



UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- Thursday, March 12, 2020
- Thursday, May 14, 2020
- Thursday, July 9, 2020
- Thursday, September 10, 2020
- Thursday, November 12, 2020-

*All Meetings will be held at 7:00 pm in the WHCP Meeting Room
516 Race Street, Cambridge, MD 21613*

All CAN Board meetings are open to the public. Everyone interested in CAN is invited to attend.

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CURRENT LINKS:

- CAN Board of Directors and Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
 - <https://cambridgecan.org/category/news/meetings/can-meeting-minutes/can-meeting-minutes-2019/>
 - Commissioner’s Corner –
 - Ward 1: Cambridge Matters: Messages from Commissioner Steve Rideout
<https://cambridgecan.org/category/news/commissioner-posts/>
- Note: CAN invites messages from all City Council Commissioners for its Newsletter and Website.*
- CAN Planning & Zoning Notes – <https://cambridgecan.org/category/news/p-and-z/>
 - CAN’s Website – <https://cambridgecan.org>
 - CAN on FaceBook – <https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeAssociationofNeighborhoods/>
 - Contact CAN – CambridgeCAN@yahoo.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – CAN 2020

The CAN board is getting ready for the New Year. This means lining up our priorities and projects for the coming months. Traditionally, CAN has been involved in monitoring City Council, the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission, and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) actions to ensure our members opinions are represented in their considerations. This takes a lot of effort in attending the meetings and following up with action when needed.

We also sponsor CAN JAM, our local music and picnic event, held at Long Wharf Park. Again, this effort takes a lot of time to coordinate and line up all the talent, vendors, tents, etc. needed to put on the event. We have been lucky with the weather and the wonderful musicians that perform for free.

Other activities of CAN include the Newsletter to let you know what's going on locally, a spring cleanup, street clean-ups, and helping needing neighbors with various projects. A CAN member has developed a listing of landlord properties in Cambridge and the number of violations outstanding by landlord and property. This will help us in our effort to improve neighborhood housing and, hopefully, improve the value of your home.

As we prepare for this year's activities, I would invite you to send suggestions to me or to any Board member to consider. Board members will be meeting in February to discuss our priorities and will discuss them at the March members meeting. Let us know your thinking and what is important to you.

Thanks,

Chuck McFadden, President

Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN), Ragtime31@gmail.com

CAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CAN's Annual Business Meeting on January 9, 2020, included the election of new members to the CAN Board of Directors. Current Board members and their terms of office are listed below.

President, Chuck McFadden, 2019 – 2021

Vice President, Roman Jesien, 2020 – 2022

Treasurer, Mary Ellen Jesien, 2019 – 2021

Secretary, Tom Puglisi, 2020 – 2022

Membership Director, Michelle Barnes, 2019 – 2021

Director, Andre Duerinckx, 2020 – 2022

Director, Rick Klepfer, 2020 – 2022

Director, Beth Kline, 2020 – 2022

Director, Sharon Smith, 2020 – 2022

Director, Dave Thatcher, 2019 – 2021

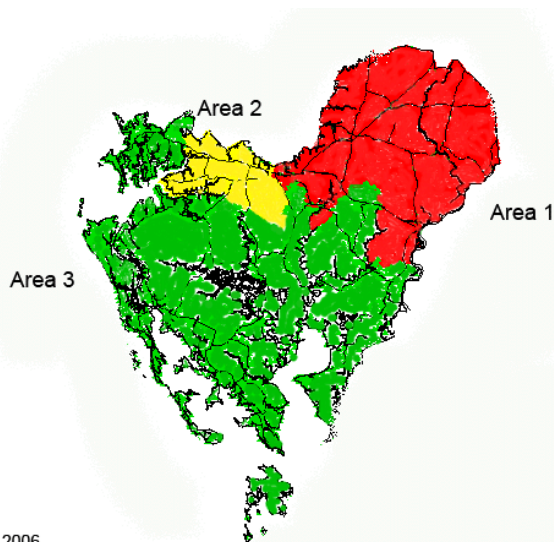
Director, Jane Weeks, 2020 – 2022

CAMBRIDGE REAL ESTATE TRENDS

by Fred & Marti Phillips-Patrick

2020 Property Value Assessments: The State of Maryland divides all the commercial and residential real estate properties in Dorchester County into three assessment areas, and re-assesses the properties in each area every three years on a rotating basis. This past year, the properties in Area 2 that include the city of Cambridge were reassessed. New assessment notices were mailed on December 27, 2019. The Notices showed the change in valuation over the last reassessment done three years ago.

The first map below shows Dorchester County's three "assessment areas." This map was provided by the State's website (SDAT 2006). The map appears possibly dated, though, as assessment Area 2 now extends south and east according to the Cambridge's own website. See map 2 for its Area 2 definition.



**Dorchester's 3 Assessment Areas
SDAT 2006**



**2020 Assessment Area 2 Map
ChooseCambridge website**

New Assessments and Property Taxes: Property tax assessment notices were mailed to Area 2 property owners in late December. The Notice of Assessment shows the old assessment of your home as well as the newly reassessed valuation. The total change in valuation is typically phased in over the next three years. These assessment valuations are used to determine your tax bill. For example, your tax bill in 2020 will be the 2020 assessed phased-in valuation times the property tax rate set for this year.

The assessment process typically uses property sales in area 2 over the last three years to arrive at an estimates of market values. The lag time between the purchase price and when it's factored into the assessment explains why the assessed value of a home is often lower than the actual market value.

If you think that your assessed value overstates the market value of your home, you can appeal. The first step is to file your appeal either online, or by replying to the Notice of Assessment by signing and returning the appeal form. The deadline to file an appeal is February 10, 2020.

For Dorchester County, the increase in Area 2 reassessed property valuations averaged 7.9% (versus state-wide this year at 8.9%). Dorchester Area 2 reassessed residential properties increased 8.4% (versus state-wide at 7.3%) and, for Commercial, 6.5% (versus state-wide at 13.5%).

Sales: Currently, according to Realtor.com, there are 105 homes for sale in the *Cambridge area*. They include 88 single family homes and 17 condos and townhomes. The average listing price was \$200K and the median sold price was \$180K. Please note not all these sales are inside the city limits, although they have a Cambridge address.

In December, according to Realtor.com, 19 single-family homes and condo sales were completed, varying in price from \$565,000 to \$40,000. They are:

507 High St, \$148K	5358 Aireys Rd, \$40K	5153 Paw Paw Rd, \$250K
8 Shady Dr, \$223K	115 Sailors Ln, \$180K	408 Bayly Ave, \$133K
12 Nanticoke Rd, \$145K	700 Cattail Cv Unit 112, \$114K	6123 Twin Pt Cove Rd, \$400K
5314 Backwoods Dr, \$60K	111 Belvedere Ave, \$165K	202 Tidewater Dr, \$165K
1605 Stone Boundary Rd, \$180K	102 Sunburst Hwy, \$89K	306 Oakley St, \$190K
5507 Bonnie Brook Rd, \$157K	5944 Horns Point Rd, \$565K	32 Algonquin Rd, \$229K
1107 Locust St, \$50K		

Median Sales Price: Given the relatively small number of sales, median sales prices can vary quite a bit from month to month. Since November, 2013, monthly median sales prices have been as high as \$222,000 in February of this year, and as low as \$104,250 in June of 2015. The median sales price for homes in Cambridge over the last month was \$165K, based on the above 19 home sales.

Home Values: Zillow estimates the median home values (not sales prices) over time. According to a Zillow report, the median home value in the Cambridge area is \$145,066. Cambridge area home values have gone up 2.9% over the past year and Zillow predicts they will rise 0.1% within the next year. The median price of homes currently listed in the Cambridge area is \$217,500.

CITY-COUNTY UPDATE

by Sharon Smith

A joint City/County Council meeting was held at 4:00 pm on January 6, 2020, to host Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt. Secretary Holt provided an update on several projects for Cambridge that his department is supporting.

1. Packing House/Cannery Park - The lead tenant will be the Department of Housing & Community Development Eastern Shore office, which is currently located on Race St. The office will expand its services to include career development and supporting home ownership, in addition to the current housing vouchers program. A state-of-the-art audio-video studio will also be added. Cannery Park just received a \$510M grant from his office and a \$2M Federal grant is being pursued.
2. Sailwinds/Hospital Property. Shore Health System just purchased property at Cambridge Marketplace for its new healthcare facility. Secretary Hold envisions the Sailwinds/Hospital property to include

senior housing, a small boutique hotel, residential, shops, and restaurants. (A similar proposal was rejected by residents in August 2015.) He wants the development to draw tourists.

3. Maces' Lane School. Meeting with the Cal Ripkin Foundation on January 10th, hoping they will rebuild the gymnasium for use as a community center.
4. Hearn Building. Under new ownership as of last fall. Repairs are ongoing.
5. Pine Street Revitalization. Still looking at opportunities to engage real estate developers in a win-win to create owner-occupied renovated housing.
6. Beasley Store at Pine & Wells Streets. Still moving forward on supporting its development.

The Mayor added that on December 16, 2019, the City was awarded a total of \$1,505,000 in grants for various projects.

Please realize that these comments are my personal understanding of what transpired.

CAN's MISSION & MEMBERSHIP

The Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN) fosters neighborhood cohesion and community involvement to (a) enhance the quality of community life for all residents of Cambridge through community events, social activities, and neighborly assistance; and (b) protect and enhance the value of properties in Cambridge by improving building and zoning codes, supporting adherence to those codes, and engaging constructively with City Government, including the Historic Preservation Commission.

CAN welcomes members from **any and all Cambridge neighborhoods** who are interested in organizing and working together, building a diverse membership reflecting the diversity of Cambridge residents. Membership information is available on the CAN website at <https://cambridgecan.org/join-can/>

- **CAN Planning & Zoning Notes** – <https://cambridgecan.org/category/news/p-and-z/>
 - **CAN's Website** – <https://cambridgecan.org>
 - **CAN on FaceBook** – <https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeAssociationofNeighborhoods/>
 - **Contact CAN** – CambridgeCAN@yahoo.com
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CAN HOUSING QUALITY COMMITTEE – PLANNING AND ZONING ISSUES

The Housing Quality Committee monitors issues affecting the quality of housing and the maintenance of property values in the City, including code enforcement. Committee members attend Planning Commission meetings to monitor zoning-related issues and report the information to the Board and Membership. *Please contact* Chuck McFadden at Ragtime31@gmail.com to volunteer.

POWER WASHER AVAILABLE

CAN has an electric power washer available to members. Contact Chuck McFadden at Ragtime31@gmail.com if you would like to borrow it for a project.

CAN NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SOCIAL EVENTS & 'NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS'

"Neighborhoods" are organized by small groups willing to work together to address neighborhood issues through small social events and "neighbor-helping-neighbor" activities. The **Social Events Subcommittee** organizes community-wide events. *Contact Chuck McFadden at Ragtime31@gmail.com to volunteer.*

CAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE – WRITERS NEEDED

CAN'S Communications Committee desperately needs **writers** and **photographers** to develop articles about CAN and its activities, get them published in local newspapers, and have them promoted by local media *Please contact Tom Puglisi at tom.puglisi@comcast.net to volunteer.*

COMMUNITY NEWS – COOPERATING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

EMPOWERMENT CENTER UPDATE

by Julia Barker

The Empowerment Center on Pine Street is a non-profit, multi-use facility located at 615 Pine Street in the Pine Street Community. Near Cedar Street and blocks from Race Street, the "Center" was built in the late 1990s to serve the community as a meeting place and site for programs. The Pine Street Community has been a continuously occupied African-American neighborhood since Thomas Jefferson was president and recently earned a place on the National Register of Historic Places.

A seven member board (Carlton Stanley, Chair; Joyce Green, Vice Chair; Leslie Bishop, Secretary; Christina Driscoll, Treasurer; and Directors Julia Barker, Bill Epps, and Mary Losty comprise the Pine Street Committee which oversees use and care of the building. Although the city of Cambridge owns the building, the Center's Board is responsible for paying for utilities, cleaning, and purchasing other necessary items. A large multipurpose room at the Center is available for rental for special events, as well as meetings for organizations. Rental income supplements the Center's budget which is primarily funded by grants, donations, and volunteer fundraising activities.

The After School Club is the largest and most important program the Center operates and serves neighborhood children from ages 5 to 12. With 30 or more children enrolled annually, this critical program is well attended with 25 to 27 children served daily. This all-volunteer-led after school program runs 4 days a week (M-Th.) from 3:00 to 5:15 pm. Joyce Green is the Program Director, and Julia Barker, a retired Special Education teacher, is the Educational Director. Our primary goal is to provide supplemental and educational enrichment for all the kids attending as well as some fun activities. The Maryland Food Bank provides a meal each day.

As part of this daily program, the children are encouraged to read the books they bring from school or to choose one from our library. Sometimes a volunteer will read to a child or a small group. The Center also has a media resource room with 8 computers, which are always in high demand. Other activities include arts and crafts, Leggos, Play-Doh, and board games. One of our Board members, Ms. Christina, performs a cooking

activity once a month and also makes sure our kids have healthy snacks when they arrive after school. A piano and 2 keyboards were recently donated to the Center so that we can start music lessons for those who are interested. Volunteer music instructors are always welcome. In February, Mr. John Dabney, a volunteer who works at the library, will start a Leggos robotics club for those who are interested in STEM activities. The robotics kits cost about \$100 for each group of 4 kids and the Leggos cost about \$120 for the whole group. Donations are greatly needed to fund this important STEM teaching activity.

The Center also operates a 6-week summer camp which serves 40 to 50 kids, Mon. thru Thursday. The summer camp is staffed with paid counselors/teachers, assistants, and food servers. We need to raise about \$20,000 to fund this year's summer camp which will include several field trips, if possible, to Washington D.C. or Baltimore museums. We also take a trip on the last day of summer camp to Ocean City. Many of the children who attend this community camp would have no other place to go during the summer. We charge a \$60 fee to parents, but never turn anyone away. We provide need-based scholarships for any who can't afford to pay. The actual cost per child is about \$500.

Our needs: Although most of the Center's programs are run using volunteers, funds are needed and essential to keeping our program going. Volunteers are also needed to work with our children and to lead critical educational and some fun activities. Notably, no regular volunteer commitment is needed. Volunteers can come once, weekly, or monthly. We would be very grateful to anyone who could provide some music lessons or teach art, gardening when the weather gets better, or other educational activities including just coming to read to a child. We are also looking for someone with computer savvy to maintain our computers, or to help landscape around the building. Please also contact us if you can donate working laptop computers, a printer/scanner, or beanbag chairs for the library among other items.

If anyone would like to tour of the Empowerment Center, volunteer, or just talk about the wonderful and important work being done here, please call Julia Barker at 410-303-0142. Notably, we always welcome donations to help us fund this important work that helps the children of Cambridge. Anyone who would like to make a monetary donation to help us purchase these items or to help with summer camp costs, please send a check made out to the "The Pine Street Committee" and mail it to The Pine Street Committee, P.O.Box 394, Cambridge, Md. 21613.

Please save the date: On, May 2 we will host a special open house to show off our programs.



MIDSHORE MEALS TIL MONDAY

Mid Shore Meals 'til Monday sends food home over the weekends all year round for nearly 250 food-insecure children in Dorchester County. During these summer months, we provide food to children attending summer school at all elementary schools, the Maces Lane STEM program, the Empowerment Center (Flagg Camp), the Judy Center, and New Beginnings, as well as children whose parents are counseled at Clearview Professional Center. For additional information, please visit our Facebook page or our website at <http://www.Midshoremealstilmonday.org>, or call Leslie Bishop, Director, at 703 371-5191.



SHORERIVERS

ShoreRivers is taking its water quality monitoring data to the next level with its RiverWatch platform, which allows the public to see grades for the sampling stations as data are collected throughout the sampling season. Read about river news, events, and water quality monitoring at: <https://www.shorerivers.org>.

ADA COMMITTEE NEEDS ADULT VOLUNTEERS FOR SIDEWALK SURVEY

Under a new collaboration between the City of Cambridge and Dorchester County Public Schools (DCPS), high school students are participating in a survey of the City's sidewalks, verifying compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Design Standards for Accessibility from the Department of Justice. The students are using a Geographic Information System (GIS) application developed by City employee Scott Shores. GIS is a software program widely used in various practical business data analysis applications. Education about the issues facing people with disabilities, as well as the use of technology such as GIS, provide students with both a window into their future as members of society and valuable training as young professionals. **Adults are needed to help guide the students as they conduct the survey.** Please contact Tom Puglisi at tom.puglisi@comcast.net if you are willing to help.



CLEAN UP CAMBRIDGE INITIATIVE

CAN member Barbara Knepp and her associates in **Clean Up Cambridge MD** are planning a series of neighborhood cleanup activities in coming months. Barbara reports that responses on Nextdoor and Facebook have been overwhelmingly positive, and neighbors from ALL OVER THE CITY are offering help! Shannon Thorpe maintains the Facebook page (**Clean Up Cambridge MD**). Make sure to "like it" and PLEASE share it with ALL of your Facebook friends.

Barbara promotes **Clean Up Cambridge MD** on Nextdoor where she announces the group's activities and planned clean ups. Barbara reports that Minty's has offered to help provide supplies (gloves/bags) and a meeting place after the clean up for coffee, and ShoreRivers has also offered to help with supplies. The group will make arrangements with the City for the bags to be collected, but they need YOU to spread the word and help identify and prioritize the areas in need. No job is too small or too big!

Clean Up Cambridge MD also hopes to partner with Shore Rivers on a city-wide cleanup. The date has not been yet finalized, but they hope to announce the date soon. The group is also exploring the possibility of implementing a tree planting program. Barbara will have more information about that soon.

Please contact Barbara on Nextdoor or Shannon on Facebook if you would like to help. Stay tuned for more information.

