CAMBRIDGE MATTERS

By: Commissioner Steve Rideout

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This was the last meeting for Sandra Tripp-Jones, the city’s first City Manager. It was, as usual, well organized with agenda items listed and provided with explanations and recommendations from staff. It was also a relatively quick meeting given all of the matters that were considered.

The first item of business after a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance (that was led by Sandra) was a report on two closed sessions with actions taken by the city council on one of them. The Agenda was then adopted.

The only public comment came from Henry Van Dyke in regard to the Cease and Desist letter that he had received from the city planning director. It directed him to stop his use of his Food Truck in the City of Cambridge. He sought the reasons behind the notice and the legal basis for it. He indicated that he had spoken with the City Manager about it but had not received any valid reasons from her. He was offered the opportunity to speak again with the City Manager and the Mayor. Based on a comment to Mr. Van Dyke from the City Attorney, I suggested that his only apparent option was to appeal the Cease and Desist notice to the Board of Appeals as his issue was not properly before the City Council for decision. From a decision of the Board of Appeals, he or the city could further appeal the matter.

The one request from the public by Ms. Wanda Smith was continued over to the July 9th meeting of City Council due to her inability to appear at the June 25th meeting.

A number of matters were then addressed under the Consent Calendar that resulted in the unanimous approval by the Commissioners of the following:

* The Meeting Minutes of May 24th and May 29th
* The requests of Downtown Cambridge/Cambridge Main Street for permission to hang a banner across Race Street in anticipation of the Taste of Cambridge on July 14th  and another one in anticipation of the GrooveFEST event on September 15th
* The request of the Hyatt for permission to allow skeet shooting on the 17th hole of the golf course on July 30th from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
* The request from the Dorchester County Community Wellness Coalition to hold their Community Health and Wellness Resources Event on July 28th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the city lot at Race and Cedar Streets
* The request from Cambridge MultiSport to hold the Firecracker Kids Triathlon on July 4th from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. It starts and finishes at the Dorchester County Family YMCA.
* The request from the Dorchester County Health Department to hold Recovery Works Day and an open house BBQ from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on September 22nd at their wellness center at 208 Sunburst Highway
* The request that the Pavement Management Study and Survey be officially received by City Council and referred to the City Manager for inclusion in the 5-year Capital Program of the City

Next on the agenda was the scheduled reading of Ordinance 1126 to allow Mobile Food Establishments (Food Trucks) as a permitted use with conditions in the city. As this matter had been further discussed at the Planning Commission meeting in early June and there was an interest and intent by the Commission as well as some of the members of City Council to consider the expansion of Food Trucks in the city, City Council voted 5-0 to cancel the noticed hearing for June 25th, referred the matter back to the Planning and Zoning Commission, extended the temporary exemption granted by City Council to Dudley Parr at the Overflow Café until September 30, 2018, and approved placement of Food Trucks at Governor’s Hall and the Dorchester County Visitor’s Center and Amphitheater subject to approval by the operators of the two venues – American Legion Post 91 and the Dorchester County Director of Tourism.

Ordinance 1127 was then provided a second reading, public hearing, and vote with regard to Yard and Bulk Requirements of the City’s Unified Development Code (UDC) to reduce rear yard setbacks in certain zones and rear and side yard setbacks in other zones. The ordinance was passed on a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Sydnor being opposed.

Under Old Business, the first item for discussion and possible approval was the Downtown Special Events and Street Closure Policy. This issue has been studied and under consideration for many months with drafts and redrafts of the policy being undertaken by a study group as well as the Ordinance Committee. The recommendation by the City Manager was that City Council adopt Resolution 18-008 that would adopt Administrative Standard Operating Procedure No. 45, which is the “Cambridge Events and Street Closure Policy”. It was approved on a 5-0 vote.

The next item involved an important next step in the development of the Sailwinds property. This was the appointment of two individuals to represent the City of Cambridge on the Cambridge Waterfront Development, Inc. Board of Directors, the appointment of the City Manager to the board, the approval of the proposed representative of Sailwinds Park, Inc. and the acknowledgement of the County’s selection of Jeff Powell and Jeremy Goldman, the County Manager.

The Mayor and committee members then presented the names of the two individuals that they recommended and provided some background information regarding them. They are Richard Zeidman, Esq. and Daryl Butcher both of whom reside here and have extensive and numerous years of experience in real estate development. Both were approved on a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Sydnor voting in the negative. Approved on a 5-0 vote was Frank Narr as the representative of Sailwinds, Inc. and the Cambridge City Manager, once he is on board. Under the MOU with the County, the County Council must also approve Mr. Narr. With regard to the recognition of the two county appointments, on a 4-1 vote, with Commissioner Sydnor voting in the negative, the City Council acknowledged their selection by the county.

The next item on the agenda was the establishment of an Interim City Administrator/City Clerk/Public Works Director position along with the amendment of the FY 2019 Position and Salary Control Resolution to add that position for a period of July 1, 2018 to no later than August 31, 2018. As the current City Manager ends her employment with the city on June 30th and the new City Manager will not start at that time, there is a need to have an administrator in charge of running the city who will report to the Mayor and City Council. Once the City Manager arrives to begin his duties, this position will expire.

The City Manager provided a proposed job description along with Resolution 18-009 that was a modification of the FY 2019 Position and Salary Control Resolution 18-004 adding the new temporary position that City Council then approved 5-0. The City Council also approved on a 5-0 vote that Odin Wheeler, the Public Works Director, would fill that position until the arrival of the new City Manager or August 31st, whichever came first.

The Mayor then brought forward the names of several individuals to serve on various City Boards and Commissions. She also mentioned that she was waiting to hear from other current commission members as to their interest in continuing to serve. Those persons proposed by the Mayor and approved by City Council were:

Rolesia (Lisa) Jones – Housing Authority Board - for a term until 6/30/21

Robert L. Jackson – Housing Authority Board – for a term until 6/30/23

Robin Sample – Board of Appeals – for a term until 4/30/21

Susan Morgan – Historic Preservation Commission – for a term until 8/3/21

There was one final agenda item before everyone present was able to extend their thanks to Sandra Tripp-Jones and her husband David for her work as City Manager. That involved the recommendation of the Mayor that City Council appoint one Commissioner to the Finance Committee and one Commissioner to the Cambridge Waterfront Development, Inc. Board Candidates Committee to replace Commissioner Sydnor, who had resigned his positions on both committees.

Earlier in the meeting Commissioner Cannon had requested that the appointment of a Commissioner to the Finance Committee be delayed until September. He made that motion that was seconded by Commissioner Foster and defeated on a 3-2 vote against. Commissioner Foster was then unanimously appointed to the Cambridge Waterfront Development Inc. Board Candidates Committee.

Commissioner Hanson then moved for my appointment to the finance committee. I seconded the motion. The vote was a tie vote with Commissioner Hanson and me voting in favor. Commissioner Cannon and Foster voted against. Commissioner Sydnor abstained. That allowed to Mayor to break the tie vote, which she did in voting “no”.

As the motion was defeated and no other candidates for the position came forward for appointment and Commissioner Sydnor had declined several requests to return to the finance committee including my request earlier in the evening, I moved that the matter be continued over to a meeting in September for a new opportunity for someone to be selected to the position. That motion passed on a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Sydnor voting “no”.

Sandra Tripp-Jones expressed her thanks for the opportunity to serve the city over the past 2 ½ years and everyone was likewise able to thank her for her service to the city and its residents.

That concluded a very productive and interesting meeting. Thanks for reading.