



City of Cambridge

O-4
FIRST IN COUNCIL
 November 22, 2020

COUNCILLOR MCGOVERN
 VICE MAYOR MALLON
 COUNCILLOR SIMMONS
 COUNCILLOR NOLAN

- WHEREAS: The City of Cambridge has many community and neighborhood organizations formed to discuss and advocate for issues that impact their neighborhood and the city as a whole; and
- WHEREAS: These groups provide effective ways for residents to have a voice in the shaping of their neighborhood and the larger Cambridge community; and
- WHEREAS: These groups are often formed and run by volunteers which have various abilities to promote, advocate, and forward their positions in aggregate for City planning purposes; and
- WHEREAS: These groups often have membership and boards that struggle to represent the diverse demographics of their neighborhood and city at large; and
- WHEREAS: Many of these groups are recognized by the City of Cambridge as the de facto voice of neighborhoods, and many city boards and agencies seek their input for planning purposes, and yet the groups may not fully represent the broad spectrum of the neighborhood; and
- WHEREAS: These groups are important and vital and deserve appreciation for trying to represent residents and amplify the voice of regular people all on a volunteer basis, and yet at times, these groups can unintentionally alienate certain voices and residents can feel uncomfortable taking part in meetings or in online conversations; and
- WHEREAS: As recently as a few weeks ago, a board member of the East Cambridge Planning Team (ECPT) directed homophobic and sexually harassing comments at a resident on a public neighborhood email group after that resident wrote an op-ed opposed to an ECPT policy position; and
- WHEREAS: No resident should ever have to expose themselves to bigotry and intimidation based on who they are in order to participate in community life; and
- WHEREAS: The City of Cambridge has a duty not to empower groups or individuals who bully, harass, or abuse other residents based on their race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or physical/mental disability; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge City Council believes in the dignity of all people and their right to respect, and equality of opportunity and participation in civic life free of abuse, and values the strength that comes with difference and the positive contribution that diversity brings to our city; and be it further

RESOLVED: That we condemn homophobic bullying and intimidation anywhere in the city, and we encourage all neighborhood groups and organizations to enact policies to prevent and sanction such abusive behavior that serves the opposite goal of these groups and organizations by alienating; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committee of the City Council host a meeting to discuss ways to strengthen community bonds and ensure equitable access to neighborhood organizations which could include, but not be limited to:

- How the City of Cambridge can support neighborhood organizations and other community groups to create rules and regulations that ensure greater diversity and representation on boards and in membership of these groups and formal codes of conduct to ensure that these groups create safe and supportive environments for all participants
- Ensure that the City is not systemically elevating certain groups and voices over others in what should be equal community discussions and governing processes
- Developing policies and practices to allow members of neighborhood organizations to formally file complaints and grievances and seek assistance from the City when discriminatory incidents take place.