The meeting was led by Ms. Patricia Escher, AICP, Cambridge City Planner.

Attendees included City Planning and Zoning Commissioners Jerry Burroughs (Chair), Marshall Rickert, and Hubert Trego; City Council Commissioners Steve Rideout (Ward 1), Dave Cannon, (Ward 4), and Rob Hanson (Ward 5).

The newly created Cambridge Waterfront Development Corporation will soon begin the process of soliciting proposals for development of the waterfront properties along Byrn Street (i.e., the Sailwinds, hospital, and Visitor Center properties -- see handout attached). The Planning and Zoning Commission and City Staff believe that the current "Commercial Mixed Use" zoning for the properties would result in designs that are overly uniform and commercial in appearance, and not in keeping with the City's vision for a unique and forward-looking space with a "wow" factor that would attract people and businesses to Cambridge.

Consequently, the proposed code changes (which would be applied only to the property described above) would permit development proposals utilizing any of six existing "Form-Based Code Standards" that are already being used in selected areas of the City. The resulting code change would give developers more flexibility as compared to the current "Commercial Mixed Use" but provide them with concrete standards as described in the six "Form-Based Code Standards" already used within the City. This is the rationale for making the proposed code changes prior to solicitation of development proposals.

In evaluating development proposals, the City Planning and Zoning Commission will determine which of the "Form-Based Code Standards" are most suitable for the different areas of the proposed development.

City Staff provided the following clarifications in response to questions from the audience:

* The next step is presenting the proposed code changes to the City Council for approval.
* The principles of Form-Based zoning ensure that new development must be compatible with the general features, including dimensions and height, of adjacent buildings and other existing buildings in the neighborhood.
* No proposals are currently under consideration for development of the Waterfront property. The Cambridge Waterfront Development Corporation has not yet solicited proposals.
* The activities of the Cambridge Waterfront Development Corporation are subject to Maryland's open meeting requirements. Meeting will be announced and open to the public. It is anticipated that the Corporation will establish a website that is "linkable" from the City and County websites. Public involvement will be critical to the success of any development.
* The State has specified that proposals include a minimum of 20 feet of open public access at the entire shoreline of the Waterfront property, similar to the new pier next to Governor's Hall. It is hoped that proposals will find creative ways to increase that access.
* Everyone agrees that it is important to preserve scenic views and ensure public open space in developing the Waterfront property. The proposed code changes would facilitate these goals by encouraging creative development. The Planning Commission would be responsible for ensuring that scenic views and public open spaces are ensured appropriately. This would include the open spaces around Governor's Hall, if included in the proposed development. *[Note: CAN members believe that the Governor's Hall area is currently designated as a resource conservation area.]*
* The current boat ramp will be included in the new development.
* The proposed code changes do not address use of the water itself. Such use would be considered the Cambridge Waterfront Development Corporation in its review and selection of development proposals.
* Cambridge Waterfront Development Corporation is tasked with considering the impact of proposed development on downtown businesses and on Cambridge as a whole, and ensuring that proposed development complements, rather than undermines, other areas of the City.
* After review and approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission, Cambridge City Council will have to review, approve, and sign all development agreements before proposed projects can be implemented.