**UPCOMING MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS**

**Saturday, March 10, 2018, 10:00 am, Dorchester County Office Building,**

**County Council Chambers, Rm 110, 501 Court Lane (rear entrance)**

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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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 5, 2018**

**MINUTES**

**Executive Committee Members Present:** Chuck McFadden (President), Judd Vickers (Vice President), Tom Puglisi (Secretary), Mary Ellen Jesien (Treasurer), Michelle Barnes (Membership Director), constituting a Quorum of the Executive Committee (five of five members being present)

**Board Members Attending:** Greg Boss, Frank Cooke, Roman Jesien

CAN President Chuck McFadden opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

1. **Objectives for 2018.** Chuck indicated that the purpose of the meeting was discussion and goal setting relative to CAN's four primary objectives for 2018: Code Enforcement, Membership, Communication, and Social Activities.
2. **Code Enforcement.** The Executive Committee and Board Members in attendance discussed the goals of code enforcement from CAN's perspective; specifically, increasing owner occupancy, fostering responsible rental practices, increasing property values, and providing concrete help to homeowners who need assistance in maintaining their homes. A wide-ranging discussion took place regarding possible actions that CAN might adopt to foster these goals. It was generally agreed that CAN should continue its current organization-wide activities as follows:
   1. Strongly support budget proposals to hire additional inspectors.
   2. Continue to identify and assist specific homeowners with specific problems.
   3. Demonstrate how the current citizen-driven complaint process is not working, including documenting instances of retaliation. Both homeowners and renters have been reported to fear retaliation in response to complaints.
   4. Coordinate identification of housing improvement programs for homeowners and enlist volunteers to assist residents in completing home improvement applications. Dave Thatcher has developed a list of available resources.
   5. Continue to solicit input from CAN members about strategies to advance its code enforcement goals. Possible strategies generated at the meeting include the following actions for future discussion:

Identify and foster remediation of gaps in the current system that permit continued rental of properties that do not comply with code requirements (e.g., multiple rental units in single unit properties).

Develop a detailed database of rental residences and focus efforts on the most flagrant offenders to achieve economies of scale.

Closely monitor the external appearance of rental properties.

Identify mechanisms to reward responsible rental practices that foster increased property values.

Identify landlords, especially absentee landlords, and management companies that fail to maintain their properties appropriately.

Research the housing supply in Cambridge to understand the economic factors/incentives resulting in substandard housing.

Review the recently completed "Cambridge Blight Study" to (i) identify areas and properties with the greatest need, (ii) determine which properties are owned by the City, and (iii) explore options for sale of these properties contingent upon rehabilitation, code compliance, and owner occupancy.

Research rental "registration" systems versus rental "licensing" systems, to delineate the advantages and disadvantages of each, and explore possibilities for improving the current system.

Review the City's code enforcement proposals, and if necessary, try to develop more effective strategies to address substandard rental properties.

Identify successful code enforcement programs in cities comparable to Cambridge for possible implementation here.

1. **Housing Quality Committee.** The Housing Quality Committee, led by CAN Vice President Judd Vickers, will work on addressing CAN's goals related to code enforcement. Judd stressed that more volunteers will be needed to implement these goals successfully. Judd will write an announcement to solicit additional volunteers. Ultimately, the Housing Quality Committee was tasked with the following specific actions related to CAN's code enforcement objectives:
   1. Continue monitoring Planning and Zoning meetings, Board of Appeals meetings, and HPC meetings. Judd Vickers and Greg Boss are going to divide the meetings, as well as look for other volunteers to fill in gaps.
   2. Identify non-conforming use violations, report code violations, and follow up to ensure City action and remediation. Susan Morgan is maintaining a list of non-conforming uses and we add them as they come to our attention. However, we will need folks willing to drill down and provide detail on a street-by-street basis to identify more of these uses. This is where it would be helpful to be able to rely on a block captain system, but everyone understands we have challenges there as well.
   3. Work with Steve Rideout and other City Council Commissioners, as well as the City Manager, on strengthening code enforcement to implement a transparent, accountability-based process, while advocating strongly for transparency in complaints, inspections, citations, and remediation. Judd has reached out to Steve and we plan to chat regarding some of the proposed code enforcement changes that are being proposed. Judd will then report back to the Board with a recommendation to support/request additional changes, etc. (When Judd speaks with Steve, he’ll determine what we need to do to obtain a copy of the Cambridge Blight Study.)
2. **Membership.** It is essential for CAN to involve people in areas of the City beyond Ward 1. To do so, CAN needs to identify the concerns of residents in each Ward and develop strong outreach to those residents. The Membership Committee, led by CAN Membership Director Michelle Barnes will work on the following objectives:
   1. In consultation with City Commissioners, Michelle will identify key leaders in each Ward and at least one specific action or event for CAN to sponsor in each Ward (i.e., work with Commissioner Canon and to sponsor an action/event in Ward 4; follow up initial contact with Commissioners Hanson, Foster, and Sydnor to undertake an action/event in their Wards).
   2. Check with City Churches and other community organizations to identify locations for upcoming meetings. The goal should be to hold CAN Board Meetings in locations throughout the City. Michelle Barnes and Mary Ellen Jesien will collaborate to identify locations for upcoming meetings, and Mary Ellen will ensure that notices are provided to the Banner, the Star, and WHCP.
   3. Identify ways to get 2017 CAN members to pay their 2018 dues ("annual membership donation"). Discussion topics included determining how much money we need to fulfill CAN's objectives, demonstrating to members that funds are well spent for important projects, developing an approach to dues that will be more appealing to low-income residents (e.g., income-sensitive voluntary "membership donations" in lieu of strict dues requirements).
3. **Communication.** CAN Secretary Tom Puglisi and the Communications Committee will continue maintaining the Website, Facebook page, and email distribution list. Goals for 2018 include the following:
   1. Solicit members to write articles about CAN for the Banner and the Star and get them submitted and published.
   2. Keep the Website up to date.
   3. Create a Webpage with links to helpful sites.
   4. Develop a CAN presence on the "Next Door" service.
   5. Explore hosting a CAN booth at events in the City.
4. **Neighborhood Development / Social Networking.** CAN needs to revive its Neighborhood Development Committee and significantly expand its social networking activities. CAN desperately needs a volunteer to spearhead these activities. Goals for 2018 include the following:
   1. Recruit a Neighborhood Development / Social Networking Director.
   2. Recruit new neighborhood block captains and jump-start the activities of existing block coordinators.
   3. Develop a mechanism for welcoming new residents - both homeowners and renters.
   4. Decide whether or not to organize a citywide social event, while simultaneously concentrating on neighborhood and Ward events.
   5. Reach out to other non-profits and cooperating organizations such as Anchor Point, Eastern Shore Network for Change, etc. For example, Anchor Point has approached CAN about developing neighborhood events for which they could provide food in exchange for an information booth.
5. **“What’s important” Survey.** Fred Phillips-Patrick and Chuck McFadden are developing a new survey to find out what actions residents consider most important for the City to address and, especially, to prioritize in development of the City budget. The survey will have to be distributed very soon if its results are to influence the budget process, which is already underway.
6. **Warren Buffet Grant**. Frank Cooke has identified a possible funding opportunity to develop an intervention program for distressed areas of the City. Frank will research parameters of this opportunity, and if viable, CAN will need to assemble a small group of individuals with strong representation from the African-American community to develop a proposal and win the support of the City.
7. **March 10th Board of Directors Meeting**. The March 10th CAN Board of Directors meeting will be held at 10 am in the County Council Chamber of the Dorchester County Office Building. Chuck McFadden will attempt to schedule a speaker from several suggested by those present.
8. **Update on 203 Choptank.** A design has been accepted by the Historic Preservation Commission and permits are to be obtained for implementation
9. **Pet care section of the emergency evacuation shelter.** Cindy Smith needs volunteers. Formal training is available.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.