



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

CITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

(617) 349-4280

Fax (617) 349-4287

TO: The Honorable, The City Council

FROM: Councillors Tim Toomey & Jim Braude

RE: Method Of Electing Mayor

DATE: January 23, 2001

Attached you'll find a copy of a letter we've sent to the Chronicle for this week's edition.

Before the order is filed, we wanted you to learn some of the details and are happy to discuss them with you before next Monday's meeting.

- ◆ After voting for Council and School Committee in the traditional way, voters will be asked to vote for one (1) of the Council candidates who has declared his/her interest in serving as Mayor.
- ◆ The mayoral votes will be counted only after the nine (9) councillors are elected. Votes for Mayor will be tallied only if they were cast for one of those nine (9).
- ◆ The top mayoral vote getter (even if s/he is not the top vote-getter for Council) becomes Mayor. The second place finisher in the vote for Mayor becomes Vice-Mayor.
- ◆ Other than the popular election of the Mayor and Vice-Mayor, the only other charter change would be to term limit the popularly elected Mayor. While neither of us are term limits supporters in general, we believe it's an important component of this transition.
- ◆ As per a May 8, 1998 opinion from the City Solicitor, such change can be done by a standard home rule petition. However, it requires an affirmative vote from two-thirds of the Council.

Those are the basics. The reasons for our proposal are outlined in the letter to the Chronicle. We look forward to discussing the plan with you and hope for your support.

attachment

Letter to the Editor of the Chronicle for publication on 1-24-01:

This coming Monday, the City Council will consider an order which would change the way we elect, though not the power of, the mayor in Cambridge.

Currently, the councilors choose the mayor, who then chairs both the council and school committee. Under our plan, the function wouldn't change, but the voters themselves would elect the mayor. Here's how it would work: the people of Cambridge would vote for members of the council and school committee as they have for decades. The same ballot would also indicate which of the council candidates was interested in becoming the mayor. Voters would then cast a separate vote for one person for mayor. The man or woman elected to the Council who receives the most votes for mayor would fill that post. The Councilor receiving the second largest share of mayoral votes would be the vice-mayor.

The reasons we are proposing this change are threefold:

First, it's good for democracy. Involvement in our city's government, both on election day and beyond, has been on the decline in recent years. We believe that by increasing voters' power, both their interest and participation will increase, as well.

Second, it will make the council more effective. In several recent elections, the mayoral decision took months. That formally postponed the appointment of chairs and the work of the council's fourteen committees. Additionally, it caused much other council business to be put on the back burner as the internal politicking went on. By electing the council's leaders in November, every committee would be up and running by the day the councilors are sworn in.

Third, it will reduce tensions. Our present system, by which a majority of councilors elect one of their colleagues to the mayor's chair, has led to unnecessary acrimony in each of the last four election cycles. And sadly, much of that bad feeling has lingered long after the vote.

By proposing this reform together, we hope to demonstrate that our only agenda is a better council. One of us is part of the council's most senior class, the other a first-term. One is an independent, the other endorsed by

the Cambridge Civic Association. Should our plan pass, neither of us will be a candidate for mayor in 2001.

We've become convinced that by putting more power into the hands of the people of Cambridge, we will go a long way to resolving much of what afflicts an otherwise productive city government. We urge those with questions to call us. And we hope many of you will attend and testify at next Monday's meeting and ultimately endorse our call for greater democracy in Cambridge.

Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
Jim Braude
City Councilors

[449 word]

**Communications and Reports
from City Officers #2**

A communication was received from Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. and Councillor Jim Braude, transmitting a copy of a letter forwarded to the Chronicle for the January 24, 2001 edition regarding the method of electing a Mayor.

In City Council January 29, 2001

*Referred to
Policy Order #3*



City of Cambridge

O-3.

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 29, 2001

COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
COUNCILLOR BRAUDE
MAYOR GALLUCCIO

ORDERED: That the City Council go on record petitioning the Legislature to enact the attached Home Rule petition entitled "**AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE POPULAR ELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND VICE-MAYOR IN CAMBRIDGE.**"

PLACED ON FILE ON THE MOTION OF COUNCILLOR BORN

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE POPULAR ELECTION OF MAYOR AND VICE
CHAIR OF THE CITY COUNCIL IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

I.

Amend M.G.L. Chapter 43 Section 96 by renumbering the first paragraph as Section 96(a) and adding the following new paragraph (b) at the end of the first paragraph.

(b) Selection of the Mayor and Vice-chair – All candidates at the time of filing their nominating petition with the Election Commission for the office of councillor shall indicate whether they desire to appear on the ballot as candidates for mayor in the regular municipal election. Candidates for the office of councillor who indicate their desire to also be candidates for mayor shall be listed on a separate portion of the ballot as candidates for the office of mayor, provided, that no councillor who has served two consecutive terms as mayor shall be eligible as a candidate for a third consecutive term. The candidate elected to the office of councillor and receiving the highest number of votes for the office of mayor shall be mayor. The candidate elected to the office of councillor and receiving the next highest number of votes for the office of mayor shall be vice-chair of the city council.

II.

Amend Chapter 43 Section 97 by striking the third sentence in the second paragraph and replacing said sentence with the following language: “Thereupon the mayor and the vice chair of the city council shall respectively make oath, before the city clerk or a justice of the peace, to perform faithfully the duties of their respective offices, except that if the mayor-elect or the vice chair of the city council-elect is not present, he or she shall so

make oath at the first regular meeting of the city council thereafter which he or she attends.”

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ABG
TT
JB

PO-3

enact the

attached
for the
Popular
Election of
the
Mayor

ORDERED that the Council go on record petitioning the Legislature to ~~pass~~
a Home Rule petition entitled "An Act to Give Voters the Power to Elect the
Mayor and Vice-Mayor in Cambridge."

Provide

~~Chair of the City Council~~
Mayor



City of Cambridge

O-3.

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January 29, 2001

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COUNCILLOR BRAUDE

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4p 5

Order #3

Petition the Legislature to enact the
Home Rule petition entitled "AN ACT
**TO PROVIDE FOR THE
POPULAR ELECTION OF THE
MAYOR AND VICE-MAYOR IN
CAMBRIDGE."**

Councillors Toomey and Braude

In City Council January 29, 2001

*Placed on file on the
motion of Councillor
Born*