CAMBRIDGE MATTERS

By: Commissioner Steve Rideout

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Our first meeting in February was long and interesting. We started early with a closed meeting to discuss a number of issues that needed confidentiality. They included personnel issues, potential property acquisition, and potential or pending litigation. Due to the confidential nature of these matters, no report was provided when the meeting reopened except for the vote that was taken in open session to hire Mark Lewis as the new Cambridge Police Chief effective March 1, 2018.

The appointment of Mark Lewis was added to the agenda and upon Motion of Commissioner Sydnor and the second of Commissioner Foster the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the City Manager’s selection of Mr. Lewis as Chief of Police

There was an overflow crowd for the public meeting that started at 6:00 p.m. After the opening moment of silence and pledge of allegiance, the meeting agenda was approved as presented. There was no general public comment although a number of people signed up to speak about two matters scheduled for later in the meeting that I will discuss shortly.

The Consent Calendar was then taken up with the following being approved unanimously by the Commissioners with some additional requirements not mentioned below:

* The January 22, 2018 meeting minutes
* The request from Awaken Hearts, Inc. for a noise ordinance variance for their event entitled “Enough” scheduled at parking lot of 530 Poplar Street on April 14, 2018
* The request from the Cambridge Power Boat Racing Association to hold the Cambridge Classic at Great Marsh Park on May 18-20 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. along with a noise ordinance variance
* The request from the Kent Narrows Racing Association to hold the Thunder on the Choptank event at Great Marsh Park on July 28-29 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. along with the noise ordinance variance
* The request from the YMCA of the Chesapeake-Dorchester to hold their Dorchester Family YMCA Crab Run on April 14, 2018 from 7 a.m. to noon
* The request to approve an amendment to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the Pine Street Area Housing Rehabilitation Project that would transfer approximately $147,000 to it from the Gateway CDBG project that was no longer needed for that project

Upon completion of the Consent Calendar, proposed Ordinances 1114 and 1115 were read by title only with both matters scheduled to be heard at the next city council meeting on February 26th for 2nd reading, public hearing, and adoption. Ordinance 1114 deals with adding Breweries as a permitted use in the Industrial Zoning District. This is the matter that had been reviewed again by the Planning Commission on February 6th after some questions were raised by the City Ordinance Committee. Ordinance 1115 proposes to allow Auctions as a Special Exception in the Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts.

There was one speaker for the Ordinance regarding Breweries and many who were present to discuss Auction Houses. A number of important issues were raised by the speakers on the Auction House issues that will probably be raised again at the time of the public hearing. As both of these matters relate to an Industrial Zone in the city near the home of Commissioner Cannon, he recused himself from participating in the discussions about them and removed himself from the City Council Chambers while those matters were being discussed. As the public discussion of the Auction House issue may be of interest to you, if you were not able to attend the city council meeting, you can view it on the web at [www.townhallstreams.com](http://www.townhallstreams.com) where you can log on to the Cambridge, MD page and find the meeting of February 12, 2018.

Ordinance 1113 was also on the agenda for 2nd reading, public hearing, and adoption. There were no speakers regarding this proposed ordinance which was a technical correction to the Cambridge Comprehensive Plan that added a growth tier map to that plan. It was passed unanimously. Another matter that was approved unanimously was the request to authorize the Mayor to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Sailwinds Park, Inc. that details how the city and Sailwinds Park, Inc. will collaborate to achieve quality economic and community development on and around the Port Property, Sailwinds Park, and other possible waterfront properties in the city. Sailwinds Park, Inc. is a long established nonprofit organization in Cambridge that has worked to support the development of the city’s waterfront over the past 25 years.

Then there were presentations by city staff on the Mid-Year financial report and the Documentation Retention Policy. As the fiscal strength of the city is of importance to everyone, I am including a copy of that report with this report. The Documentation Retention Policy was approved as submitted and will be sent to the state for final approval. The final topic for decision by city council was the request for the appropriation of $18,000 from Sewer Impact Fees to complete the Oak Hill Service Project. The City annexed 28 residential/commercial properties in the area between Route 50 and Bucktown Road in 2004, known as Oak Hill properties and this funding will finish the effort to provide water and sewer service to this area.

City Commissioners and the public were then reminded of the upcoming work sessions at the Public Safety Training Room on February 16th and February 23rd from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. both days. FY 2019 budget issues will be discussed at the first meeting and priorities for Council Goals, capital projects, and grant applications will be discussed at the 2nd meeting.

The final matter on the agenda was a request to endorse the Work 2 Live WELL program which is a Maryland Department of Natural Resources Skill Accelerator Program. The goal of the program is to make job opportunities more readily available in natural resources fields through the public and private sector so that environmental related careers are more reflective of Maryland’s population. The plan is to have in Cambridge an 8-week workforce development program for 10 people who are 18 years or older. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources hopes to make this the pilot for a continuing program that builds more partnerships. People in the Cambridge and Dorchester County area are encouraged to apply, and local partnerships and businesses are urged to consider hiring certificate recipients of the program. It will be run through the Chesapeake College Adult Education Program. More information about the program is found on the attached.

I hope this has been helpful.

Sincerely,

Steve Rideout

Commissioner

Ward 1

City of Cambridge.