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ALFRED B. FANTINI
CAROLINE HUNTER
JOSÉ LUIS ROJAS
DAVID J. WEINSTEIN
AYESHA M. WILSON

--IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE--

August 8, 2023

ORDERED:

WHEREAS: the School Committee expresses its most profound sorrow upon learning of the passing of former City Councilor and State Representative Sandra M. Graham; and

WHEREAS: Graham was born on September 5th, 1941, in Cambridge, MA, and was raised as one of eleven children by her parents, Charles B. Postell and Roberta (Betts) Postell; and

WHEREAS: Graham's contributions extended beyond her elected roles, as she served as a friend, mentor, teacher, mother, and a source of inspiration to those around her, offering guidance and wisdom in various aspects of life while excelling as a single mother to her five children; and

WHEREAS: Graham pursued her primary and secondary education through Cambridge Public Schools and continued her academic journey at The University of Massachusetts, Boston, and The Harvard Extension School; and

WHEREAS: Graham played a significant role in advocating for the preservation of rent control in the early 1970s; and

WHEREAS: her public service journey commenced in 1968 with her involvement on the board of directors of the Cambridge Community Center and her subsequent tenure as president of the Riverside Planning Team in 1970; and

WHEREAS: Graham's dedication to public housing resulted in extensive renovation and modernization efforts for a substantial portion of public housing in Cambridge during her tenure as chairwoman of the housing and land use committee from 1972-1983; and

WHEREAS: Graham's leadership was instrumental in the establishment and successful operation of the Riverside Cambridge Community Development Corporation, providing housing options for low-income individuals and families in Cambridge; and

WHEREAS: Graham's efforts led to the interruption of Harvard University's commencement proceedings in 1970, which led to Harvard's acknowledgment and responsibility in building housing for families and older adults, thus preventing the displacement of long-term Riverside residents; and

WHEREAS: Graham was the first black woman elected to the Cambridge City Council, serving from 1971 until 1989 and serving as Vice Mayor from 1976-1977 and later made history as the first Black woman from Cambridge elected to the State Legislature, representing the 4th Middlesex District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1977 to 1988 and serving as a chair for the

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Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus and as a member of the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, securing substantial federal funding for the revitalization and modernization of public housing in Cambridge; and

WHEREAS: Graham founded the Massachusetts Childcare Coalition in 1979 on the belief that “day care is not a luxury, it’s an essential”; and

WHEREAS Graham was the namesake, along with Rosa Parks, of Cambridge’s Graham & Parks School which in 1981 was named as a tribute to these two remarkable leaders, whose impacts and profound contributions to society continue to inspire and uplift future generations in Cambridge and beyond, and Sandra Graham's legacy serves as a beacon of hope and empowerment for Cambridge students’, encouraging them to follow in her footsteps and make a positive difference in the world; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED the Cambridge School Committee and Superintendent go on record recognizing Sandra M. Graham’s unwavering commitment to the fight for affordable housing has transformed the lives of countless individuals, families, and the city of Cambridge. Graham’s compassion, resilience, and leadership made her an exceptional individual who touched the lives of many, leaving a lasting legacy of kindness, strength, and service; and be it further

RESOLVED that a formal copy of this Resolution be prepared by the Executive Secretary to the School Committee and forwarded directly to the Graham Family.

A true copy:

Attest: 
Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the Cambridge School Committee

Motion: 23-201
cc:

- Member Wilson
- Member Hunter
- Member Weinstein
- Member Fantini
- Vice-Chair Rachel
- Member Rojas
- Mayor Siddiqui
- Superintendent