

Nicole Murati Ferrer  
Chairperson

Mark Melo  
City Electrician

Terrence James Shea  
Superintendent of Streets

# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

## POLE AND CONDUIT COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139



### POLE AND CONDUIT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.

By Remote Participation Via Zoom

*This meeting was held remotely in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor.*

**Commission Members (All Present):** Nicole Murati Ferrer, Mark Melo, and Terrence James Shea.

**License Commission Staff Present:** Cristina Casilli, Administrative Assistant; and Kris Foster, Executive Officer.

**Documents Considered:** As to all petitions, the Commission considered the application submitted to it and all documents attached thereto.

**Decisions:** All votes, unless otherwise stated, were taken by roll call vote and were 3-0, unless otherwise indicated. When matters are granted with "typical conditions," those are:

- (1) Must obtain Electrical Department Utility Permit and Department of Public Works ("DPW") Permits and comply with the provisions therein.
- (2) Must pay sidewalk preservation off-set fee.
- (3) Must coordinate site visit with DPW.
- (4) Must commence work within sixty (60) days of the grant and complete within six (6) months of the date of the approval.
- (5) Must comply with any amendment City agencies make to the issued permits after the Acceptance Without Reservations is filed.

**1. New petition (1159445) - Zayo Group**, 1805 29th Street, Boulder, CO 80301, for the following: Broadway and Binney Street - Place +/- 274 feet of fiber optic cable from Verizon MH #26/543 within the existing Crown Castle conduit to the private property manhole at 290 Binney Street. No excavation.

**Present:** Chris Cremers.

**Summary:** This is to install fiber optic cable to private property. Zayo Group has signed an agreement with Crown Castle, which already has cable installed, so there will be no excavation. The Commission stated that the work must be performed at night so they will need a noise variance. Applicant advised to note on the filing of the variance that the Commission made the nighttime work a requirement.

**Decision:** Granted with the condition that the work must be done at night and a noise variance must be obtained.

**2. New petition (1163165) - Eversource Energy**, 101 Linwood Street, 4 Somerville, MA 02143, for the following: Reed Street - Easterly from pole 577/5, approximately 245 feet north of Rindge Avenue, to private property at #23 Reed Street, install approximately 4.7 feet of conduit.

**Present:** Phyllis Galloway.

**Summary:** This is to provide electrical service to a new house. The application requested one three-inch conduit. The work has already been performed but a two-inch pipe and one-inch conduit were installed.

The Commission discussed that Eversource has frequently performed work prior to obtaining Commission approvals. Eversource replied that customers and electricians are provided with copies of sketches that say in bold red letters that any work on a public way must get Commission approval prior to work, and that this is reiterated by Eversource's electrical designers to the electricians. Eversource will reach out to this electrician and warn them that they need Commission approval prior any work on public ways.

The conduit already installed must be removed because it is not to application specifications and must be reinstalled per Eversource's submitted plans. Eversource may be seeking the installation of a communications conduit.

**Decision:** Continued (2-1, Commissioner Shea voted to grant) until Eversource confirms whether it will be seeking a communications conduit.

**3. New petition (1163171) - Eversource Energy**, 101 Linwood Street, 4 Somerville, MA 02143, for the following: Lexington Avenue at Huron Avenue - Easterly side, approximately 22 feet north of pole 435/25, install one guy stub pole P435/25-S. Installing new Eversource stub pole to allow for removal of existing MBTA stub pole.

**Present:** Phyllis Galloway.

**Summary:** This is to install one new Eversource guy stub pole because the MBTA will be removing the existing stub pole.

**Decision:** Granted with typical conditions and additional condition of sidewalk restoration.

**4. New petition (1163176) - Eversource Energy**, 101 Linwood Street, 4 Somerville, MA 02143, for the following: River Street - Northwesterly from existing manhole (MHC1733), approximately 157 feet northeast of Putnam Avenue, to existing manhole (MHC1604), install approximately 44 feet of conduit.

**Present:** Phyllis Galloway.

**Summary:** This is to relocate existing conduits between manholes to go another sixteen inches below grade. It is a City of Cambridge Public Authority mandated project. It has been reviewed internally by DPW.

**Decision:** Granted with typical conditions.

**5. New petition (1163174) - Eversource Energy**, 101 Linwood Street, 4 Somerville, MA 02143, for the following: Brattle Street - Northwesterly from existing manhole (MHC2939), approximately 175 feet northeast of Riedesel Avenue, to private property at #145 Brattle Street, install approximately 80 feet of conduit.

**Present:** Phyllis Galloway.

**Summary:** This is to provide electric service to 145 Brattle Street. It involves removing overhead service that is currently fed from an adjacent building. The Commission discussed that revised drawings will need to be uploaded depicting mill and overlay curb to curb ten feet past excavation limits.

**Decision:** Granted with typical conditions; additional conditions of uploading a revised drawing reflecting mill and overlay curb to curb ten (10) feet past excavation limits. Blue stone sidewalk must be restored to original condition.

**6. New petition (1163404) - Eversource Energy**, 101 Linwood Street, 4 Somerville, MA 02143, for the following: Fayerweather Street - Easterly side, south of Huron Avenue install sidewalk anchor guy at pole 255/25, and north of Huron Avenue, install anchor guy at pole 255/27.

**Present:** Phyllis Galloway.

**Summary:** This is an MBTA request to install sidewalk anchor guys to support Poles 255/25 and 255/27 due to future removal of MBTA not sure what it's called, which currently supports these poles.

**Decision:** Granted with typical conditions. Eversource must maintain ADA accessibility with guy pole installations.

**7. New petition (1160391) - Eversource Energy**, 101 Linwood Street, 4 Somerville, MA 02143, for the following: Inman Street - Southerly from existing manhole (MH1830), approximately 406 feet south of Hampshire Street, install approximately 80 feet of conduit, to private property at #106 Inman Street.

**Present:** Phyllis Galloway.

**Summary:** This is to provide electric service to Unit 3 at 106 Inman Street, a detached apartment. The Commission discussed that Eversource needs to coordinate with the City arborist because excavation will be occurring behind existing street trees.

**Decision:** Granted with typical conditions and additional condition of working with city arborist for sidewalk restoration.

**8. Continuation from April 17, 2025 - Tolling agreement entered pending submission of Eversource petition for guy pole (original petition #1156110) - Bifurcated to 1162472 - Crown Castle**, 4545 East River Rd, West Henrietta NY 14586, for the following: Pacific Street - Crown Castle is proposing to upgrade existing equipment on site in order to comply with new technology, allow for increased bandwidth and reliability for residents and businesses, enhance emergency services, and also continue to allow collocation of multiple carriers on a single pole, reducing the wireless installations on surrounding poles.

**Present:** Brandi Spezzano; and Sarah Feely.

**Summary:** Crown Castle stated that since the previous hearing, guy wire will no longer be needed. Now they are requesting pole replacement to support current equipment. There will be no excavation. The Commission discussed that Crown Castle needs to work with Eversource to get a double pole removed.

**Decision:** Granted with the condition that the double pole needs to be removed.

**9. New petition (1160781) - Crown Castle**, 4545 East River Rd, West Henrietta NY 14586, for the following: Henry Street - Kelly Road - Berkshire Street - 171 Hancock Street - 136 Hancock Street - Crown Castle is proposing to upgrade existing equipment on site in order to comply with new technology, allow for increased bandwidth and reliability for residents and businesses, enhance emergency services, and also continue to allow collocation of multiple carriers on a single pole, reducing the wireless installations on surrounding poles. Crown Castle is proposing new radio and mounting bracket externally, in addition to power down converter internal at all 5 sites. Current antenna measures 5.42 feet on Henry, Kelly, Berkshire and 136 Hancock Streets. These sites will be upgraded to an antenna that measures 2.75 feet. At 171 Hancock Street, antenna is being replaced with same size antenna which is 2.75 feet.

**Present:** Brandi Spezzano and Sarah Feely, Crown Castle; and Erika Wallace, resident.

**Summary:** This is to upgrade five existing sites. All sites except for Kelly Road are going from a taller, longer antenna to a short antenna. Kelly Road's antenna will remain the same size. Each site will also get a power down converter added to the side of the shroud box to allow for additional wireless carriers to be on the poles.

The Commission received several comments opposing the Kelly Road site. Crown Castle explained that emissions are measured from the top of the pole, not the shroud box. The emissions only go out approximately twelve feet so there is no risk of exposure because the antenna is on the top of the pole.

Complaints about Kelly Road also addressed that the pole is less than six feet from two driveways. Crown Castle explained that this is not a new installation so that the six-foot setback is not applicable. There is nowhere else to move the pole without moving all the others on the street. They use aerial measurements for this pole, which is eight feet-nine inches from the driveway. The equipment itself is more than six feet from the driveways.

The pole will be replaced at Kelly Road. The Commission addressed its concerns and expressed understanding at the residents' complaints but explained that the Commission has very limited authority over this because it is an existing installation, based on FCC guidelines. It cautioned Crown Castle to minimize disruption to the neighbors with the pole's installation.

Erika Wallace, a Kelly Road resident, testified in opposition to the Kelly Road site. They explained that the six-foot setback is applicable here because the documents Crown Castle gave to neighbors indicated this was a new installation. They requested that the equipment should be moved to another pole.

Crown Castle responded that it measured from the antenna to the closest corner of the closest building for a measurement of eighteen feet; this is outside the RF emissions zone established by the FCC. This is not a new installation but rather an upgrade to a deteriorating pole and newer equipment.

The Commission discussed that at the Hancock Street site the pole has a severe lean. A new pole will be installed by Eversource. Crown Castle will also coordinate with Verizon to replace Pole 23. Also, any double poles at sites will be removed.

It was noted for the record that FCC regulations as to small cells severely limit the Commission's authority.

**Decision:** Granted with the condition that double poles need to be removed.

**10. New petition (1160971) - Crown Castle**, 4545 East River Rd, West Henrietta NY 14586, for the following: Prentiss Street - Sciarappa Street - Bent Street - Lawrence Street - Vandine Street - Crown Castle is proposing to upgrade existing equipment on site in order to comply with new technology, allow for increased bandwidth and reliability for residents and businesses, enhance emergency services, and also continue to allow collocation of multiple carriers on a single pole, reducing the wireless installations on surrounding poles. Crown Castle is proposing new radio and mounting bracket externally, in addition to power down converter internal at all 5 sites. Current antenna measures 5.4 feet on Prentiss, Bent, Lawrence and Vandine Streets. These sites will be upgraded to an antenna that measures 2.75 feet. At 54 Sciarappa Street antenna is being replaced with same size antenna which is 2.75 feet.

**Present:** Brandi Spezzano and Sarah Feely, Crown Castle; and Peter Bristol, resident.

**Summary:** This application is similar to Application 11624722. Four sites will receive smaller antennas; the fifth site already has a smaller antenna but will be upgraded to a newer model. All five sites will get a power converter box.

Peter Bristol testified in opposition to this application. They expressed three concerns: (1) how loud the new equipment will be and its appearance; (2) concerns about radiation levels; and (3) whether Crown Castle and/or Cambridge has a densification strategy.

Crown Castle addressed the residents' concerns. First, the power down converter boxes are approximately 6 in. x. 13 in. x. 4 in., and will be mounted to the shroud boxes. These upgrades have sometimes resulted in quieter operation. If any resident has complaints about noise, Crown Castle encourages them to reach out because sometimes leaves get trapped inside, making operation louder.

Second, the new antennas would not change any emissions output, which is set by the FCC. Emissions are typically only 12-14 feet; anything beyond that is negligible.

Third, Crown Castle explained that since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a surge in demand for wireless service, so there has been an accelerated need for these upgrades. The benefit is that large towers are not needed, because Crown Castle works with all major wireless carriers to keep them all on one pole, to avoid new poles and/or double poles.


Crown Castle encouraged the public to call them if there are any noise concerns.

**Decision:** Granted.


**11. Consideration of Meeting Minutes** - April 17, 2025.

**Decision:** Approved.

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**Minutes Approved:** June 26, 2025

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**Minutes Posted:** June 27, 2025

TJS\_\_\_TJS/