

**Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN)
Notes on Cambridge City Council Meeting
Monday, February 8, 2021, Virtual Meeting, 6:00 pm**

Submitted by Alison Kennedy

Public Comment

Discussion about Circles Dorchester County, a community driven program, where the County is partnering with social services and other organizations to reduce poverty. It involves training people to become Circle Leaders to work with impoverished individuals. The philosophy of the Circles Program is to have the Circle Leaders work with the impoverished to build trust which will help change lives. There is a website which provides more detail about the program, circlesdorchester.org. Right now, the program has 8 people in training to be leaders. The program is looking for more people interested in training to be Circle Leaders. They would like to have at least 10 trained leaders to volunteer on resource teams. The training lasts for 12 weeks.

Consent Calendar

Council members went over the Consent Calendar and events requesting the use of Long Wharf for public and private events. These events include a community music festival and a wedding among others. The use of Long Wharf for these events was approved.

The first meeting in March will discuss Ordinance 1171 involving real estate property credit. There will be a public hearing on this ordinance which will be advertised in the paper and on social media.

Old Business

Conversation with Larry White, a volunteer with extensive background who is working with city engineers and FEMA on Hazard and Flood Mitigation in Cambridge. Mr. White has been working on this project for 1 year. A master planning grant was applied for and received for addressing sea level rise in Cambridge. There is published data that the sea level will rise 2 feet by 2050 and 5.7 feet by 2100. The master plan is being designed to include both “green and gray” solutions. The “gray” would involve walls and/or levees in combination with the “green” which would be more “natural” strategies (e.g. a bike path on top of a levee, as has been done successfully in the Netherlands). The project plans to incorporate long term solutions. One solution is called the “Living Shore” which was used in reinforcing Pink Pond’s sea walls to prevent flooding. One third of the grant

money, will be dedicated to Phase 1 of this project which is \$58,000. All funding is being provided by grants. The total grant provided by FEMA is \$250,000. Mr. White says they are hoping to have a master plan by October 21, 2021.

Brian Roche, the Commissioner for Ward 1, called in with a question about sea walls. He stated that people living in his ward have trouble with water streaming onto their properties and collecting there. The water does not drain off. Mr. White explained that a lot of “fill” was used to reinforce the sea walls in Cambridge. There will be a drainage plan as part of the overall master plan for hazard and flood mitigation. The issues involve a mix of storm water and river water. Most likely the plan will involve the building of a Pump Station. Mr. White cited that Virginia has a pump station as part of their flood planning. It is successful and will serve as an appropriate model to address the drainage issues in Cambridge.

Public Comment

A non-competitive grant for the Maces Lane Community Center will be applied for in the spring '21 for Phase 1.

A person called in asking about more details on the housing for the Pine Street Project. The mayor told her to email him and he could provide her with details.

One of the Council members said that there should be community members on the Pine Street Committee since they will be directly impacted.

New Business – Review of Document

- 1) There were language changes made to Resolution 21-03, concerning the Technology Committee. Applications will be sent out in March '21 for tech specialists. Approved.
- 2) There were language changes made to Resolution 21-04, concerning the Traffic and Safety Committee. Language was changed that the Committee should consider all forms of traffic – vehicular, pedestrian, people moving around in non-motorized vehicles, etc, when making decisions. Approved.
- 3) Ordinance for the police and fire departments was reviewed. Money will be raised for both the police and fire departments of Cambridge. Tax credits will help with this. Both departments need more members. There are 12 fire dept life members in Cambridge right now. The police dept has hovered around 50 members for the last 10-15 years. Response time is quicker if most of the members live in town which is not the case right now. A proposal of a 5-year contract for police officers was made to be used since it costs \$45,000 to train one police officer. Brian Roche of Ward 1

proposed having a review of the ordinance over time to see if it is working as intended.

- 4) A Council member asked if there was a way to delay/reduce/discard rent spending during the pandemic. At this time, there is litigation by landlords in Baltimore. It was decided that this was not a good time to address the issue because they would be drawn into the Baltimore litigation.

Public Comments

2 new restaurants opened up in the center of town - Bombay Social in the former "Stoked" location and Lil Bitta Bull.

First caller interested in progress of the Pine Street Project. Caller has been involved with the improvements needed to the Bradford House. She reiterated that these changes are still needed there.

Second caller interested in progress of the Pine Street Project. Caller said that originally, there were supposed to be more housing options offered besides Habitat for Humanity. More housing options were supposed to be offered to construction businesses in Cambridge. The Mayor said that this was an issue for the Housing Commission specialist and asked the caller to contact that person.

The meeting was closed with this message from the Mayor. Mayor repeated that the tax credits will help the police and fire departments. Cambridge cannot afford to have dedicated departments at this time. He believes that both departments need experienced members. He acknowledged that Cambridge is growing and it is important to strengthen the safety here. He admits that there has been a lot of confusion and misinformation in the past. However, the Council is working to rectify this by getting consistent stable sources of news to the citizens of Cambridge.