



UPCOMING MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS (REVISED)

***Saturday, January 20, 2018, Dorchester County Public Library (303 Gay St), 10:00 am**
*** Annual Business Meeting, including Board of Directors Election**

Saturday, March 10, 2018, Location To Be Determined, 10:00 am

Thursday, May 10, Location To Be Determined, 7:00 pm

Thursday, July 12, Location To Be Determined, 7:00 pm

Thursday, September 13, Location To Be Determined, 7:00 pm

Saturday, November 10, Location To Be Determined, 10:00 am

All CAN Board meetings are open to the public.
Everyone interested in CAN is invited to attend.

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CAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Dorchester County Library Meeting Room
November 18, 2017

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Chuck McFadden (President), Judd Vickers (Vice President), Mary Ellen Jesien (Treasurer), Michelle Barnes (Membership Director), Tom Puglisi (Secretary), Frank Cooke, Roman Jesien, Sharon Smith, and Dave Thatcher, constituting a Quorum of the Board under Bylaws Section 11 (nine of ten members being present)

Board Members Absent: Jackie Vickers

NOTE: CAN is not responsible for verifying the accuracy of attendee comments.

- 1. Welcome and Introductions.** CAN President Chuck McFadden opened the meeting at 10:00 am by welcoming the members of the Board, as well as approximately 20 attendees. Chuck explained that Cambridge City Manager Sharon Tripp-Jones had a previous commitment that prevented her from attending the meeting today. He apologized to Ms. Tripp-Jones and the Membership on behalf of CAN for prematurely indicating that she would be present. CAN will invite Ms. Tripp-Jones to a future meeting. Chuck invited everyone in attendance to introduce themselves, beginning with Board Members and including all attendees.

- 2. Approval of Minutes.** Can Secretary Tom Puglisi introduced the minutes of the September 14, 2017 meeting, which were previously distributed via email. It was moved (Chuck McFadden) and seconded (Judd Vickers) that the Board approve the September 14 minutes as distributed, and the motion was approved by a 9-0 vote of Board members present.
- 3. Treasurer’s Report.** CAN Treasurer Mary Ellen Jesien reported that CAN now has 74 dues-paying members and a total of \$832.74 in its treasury. The current funds have come primarily from dues payments, although several persons previously made donations to provide start-up monies.
- 4. WHCP Calendars.** Susan Klise announced that WHCO’s 2018 calendar was available at the back of the meeting room for \$12. She indicated that WHCP membership dues are \$40 and that membership includes a free calendar. A member of the audience suggested that CAN and WHCP should consider establishing a discounted joint membership arrangement. CAN President Chuck McFadden observed that CAN is interested in establishing partnerships with other community organizations and joint memberships might be worth exploring.
- 5. Leonards Lane Recycling Site.** City Council Commissioner Steve Rideout (Ward 1) announced that the new Leonards Lane recycling site, located on the left side of Leonards Lane toward Washington Street (MD Route 343), is now open. He encouraged everyone to make use of this new site, which is the result of a City-County collaboration.
- 6. Good Neighbor Acknowledgments.** Chuck McFadden presented the following “Good Neighbor” acknowledgments, and reminded everyone that one of CAN’s primary goals is to strengthen neighborhoods through active neighborhood involvement.

 - a. Oakley Street Neighborhood.** Roman Jesien, Dave Thatcher and Chuck McFadden recently helped a neighbor clear away a garage that had fallen into disrepair and made five trips to the dump to haul away the debris. CAN paid the required dumping fees.
 - b. Belvedere Avenue Neighborhood.** Jackie Eckles is hosting a brunch tomorrow (November 19) for the Belvedere Avenue neighborhood.
 - c. Choptank Avenue Neighborhood.** The “Choptank Mommas” (Kay Klepfer, Linda Starling, and Martha Phillips-Patrick) recently decorated a Christmas tree for Pleasant Day Medical Adult Day Care Center. The November CAN Newsletter (on the website at <https://cambridgecan.org/newsletters/>) includes a photo.

- 7. Nominations for CAN Board of Directors.** Per the CAN Bylaws (Article VIII, Section 1), CAN Vice-President Judd Vickers chaired a Nominating Committee made up of Chuck McFadden, Tom Puglisi, and Susan Morgan to identify candidates to fill upcoming Board of Director vacancies. Of the Board Members whose terms will expire in January 2018, Judd Vickers (Vice-President), Tom Puglisi (Secretary), and Sharon Smith have agreed to be nominated for 2-year terms, and Jackie Vickers will not seek another term on the Board. Gregg Boss has also agreed to be nominated for a 2-year term. These candidates will be included in the ballot to be presented at the Annual Business Meeting on January 20, 2018. Per the Bylaws, additional nominations (specify Vice-President, Secretary, or At-Large Member) submitted in writing to the CAN Secretary least 30 days prior to the January 20 meeting will also appear on the ballot. CAN members will vote on the candidates at the January 20 meeting in accordance with the CAN Bylaws (Article IV, Section 3). Per the Bylaws, absentee votes will be accepted if submitted to the CAN Secretary **seven (7) days** in advance of the meeting.
- 8. Membership Dues.** Chuck McFadden reported that the CAN Executive Committee has proposed that CAN membership dues for Calendar Year (CY) 2018 be set at \$15 per individual or \$20 per household. It was moved (Judd Vickers) and seconded (Tom Puglisi) that the Board approve the proposal, and the motion was approved by a 9-0 vote of Board members present.
- 9. Discussion of Cambridge City Manager Position.** Chuck McFadden began the discussion by noting that the current City Manager has announced her retirement, effective June 2018. Chuck indicated that there has been some discussion within the City Council of changing the City Charter as to the form of government and/or the City Manager’s job description, as discussed during the City Council Public Work Session on November 1, 2017.

Dave Thatcher, Mary Ellen Jesien, and Sharon Smith attended the most recent City Council meeting (November 13, 2017) and presented a statement during the Public Comment Period to encourage continuing the City Manager position as currently described and going forward with hiring to ensure that there is no interruption in service. It appeared that three City Council members wanted to proceed immediately with the hiring process, but the Council rejected a motion to appropriate \$30,000 to finance the process, which would have included funding for candidate interviews, travel expenses, etc., and hiring an experienced, professional consultant/recruiter. Although three Commissioners voted in favor of the motion, two Commissioners (Foster and Sydnor) abstained, and the notion was defeated.

Commissioner Rideout clarified that, under Maryland State law, once a budget has been adopted, a 2/3 majority of the Council (i.e., 4 out of 5 votes on the Cambridge City Council) is needed to pass a budget change. Commissioner Rideout indicated that he believes the Mayor is in favor hiring a consultant. He indicated that the Mayor will head the City Manager Search Committee, assisted by Mr. Odie Wheeler. In addition to the Mayor, the Search Committee will include one member designated by each Council Commissioner. Commissioner Rideout intends to designate former Cambridge Police Chief Dan Dvorak.

In response to questions from attendees, Commissioner Rideout indicated that (i) the optimal timeline would be to have the search completed by June 30; (ii) \$25,000 was appropriated for the search for the current City Manager, but some additional funds were ultimately needed; (iii) the City Manager's salary is currently \$105,000; and (iv) qualifications for City Manager are specified as either prior training and experience as a city manager or comparable professional management experience.

Attendees noted that if a petition for a public referendum on the City Manager form of government is brought forward, community meetings will need to be organized to preserve the position. It was suggested that it is important to document positive changes that have resulted from having a City Manager. For example, the current City Manager and the current Finance Director are said to have saved the City \$1,000,000 by restructuring the City's existing debt soon after the City Manager took office.

Commissioner Rideout indicated that he documented such positive changes in his June 22, 2017 "Cambridge Matters" message (available on the CAN website at <https://cambridgecan.org/category/news/commissioner-posts/>) and that he is working on updating that list of accomplishments.

- 10. CAN TRASH COLLECTION SURVEY.** Chuck McFadden thanked Fred Phillips-Patrick for developing and executing the recent CAN survey on the City's new trash collection service. Almost 100 responses were received from the approximately 400 individuals on Dave Thatcher's email distribution list (which extends beyond the West End but is not scientifically representative of the City's population). Chuck reported the "bottom line" result that most respondents were happy with the new trash service but would like to have options for (i) smaller containers and (ii) recycling, if the cost is reasonable. Comments from respondents suggested that people want separate cans for recycling. Complete results are available on the CAN website at <https://cambridgecan.org/take-chesapeake-waste-survey/>.

Chuck noted that in addition to the actual survey results, Fred was able to work out various mechanical bugs that will make future surveys relatively easy to implement. The goal is to use the survey system as a vehicle to expand CAN's database and membership throughout the City. Chuck has reached out to Commissioners Rideout and Hanson should they like to make use of CAN's survey system. Possible issues for future surveys include (i) re-surfacing of the 100 and 200 blocks of High Street, and (ii) installing restrooms within Great Marsh Park.

Attendees suggested that CAN needs to get better at communicating beyond the West End. Suggestions included (i) making surveys available to all City Council Commissioners and the City; (ii) asking the City to place links to CAN and CAN surveys on their websites; (iii) advertising on WHCP; and (iv) partnering with WHCP, Cambridge Mainstreet, the Chamber of Commerce, and other community organizations to provide links to CAN on their websites and Facebook pages.

- 11. City Code Enforcement.** In follow-up of the discussion of City code enforcement at the September CAN meeting, Chuck McFadden noted that the City is down to one full-time inspector, and one part-time contractor. Attendees noted several concerns:
- a. The City's decision not to enforce the code without a specific complaint results in lax and uneven enforcement.
 - b. The City tolerates poor enforcement of building permits. Some landlords and homeowners do not respect the requirement to obtain building permits and arrange required inspections.
 - c. Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Vice-President and CAN Board Member Sharon Smith noted that HPC receives many requests for "retroactive" approvals of already-completed work (e.g., a 24-foot shed recently built without HPC approval, without required building permits, and in violation of both HPC guidelines and building code requirements), and that some individuals avoid coming to HPC meetings in hope that discussion of their violations will be deferred indefinitely. Sharon observed that many non-permitted changes have been allowed to remain in place (e.g., use of vinyl or aluminum materials to cover porch ceilings) such that they become de facto precedents for future non-conforming changes. In-kind repair of non-conforming materials (e.g., use of plywood on porch floors) has become quite common and problematic. In response to comments from attendees, Sharon clarified that (i) the Universal Development Code (UDC), not HPC, addresses structural integrity and safety; and (ii) HPC has contracted for professional assistance in helping update and revise its guidelines. Sharon strongly encouraged CAN members to attend the many HPC work sessions that will

occur as the guidelines are being updated. All such sessions will be announced in advance and open to the public.

- d. Substandard rentals seem to face no enforcement action whatsoever. We have a responsibility to give people a voice to ensure that people live in decent housing. We need to push City Council to enforce codes. Current fines just result in liens on the property that do not have to be addressed until the property is sold. The City needs authority to impose improvement plans with a defined and enforceable time limit.
- e. Oversupply of rental housing has become a problem in Cambridge. Cambridge needs targeted middle class recruitment to grow business and lift the quality of life throughout the city.
- f. Funding of approximately \$800,000 for rehabilitation of the Pine Street area has been obtained through the State, Habitat for Humanity, and other sources.
- g. Commissioner Rideout noted that the City Manager has recently taken training in the area of code enforcement and may be making a proposal to City Council for strengthened enforcement. Commissioner Rideout described one recent case in which City enforcement of required sidewalk repairs had not occurred for many years prior to sale of the property to a new owner, who was then immediately cited for the ongoing sidewalk repair violations. Commissioner Rideout has proposed requiring that there be a review of code compliance prior to any property sale, thus forcing an inspection and solution at the time of sale. He also noted that the City has no authority to perform inside inspections of homes unless police or emergency personnel have identified safety hazards. Commissioner Rideout sees code enforcement as an area of ongoing improvement that will need some time to remedy fully.
- h. An attendee observed that Cambridge needs better coordination of the HPC and building permit processes. Proper legal notice needs to be given to all owners in the Historic District that, after a specified date, the City will implement strict enforcement of HPC guidelines and determinations.
- i. An attendee described a situation in which a homeowner is being hauled into court while in the process of getting a porch fixed by Habitat. The attendee wrote a letter explaining the situation to the Director of Public Works but has received no response yet. Chuck noted that the CAN Housing Quality Committee, chaired by Judd Vickers, is trying to address these issues and needs lots of volunteers to help with both identifying individual noncompliance and monitoring activities of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals.

- 12. Need for Special Volunteers.** Chuck McFadden announced that Dave Thatcher has done research on available programs to fix up homes, especially for low-income individuals and families. CAN needs volunteers to (i) continue identifying such programs, (ii) perform outreach, (iii) explain the programs to homeowners, and (iv) help homeowners fill out the necessary forms to apply for these programs. Please let CAN Board members know if you are willing to become an expert advisor to help perform any of these tasks.
- 13. Membership.** CAN Membership Director Michelle Barnes described several initiatives planned throughout the City to foster CAN membership. One of these initiatives involves distributing CAN Door Hangers to different sections of the city after each CAN meeting (including today's meeting) and at additional times to be announced. CAN currently has 1000 door hangers to distribute. In addition, Michelle has scheduled meetings with each of the City Council Commissioners to enhance outreach beyond the West End. She will seek recommendations from Commissioners of people in their Wards who might be interested in CAN and become involved in CAN's activities.
- 14. CAN's Goals for CY2018.** Chuck McFadden announced that CAN's Annual Business Meeting on January 20, 2018, will include a discussion of CAN's goals for CY2018, in addition to the election of Board Members. He encouraged everyone to think about what our goals should be next year, in addition to the goals of growing membership and increasing community involvement.
- 15. Adjournment.** Chuck McFadden made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tom Puglisi seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

