



# HOUSING COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**The Housing Committee will conduct a public hearing to discuss potentially allowing multifamily housing to be built citywide.+**

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
E. Denise Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dennis J. Carlone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3:15 PM
Alanna Mallon	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Housing Committee was held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Councillor Simmons. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via zoom.

**Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Simmons – Present/Remote

Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote

Councillor Carlone – Absent\*

Vice Mayor Mallon – Present/Remote

Councillor McGovern – Present/Remote

**Present – 4 Absent – 1. Quorum established.**

\*Councillor Carlone was marked present and in the Sullivan Chamber at 3:15p.m.

The Chair, Councillor Simmons offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to continue the discussion around potentially allowing multifamily housing to be built citywide. Councillor Simmons shared that Councillor Nolan and Councillor Zondervan were also present at the meeting, as well as Assistant City Manager for Community Development Department (CDD), Iram Farooq. Assistant City Manager Farooq was joined by her team Jeffrey Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, Chris Cotter, Housing Director, Melissa Peters, Director of Community Planning, Cassie Arnaud, Housing Planner, and Sarah Scott, Associate Zoning Planner. Councillor Simmons shared that due to her not feeling well, Councillor Azeem would be Chairing the Housing Committee meeting.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Iram Farooq who, along with her team, gave a presentation titled “Allowing Multifamily Housing Citywide” which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview on the background of multifamily housing currently allowed in the City, a review of the discussions that

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Sep 13, 2022 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

have happened within Planning Board hearings, the changes that would need to be made to allow more housing uses, changes to allow more units per acre, changes to allow more site configurations, options for more studies, and evaluating the preferred options. At the end of the presentation, the staff from CDD were available to respond to questions and concerns from Committee members.

**The Chair, Councillor Azeem opened Public Comment.**

Allan Sadun, 237 Elm Street, Cambridge, MA offered comments on the increase of rental prices and spoke in favor of more multifamily housing in Cambridge.

Helen Walker, 43 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA, shared they were in favor of increasing multifamily housing citywide and offered comments on NCD's and Historical Districts.

Justin Saif, 259 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of ending exclusionary zoning and creating more housing in Cambridge.

Bill Boehm, 18 Laurel Street, Cambridge, MA, asked the Council to move forward with urgency on the construction of multifamily housing.

Daniel Hidalgo, 79 Norfolk Street, Cambridge, MA, encouraged the Council to consider zoning changes and move forward with multifamily housing.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on multifamily housing and policy making with goals.

**The Chair, Councillor Azeem made a motion to close public comment.**

**Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

**Councillor Simmons – Yes**

**Councillor Azeem – Yes**

**Councillor Carlone – Yes**

**Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes**

**Councillor McGovern – Yes**

**Yes – 5, No – 0, Absent – 0. Motion passed.**

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor McGovern who offered comments on the history of zoning and the role that Cambridge played in the creation of zoning in Massachusetts. Councillor McGovern offered comments on housing and housing priorities in Cambridge. He noted the urgency of making housing more inclusionary and offered suggestions on how that could look moving forward.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor Carlone who noted that he shares the same goals that have been mentioned relative to inclusionary housing. Councillor Carlone noted that CDD and Planning Board opinions are critical when setting goals and highlighted the importance of developments that are designed to fit in appropriately within neighborhoods. He offered comments on where housing could be developed and zoning changes.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor Zondervan who had a follow up question for City staff regarding potential challenges that may occur when upzoning certain districts. Iram Farooq and Jeffrey Roberts were available to provide a response and offered suggestions on

ways to prevent those potential challenges. Councillor Zondervan provided additional suggestions on upzoning with multifamily housing. Councillor Zondervan asked CDD how the City can ensure affordability for some of the units that will be developed with the addition of inclusionary housing and upzoning. Iram Farooq responded and noted that an affordability requirement is something that can be reviewed further if it is something that the Council is leaning towards and shared concerns and challenges that could arise within the smaller developments.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who offered comments on the two different approaches the City could potentially take when discussing inclusionary housing, and shared she would be in favor of a city wide approach when looking at zoning. Vice Mayor Mallon agreed with comments made by Councillor Carlone about making sure the zoning is done right and noted that this conversation has been happening for some time. The Vice Mayor shared that from this meeting she would like to give some direction to CDD so the City can start moving forward.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor Nolan who shared that she was in favor of moving quickly on elements that everyone agrees on to begin the process of inclusionary housing. Councillor Nolan offered comments on proposed zoning regarding density and units and shared she looks forward to future conversations.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem asked CDD if single family housing is the most expensive type of housing that is in Cambridge compared to multifamily housing on a per unit basis. Iram Farooq shared that it is most likely true that single family homes are more expensive. Councillor Azeem asked if Cambridge zoning in heavy density areas follow areas that are most accessible to transit. Jeffrey Roberts responded and shared the map that was on Agenda Packet page 11, which showed areas that were accessible by transit and were in heavily dense areas with multifamily homes and mix used developments. Councillor Azeem asked CDD how many buildings existing in the City are compliant under current zoning. The team from CDD shared that they do not have an exact number, but it is something that they look at when reviewing a zoning analysis of an area. Councillor Azeem offered additional comments on how he would like to see zoning and what he envisions moving forward.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor McGovern who shared that he agrees with comments that were made by previous Committee members about moving forward with zoning. Councillor McGovern asked CDD if they had a timeline on when an analysis on the goals that have been discussed can start. Iram Farooq shared that there are some areas that are time sensitive and noted challenges that could arise and shared that she would consult with her team before giving an estimate on time.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem shared what he and Councillor Simmons discussed about moving forward, noting that he would like to introduce a Policy Order at the next regular City Council meeting as well as schedule additional Housing Committee meetings to continue the conversation. Iram Farooq recognized the important goals and suggestions that have been made by Committee members and shared that she and her team will be working with the Chair moving forward. Jeff Roberts offered additional comments and suggestions on how the City and the Committee can continue to move forward regarding zoning.

**The Chair, Councillor Azeem made a motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

**Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. The meeting was adjourned at 4:57p.m.**

**Clerk’s Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/312?view\\_id=1&redirect=true&h=40761c8385cfa-d68fef44ba372353efd](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/312?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=40761c8385cfa-d68fef44ba372353efd)

**A communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to an update from the Planning Board on discussions of allowing Multifamily Housing citywide.**

**A communication was received from Assistant City Manager / Community Development Iram Farooq, transmitting potential zoning changes to allow multifamily housing to be built citywide.**