CAMBRIDGE MATTERS

By: Commissioner Steve Rideout

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The first City Council meeting of the year had a short agenda with most items that were easily resolved. The one matter that took most of the time for discussion was the request from the Eastern Shore Network for Change for a contribution from the city of $1500 toward the development of a strategic plan to follow up on the “Reflections on Pine” event from last summer.

The matter had been continued over from the December 11th meeting due to absence of one of the commissioners and the need for 4 votes from City Council to authorize the movement of funds allocated for the July 2017 event from budgeted reserves to make this contribution. At the December 11th meeting, there were three votes in favor and one opposed so the only hope for funding the request was that the absent commissioner might be in favor of expending the funds. The request failed last night on a vote of three in favor, one opposed, and one abstention.

Rather than try to explain what happened on this issue I would urge you to take some time to view the entire discussion and vote at Townhallstreams.com, which is the website where all of the City Council meetings are recorded and stored. The discussion was too wide ranging for me to try to explain here, but the views and reasoning of those who spoke are important for you to hear.

The discussion starts 6:15 minutes into the meeting on the video and goes to 31:00 minutes. To find the video, go to [www.townhallstreams.com](http://www.townhallstreams.com) and click on the arrow next to Albany, NH. A list of cities will be revealed including Cambridge, MD. Click on Cambridge, and you will find the January 8th meeting in the low right hand corner of the page.

With regard to the other matters heard last evening, the Dorchester Elks Lodge 223 presented the Mayor and Commissioners trophies for their participation in the Elks’ 100th Anniversary Parade, which took place this past fall and was a great success under the leadership of Greg Meekins, who will be taking over the leadership of the organization this month.

Under the Consent Calendar, the following were approved unanimously:

* The December 11th meeting minutes with some minor corrections
* The request from the Cambridge Rotary Foundation to hold their annual Rotary Oyster Roast at Long Wharf on March 24, 2018 from noon to 4:00 p.m.
* The request from IronMan Maryland to hold IronMan 70.3 Eagleman starting and finishing at Great Marsh Park on June 10, 2018 from 4:00 a.m. until finish
* The request from the YMCA of the Chesapeake to hold their Heart of the Chesapeake Bike Tour on July 21, 2018, starting and ending at the YMCA from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Under Old Business, the following were approved unanimously:

* The award of the contract to Colossal Contractors, Inc. in the amount of $65,446.00 for the Marina Bathhouse interior renovations, the approval of an amendment to the FY 2017 Operating and Capital Improvement Program removing $65,000 grant funding for lights and dock repair at the marina, and the adding $65,000 grant funding for interior renovations to the Marina Bathhouse.
* The encumbrance of $800,000 in FY 2018 funds for the repair and construction costs for the 300 Block of High Street scheduled to start in January 2019.

Under New Business, City Council unanimously approved the appropriation of $500 into the 2018 General Fund budget and increased the Cambridge Police Department operating budget by that amount for the Shop with a Cop program held this past December 21st and 22nd. Choptank Electric Trust had donated the $500 to the program for the purchase of Wal-Mart Gift Cards for children in the community.

Following that vote city staff, the Mayor and Commissioners were provided the opportunity to offer comments and make reports of public interest. Included in those reports were the thanks of the elected officials and the City Manager for the good work done by city staff and the Police and Fire Departments during the recent snow storm and extreme cold period.

Thanks for reading (and viewing the video).

Steve