



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

1:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Economic Development and University Relations Committee will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 from 1:00p.m. – 3:00p.m. to report and update on the City of Cambridge Disparity Study.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Economic Development and University Relations Committee was held on Wednesday, September 27, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 1:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Toner. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

**At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor Mallon – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/Remote

Councillor Zondervan – Present/Remote

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

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

The Chair, Councillor Toner offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing to discuss the report and update on the City of Cambridge Disparity Study. Present at the meeting was Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD), Pardis Saffari, Director of Economic Opportunity and Development, Megan Bayer, Acting City Solicitor, Evan Bjorklund, Assistant City Solicitor, Elizabeth Unger, Purchasing Agent, Shuo Wang, Assistant Purchasing Agent for Goods and Services, and Deidre Brown, Chief of Equity and Inclusion. Councillor Toner shared that Councillor McGovern was present at the meeting as well.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Pardis Saffari who introduced panelists Michele Clark Jenkins, David Maher, Jerrica Lighting, Rodney Strong, and Tereva Wilson from Griffin and

Strong, as well as Dr. Gregory Price from the University of New Orleans. Pardis Saffari along with the panelists and City staff gave a presentation titled “Disparity Study Update”, which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of the background of the project, draft findings and recommendations from Griffin and Strong, and a preliminary program and policies. After the presentation, City staff and panelists were available to respond to questions and concerns brought forward by Committee members.

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

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – No

Councillor Toner – Yes

**Yes – 2, No – 1, Absent – 2. Motion passed.**

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who shared her excitement for all the work that has been done and for moving forward and using the City’s funding in a positive way to help disadvantaged classes. The Vice Mayor asked why construction was not included in the disparity study and how could it be added. Elizabeth Unger shared that in the beginning of getting the study started, it was shown that the City already had goals set in place for their construction projects and it was determined to focus the RFP on establishing a sheltered market for goods and services that would be in line with MGL Chapter 30B, which is a statute that governs goods and services. Vice Mayor Mallon also shared that she would like to know who would be overseeing the store to confirm everything is in compliance. Deidre Brown provided a detailed overview of the process once the Bids are received by her office. Iram Farooq noted that to strengthen the City’s commitment, the City recently signed the Commonwealth Devourment Compact, and explained how it works to ensure diversity in real estate.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Zondervan who shared that he is hopeful to see strong recommendations on how this can study, and programs, can continue to move forward.

The Chair, Councillor Toner asked what the process is for deciding vendors and the criteria for determining who is hired for this work. Elizabeth Unger provided a response, noting the criteria that falls under MGL 30B, she shared that an important detail to look at is the scope of work that the vendor is offering to provide. Councillor Toner asked if local, Cambridge vendors would be considered as a priority during the vetting process. Elizabeth Unger shared the geographic restrictions that fall under 30B, and highlighted the fact of how time restrictions can play a role when looking at locations. Councillor Toner had follow up questions for Griffin and Strong around minority women owned businesses. Team members from Griffin and Strong were available to respond and provide more information, as well as Iram Farooq. Councillor Toner offered the suggestion for business owners who no longer have interest in owning a business being matched up with someone who is interested in owning a business. Pardis Saffari shared that there has been some discussion around a similar idea to help those who are looking to sell their businesses, and how the City could play a strong role in helping match them with a buyer. Councillor Toner asked for additional information on the sheltered market. Griffin and Strong members were available to provide a response, noting that Massachusetts is the only place where

they have seen sheltered markets be race and gender based, and have seen the sheltered market be successful when it has been a race and gender-neutral program. Councillor Toner asked if there could be any legal issues based on how Massachusetts sheltered markets are different. Evan Bjorklund was available to respond and noted that there is currently one federal lawsuit and one established sheltered market in the State, which is the City of Boston.

**With no further business, The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:18p.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 at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/580?view\\_id=1&redirect=true&h=f3613720d0ffd56602e343c06fad609a](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/580?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=f3613720d0ffd56602e343c06fad609a)

A communication was received from Pardis Saffari, Director of Economic Opportunity and Development, transmitting a presentation regarding the Disparity Study Update.