**Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods**

**Unofficial Notes on Cambridge City Council Meeting**

**Monday, July 12, 2021**

**In Person and Virtual Meeting**

5:00 pm (Meeting began at 5 PM. Notes taken from 6 PM – 7:30 PM. Meeting continued after 7:30 PM)

Submitted by Alison Kennedy

**Charter Amendments to Ordinances read by city attorney**

* Misdemeanors, infractions, fines increased up to $1000.00 (It had been up to $100). This amount had not been updated since the 1970s.
* Ordinance 1179
  + This ordinance pertains to elements of property development
  + Public Comment
    - Residents on Mill Street commented on the school property on Mill Street that was purchased by a developer.
      * There are concerns in the community about the development of the space where the vacant school building is located.
      * It is not clear, however, what will happen to the land around the building.
      * The city planner commented that the new building cannot be higher or outside of the current structure. This is referred to as the “building envelope”.
      * The neighbors are worried about flooding on that property. The lot is 40,000 sq.ft – 30% of that lot must be green space to alleviate flooding potential.
      * Ward 1 commissioner, Brian Roche, stated that there can be no impact of storm water flooding on properties from the school property to the river.
      * There is concern about proposed sidewalks and parking around the building. Driveways and parking area are excluded from open space.
      * Proposed development of the school property has been talked about for years but nothing has been done. The property has changed hands in that time.
      * Comment was made that if there is a change in the ownership of property, there should be an incentive to have it done within the year or at least started within the year. There should be an expiration on it. Tax credits will also be affected if the ownership changes.
      * Someone asked about the back part of the school property. No townhomes can be built on it. However, 4 to 6 single homes or duplexes could be built based on a 5000 sq. ft lot for each. This could happen under current zoning which is NC3.
      * The city planner said the current owner is motivated to start development as he has received tax credits. These tax credits have an expiration date.
  + The exact wording changes to the amendment to Ordinance 1179 were approved by all the commissioners.
  + City attorney and city planner will make sure the wording changes use the appropriate language.
  + Brian Roche, Ward 1 Commissioner, will also be included in the final review of the language to make sure it addresses what he wanted addressed.
* Ordinance 1180
  + Pertains to elements of property development
  + Public comment
    - Residents on Mill Street commented on the school property on Mill Street that was purchased by a developer.
      * Residents on Mill Street were relieved to find out that the owner of the school building is only planning on putting in 8 or 9 apartments in the structure.
      * 14 parking spaces will compose the parking lot
      * It was proposed that a dog park be put on the back of the property
      * Surrounding residents are worried about parking and traffic.
      * It was purposed by the council that the back of the property (.8 to 1.1 acres) be handled separately.
      * Citizen called in to say that the school building property looks unkept. They support the development plans which will improve the looks of the space.
      * William Street residents support the scale down from a 19 apartment building to an 8/9 apartment building.
    - Benjamin Brown is the architect selected for the design of the new development. There are only 4 schoolhouse buildings on the Eastern Shore that have gone through restoration.
  + All changes approved by the members of the council.
* Ordinance 1181
  + This ordinance addresses the garage/shed built on the back of a lot with no backyard.
  + The city planner commissioner said that this could be approved if the lot owner met with the her.
  + If she says No, the outcome can be appealed.
  + All changes approved by the members of the council.
* Ordinance 1182
  + This ordinance concerns fees incurred during construction.
  + The fees will be waived for non-profit companies who provide services to the community (i.e. providing ramps to existing buildings for the handicapped).
  + All changes approved by the members of the council.
* Ordinance 1183
  + This ordinance concerns rental units.
  + Registration will be required annually
  + All repairs that are in violation must be taken care of to get the registration.
  + The question was asked: If an apartment is reported, how do violations get conveyed?
    - This will be conveyed to the Municipal Utilities Commission so everyone is on the same page and those responsible for registration are informed and enforcement is supported.
  + Addressing repetitive complaints
    - Up until now, multiple complaints about an individual would be made until the person moved out.
    - This is not most effective way to handle this
    - The registration will encourage rental unit owners to be aware that it is an annual requirement.
  + Annual registration will discourage renter violations (i.e. fireworks outside of holiday celebrations, neighborhood terrorism, etc).
  + There will be an adjustment in fines according to violation.
    - If person is out of registration and there is a violation, they will get a notification.
    - They will incur a low fine, to get their attention. And this will stay in effect.
      * First infraction - $100
      * Second infraction - $1000 on every day that infraction is not repaired per property.
  + Can be discussed further since October 1st is the approval date on the amendment.
  + The question was asked if violations include not being up to date on city taxes?
    - Reply was that there is no connection between the 2 areas in the databases.
  + Decision was made to go with what was agreed upon and research the language.
  + All changes approved by the members of the council.