



Building a Better Community, Block by Block

Newsletter #21.1

February 2021

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Contingent Upon COVID-19 Restrictions: Virtual Meetings will be announced at least one week in advance In-Person 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
 - o https://cambridgecan.org/category/meetings/can-meetings-2021/
- Commissioners' Corner
 - Messages from City Council Commissioners
 <u>https://cambridgecan.org/category/news/commissioner-posts/</u>

 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 <u>https://cambridgecan.org</u>
- CAN on FaceBook https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeAssociationofNeighborhoods/
- Contact CAN <u>CambridgeCAN@yahoo.com</u>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Welcome to CAN!

This January, CAN had a surge in membership and I would like to welcome the 28 new members to our organization. The new members bring the CAN total to 140 members and counting. The Board is very pleased with the increase but we are faced with some tough issues for a community civic association during these times of COVID.

We have traditionally had numerous events that gathered people together in social events like CAN Jam, ice cream socials and work groups to do clean up and assist neighbors. This all has changed with the pandemic and CAN has been trying hard to assist the community without endangering people. So we have been stressing reporting on City activities such as City Council meetings and meetings of the Planning & Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). We would like to expand that reporting to include the County meetings. We are a partner with WHCP, the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce, the Dorchester Banner, and the Dorchester Star in *Cambridge Community Conversations* and continue to track rental units, landlord actions and home sales. We also started a new committee on the City Marina, which had its first meeting last month.

All of this is to say to the new members (and old) that we are open to new ideas of what we should be involved with as a civic association. We would invite you to volunteer with any of the on-going activities, and we would like your suggestions as to what we should be involved with in the community.

If you have ideas for CAN, please forward them to me, Chuck McFadden at <u>Ragtime31@gmail.com</u>. Thanks for joining!

Chuck McFadden, President Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN) <u>Ragtime31@gmail.com</u>

CAN MARINA COMMITTEE

CAN had the first meeting of its new Marina Committee in January, 2021. The purposes of this committee are to:

- 1. Understand the facts how many slips, what size, how many are occupied, depth of water, etc.;
- 2. Make suggestions to Oasis (the management company) and the City for improvements that are financially practical and doable; and
- 3. Get information out to members as to what is going on at the Marina.

The first meeting was an organizational meeting but we did have some results. We have contacted the Yacht Club to see if they would like to have someone on the Committee. We contacted the City for the same reason, and Patrick Comisky, the City manager, volunteered to give us guidance.

We also obtained a copy of the grant that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) gave the City this year. The \$250,000 grant is to be used for:

- 1. Modifications to existing finger piers on unused 60' and 50' boat slips to accommodate smaller boats (the smaller slips are almost entirely rented while there are only a couple of the larger slips rented);
- 2. An engineering study of the excessive wave action within the Marina;
- 3. Engineering design and permitting for Piers E, F, and H;
- 4. Replacement of the piling caps; and finally,
- 5. Asphalt paving repairs in the parking lot.

It is expected that the work will be completed by June 30, 2021. It should be **noted that the City did not have to put up any funds** to get this grant from the State.

Members of the CAN Marina Committee are: Steve Gross, Rick Klepfer, George Vojtech, Tom Eliason, Chuck McFadden and Patrick Comisky. If you have ideas on the Marina, please send them to Chuck McFadden, <u>Ragtime31@gmail.com</u>.

Chuck McFadden, President Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN) <u>Ragtime31@gmail.com</u>

CAMBRIDGE REAL ESTATE TRENDS

By Fred and Martha Phillips-Patrick

US Housing Market in 2020: According to CoreLogic, "The housing market exceeded expectations in 2020, closing out the year with the highest annual home price gain since February 2014 in December at 9.2%. Despite a blip in April, home-purchase demand surged as record-low mortgage rates persuaded first-time homebuyers to enter the market. Meanwhile, the consequences of the pandemic were seen in the dwindling supply of homes — dropping, on average, 24% below 2019 levels — as homeowners delayed selling. These factors translated to significant home price growth in 2020, surpassing the previous year's levels with an average monthly year-over-year gain of 5.7%, compared with 3.8% in 2019."

Two factors driving the national housing market are a shortage of available housing inventory and extremely low mortgage interest rates. These factors have led to a sharp rise in home prices. Nationally, home sales this year have risen to a 14-year high. List prices are nearly 13 percent higher than last year. How have these national trends been reflected in the Cambridge market?

Cambridge Market Update: According to Realtor.com's most recent data, the median list price of homes in Cambridge was \$192.5K in November 2020, but rose to \$200K in December. Homes in Cambridge sold for approximately the asking price on average in November 2020 as well as in December (just 1.84% below asking price). On average, homes in Cambridge sell after just 98 days on the market.

Sales: Currently, according to Realtor.com, as of January 2021, there are 84 homes for sale (71 single family homes and 13 condos and townhomes) in the Cambridge area, compared with 109 in November. The median sold price in October hit a high point of \$254.5K in October; in November it was \$180k, and in December it was back up to \$230K.

According to Realtor.com, 17 single family, townhouses, and condo sales were completed in January, 2021, varying in price from **\$70.K** to **\$1,225K**. They are:

- 502 Bayly Rd, \$159.9K 602 Glasgow St, \$169.9K 301 Old Squaw Ct, \$166K 2074 Dailsville Rd, \$200K **5202 Heron Rd, \$1,225K** 5232 Ragged Point Rd, \$475K
- 307 Mill St, \$495K 7 Willis St, \$230K 142 Regulator Dr N, \$272.9K 206 Henry St, \$150K 401 Robbins Farm Rd, \$245K
- 207 Buena Vista Ave, \$223.9K 5907 Heather Ln, \$414.9K 123 Teal Ln, \$255K 104 Cambridge Lndg Unit A, \$495K **727 Rigby Ave, \$70.2K** 5020 Bucktown Rd, \$269K

Median Sales Price: Given the relatively small number of sales, median sales price can vary quite a bit from month to month. Since November 2013, monthly median sales prices have been as low as \$104K in June of 2015, as high as \$254.5K this past October, and \$180K in November, and now \$245K in January.

Home Values: According to the most recent data on Long and Foster, the median home value in Cambridge is now \$212.5K. This is higher than the Dorchester County median home value of \$150,000. The national median home value is \$231,815. Approximately 39% of Cambridge homes are owner-occupied, compared to 45% rented, while 16% are vacant. According to Zillow, Cambridge home values increased about 2.4% in 2020.

Conclusion: 17 houses, townhouses, and condos (28 in September, 37 in October, 24 in November, 41 in December) have sold in January; the median sales price has increased, and there are fewer homes for sale. 2021 should be an interesting year for Cambridge property values.

CAMBRIDGE FUN FACTS AND LOCAL LORE

By Martha Phillips-Patrick

Yogananda Pittman.

Yogananda Pittman, 1991 South Dorchester High School and Morgan State University graduate was named Acting US Capital Police Chief in January after the resignation of former Chief Steven Sund. Congratulations!

A Love Story for the February Issue

provided by Melanie Merryweather, historian parishioner of Christ Church

Williamina Elizabeth Smith Goldsborough lived from 1762 to 1790 and is buried in the graveyard at Christ Episcopal Church in Cambridge. Here is her story: Williamina was the wife of Charles Goldsborough of Horns Point and daughter of the Rev. Dr. William Smith, first provost of the University of Pennsylvania and first president of Washington College and author of the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer which is still used today as adopted in 1789.

At a young age, Williamina Smith became engaged to Dr. Thomas Cradock (1752-1821), son of the Reverend Thomas Cradock, Rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Garrison Forest. When his suit for the hand of Williamina was frowned upon by her father, in part because Dr. Cradock's father had refused to support his future father-in-law's candidacy for Bishop of Maryland, the young couple made plans to elope; but at the last minute Williamina, "fearing her father's displeasure," had second thoughts and backed out. Afterward she

sent Dr. Cradock a miniature portrait ring, said to have been painted by Major Andre, that the good doctor retained until the day of his death.

Williamina then returned to Chestertown to be with her family. On one especially rainy day this lively young lady when walking in the mud of the unpaved Chestertown streets lost one shoe in the mud. As she was struggling to cope, a young man asked her what she was doing. Her retort was "putting my best foot forward." That man was Charles Goldsborough son of the Hon. Robert and Sarah Yerbury Goldsborough of Dorchester County, whom Williamina married on May 15, 1783. Charles and Williamina had three young children when she tragically died in 1790 at only 28 years of age. Her bereaved parents Rev. Dr. and Mrs. William Smith came to Christ Church and placed her monument in the graveyard where it still stands today.

But the story doesn't end here! To get back to Williamina's first love Dr. Thomas Cradock. Although a great society figure and able physician, he never married but devoted himself to his estate Trentham and to his church where he served as a vestryman for many years. The portrait ring that Williamina had had painted for him to remember her by remained in his possession and that of his nephew's family for several generations until 1950 when his great, great nephew donated it to the Maryland Historical Society.

To our readers: If you know any interesting factoids about our fair city, please let us know so we can include them in future issues.



CAMBRIDGE CORNER – CITY COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC) – Wednesday, January 20, 2021, Virtual Meeting, 6:00 pm By Sharon Smith

The January 2021 monthly meeting of the HPC was held on Wednesday, January 20th at 6:00 pm via conference call. Audio of the meeting may be heard at <u>https://townhallstreams.com/towns/cambridgemd</u> (No December, 2020 meeting was held.)

Five applications were reviewed and all were granted Certificate(s) of Appropriateness (CoAs). It was noted that one additional case was granted administrative approval by City staff. One other case received an informal review.

Each January, the HPC elects its Chair and Vice Chair for the year. George Vojtech, Chair, and Susan Morgan, Vice Chair, were reelected to their positions.

HPC meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month; the next meeting is scheduled for February, 17, 2021.

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS - Monday, January 25, 2021, Virtual Meeting, 6:00 pm By Alison Kennedy

Public Comment

Several citizens phoned in about concerns over the use of grant money. Citizens were questioning why grant money was being used to upgrade City Hall with an elevator and being taken away from the Pine Street Project. It was explained that there were 2 separate grants applied for; one for Pine Street Project and one for City Hall improvements. To date there has been 1.2 MM committed to the Pine Street Project in Phase 1 (This includes grant money, supplements from the city and Habitat for Humanity). Phase 2 expenditures are anticipated to be \$540,000 from the grant above.

There was a comment from City Council members that the previous Council took money from the Community Legacy Grant for the demolition on Race Street. That is permissible and legal for them to do. City Council questioned why there were no comments at the public hearing on the grant money. It was said that the hearings are published in the Star Democrat and on social media. City Council questioned why hearings were not advertised in the Dorchester Star. It was explained that the Star Democrat has a reliable and regular printing schedule and the Dorchester Star does not. In addition, the Dorchester Star is not sufficient to be used for public hearing advertisements by the State.

Old Business

No old business

New Business

- 1. Want to buy new street sweeper. Last one purchased 10-12 years ago. Personnel is available to run both old and new sweepers. No need to hire anyone else for it. Motion approved for purchase.
- 2. Historic marker placed at 207 Race Street. Approved.
- 3. Maces Lane and Washington Streets problem with safety crossing at this intersection. Issues blocked views, parking problems; pedestrians crossing street, kids going to school, car travel. Citizen called in that a crossing guard is needed for the children traveling to and from school.

Public Comment

The 1C Phase of the COVID-19 vaccinations begins 1/25/21.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Father, Woodworker, Sailor, Triathlete, Coach, Holistic Caregiver, Writer, and Lover of People & Flowers — Mike Keene

By Ellie Ludvigsen

These are just a few of the labels that could be attached to Michael J Keene, our new and still part-time neighbor at 108 Choptank Ave. Mike bought 108 in March of this year and immediately started making small but significant improvements on that neglected old lady. An open door, windows that can be seen through, flowers by the front steps, a sunflower bench on the porch – and that's just a few things on the outside.

Mike even managed to excite the neighbors enough for an impromptu "block party" while he and some helpers took down the unsightly tall tree stump in his front yard. Neighbors, as always, offered much ridiculous advice, jeered appropriately when ropes broke or other mishaps took place, and cheered long and hard when the dead tree finally came down. Over the next couple of days, the tree was chunked and those chunks are now temporarily or permanently decorating the porch and surrounds. All the wood will be used. The neighbors appreciated the fabulous entertainment, the elimination of the unsightly tree, the bushes/landscaping that took its place, and the property change of attitude. Mike, hopefully, appreciated his initiation to the block.

Plans for the inside house renovation are still in their infancy. Mike's first priority is to obtain a permit for a work and storage shed for his woodworking tools and wooden boat restoration passion. He owns a Chesapeake Bay Long Sailing Canoe built in the 1800's that also needs to fit in-between those shed walls. He has started revising plans and is hoping to have the permits completed within the next few months. Once the shed completed, he will begin paying more attention to the house itself. He does not plan on moving here full-time until the house structure has been fully fortified.

Since 1989, Mike has lived and worked in Wittman, Maryland. He is a wooden boat restorer, a passion that has grown exponentially since becoming enthralled by a boat builder as a child. He has also always wanted to be a boat builder but so far has only been able to build a few smaller wooden boats. Growing up on the Eastern Shore in Maryland, he has salt and brackish water running through his veins. His is an accomplished sailor and has raced and pleasure sailed on the Choptank, Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic over to Bermuda.

Mike's family came to Maryland in the mid-1600's. His great great grandmother was born in the Applegarth House on Hip Roof and Smithfield Roads that still stands today. His grandfather and great aunts went there for summer fun via the ferry system from the cities. During the Civil War, prior to them getting married, his great, great grandmother stayed in a nunnery in Louisiana and his great, great grandfather became the Medical Examiner for the State of Maryland in Baltimore. His ancestors started the Catholic Church in Cambridge.

Mike, the youngest of three children, was born in Baltimore but the family moved to Easton in 1971. While the family was waiting for their new home to be built there, they had planned on spending the summer living on Mill Street in Cambridge directly behind 108 Choptank Ave. It burned down immediately before they were scheduled to move in. He attended Saints Peter and Paul Parish school from 1st through 12th grades. He was an altar boy and was part of the funeral crew. That meant every time there was a funeral during school hours, he would be called out for duty. When the funeral finished the boys would be given \$2. They then skipped out from classes to buy hamburgers, sodas, etc. Many children from Cambridge went to school at Saints. Peter and Paul Parish school. Since spending more time in Cambridge again, he has been able to reconnect with some of those friends.

Mike has been a runner since before 2000 but became a triathlete in 2008. He has been an active member of the Cambridge Multi-Sport Association since 2008, which was also the year of his first Eagleman competition. As his love of pushing his body to the limits grows, so has his commitment to holistic treatments. He is in the process of transitioning into doing more coaching of triathletes and swimmers. He is working towards certification as a yoga instructor and of other forms of alternative care. After spinal surgery in December, he has quickly transitioned back to pain-free life and soon will be as good as new.

He loves being a father to his two "great" daughters, Olivia and Eleanora, ages 25 & 28. He is also close to his two older sisters. Mike is looking forward to whatever this new phase of his life will become. As a community, we are fortunate to have him as a new neighbor who is steeped in the history of the area, has lived on the Eastern Shore since shortly after birth, and has the energy, interest, and skills to add so much to this community and town. His friendly smile, enjoyment of people, sense of humor, and depth of character will be valued greatly over the long run.



COMMENTARY

Poopy New Year

by Lynn Stewart

It's February, a second-fiddle month – the calendar on the wall still shiny, the lofty New Year's resolutions fallen by the wayside. The year is still young enough, unique enough, fresh enough for other opportunities. Maybe it's goals instead of resolutions. Or aspirations to do better today than we did yesterday. For me, write a few more words, have one less piece of chocolate, run one more mile.

Going forward in 2021, I really need to take a deep breath and reign in the frustration I feel every time I encounter a pile of dog poop that my dog didn't drop. I'm a relatively new dog owner—we welcomed our rescue, Jack, into our lives in October. As a runner, I have covered a lot of ground in Cambridge over the past few years; I'm slow but still too fast to notice the poop. Now that I'm walking Jack twice a day, I have time and opportunity to stop and smell the roses, or in this case, stop and see the poop.

I try to give people the benefit of the doubt, telling myself that perhaps the piles of poop I'm encountering are from stray dogs, raccoons, foxes, or the Choptank's version of the Loch Ness Monster (yes, some of the poop seems that big...). A las, the reality is that some people don't pick up after their dog. And I'm noticing a lot of poop. Big piles. Little piles. Poop trails — as if the dog couldn't quite decide on a spot.

In addition to looking ugly and smelling bad, dog poop poses a litany of threats to both dogs and humans alike. Even if a dog is asymptomatic, its poop could still carry parasites and bacteria. Some common ones: roundworms, hookworms, E. coli, Salmonella, Giardia, Parvovirus. Plus, after a rainstorm, the runoff pollutes our beautiful Choptank River.

I wish I could develop a creative solution. Shy of requiring dog owners to register their dog's DNA or confronting a dog owner at the moment — I'm at a loss. Our city makes it easy and convenient to pick up after our dogs. Doggie waste stations dot the town. A few of my favorites: the Visitor Center, Long Warf, Gerry Boyle Park, the Robbins Y. There are also many trash cans, like the ones lining the promenade at Sailwinds. Since we've had Jack, we've never even had to buy a roll of poop bags; I always grab an extra from the many stations throughout Cambridge. I walk out of my house with a waste bag. When Jack poops, I use the bag to pick it up. Depending on my route, I'll toss the bag into one of the bins, then grab another bag. If I'm almost home and have missed my opportunity to dump the load, well, I carry it home and put it in a bin there. The bottom line is that there's no excuse for a dog owner not picking up the poop.

I realize I'm preaching to the choir here. I'm confident that every pet owner reading this cleans up their dog's poop. So, what can we do? Perhaps it's as simple as looking at the new, one-month-young year and committing to collectively trying to develop some practical solutions to this poopy problem. Maybe it's a three-part approach. First: see something, say something...politely. Second: take a photo and post it on NextDoor (public shaming...). Third: identify any areas that may need additional doggie waste stations.

COMMUNITY NEWS – COOPERATING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION – CWDI WATCH PARTY AND SURVEY UPDATE

Join us on Wednesday, February 10 at 7:00 pm for a conversation about development along the Cambridge Waterfront. We will watch a Ted Talk presented by Ed McMahon on The Power of Uniqueness. Then we will hear from Cambridge Waterfront Development Inc (CWDI). Jeff Powell of CWDI will lead the discussion on your thoughts about McMahon's presentation and the results of the survey conducted by CWDI

Sponsored by CAN, WHCP Radio, the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce, the Dorchester Banner, and the Dorchester Star. Broadcast Live on WHCP at 101.5 FM or via Facebook LIVE at: <u>https://www.facebook.com/WHCPRadio/live/</u> or via YouTube at: <u>https://youtu.be/xAMO3tKAbro</u>



MIDSHORE MEALS TIL MONDAY

MidShore Meals 'til Monday sends food home over the weekends all year round for nearly 250 foodinsecure children in Dorchester County. During summer months, they 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. During a "normal" month, *MidShore Meals 'til Monday* provides food assistance for about 500 students. *MidShore Meals 'til Monday* is providing extra food and meals to the children of Dorchester County during the school closures amid COVID-19. *Meals 'til Monday* needs your support in order to keep providing essential nourishment to our children. Donations are fully tax deductible and can be made at https://www.mscf.org/donate-online/. For more information about *MidShore Meals 'til Monday*, please call Leslie Bishop, Director, at 703-371-5191, or visit their Facebook page or website at www.midshoremealstilmonday.org/.



WHCP – 101.5 FM – New Programs for 2021

- **Rockin' Randall's Classic Country Call In Request** show airs Saturday mornings from 6-9am. Randall's program has been on the air for four decades with listeners across the MidShore. He is your expert on everyone and anyone in Country music from the 50's to the mid 80's.
- **Bill Wright's** *Road Trippin'* airs Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9-11 am, as well as 10pm to Midnight on Monday and Wednesday evenings. *Road Trippin'* is an eclectic blend of deep tracks and amazing artists you might not have heard of.
- **DORIS (is back!)** Marco Garcia hosts an delightful ensemble of local guests and heady, often uplifting, often serious topics every Thursday at 1 pm with a replay on Sunday mornings at 10 am. Marco is well known as a smart, joyous, energetic activist who is committed to "bridging the gaps through music."
- **Town H@ll** is an exciting community forum airing at High Noon the first Wednesday of each month, hosted by Marco Garcia and former Mayor Dave Wooten with newly installed Cambridge Mayor Andrew Bradshaw each month two of the five sitting City Commissioners will join the group to discuss current city initiatives and take your questions and comments in chat.



CAMBRIDGE EMPOWERMENT CENTER

The Empowerment Center works in partnership with the community to provide youth development through education, skills training, mentorship and other support services. We strive to inspire confidence, self-esteem, a desire for lifelong learning, and to contribute to the health and well-being of the Dorchester County youth and community. Our youth enrichment programs provide kids with computer experience and

other skills that help them succeed in school and life. Our computer literacy lab is utilized by many in our community to develop basic computer skills.



DORCHESTER COUNTY LEARNING LABS



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 is FREE for CY2021** – information is available on the CAN website at <u>https://cambridgecan.org/join-can/</u>.

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 <u>Ragtime31@gmail.com</u> to volunteer.

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 <u>Ragtime31@gmail.com</u> 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.

POWER WASHER AVAILABLE

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

