CAMBRIDGE MATTERS #32

By: Commissioner Steve Rideout

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The meeting started on time with the Mayor asking for a moment of silence, especially during this week of remembrance of the attack on America on September 11, 2001. Commissioner Hanson led the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was unanimously approved as submitted on my motion and second by Commissioner Hanson.

There were several citizens who spoke during the Public Comment portion of the meeting. It is encouraging to see more people attending our meetings. The first comments came from the Executive Director of the Cambridge Housing Authority.

They are planning to fund and install 5 cameras on Cornish Drive and 2 on Weaver Avenue for the safety of their community. They were seeking the city’s assistance in that effort which was approved on a vote of 5-0 on motion of Commissioner Sydnor that was Seconded by Commissioner Foster. The Executive Director then asked that City Council consider approving speed bumps in the area in order to help slow traffic. This request was referred to the staff at DPW on a vote of 5-0 for review and report back to City Council.

Adrian Holmes from AlphaGenesis Community Development Corporation and Barbara Seese from the Dorchester Center for the Arts thanked the Mayor, Council, and Staff for their help in the “Day of Resilience” programming that took place on Saturday. It was a very successful day and event. Herve Hamon, a member of city staff, was acknowledged several times during the meeting for his help.

Sharon Smith noted that the General Fund Analysis showed grants of $4.5 Million in FY 2018 and only $1.08 Million in FY 2019. Her concerns focus on our need to continue to work hard to seek more grant funding to support the work of the city. She also commented on Ordinance 1157 that had its first reading at the last meeting in August. It deals with the 50-foot setback of properties along Route 50. She opposes eliminating the setback even though there are properties that are closer to Rt. 50 than 50 feet.

Portia Johnson-Ennels then spoke on the CDBG Grant for the Pine Street Area and raised concerns about how long it has taken before any substantial work is being done on properties in the area. She asked about any success in finding a replacement for the prior Housing Expert whose contract was not renewed. Mr. Wheeler commented that during the past year much of the foundational work for this project was taking place in order to be ready to have a sustained and successful project.

On motion of Commissioner Cannon and Second of Commissioner Sydnor, the Consent Calendar was approved on a vote of 5-0. It included the following:

* The Meeting minutes of August 26th
* The Noise Ordinance Waiver for the Awaken Celebration Event
* The request of the “Concerned Citizens” to have a “Back to School BBQ and School Supplies” Event
* The request of the ADA Committee to send out an application and letter regarding vendor services for the upcoming ADA Fair.

In conjunction with Ordinance 1160, the Mayor opened the bids received for the 809 and 811 Fairmont Avenue parcels of land that are owned by the City. The bids were for $100 each. On a motion by Commissioner Hanson and seconded by me, after modifications were made, the purchaser agreed to pay $200 for each parcel, and Ordinance 1160 was read. City Council then agreed to the Request of Rufus Sampson to go on the property to prepare for his future building on the property. This request was condition on his paying the money promised, signing an agreement with the city about what he was permitted to do on the property pending settlement, and agreement to provide insurance to protect the city pending settlement. It is expected that the agreement will be completed and signed by September 11th.

There were no ordinances for second reading, so Old Business was taken up with Resolution 19-012 that approved the application for and acceptance of any money granted by a Maryland Community Block Grant – Special Loans for improvements to Cannery Park as part of the ongoing effort to improve the park and the adjacent Building F. After a Public Hearing where Richard Latka asked questions concerning the project, on Motion of Commissioner Cannon that was seconded by me, the request was approved on a vote of 5-0.

With New Business there were two requests for permission to discharge firearms in the city. One came from Dorchester County that needs to be able on an ongoing basis to try to minimize the number of deer that come on to the airport property and endanger planes and passengers taking off and landing at the airport. Chis Chisholm, the Airport Manager, made the presentation. The request was approved on a 5-0 vote conditioned on the County meeting all the additional requirements placed on the project.

George Brittingham requested permission during hunting season to hunt dear from 3 stands on his 150 Acre Property that is near the airport and about 500 yards from some housing. He wanted to be able to hunt with bow and arrow, shotgun, and muzzle loaded guns in order to reduce the number of Sika Deer that are endangering automobiles driving in that area and deer going on the airport property. He plans to give any venison to the needy through his church. Concerns were raised about the closeness of housing to the area of any hunting. After a full discussion and explanation, the request was approved on a vote of 5-0 on motion of Commissioner Hanson and second of Commissioner Sydnor for one year with a review next year and further conditioned on providing notice to the police chief of upcoming hunts.

The Police Department was then approved to receive $65.55 cash from Midshore Recyclers for sale of scrap metal with the money to be placed in the Police Event Fund. The budget was revised to add $1117.60 of city reserves to the Fire Department Budget for two purchase orders from last year that were delayed.

The Mayor then nominated Megan Nabb Holotik, Glenn Ford, Sr., and Andy Pasden for reappointment on the MUC until 2022. On motion of Commissioner Hanson and Seconded by Commissioner Cannon, the confirmation vote was 5-0. The Mayor then nominated Dr. Theresa Stafford for a full term on the Ethics Commission and Kisha Petticolis as the alternate member both for terms until 2023. On my Motion Seconded by Commissioner Sydnor, the two nominees were approved on votes of 5-0.

The Mayor and Commissioners then provided a variety of reports and upcoming events of interest to the City Council and the public. Upon the conclusion of the reports and a question by Michael Wheatley, the meeting was adjourned.

Thanks for reading.