

Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN)
Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting
March 19, 2017
(Open to the Public)

Board Members Present: Chuck McFadden (President), Judd Vickers (Vice-President), Mary Ellen Jesien (Treasurer), Tom Puglisi (Secretary), Jackie Vickers (via telephone in accordance with Bylaws Section 12), constituting a Quorum of the Board under Bylaws Section 11 (five of nine members being present)

Board Members Absent: Frank Cooke, Roman Jesien, Sharon Smith, Dave Thatcher

- 1. Welcome.** CAN President Chuck McFadden opened the meeting at 3:00 pm by welcoming the members of the Board as well as approximately 20 additional persons in attendance.
- 2. Meeting Minutes.** Chuck McFadden introduced the minutes of the January 14, 2017, organizational meeting distributed earlier this week. Judd Vickers moved that the Board approve the January 14 minutes as distributed, and Tom Puglisi seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote of Board members present.
- 3. Bylaws.** Chuck McFadden introduced the draft Bylaws distributed earlier this week. Chuck explained that the draft Bylaws were discussed and approved at the January organizational meeting with stipulations that have been incorporated into the current draft. In response to a question from the floor, Judd Vickers clarified that telephone participation in Board meetings is permitted under the Bylaws. Tom Puglisi moved that the Board approve the draft Bylaws as distributed, and Judd Vickers seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote of Board members present.
- 4. Administration issues.** Chuck McFadden reported that CAN's incorporation papers and submission for 501(c)(3) tax exempt status have been finalized and submitted. Chuck noted that several individuals had made donations to CAN to fund these submissions and expressed his thanks for those donations.
- 5. Community Partners.** Chuck McFadden reported that a number of community organizations (including Habitat for Humanity, Delmarva Community Services, Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy (MRC), and Genesis) have indicated that they are anxious to partner with CAN on matters of mutual interest. CAN's immediate challenge is to enroll sufficient numbers of members to make such partnerships feasible.

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6. Finances. CAN Treasurer Mary Ellen Jesien reported that CAN has enrolled 31 members and collected \$1150 in dues and donations. Funds will be used to cover the costs of incorporation, liability insurance, informational materials (e.g., postcards and fliers to support recruitment), and sponsored events.

Chuck McFadden indicated that CAN's goal is to recruit at least 100 members during CY2017 in order to ensure that CAN becomes a viable organization, wields substantive influence in the Cambridge community, and is able to partner effectively with other community organizations.

General discussion followed suggesting that the \$20 membership dues might be beyond the means of many persons who would be interested in joining. Chuck explained the Board's concern that substantial funds were needed to cover start-up costs and noted that the Bylaws permit the Board to waive or reduce the amount where appropriate. He also stated that individuals who join after July 1st will be charged only for half the year, and that the Board will re-examine the need for funds in establishing dues for CY2018. It was suggested that the Board consider a "family" dues plan and permit individuals to perform community service in lieu of dues.

Chuck added that CAN's goals for the coming year including "giving back" to the community in meaningful ways (e.g., sponsoring summer scholarships for kids, organizing neighborhood gatherings, holding or participating in other events to benefit the community), and he invited suggestions about ways CAN might do so.

Chuck stressed that **CAN very much needs a Membership Coordinator** to drive membership proactively throughout the City, and Michelle Barnes volunteered for this role. He also encouraged everyone to forward suggestions for expanding the number of participating neighborhoods, increasing membership diversity, and reaching out to and addressing the needs of additional neighborhoods throughout the City.

7. Communication Committee. CAN Secretary Tom Puglisi reported that the Communications Committee has successfully launched the CAN website (kudos to Brooks Bridges) and the CAN Facebook page (thanks to Janet Boss), and partnered

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with Dave Thatcher to distribute information through his email list (thanks, Dave). He noted that a Survey function is being developed (by Fred Phillips-Patrick) and invited everyone to suggest topics for future surveys.

Goals for the coming year include expanding use of the CAN website and Facebook page (e.g., adding a “resources” page with links to other useful sites), inviting all interested City Council Commissioners to provide updates and comments for CAN’s monthly Newsletter, increasing participation of additional Neighborhoods across all of Cambridge, and conducting one or more surveys of community issues and concerns. Brooks Bridges and Fred-Phillips Patrick have volunteered to add “PayPal” capability to the CAN website to facility enrollment of new members.

CAN website: <http://www.cambridgecan.org/>

CAN FaceBook <https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeAssociationofNeighborhoods/>

Contact CAN: CambridgeCAN@yahoo.com

- 8. Housing Quality Committee.** Judd Vickers reported that he and other members of the Housing Quality Committee have attended, and will continue to monitor, every meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Committee circulates and posts (via email and the CAN website) summaries of every meeting and attempts to highlight issues of particular concern.

Current issues of discussion include developing guidelines for large solar farm proposals; redevelopment of Cambridge Plaza to include a new grocery store, Starbucks, and Chick-fil-A; guidelines for food trucks operating in the City; and whether the definition of “duplex” should include building with living units stacked vertically (i.e., up/down), as opposed located horizontally (i.e., side-by-side).

CAN is participating in the April 1 Cleanup sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Alliance and Midshore Riverkeepers. CAN members have registered cleanup teams for the West End Avenue and Long Wharf Park / Municipal Marina areas. CAN Block Captains or other CAN members who would like to lead a clean up effort in a particular area, or otherwise participate as a volunteer, should contact **Judd Vickers** at judd.vickers@gmail.com.

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One goal of the Housing Quality Committee is to identify significant issues in individual neighborhoods – especially vacant housing and problem housing – in order to take action as a group. Judd Vickers and Frank Cooke are leading this effort. Please contact Judd (judd.vickers@gmail.com) or Frank with suggestions or to volunteer to help.

It was noted that City police officers and other City officials often lack a good working knowledge of code requirements related to housing and neighborhood concerns, but the CAN Housing Quality Committee monitors these codes closely and can focus attention where needed – not to be adversarial but to effect positive change.

Landlords sometimes just ignore citations because the citations have no immediate consequence (other than a lien on the property). CAN would like to explore other actions the City might take to address this problem. For owner occupied housing, CAN's goal is to help the homeowner make positive improvements with constructive assistance from CAN members.

It was noted that Annapolis maintains a mandatory fee-based Vacant Property Registry. Comments from the floor indicated vacant housing is a significant problem that might be a useful topic for discussion at a general members meeting resulting in call for action by the City Council.

- 9. Neighbor Development Committee.** Chuck McFadden reported that **CAN's Neighborhood Development Committee still lacks a Chairperson and desperately needs a volunteer to take on this responsibility.** The Committee also needs to recruit many more **Neighborhood Block Captains** from all areas of Cambridge.

Chuck explained that the Neighborhood Development Committee and its Neighborhood Block Captains foster the development of **self-identified Neighborhood** "blocks" and stressed that "Neighborhood blocks" are loosely defined to meet the needs and concerns of each self-identified neighborhood.

Neighborhood "Block Captains" organize their "block" to build neighborhood involvement by networking in their neighborhood, welcoming new residents; distributing postcards and fliers (currently under development), and hosting social

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events and other activities through which people get to know their neighbors and identify problems and concerns. Building neighborhood involvement across the Cambridge is considered the key to making CAN vibrant and effective.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE NEEDS MANY MORE VOLUNTEERS. If interested in organizing neighborhood blocks, please contact Chuck McFadden at Ragtime31@gmail.com or CambridgeCAN@yahoo.com

- 10. CAN LOGO CONTEST.** The deadline for submission to the CAN LOGO contest has been extended to midnight, Sunday, March 26. The CAN Communications Committee will award a grand prize of \$5.34 to the winning entry. Entries will be accepted via email at CambridgeCAN@yahoo.com or in person to CAN Secretary Tom Puglisi at 104 Willis St.
- 11. SUMMER EVENTS.** In addition to social events organized by Neighborhood Blocks, CAN is considering hosting a City-wide social event this summer. Comments from the floor suggested that it may be more beneficial to piggy-back on already established City-wide events by partnering with the organizers and/or setting up booths at these events. This is another function that could be undertaken by the Membership Coordinator that Chuck referenced in Item #6 above.
- 12. CITY PROPERTY TAX.** As discussed in CAN's March Newsletter, the City of Cambridge is discussion options for increasing property tax revenue. Commissioner Steve Rideout encouraged CAN members to study these options, attend City Council meetings, and make their views known on this and other issues coming to the Council.
- 13.** The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 pm, and was followed by snacks and socializing.