**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**

**March 1, 2018**

**MINUTES**

**Executive Committee Members Present:** Chuck McFadden (President), Judd Vickers (Vice President), and Tom Puglisi (Secretary), constituting a Quorum of the Executive Committee (three of five members being present)

**Executive Committee Members Absent:** Mary Ellen Jesien (Treasurer), Michelle Barnes (Membership Director)

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

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

1. **Report on Meeting with City Manager.** Chuck McFadden reported that his recent meeting with City Manager Sandra Tripp-Jones went well.
   1. During the meeting, Chuck clarified that one of CAN's concerns about the City's strong reliance on citizen complaints to drive code enforcement involves several known instances of retaliation by neighbors against persons suspected of submitting complaints.
   2. Chuck also described a widely held perception that newer property owners from outside the City seem to receive closer scrutiny for code enforcement than do long-time property owners.
   3. The City Manager stated her belief that rental units account for a bit over 50% of dwellings in the City.
   4. The City Manager indicated there is no money for the City to provide sidewalks, which remain the responsibility of the property owner. [Judd suggested that a solution might involve the City negotiating with selected contractors to provide sidewalks at a reduced rate that could paid by property owners over time through their tax bills.]
2. **March 10 Board of Directors Meeting.** City Manager Sandra Tripp-Jones will be the featured speaker at CAN's March 10 Board of Directors Meeting. CAN Secretary Tom Puglisi will serve as moderator for the City Manager segment of the meeting. Chuck emphasized that we need to get as many people as possible to attend this meeting. CAN Board members will be challenged to ask at least 5 people to attend the meeting, perhaps focusing on representatives from other organizations such as Anchor Point, Eastern Shore Network for Change, Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth, etc. Chuck will tell the City Manager that she can talk about any topics she would like to address, but he will send her the following three suggestions:
   * + - 1. Her accomplishments and view of the future for Cambridge, including how well the City Manager system has worked in Cambridge.
         2. Code Enforcement and Housing.
         3. Q&A.

Additional topics that are likely to be raised during the Q&A include:

1. City priorities.
2. Economic development in the new future.
3. Changes that need to be made in the City.
4. Academy Street improvements (needed because it increasingly serves as a major thoroughfare).
5. Development of the cemetery on Academy Street, highlighting its historic significance.
6. Sidewalks
7. **Membership.** Chuck observed that CAN needs to promote membership heavily and directly address lack of civic engagement in Cambridge. Recognizing the need to get out into the communities to build enthusiasm, it was suggested that CAN focus on building alliances with existing community groups such as Anchor Point, Eastern Shore Network for Change, Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth, etc. It was further suggested that, from a marketing point of view, CAN needs to develop and publicize value-added propositions that will attract community leaders (focusing on community organizations and churches) to work with us and assist us in contacting people to build membership. Tom stated that he believes Michelle will soon follow up with City Council Commissioners to identify concerns in their respective Wards. Chuck is coordinating with ShoreRivers to organize CAN participation for their upcoming cleanup day. Tom will contact CAN Treasurer Mary Ellen Jesien to get a list of current CAN members and will send personal email messages to those who have not renewed their membership.
8. **“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, particularly, to prioritize in development of the City budget. The survey will have to be distributed very soon if its results are to influence the City budget process, which is already underway. It was noted that there seems to be something of a "disconnect" between CAN's original list and what the City Council is actively considering. Chuck noted that the City Manager has suggested that realistic budgetary limitations need to be built into the survey. Fred is working on revising the survey and Chuck hopes to distribute it very soon.
9. **Warren Buffet "Purpose Built Communities" Grant**. Frank Cooke identified Warren Buffet's "Purpose Built Communities" grant program as a possible funding opportunity to develop an intervention program for distressed areas of the City, and he has contacted them to see if they are interested in Cambridge as a possible project site. If so, 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.
10. **Update on 203 Choptank.** Chuck reported that a design for 203 Choptank Avenue has been approved by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and that permits have been obtained for implementation of the design. An inspector has apparently visited the house, and one of the kitchens in the house has apparently been removed. It is not clear how many families and/or people are actually living in the house, but the City has no current prohibition on how many people can reside in this or any other house. Judd Vickers indicated that the property has been listed for sale as a single-family dwelling.
11. **Housing Development Committee.** CAN Vice President and Housing Development Chair Judd Vickers stated that he will present a brief Committee Report at the Board of Directors meeting on March 10. A meeting of the Housing Development Committee is scheduled for the evening of Monday, March 5, to discuss nonconforming uses and code enforcement issues and possible solutions. A Section 8 Housing Inspector has been invited to attend the Monday meeting to explain the inspection process. It was noted that the City Manager and the City Council Commissioners are examining possible code enforcement improvement strategies. CAN's long-term goal should be to identify several workable, easy-to-understand, consensus solutions and then advocate persistently for adoption of those solutions. Greg Boss and Frank Cooke stressed that CAN really needs hard data to determine whether the poorly maintained housing in Cambridge is owner-occupied or renter-occupied in order to determine what strategies are needed to address the problem of blighted houses. Analysis of data that Greg has obtained from the City suggests that the frequently cited 50% rental figure is probably too high. The Housing Development Committee will try to resolve the factual issues related to the percentage of rental housing in the City as quickly as possible. It was suggested that CAN also needs to obtain a copy of the most recent update of the Cambridge Blight Study to identify rental-concentrated blocks and see if there is high correlation with things like poor housing maintenance, crime, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.