



City of Cambridge

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For Immediate Release

Cambridge Council Weights In On Historic Preservation Question

During the special meeting of the Cambridge City Council on Monday, Dec. 22, 2025, a last-minute agenda item, Resolution 25-15 led to an extended discussion.

Commissioner Brian Roche proposed the resolution to object to the partial demolition of historic properties in the 500 block of Race Street, suggesting adaptive reuse as an alternative. He spoke in favor of the resolution, saying it is important to preserve our historic buildings, that the point of the resolution is to give the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) a clear understanding of the position of the Council on this issue, to empower the HPC by showing full support for its existing guiding principles and stressing that this project is not an urban renewal project, but a preservation project. “We can’t wait for the HPC to make its decision to express our opinion,” he added.

Commissioner Brett Summers said, “I just believe those buildings are sound” and that Green Street Housing should work within the existing building envelopes. He concurred with Commissioner Roche, saying he liked the resolution and that it is important for the council to state how they feel up front.

Some timing issues regarding the agenda item and the HPC process came to light during the discussion, as a couple of commissioners questioned how this issue was up for discussion when no formal application for any demolition had been made and the HPC had not made a ruling for the Council to review. Council President Sputty Cephas stressed the importance of trusting the people [the Council members] put in place to make decisions. Commissioner

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Lewis-Sisco said that if the Council is taking a stance, their approach should be for the entire historic district and not applied to specific properties.

Commissioner Frank Stout amended his original motion. The new motion was to have City Attorney Patrick Thomas adjust the resolution, formatting it properly and amending it to include the changes indicated during the discussion. This motion was passed with Commissioner Lewis-Sisco opposed. A second motion, to approve the amended resolution, was brought to a vote. This motion was passed with Commissioner Lewis-Sisco opposed.

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