



CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Building a Better Community, Block by Block

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

*All Meetings will be held at the WHCP Meeting Room
516 Race Street, Cambridge, MD 21613*

2018

Saturday, November 10, 10:00 am

2019

Saturday, January 12, 10:00 am,

Saturday, March 9, 10:00 am

Thursday, May 9, 7:00 pm

Thursday, July 11, 7:00 pm

Thursday, September 12, 7:00 pm

Saturday, November 9, 10:00 am

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 13, 2018

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Chuck McFadden (President), Judd Vickers (Vice President), Mary Ellen Jesien (Treasurer), Tom Puglisi (Secretary), Greg Boss, Roman Jesien, Sharon Smith, and Dave Thatcher, constituting a Quorum of the Board (8 of 10 members being present)

Board Members Absent: Frank Cooke, Michelle Barnes (Membership Director).

CAN President Chuck McFadden opened the meeting at 7:04 pm. Chuck reminded attendees of the hurricane in the Carolinas and encouraged attendees to consider making contributions in support of relief efforts.

- 1. CAN JAM.** CAN held its first annual ***CAN JAM Picnic and Music Fest*** on August 26 at Long Wharf Park. Chuck thanked all those who developed or attended the event. The ***CAN JAM*** Committee did a great job putting it all together. ***CAN JAM*** promoted CAN's mission of encouraging community involvement and neighborhood vitality across all areas of the City.
- 2. Approval of Minutes.** Judd Vickers made, and Tom Puglisi seconded, a motion that the Board approve the minutes of the July 12 Board meeting. The motion was approved 8-0.

3. **Treasurer's Report.** CAN Treasurer Mary Ellen Jesien reported that CAN's treasury currently holds \$1433.08. Approximately ten new members joined during *CAM JAM*.
4. **MidShore Meals 'til Monday.** Ms. Leslie Bishop, Director of *MidShore Meals 'til Monday* described her organization's program, which provides weekend meals to elementary school students in Dorchester County. Approximately 5,000 students attend public school in Dorchester County, which ranks third in Maryland in terms of children experiencing hunger. Although the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) meal program allows the Dorchester County Public Schools to offer breakfast and lunch at no cost to all students, many children suffer from lack of nutritious food over weekends. During the 2017-18 school year, *MidShore Meals 'til Monday* served 250 school students at Vienna, Maple, Choptank, and Sandy Hill Elementary Schools with "backpack" weekend food consisting of two breakfasts, snacks, and two substantial lunch meals each weekend, including fresh fruits and vegetables. Six programs with about 175 children were also served this summer. About 100 students at Maces Lane Middle School will be added to the program for the 2018-19 school year. The *Midshore Meals* service costs about \$5 per child per weekend.

Locked storage and packing spaces are currently located at Vienna Elementary School (packing every two weeks on Thursdays) and the Judy Center (packing every two weeks on Wednesdays). **Volunteers are needed** for packaging and transportation twice each month. Additional storage and packing space is needed so the program can expand to serve about 500 children each week. The program also distributes toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss every three months, and provides individual children with coats and clothing as need is identified. Money and support for the program comes from grants, donations, the Maryland Food Bank, and a variety of local organizations. However, much more is needed to solve the problem of Mid-Shore child hunger beyond the current band-aide approach. ***For addition information or to volunteer, contact Ms. Bishop at 443.225.6789. See attached.***

5. **City Manager, Mr. Patrick Comiskey.** CAN President Chuck McFadden introduced new Cambridge City Manager, Mr. Patrick Comiskey, who has been on the job here for about six weeks. Mr. Comiskey was born in Havre de Grace, grew up in Aberdeen, and still has family in Maryland, as well as many local ties. He has worked in local government throughout his career and comes to Cambridge from a similar position in Georgia.

Mr. Comiskey has been impressed by many **positive things** in Cambridge, including the natural beauty of the area with its energy and conservation projects and its parks and recreation programs; it's attractive Visitors' Center; forward-looking planning activities, including riverfront and medical facility development; and an energetic spirit of volunteerism. His goals for Cambridge include increasing homeownership and expanding job opportunities.

Based on his six weeks here, Mr. Comiskey considers the **biggest challenges** to be:

infrastructure maintenance and improvement (water/sewer, roads, and homeowner responsibility for sidewalks); economic growth; City employee salaries and benefits; City equipment replacement costs; housing; and code enforcement. He invited the audience to send him suggestions in the following areas: (a) Big ideas to make Cambridge brighter; (b) small-scale tasks that would improve Cambridge; and (c) best things to like about Cambridge. CAN will distribute these questions to all its members.

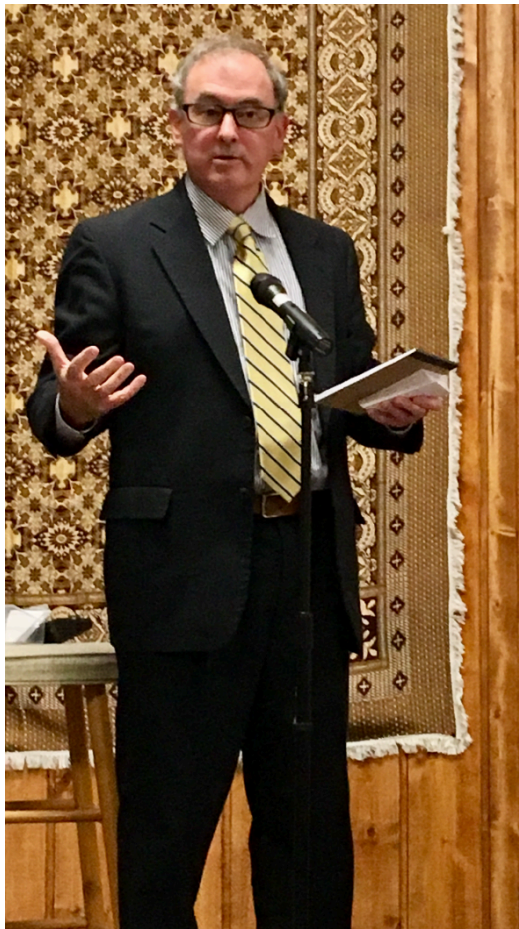
6. Audience Questions and Comments for the City Manager. *NOTE: The following issues were voiced by attendees and should not be construed to reflect the positions of CAN as an organization. CAN has not confirmed the accuracy of commenters' statements.*

- Code enforcement, especially for rental housing, is major problem in the City. Landlords currently face no immediate cost or meaningful penalty for failure to comply with City code requirements. Many CAN members believe that suspension of rental licenses should be used as an enforcement mechanism.
- Lack of proper code enforcement results in substandard housing that victimizes our poorer residents. We should not allow people to be housed in substandard housing. Federal housing requires internal inspections but the City of Cambridge does not have such a requirement and does not have enough inspectors to perform these types of inspections.
- Rental housing data are available from the City, but data from the Cambridge Blight Study are not available to community organizations for research to identify the interaction of blight, code enforcement, and property ownership. Another use of these data would be to identify homeowners to whom CAM could provide help in maintaining their properties.
- There have been rumors of collusion between housing inspectors and certain realtors and landlords.
- Citizens about to be evicted and looking for rental assistance in Cambridge have great difficulty finding help. Dorchester Community Services and most other organizations have been so overwhelmed that they can now only provide assistance upon court-ordered eviction. It appears that money has been given out in the past that was not used for rent as intended, but rather went to support addiction habits.
- Drugs are a huge problem here. Drugs are being used and brought to school by 9 and 10 year olds. Employers can't find qualified workers because so many people here have drug histories and/or criminal records that make them unemployable.
- Grocery stores are desperately needed in Cambridge. Lidl recently pulled out of Cambridge Marketplace. Cambridge's low average income and high poverty rate apparently discourages grocery stores and other businesses from coming here.
- Seawalls are desperately needed on the waterfront from Sailwinds to Great Marsh Park, both at the end of streets and between streets. The Department of Public Works puts sandbags on manhole covers to prevent flooding. A study was conducted to support grant applications for improvements at the ends of Choptank Avenue,


West End Avenue, and Willis Street (although all the streets on the waterfront experience frequent flooding), but nothing has been heard about the results..

- There is no commercial development on the river from the bridge to the golf course. We need to develop the Sailwinds property and other waterfront areas in a way that benefits the entire city. This includes realistic, forward-looking development that maximizes the opportunities provided by the riverfront while ensuring public access and providing an attractive destination for visitors. There was supposed to be public access along Cambridge Creek to walk or bicycle all the way up to the new park, but that has not been provided as envisioned.
- In response to a question, Mr. Comiskey noted that citizens can obtain information about crime committed in their neighborhoods by going to the Community Crime website at <https://www.communitycrimemap.com>.
- We are thankful to Mr. Comiskey for choosing Cambridge and for speaking with us.


7. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm.



City Manager Patrick Comiskey



**Working to end
childhood hunger on
the MidShore and
beyond**



**MidShore
Meals til Monday**

Leslie Bishop, Founder and Co-Director

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MidShore Meals til Monday

MidShore Meals til Monday, a 501 (c) (3) charity is a component fund of the Mid Shore Community Foundation. We are a "backpack" program and send home healthy, nutritious food for weekend meals year-round for nearly 250 school children in Dorchester County, MD. We also provide toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental floss and other hygiene items.. During cold weather all children are given warm hats and gloves and if needed, coats, also. Our program continues to grow and expand as we work with more schools county-wide.

