CAMBRIDGE MATTERS #50

By: Commissioner Steve Rideout

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December 10, 2018

Our meetings began with an Open Session at 5:00 p.m. in order to go into closed session on a confidential topic allowed under the Open Meetings Act to discuss some business proposals. After completing that session, we closed the meeting again in order to discuss a personnel issue. All the Commissioners, the Mayor, the City Manager, the City Attorney, and Director of DPW were present for the closed meetings

The regular City Council meeting began at 6:00 p.m. with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. The Agenda was adopted as presented after which the Mayor invited anyone who wished to make a public comment.

Michael Wheatley spoke about the Model Train Exhibit that was currently open during the Holiday Season for people to come and view. It is in its 84th year.

Sandra Tripp-Jones, the acting volunteer Executive Director of the Cambridge Waterfront Development Corporation spoke in favor of Item 11 on the agenda regarding a budget matter that would have the city setting aside funds for the work of the Corporation as it organizes and plans for the development of the Sailwinds Property.

Stephanie Hallowell, who volunteers with Vets Helping Vets, expressed her interest in becoming a member of the Cambridge ADA Committee now known as the Cambridge Citizens Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. She and Commissioner Cannon, Liaison to the Committee, will meet and consider her application.

Susan Webb, from Cambridge Code Enforcement, made an oral request that City Council approve an event to be held at the Elks Lodge on Pine Street on December 19th where Santa will arrive at 6:05 P.M. and to accept a $2,000 donation to the Police Department Account that would then be used to fund the event. On motion properly made and 2nd, her request was granted.

Joe Buccheri, from Team Blessing/American Liver Foundation, asked that the city council approve his request that was scheduled to be taken up later in the meeting. After hearing the request, the matter was postponed to see if there were other public comments. When it came up shortly thereafter, he indicated that they expected to have between 25-100 bicyclists for the fundraising event.

The next items on the agenda were the request of the Dorchester Center for the Arts by Alicia Coro-Hoffman, Board Chair, for a letter of support for a bond bill that is being introduced in the legislature on behalf of the Art Center. After being advised that this request would not conflict with other city requests for state funding and that the Art Center was going to be providing matching funds for the $50,000 grant, City Council approved on a 5-0 vote the request for a letter of support.

Mr. Bussheri’s request regarding permission to use the city owned parking lot across from City Hall on April 4th (or the 5th as a rain date) from 11:00 a.m. to noon and for a police escort from the parking lot to Rt. 50 for their fundraising bike ride was then approved 5-0.

The Consent Calendar brought 5-0 votes approving

* The Meeting Minutes of the November 26th City Council Meeting
* The Request from the Cambridge Yacht Club for the city to prohibit any Power Boat Events to be held from City parks/boat ramps on July 19-21 and August 17-18, 2019 for the Yacht Club to hold the Admiral Bird Regatta and the Log Canoe Races. The reasoning behind these requests is that boat racing during those events might be dangerous to the participants involved in the Regatta and the Log Canoe Races.

Ordinance 1136 was then provided its first reading and continued over to January 14, 2019 for 2nd reading, public hearing, and possible adoption. This legislation would allow for a Mixed-Use Waterfront Overlay District at the City’s Sailwinds Property and the adjoining property owned by Shore Regional Hospital to facilitate the future development of these properties.

The only matter under Old Business was the potential Lease of Governor’s Hall. There are several candidates for the opportunity, and the finance committee recommended that the Commissioners interview all the applicants before deciding on which one should be approved. Commissioner Hanson recused himself from participation as he is a member of one of the applicant organizations. The matter was continued to December 17th for closed meeting interviews with all the applicants. As I have a conflict that day, I will not be able to participate in that process.

Several New Business Items were then brought forward for the Commissioners to Consider. Items 5-13 on the agenda were all approved on votes of 5-0. They were the following:

* $1,977 in proceeds from the auction of a forfeited vehicle were placed in the 2019 Police Department Equipment Budget
* $875 in proceeds of sales and donations to the K-9 Unit were placed in the 2019 Police department K-9 Budget
* $2,000 from the sale of a K-9 that will be going with his handler to work in Talbot County was appropriated to the General Fund K-9 Account and the Police Department K-9 Budget was increased by that amount
* The Budget Amendment for the Cambridge Waterfront Development Committee was deferred until a later meeting in order to clear up some uncertainties in the proposal.
* The Request from the City Attorney that City Council extend his firm’s current engagement under the same terms and conditions as currently exist (for which the city has already budgeted funds) was approved through June 30, 2019. Mr. MacLeod’s firm will be submitting a new proposal for FY 2020 based on anticipated usage of their services moving forward.
* The Contract for reconstruction of the 300 block of High Street was awarded to David A. Bramble, Inc. in the amount of $646,955.75 plus a contingency for unforeseen issues not to exceed 10%.

The Traffic and Safety Committee then brought forward 5 items for which action was proposed. After they were read and discussed, the 1st item – Beginning the public process to consider change Camelia Street between Greenwood Ave. and Cornish Dr. – was pulled, and the remaining four items were approved. They were

* Approve DPW creating a 3-way stop sign at the intersection of Boundary Ave. and Stone Boundary Rd. to assist with slowing the traffic on Boundary Ave.
* Approve DPW creating a 4-way stop at the intersection of Phillips Street and Robbins Street to assist in slowing traffic on Phillips Street.
* Approve DPW adding a stop sign at the end of Goodwill Road where it ties into Goodwill Ave. to slow down traffic
* Approve the addition of a street light on an existing pole near 420 Park Lane.

On December 17th between 2-4 p.m. will be interviews and discussion of the leasing of Governor’s Hall in a closed meeting. The City Council will also seek to hold a meeting with the County Council on December 20th from noon-2:00 p.m.

Following comments and some questions by the Commissioners and Mayor the meeting adjourned.