



ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

1:30 PM

Sullivan Chamber

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1:35 PM
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Catherine Zusy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Ordinance Committee was held on Tuesday, April 30, 2025. The meeting was Called to Order at 1:30 p.m. by the Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Deputy City Clerk Crane called the role.

Councillor Azeem – Absent*

Vice Mayor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote

Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Present – 6, Absent -3. Quorum established.

*Councillor Azeem was present and remote at 1:35p.m.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing on a Zoning Petition by the Cambridge City Council to amend the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in Article 5.000 and Section 20.70 with the intent of (1) replacing the Floodplain Overlay and Planning Board Special Permit with the Massachusetts model ordinance structure for permitting development in the flood plain through administrative review; (2) updating references to the most recent FEMA maps to maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program; and (3) revising other parts of the Zoning Ordinance for internal consistency. Present at the meeting was Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, Jim Wilcox, Assistant Commissioner of Engineering/City Engineer, Megan Bayer, City Solicitor, Franziskus Lepionka, Assistant City Solicitor, Kara Felise, Supervising Engineer, Jennifer Letourneau, Senior Engineer and Conservation Commission Director, Jacob Lazzara, Assistant Commissioner for Inspectional Services, and Olivia Ratay, Zoning Specialist.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Jeff Roberts who gave a presentation titled “Floodplain Zoning Petition”. The presentation was provided in advance and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation provided information on the current floodplain regulations and required local updates.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Zusy who pointed out that without Planning Review, it is important that there is no bias toward development when it may result in building area that floor prone, and asked if developers are required to notify the buyer the property is in a flood zone. Jim Wilcox provided an overview of the process through the Planning Board and Conservation Commission, noting that within that public process, the Conservation Commission is made aware of it being a flood zone as well as any buyer. Jeff Roberts noted that the Planning Board held a hearing on April 29, 2025 with the decision to forward this petition with a favorable recommendation and added that there was not much discussion on the topic. Councillor Zusy questioned if the Conservation Commission's judgment on a flood zone is in the deed of the property, would the City not be responsible for a developer developing in a flood zone. Jim Wilcox shared that there are very specific requirements through the Conservation Commission because of the Wetlands Protection Act regarding development and there is a process within the Conservation Commission on whether to approve a project or not.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who asked if there was more information to be shared on the Conservation Commission's role during the process. Jennifer Letourneau responded by providing a brief overview of the members and volunteers of the Conservation Commission and provided clarification on floodplain maps, noting that F is the most recent. Councillor Nolan asked if there is any role for the maps or the Conservation Commission in overseeing the combine sewer overflows in Alewife. Jim Wilcox explained that the Conservation Commission will eventually have jurisdiction and will have a more active role once construction begins. Councillor Nolan shared her support for the proposed changes.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to accept the amendments and forward them to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the role.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Chair, Vice Mayor McGovern recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the role.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Vice Mayor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Simmons – Absent

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Ordinance Committee adjourned at approximately 2:01p.m.

Clerk's Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/1010?view_id=1&redirect=true

An Ordinance has been received from City Clerk Diane P. LeBlanc, relative to To amend Articles 5.000 and 20.000 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.

A communication was received from Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, transmitting a presentation related to the Floodplain Zoning Petition.