposed personality factors were related to questions of style, discipline and structure. Furthermore, in the main Stead's supporters and detractors were not distinguished by 'race,' but by *class*.

level jobs.¹²⁸ City Hall's commitment to justice follows the wandering media spotlight. Its commitment to development is guaranteed, off-camera, by armies of full time professionals - real estate, contractors, lawyers, and bureaucrats.

Is it too late?

Prevailing winds in the northern hemisphere blow generally west to east. That's why our cities have generally assigned the east end to industry and lower-income people, that they might receive the bulk of the effluvia.

After decades of official projections that industry had no future in Cambridge, most of the old factories are gone.¹²⁹ There is no longer any need for an Inner Belt to separate the west side from the slums. There are no 'slums.' Turns out that the blighted structures of yesteryear are perfectly serviceable; in fact some of them today are worth quite a lot of money.

It turns out that it was the *people* who were the blight, not the buildings.

With so many of its poor and working class people gone, must Cambridge now become an exclusive enclave of wealth and privilege? History alone doesn't supply the answer. It only gives a sense of possible futures, showing how we arrived at our present situation. We have seen that the enthusiastic proponents of University City were, at the very height of the urban renewal era, dismayed that the city was actually becoming more working-class - and perhaps less 'white.' Working-class people and blue-collar employers were not just voluntarily heading for the suburbs. Urban renewal sought systematically to push them out.

Of course, this was not happening only in the Boston area, and some industry went much further away than the suburbs. The methods and mentality of urban renewal are complementary to union-busting and economic globalization - sometimes quaintly called "imperialism." But low and moderate income working people and their employers would still return to this city if they were able. The question is, whether

128 The progressive Cambridge Rainbow organization faced the Commonwealth Day School issue in 1991, and was unable to take an independent position because it did not wish to break publicly with the CCA. Progressives generally favor affirmative action to fill top-level city positions. At the same time, white progressives actually fill many of them.

129 "From 1972-1992 Cambridge lost two thirds of its manufacturing base, some 12,000 jobs." city manager Robert W Healy, Response to Council, 4/15/94. [But *CF.* p.17 above]

there is political will to let it happen. Doubtful as that may seem today, politics is fickle, and history has a way of changing unexpectedly. People have stopped highways, and wars, and won rent control, despite all the sneers of the pundits.

Ironically, a lot depends on the professional-class people who now dominate our political life. Professional-class people may have usually opposed working-class interests in the history of this city, but their support was crucial in defeating the original urban renewal plan and winning rent control. For many professionals today, Harvardization and hyper-development have gone too far. Moreover, the current emphasis on the value of 'diversity,' however vague, is more than cultural posturing. The class structure itself is changing, and many professionals are unsure about their own position amidst the growing imbalances of our economy.

Cambridge does not have to accept its current social direction. Location, and the tenacity of our communities, put us in a strong position to choose. If it is possible to change course anywhere, we can do it here. *It is possible*, if we will *set limits* to the institutions and interests which are now threatening to drive out all others, and instead *seek a dynamic balance* in our local political economy.

To be more precise, a serious defense of Cambridge's diverse communities means ending the city's one-track university-based economic strategy. It requires not only *a will to reject development*, but also a *determination to pursue development* toward a balanced economy. By a *balanced economy*, we mean one which tries to offer *gainful employment to all*, in as broad a variety of industries as feasible; and a culture of respect for nature, *appropriate to the land we dwell on*.

Because the political economy has already carried us so far toward University City, only a rather drastic reversal can return Cambridge to balance. This means an absolute preference for employers of primarily blue-collar labor. The city should decide that not one single such employer should have to leave involuntarily, even at the considerable inconvenience of the institutions and employers of professional labor. It also means favoring locally-controlled small retail businesses, whose stake in the community allows them to accept smaller and more variable profit margins.

The communities of Cambridge can't stand further expansion of university facilities into their commercial and residential areas. We must educate these institutions to accept limits and respect their neighbors. Because Harvard and MIT profess a universal (not to say imperial) mission, this has more than local implications. If they can push their own neighbors around, and violate their own environment with impunity, what brutal generations of masters will come out of Cambridge, the imperial University City of the twenty-first century!

In a city like Cambridge, rent control remains the keystone of any serious housing policy. Rent control should be *class-conscious* and *community conscious*, granting relief to landlords who house low and middle income residents, and requiring

higher income tenants to share the cost of administering a program not designed mainly for them. The *lower property valuations* brought about by regulation are *necessary* to stabilize and balance our social economy. Regulation should be used to leverage subsidies and increase opportunities for working-class homeownership.

These economic policies clearly mean less intensive revenue and tax-producing use of land. This in turn implies a different kind of budget, appropriate to a middle- and working-class rather than a rich city. Taking balance and diversity seriously will mean that government will have both more responsibility and less money.

City economic policy should include regional cooperation with neighboring cities. After all, we all benefit from the jobs located there. The point of encouraging industry to locate here rather than in, say, Somerville or Chelsea is primarily to influence the character of our neighborhoods and our politics. All poor and working people should benefit if jobs, affordable housing and public transportation are kept together near the center of the metropolitan area. .

Possibly our neighbors would like to share some of our professional and institutional abundance. It would be a good thing for all of us if they did. The alternative is continued drift toward municipal *apartheid* of the poor, middle-class, and rich, a disaster for the whole republic.¹³⁰

Democracy is no guarantor of justice, but there will never be justice without democracy. Direct election of mayors is no more than a *minimal* requirement for a democratic city. After sixty years of 'Uncle Bob' government, we *fear* democracy, afraid that an elected strong mayor may be one of *them*, rather than one of *us*.

Legislative bodies like city councils are *and ought to be* divided. Their rôle is to represent differences within the wider community. This, not lack of charter powers, is what makes any city council 'weak' *vis-a-vis* the city manager. This is one reason city councils have trouble holding city managers accountable. The other is the strong temptation to use the manager to avoid accountability themselves.

An elected mayor might be no better, but is unlikely to be worse, than an unelected manager. If we are ready to change course, we shall install an executive accountable to the voters. This will be a signal, to ourselves and to all others, that we don't want to keep on sliding toward the monolithic University City; that we want to give force to our own plans for the future; that we are willing to be free.

¹³⁰ Robert Reich used Chelsea, Somerville, and Belmont as examples of this trend, in *Work of Nations* (1991) ,p.275

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



Memorandum

TO: Cambridge Charter Review Committee
FROM: The Collins Center Charter Project Team
DATE: March 24, 2023
RE: Memo 4: Working Issues on Form of Government

Overview

During the previous meeting, Committee members raised questions regarding the form of government and roles of the executive and legislative branches.

Accountability of City Council

Questions were raised regarding methods of accountability for City Council. Typically, the primary method of accountability for elected officials is at the ballot box by the voters. Tools some municipalities employ to increase accountability to voters can include:

- Shorter term lengths (2 years as opposed to 4 years).
- Goal setting for the council.
- Citizen participation mechanisms allow voters to directly participate in government by urging the creation of laws, overturning laws, and removing elected officials. These include requesting that City Council pass a certain measure and requesting that the Council reconsider action on a measure. Both requests can be submitted to voters via the ballot if the Council fails to take the requested action. There are some municipal functions that are exempt from these measures.
- Recall is a method of removing an elected official prior to the expiration of the term (generally has a very high signature threshold and limitations on timing of recall when next election is imminent).
- Required annual (or bi-annual) meetings with boards, departments.
- Mandatory public status reports on Council business and/or state of the City reporting.

Differences in City Council Functions in Council / Manager vs. Council / Mayor

Under both the Mayor/Council and Council/Manager forms, the legislative branch of government is the Council. While the essential functions and authority of the legislative branch are similar in both models, in the Council / Manager form, the City Council has more influence over the executive branch because of its oversight of the City Manager. It is important to remember that the dynamics vary in either form of government based on the individuals holding vital positions.

Council/Manager

The Council has more authority over the executive branch of government in the Council/Manager form because the Council is the appointing authority for the Manager. This relationship allows the Council to set performance goals and conduct performance evaluations of the Manager (executive branch). Because the Manager isn't elected this form of government is perceived to have a more stable executive branch and management function (the reality of this is debatable as many mayors serve multiple terms – some more than an appointed Manager). The Council also has the authority to terminate the manager. Because of this relationship, the degree to which the Manager influences matters traditionally within Council authority – including policy – can vary depending on the deference the Council provides to the Manager. Additionally, theoretically, a Manager is insulated from political influence and may be more willing to make difficult or politically unpopular decisions.

In this form of government, the City Council may have more ability to influence the budget through goal setting and the employment relationship.

Mayor / Council

In a Mayor / Council form of government there is – typically – a strong executive branch leader with great autonomy over the daily operations of the City. Instead of having the City governed by a more diffuse authority distributed over a number of elected and appointed leaders (ex. in Cambridge 10 leaders: 9 elected, 1 appointed), there are two central (and political) spheres of power.

Mayors generally have veto authority over Council actions – managers do not. Thus, City Councils may not function as autonomously in a Mayor / Council form. This may either encourage collaboration with the executive branch or may become dysfunctional depending on the individuals in the positions.

A strong Mayor form of government is regarded as a more independent executive branch because the Mayor is accountable directly to voters, as opposed to a Manager who reports to the City Council. Direct accountability to voters may inhibit the Mayor from making decisions that could be politically unpopular. The other side of this political accountability may make a Mayor less risk adverse and encourage more radical change, as well as keeping the executive branch more reflective of the residents.

Chief Administrative and Financial Officer (CAFO) or Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

The role of a Chief Administrative Officer or Chief Financial Officer is most often utilized as a professional manager in the Mayor / Council form of government. This role provides the City with the ability to ensure a level of professional qualifications and management skills in the elected branch, which could otherwise be filled without a base level of experience, education or skill. While typically appointed by the Mayor, if not immediately replaced by the incoming Mayor, this position can assist with transition and lend stability to an executive branch that could theoretically turn over every 2 or 4 years. Sample job descriptions and example charter language is attached.

APPENDIX: CAFO / CFO Duties and Responsibilities

Gloucester:

Section 3-7. - Chief Administrative Officer.

To aid him in performing the duties of his office the mayor shall, within sixty days following his inauguration, appoint, subject to the provisions of section 2-10, [2-10 refers to the confirmation power of the Gloucester City Council] a chief administrative officer who is professionally qualified as a municipal administrator by virtue of education, training and previous experience. The chief administrative officer need not be a resident of the City of Gloucester.

The chief administrative officer shall assist the mayor in the preparation of an annual operating budget for all city agencies, and shall, in cooperation with the city auditor, administer the operating budget throughout the year. He shall assist the mayor and the heads of all city agencies in the development of a capital outlay program and the preparation of a capital improvement budget. The mayor may delegate to the chief administrative officer any power or duty which he has under the charter other than the power to veto measures adopted by the city council or the power to appoint or to remove city officers, members of multiple-member bodies and department heads. Under the supervision of the mayor the chief administrative officer shall be specifically responsible for the following:

- (a) Coordination and supervision of all city agencies;
- (b) Submission of reports at such times as may be required;
- (c) Installation and maintenance of financial management and record keeping systems;
- (d) Conduct of a continuing study of the work of all city agencies and the preparation of management policies based on such studies;
- (e) Preparation of policy programs and ordinance recommendations affecting the management of the city;
- (f) Such other powers, duties and responsibilities as may be delegated to him by the mayor.

The delegation of any power or duty by the mayor to the chief administrative officer may be terminated by the mayor, at will, but all acts of the chief administrative officer pursuant to such delegation prior to any such revocation by the mayor shall be and remain the acts of the mayor.

Framingham

Article III: Executive Branch:

d) Chief Operating Officer: The mayor shall appoint a chief operating officer to assist in the coordination and direction of the operations of the various departments and functions of the government. The chief operating officer shall serve at the pleasure of the mayor and be appointed on the basis of having strong administrative and executive qualifications or such other qualifications and shall be especially fitted by education, training and municipal experience to perform the duties of the office.

Article V: Administrative Organization

b) Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Director of Administration and Finance: The CFO/director of administration and finance shall be appointed by the mayor and shall be especially suited by education, training and experience to perform the duties of the office. Said director shall devote full time to the duties of this position and shall not engage in any other business or occupation during his or her term except as permitted herein. Said director shall serve coterminous with the mayor and may also be appointed by the mayor to serve concurrently as the head of one of the departments organized under the administration and finance division.

Newton (proposed, but charter failed)

(b) The mayor shall appoint a chief administrative officer to coordinate and direct the operations of the various departments and functions of municipal government. The chief administrative officer shall serve at the pleasure of the mayor and be appointed on the basis of having strong administrative and executive qualifications or such other qualifications and shall be especially fitted by education, training and experience to perform the duties of the office.

Springfield (in ordinance)¹

§ 27-116 Establishment; responsibilities.

A. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 656 of the Acts of 1989, as amended, and Chapter 468 of the Acts of 2008, there shall be established a Department of Administration and Finance.

B. The Department of Administration and Finance shall be responsible for the overall budgetary, financial and personnel administration of the City.

C. The Department shall be under the charge and control of the City's Chief Administrative and Financial Officer, herein referred to as the "CAFO."

D. The Department of Administration and Finance, under the direction of the CAFO, shall oversee the Treasurer/Collector Department, Assessors Department, Human Resources Department, Labor Relations Department, Budget Department, Finance Department, Division of Capital Asset Management, Information Technology Department, Comptroller Department, Grants Management Department, Payroll Department and Purchasing Department, and such other departments as may be placed under the direction of the CAFO by the Mayor.

E. The City shall annually appropriate amounts sufficient for the proper administration of the department, as determined in writing by the Secretary of Administration and Finance. If the City fails to appropriate such amounts, the Secretary shall direct the State Treasurer to deduct the necessary funds from the City's distribution from the State Lottery Fund and shall expend those funds directly for the benefit of the Department.

¹ It should be noted that Springfield experienced significant fiscal difficulties that required involvement of a state finance control board. Many financial policies were influenced and/or generated by that involvement.

F. Whenever the term "Department of Finance" appears in any general or special law or any ordinance, regulation, contract or other document with reference to the City of Springfield, it shall be taken to mean the Department of Administration and Finance of the City of Springfield.

G. Whenever the term "Chief Financial Officer" appears in any general or special law or any ordinance, regulation, contract, or other document with reference to the City of Springfield, it shall be taken to mean the Chief Administrative and Financial Officer of the City of Springfield, unless specifically noted as pertaining to the Director of Finance.

§ 27-117 Responsibilities and duties.

A. The Department of Administration and Finance, under the direction and management of the CAFO, shall be responsible for the overall budgetary and financial administration of the City, including:

- (1) Coordination, administration, and supervision of all financial departments, services and activities;
- (2) Assistance in all matters related to municipal financial affairs;
- (3) Implementation and maintenance of uniform systems, controls, and procedures for all financial activities in all departments, including the School Department, boards, commissions, agencies and other units of City government, the operations of which have a financial impact upon the general fund and enterprise funds of the City, and including, but not limited to, maintenance of all financial and accounting data and records;
- (4) Implementation and maintenance of uniform financial data processing capabilities for all departments;
- (5) Supervision of all financial data processing and technological activities;
- (6) Implementation and maintenance of uniform budget guidelines and procedures;
- (7) Assistance in development and preparation of all department budgets and spending plans;
- (8) Review of all proposed contracts and obligations with a term in excess of one year;
- (9) Monitoring of the expenditure of all funds, including periodic reporting by and to appropriate agencies of the status of accounts;
- (10) Review of the spending plan for each department as provided herein; and
- (11) Providing for the allotment of funds on a periodic basis as provided for in Chapter 468 of the Acts of 2008.

B. In all cases where the duty is not expressly charged to any other department or office, it shall be the duty of the CAFO, under the auspices of the Department of Administration and Finance, to promote, secure, and preserve the financial interests of the City.

C. All incumbents in the positions of Chief Financial Officer now known as the "Finance Director," "Collector/Treasurer," "Board of Assessors" and "Director of Information Technology" shall continue to serve in such capacity after the effective date of this article; provided, however, that the CAFO may, with approval of the Mayor, remove such incumbents at any time, without cause, upon written notice.

D. All department budgets and requests for budget transfers shall be submitted to the CAFO for review and recommendation by the Department of Administration and Finance prior to submission to the Mayor, City Council or School Committee, as appropriate.

E. For each and every proposed appropriation order, and with respect to any proposed City Council vote necessary to effectuate a financial transfer, ordinance revision, or special legislation which may require the expenditure of funds or otherwise financially obligate the City for a period in excess of one year, or with respect to a vote to authorize a borrowing pursuant to a provision of law other than MGL c. 44, § 4, 6 or 6A, the CAFO shall, if it be the case, submit in writing to the Mayor and City Council a certification that is the CAFO's professional opinion, after an evaluation of all pertinent financial information reasonably available, that the City's financial resources and revenues are and will continue to be adequate to support such proposed expenditures or obligations without a detrimental impact on the continuous provision of the existing level of municipal services. If the CAFO fails to provide a certification as aforementioned within seven days of a request for such certification from the City Council or Mayor, such appropriation order, financial transfer, ordinance revision, special legislation or borrowing authorization may nonetheless be approved, but the absence of the certification of the CAFO shall be expressly noted in such order or vote.

[skipped]

§ 27-119 Appointment, term, qualifications and requirements of CAFO.

A. The Chief Administrative and Financial Officer shall report to and be under the direction of the Mayor. The Mayor shall appoint the CAFO for a term of not more than three years. Before entering upon the duties of the office, the person shall be sworn to faithfully discharge the duties thereof.

B. The CAFO shall be appointed solely on the basis of administrative and executive qualifications, and shall be especially fitted by education, training and previous experience to perform the duties of the office and shall hold no less than a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

C. So long as the loan under Section 2 of Chapter 169 of the Acts of 2004 remains outstanding, the appointment, including an acting appointment, or removal of the CAFO shall not take effect until it has been approved in writing by the Secretary of Administration and Finance.

D. Under the policy direction of the Mayor, the CAFO shall function with considerable independence and be directly accountable for his or her actions.

E. The Chief Administrative and Financial Officer need not be a resident of the City or commonwealth when appointed, but shall become a resident of the City within one year of appointment to the extent required by law.

§ 27-120 Selection of CAFO.

A. When the office of the CAFO is vacant or will become vacant, the Mayor shall initiate the selection process by giving notice of his intent to establish a "screening committee" to review applicants for the position. The Mayor shall send a copy of the notice to each agency or officer responsible for appointing persons to serve on the screening committee.

B. The Mayor shall appoint a screening committee no later than 21 days after sending the notice. No screening committee is required if the Mayor reappoints an incumbent CAFO.

C. The screening committee shall consist of seven members. The School Committee, City Council and Secretary of Administration and Finance of the commonwealth shall each appoint one person to serve on the screening committee. The Mayor shall appoint four other members to the screening committee, two of whom shall be experts in municipal management specifically in the areas of finance and/or personnel management.

D. The screening committee shall recommend to the Mayor the names of not less than two nor more than five candidates whom it believes to be best suited to perform the duties of the CAFO. If the screening committee determines that there are not at least two candidates qualified to perform the duties of CAFO, the screening committee shall report to the Mayor that it is unable to complete its assigned task. In that event, the Mayor shall direct the screening committee to reopen the search.

E. In the absence of a Chief Administrative and Financial Officer, or while the process of appointing a CAFO is proceeding, the Mayor may appoint an Acting CAFO in accordance with Chapter 656 of the Acts of 1989, as amended, and Chapter 468 of the Acts of 2008.

§ 27-121 Powers and duties of CAFO; violations and penalties.

A. The Chief Administrative and Financial Officer shall cause the laws of the commonwealth and the ordinances, orders and regulations of the City to be executed and enforced by the officers under the direction of the CAFO. The CAFO shall exercise and have direct responsibility for the organization, administration and management of the following:

- (1) Coordination, administration, and supervision of all financial services and activities;
- (2) Assistance in all matters related to municipal financial affairs;
- (3) Implementation and maintenance of uniform systems, controls, and procedures for all financial activities in all departments, including the School Department, boards, commissions, agencies or other units of City government, the operations of which have a financial impact upon the general fund and enterprise funds of the City, and including, but not limited to, maintenance of all financial and accounting data and records;
- (4) Implementation and maintenance of uniform financial data processing capabilities for all departments;
- (5) Supervision of all financial and information technology and data processing activities; overseeing all management information systems; making recommendations for improvements and implementation of appropriate policies;
- (6) Implementation and maintenance of uniform budget guidelines and procedures;
- (7) Direction, guidance and assistance in development and preparation of all department budgets and spending plans; establishing and overseeing budget processes from developing instructions and setting deadlines to providing recommendations;
- (8) Coordination of the development of strategic financial goals;
- (9) Review and approval of all proposed contracts and obligations with a term in excess of one year;
- (10) Monitoring of the expenditure of all funds, including periodic reporting by and to appropriate agencies on the status of accounts;
- (11) Review of the spending plan for each department; reviewing all revenues collected and making recommendations concerning fees, charges, enterprise fund rates as well as new sources of revenue;
- (12) Providing for the allotment of funds on a periodic basis as provided for in this article and in accordance with Chapter 458 of the Acts of 2008.

B. In all cases where the duty is not expressly charged to any other department or office, it shall be the duty of the CAFO to promote, secure, and preserve the financial interests of the City.

C. In the case of the School Department, MGL c. 71, § 37M, shall be deemed to have been accepted by the City for the purpose of consolidating the operations of the business and financial services department of the School Department with those of the City under the authority of the CAFO which shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- (1) Finance and budget;
- (2) Information technology;
- (3) Procurement;
- (4) Administration of personnel functions, including payroll and accounting;
- (5) Labor relations; and
- (6) Building maintenance.

D. No revocation of acceptance of MGL c. 71, § 37M, shall be valid or effective in any year during which a loan under Section 2 of Chapter 169 of the Acts of 2004 remains outstanding, without the written approval of the Secretary of Administration and Finance.

E. All department budgets and requests for budget transfers shall be submitted to the CAFO for review and recommendation before submission to the Mayor, City Council or School Committee, as appropriate. For each proposed appropriation order, and with respect to any proposed City Council vote necessary to effectuate a financial transfer, ordinance revision, or special legislation which may require the expenditure of funds or otherwise financially obligate the City for a period in excess of one year, or with respect to a vote to authorize a borrowing pursuant to a provision of law other than MGL c. 44, § 4, 6, or 6A, the CAFO shall, if it be the case, submit in writing to the Mayor and City Council a certification that it is the CAFO's professional opinion, after an evaluation of all pertinent financial information reasonably available, that the City's financial resources and revenues are and will continue to be adequate to support such proposed expenditures or obligations without a detrimental impact on the continuous provision of the existing level of municipal services.

F. If the CAFO fails to provide the certification in Subsection E above within seven days after a request for such certification from the City Council or Mayor, the appropriation order, financial transfer, ordinance revision, special legislation or borrowing authorization may nonetheless be approved, but only if the absence of the certification of the CAFO is expressly noted in that order or vote.

G. All departments, officers, boards, commissions, agencies and other units of the City, including the school department, shall submit budget requests to the Mayor upon the schedule and in the form established by the CAFO.

H. On or before March 30 of each year, the CAFO shall submit to the Mayor and City Council a four-year financial plan and a five-year capital plan that includes all capital needs of the City.

I. In any year in which a loan under Section 2 of Chapter 169 of the Acts of 2004 remains outstanding, on or before July 1, the CAFO shall submit to the Director of Accounts a pro-forma tax rate recapitulation for the following fiscal year. (See MGL c. 468, § 5.)

J. The Board of Assessors, Treasurer/Collector, Budget Director, Finance Director, Comptroller, Director of Information Technology, Director of Purchasing, Director of Human Resources, Director of Labor Relations, Director of Capital Asset Construction, School Building Commission and employees performing similar duties but with different titles shall report to and be under the direction of the CAFO. The CAFO shall appoint all such officers and employees with the approval of the Mayor.

K. The CAFO shall be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the City's human resource and employee relations functions, including establishing and maintaining impartial and uniform personnel policies, job classifications, compensation, and benefits. The CAFO will oversee and coordinate budgets for insurance or self-insurance plans, including health, accident, life and other forms of insurance, including workers' compensation and unemployment compensation.

L. The CAFO shall be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the City's labor-management activities. Working with the Mayor and Director of Labor Relations, the CAFO will provide professional guidance and oversee and coordinate all strategies, negotiations and settlements regarding collective bargaining, grievance/arbitration, and all matters related to the promotion and maintenance of a harmonious labor-management relationship. The CAFO shall protect the rights and interests of the City in all actions, suits, proceedings or claims brought against it.

M. By executive order, the Mayor may place other positions and departments under the direction of the CAFO.

N. The CAFO shall not assume the duties or responsibilities of the Director of Internal Audit or Treasurer/Collector and shall not hold any elective office or engage in any other business or occupation.

O. If the CAFO finds, after receiving such information and report from the Director of Internal Audit, and after notice and opportunity for hearing, that an officer or employee of any unit of City government, including the School Department, has refused information or access to the office of the Director of Internal Audit, or knowingly or through neglect provided false information to the Director, the officer or employee shall be individually and personally subject to a civil fine of \$100 per violation, per day, until the violation is cured. This fine shall be payable to the general fund of the City. Notwithstanding any general or special law, contract or collective bargaining agreement to the contrary, a violation of this subsection shall be just cause for termination.

[additional less relevant information removed]



City of Newburyport
Chief Administrative Officer
Job Description

Position Purpose:

Under the direction of the Mayor, the Chief Administrative Officer supports the Operations of the City. The position includes oversight of all City departments and coordination of special projects and interdepartmental initiatives. The Chief Administrative Officer performs a variety of management duties involving budgeting, collective bargaining, and purchasing, and is responsible for the implementation of all policies set by the Mayor. The Chief Administrative Officer provides professional advice to the Mayor, City Council, and a variety of officials, departments, boards and committees concerning the development, implementation and administration of the policies, goals, regulations, and statutory requirements related to the administration and operation of the City.

Supervision:

Supervision Scope: The Chief Administrative Officer works in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws. The Chief Administrative Officer performs highly responsible work of a complex nature requiring the exercise of considerable judgment, initiative, and attention to detail.

Supervision Received: The Chief Administrative Officer works under the policy direction of the Mayor and works closely with members of City Council.

Supervision Given: The Chief Administrative Officer supervises all department heads and administrative staff under the direction of the Mayor.

Job Environment:

The Chief Administrative Officer's work is performed under typical office conditions. This position is required to frequently work outside of business hours, including evening meetings. In addition, the Chief Administrative Officer may be required to work on weekends and may be contacted at any time to respond to important situations and emergencies. This position requires the operation of office computers, printer, calculator, telephone, copier, facsimile machine, and all other standard office equipment.

The Chief Administrative Officer maintains contact with other organizations, particularly regional, state and federal organizations, attorneys, members of the press, and the general public. He or she has access to City-wide confidential information, including personnel records, litigation matters, criminal investigations, collective bargaining strategies, contract negotiations, and bid documents.

Essential Functions:

(The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.)

- Facilitates the operations of the City in accordance with City Ordinances, City Charter, and all state and federal laws: serves as a liaison between the Mayor and department heads, keeping the Mayor apprised of departmental activities; provides oversight of professional contractors and consultants as needed; assists departments with resolution of issues requiring the attention of the Mayor; monitors and evaluates progress of departments towards the goals and objectives of the Administration.
- Supervises all department heads and administrative staff under the direction of the Mayor, and participates in the hiring, training, performance evaluations, and discipline of senior management personnel; establishes policies and procedures for all City functions; oversees and participates in the resolution of inquiries and complaints from the public and other organizations.
- Serves as the Mayor's liaison to the City Council: attends all meetings of the City Council; briefs the Council on pending agenda items and other City issues; responds to inquiries and provides Council Members with information on the status of City operations and projects; provides analysis as needed to assist the Mayor and Council to make informed policy decisions; and provides administrative support to the Mayor.
- Performs financial and managerial analyses for the Mayor and City Council, as required by the Mayor pertaining to City operations and programs; evaluates data and makes recommendations based on findings; prepares financial reports and projections; and makes necessary presentations to the Mayor and, as needed, to the City Council and other interested parties.
- Develops the annual operating and capital budgets: prepares annual budget document in coordination with Finance Director; reviews departmental budget requests for inclusion in the Mayor's recommendation to the City Council; coordinates the scheduling of budget meetings; ensures compliance with all legal and procedural requirements.
- Provides executive direction to the labor relations and collective bargaining function: serves as lead negotiator representing the City's position; conducts costing analysis in preparation for contract negotiations; drafts responses to grievances in consultation with Mayor.
- Assists the Mayor with strategic and long-range planning for the City: participates in planning

efforts at the local and regional level; keeps the Mayor apprised of developments at the state and federal level that impact the City; monitors pending legislation for impact on the City; oversees compliance with new legislation.

- Represents the Mayor and the City at various meetings, functions, and events: serves as a liaison to various civic and governmental organizations and committees, taskforces, boards, and commissions; confers regularly with officials from other municipalities, chambers of commerce, authorities, and commissions; provides information about City operations; participates in discussions and decisions and keeps the Mayor apprised of such activities.
- Facilitates problem solving at all levels in the organization: works with department heads and senior management to ensure effective coordination and cooperation among departments; coordinates the continuous review of interdepartmental processes for quality control and improvement; responds to inquiries from the public regarding issues unresolved at the departmental level.
- Coordinates special projects for the City, including the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of projects, management studies, introduction of new programs, and various professional services: defines the scope of the project; identifies and ensures proper allocation of financial, material, and human resources committed to the project; formulates solutions and resolves problems; facilitates implementation of the project; and provides administrative support to the project as needed.
- Serve as the Chief Procurement Officer: assist in the oversight and management of the purchasing function, ensuring the City engages in cost effective purchasing procedures and is in compliance with Massachusetts Laws governing public procurement; assist in the development of bids, request for proposals and request for quotations; review specifications, draft contract terms and supplemental conditions; support all City departments in procurement related matters.
- Other duties as assigned by the Mayor.

Minimum Required Qualifications:

Education, Training, and Experience:

Minimum of five years of executive management experience in municipal government, which includes responsibilities for operations, budgeting, and managing personnel. Knowledge of Massachusetts' government finance with proven experience in administering a multi-million dollar budget. A Master's Degree in public administration, public policy, public finance or other appropriate field is strongly recommended. Massachusetts Certified Public Procurement Officer is preferred, or ability to attain certification within one year of employment. Appropriate combination of relevant experience and education considered.

Knowledge, Ability and Skill:

Knowledge: Extensive knowledge of all aspects of municipal management including labor relations, collective bargaining, procurement, financial management, and budgeting, and relevant Massachusetts General Law.

Ability: Interact objectively and professionally with the public, state and local officials and co-workers. Ability to lead and direct Department Heads. Ability to analyze and interpret data and to clearly communicate findings to decision-makers. Ability to establish relationships with City officials and governmental representatives. Ability to communicate effectively in written and oral form before public groups and elected officials. Ability to manage several projects at one time. Ability to develop City-wide plans, policies, and procedures relative to the City's operations. Ability to maintain confidential information.

Skill: Excellent verbal and written communication and organizational skills; aptitude for working with people and maintaining effective working relationships with various groups; aptitude for working with paperwork and having attention to detail; skills in with dealing with public; skill in utilizing personal computers, word processing, and databases. Sensitivity to public communications. Skills in planning and delegation.

Errors and Omissions:

Errors in administrative decisions could result in lower standards of service, have legal and/or financial repercussions, and result in inadequate project and operational funding.

Physical and Mental Requirements:

The work is primarily of an intellectual nature but requires a variety of physical capabilities. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to sit, stand, walk, use hands, and talk or hear; occasionally required to kneel, handle objects; and reach with hands and arms. The position involves often moving from a sitting position to standing position for counter work. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 10 pounds and rarely has to lift and/or move up to 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close and distance vision. This position requires the ability to operate a keyboard at efficient speed. The employee must be able to hear normal sounds, distinguish sound as voice patterns and communicate through human speech using American English.

(This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee. It is used as a guide for personnel actions and is subject to change by employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.)

Meeting Date: March 28, 2023

Topic: Form of Government

Question: *Should the head of the executive branch be an elected official (strong mayor) or remain an appointed position by the city council (city manager)?*

Sub Questions:

- i. What are some of the challenges in the current council-manager structure? Would these be impacted by an elected executive branch? Does an appointed city manager impact those challenges?
- ii. What are the strengths of the current Cambridge government? How does the city manager support those? How might an elected mayor support those?
- iii. What are the core values and elements the Cambridge community wants to see in its government? How does an appointed manager represent those? How might an elected mayor represent them?

Research Articles:

[2018 Municipal Form of Government Survey Report](#) (32% response rate, survey sent to 12,000+ municipal clerks)

Interesting breakdown of what forms of government municipalities have, how they are defined, what roles they require their governments to have, and appointment processes.

[Common Issues and Pro and Con Arguments in Elections to Change Form of Government](#)

[Framework for considering Mayor and Manager forms of government](#) - by Collins Center

[Model City Charter](#)

More Form of Government articles: [Folder Link](#)

Interview Feedback:

Arthur Goldberg: With any structure, you are relying on good people who are willing to collaborate in those roles to make it function well. Any form will have abuses and push the limits of powers, and some people might not want to cooperate if that's the kind of person they are.

Bob Healy: Thinks the system works well and has been stable over most of the 80 years of the charter.

David Maher: I always felt like the Plan E form of government was good. But more recently I wonder if we might be outgrowing that form.

The current feeling feels like weekly whiplash, and I believe that is coming from the council. And part of that is coming from not having defined goals and objectives. Which leads to a clouding of what the council is and is supposed to be.

Feels disjointed right now, doesn't necessarily mean we need to throw it out.

David Sullivan: Executive leadership: I think a strong mayor form of government should be strongly considered. City Manager does a great job with efficiency, fiscal responsibility, and day-day ops, it is not as good at changing policy. Because the city manager isn't supposed to get involved/advocate for specific policies. The city manager contract clause, where if the city council wants to discharge a manager they have to pay a huge amount, which is a big disincentive for the city council. And as a result, they never discharge a manager.

Henrietta Davis: Not a lot of challenges with the structure. I know there is a perception around how to get popular ideas implemented, for example, broadband, and I wanted to see that implemented across the city. But it hit a wall in the manager's office because they explained the actual cost and obstacles to getting it implemented. NLC involvement, so I could see how things were being done in other communities. And understood there were other communities struggling to get issues through, there are genuine obstacles to policy initiatives.

In Cambridge, because of professional management, once we are able to work through a policy initiative or idea, the implementation is very effective and sticks and continues to improve over time.

Jeffery Young: Distinct structural differences between Cambridge / Other places? Strong city manager form vs newton's strong mayor - it was the personal relationships that superseded any structural impediments. presumably, the managers would have been more in a professional position with training/ other professional development around running a city. Able to talk to those managers in an almost shorthand because of their professional experience. Mayor system/ newton: relied on his legislative background, and I think because we built a relationship the trust was there. Even though that mayor wasn't exactly trained in finance/ professional management

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler: Generally supportive of an elected mayor. But even with that system, would want to strengthen the legislative and balance that power between the branches

With a strong manager/ weak council system, it was challenging to get things done as a councilor. Boston for example with the Mayor/Council system has more clear paths for accountability that Cambridge lacks. The process of councilors voting on the manager's contract is not clear to the public and lacks accountability. The only existing mechanism for accountability is to fire the manager, which requires a lot of money and an extensive process to replace. More challenging than having an election every 2/4 years like a mayor. Right now there are few ways to bring the city manager to the table on issues if the council feels like they aren't heading in the right direction.

Louie DePasquale: I feel the manager system works well. Mayor structures can also be effective systems, but I think the manager structure works for Cambridge. In Cambridge, the City Manager understands that the city council sets policy priorities and they as the manager are responsible to execute.

Rich Rossi: Overall I thought and still do that it's a good system, clear lines of responsibility. The city manager is responsible for the administration of the city. The City Council was responsible for policy. The manager was in charge of the implementation of those policies. Then there are different positions that manage checks and balances like the city clerk and auditor.

General position - Cambridge has a structure that produced a system that was/is really successful. Doesn't mean you can't polish it, and add more effective parts.

Public Comment/ Community Group Feedback:

DSA: Pro Strong Mayor System

PSNA:

Amy Perlmutter - I thought the system in SF with a weak mayor, with a CAO position that was recommended by the mayor and approved by the legislative body for one ten-year term. I think it worked really well.

Public Forum:

- Overall Several Comments: Increase democracy and participation
- Hector: supports strong mayor form of government it is more resident-focused
- Another individual: Supports elected mayor, increasing the number of councilors, term limits, increasing term length, limiting campaign finance, eliminating ranked choice (one person - one vote), and more community input

ABC:

Three comments: pro strong mayor.

- Strong mayor might offer a focal point for community engagement.
- Strong mayor with a COO/CAO, to support strong leadership for the city
- Strong mayor might increase turnout, but should be on the same cycle as city council

Public Comments (mentioning mayor/manager)

John Hanratty via Email

"... Last thought, what is the job description for city government? The first step before deciding on Mayor vs. City Manager vs. Town Hall is formulating the responsibilities and goals for the city government. Maybe, you did this in previous meetings, if so please refer me to your work. Diversity, equity, and justice are a given, but the following items are currently unclear.

- Who does the government represent? Residents, property owners, businesses, visitors, employees, special-interest groups, self-selected ideals, ...
- What are the priorities? Quality of life, neighborhood/community, social-economic opportunity, cultural diversity, world citizenship, ... How we settle conflicts?
- What is the scope of city government? How should the government recognize and tackle local vs. regional vs. global problems?
- How does the government responsibly manage and spend tax-payer money? Are there checks and balances? Why should we incur debt to finance projects, given our huge tax base? We're missing a transparent project budgeting process and reporting.
- How to implement accountability? Do projects have clear goals that are measured? How do we identify and fix failed initiatives? How do we gather input and data to avoid unintended consequences?

The above is not a complete list, but it might spur some thought. I look forward to a new inclusive city government.

John Hanratty
Porter Square”

Lee Faris via Meeting

“asked if there is a way to require the Manager and Council to agree on goals and metrics. She also asked to see goals between the Manager and Council prioritized in relationship to each other. She asked if there could be an email list where people could receive notes, agendas, and materials to build participation. “

James Mahoney via

“ Dear Committee,

As you know (and probably the rest of the universe does, too), Cambridge has a very vocal, highly visible, very progressive cohort, which is well-represented on the City Council. But despite their thinking so, that cohort does not represent the entire spectrum of city residents, and may not actually even represent the majority of the citizenry beyond the core that votes in city elections.

Many of the progressive policies and ideas are laudable, but the vigorous pursuit of them is very often not clearly thought-through. The result is that unintended consequences seem to frequently crop up as these policies are implemented. It is also not unusual for proponents to dismiss or disregard known downsides of some substantial initiatives because of their view that the ends justify any means.

Separately, but related, the two-year term for Councillors means that the Council make-up changes frequently. So though there is relative consistency over multiple terms, single-issue groups are able to disproportionately influence and staff the Council.

For these reasons, and because the Manager typically serves over many election cycles, I believe we need a pragmatic, middle-of-the-road Manager who can keep her/his eye on the overall picture and trends, and can temper some of the more aggressive initiatives while advancing City and Council objectives. To put it another way, we need the Manager to be a voice of reason, balancing desires and goals with practical realities and the overall health of the city.

I believe that the City has been fortunate in this regard over at least the past four City Managers, and with the current Manager.

For these reasons, I strongly believe that the current balance between the Council and the Manager is best for the City, and should be retained in the revised Charter that you are working on.

Thank you for your consideration, and also for the work you are doing on the Charter review.

James Mahoney
234A Walden Street
02140 “