

Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN)
Unofficial Notes on Cambridge City Council Meeting
May 23, 2022

Submitted by Tom Puglisi

Note: Supporting documents may be found on the City website at

<http://www.choosecambridge.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/05232022-1112>

Commission President Lajan Cephas Convened the Commission in Regular Session at 6:03 pm. in City Council Chambers at 305 Gay Street, Cambridge, MD. Commissioners Sputty Cephas and Jameson Harrington were also physically present. Commissioner Chad Malkus was present virtually. Commissioner Brian Roche did not attend.

1. Commission approved the agenda as presented.

Presentations from the Public

Matt Pluta – ShoreRivers Choptank RiverKeeper. Mr. Pluta thanked the Commission for providing funding for the ShoreRiver bacteria monitoring program. Samples consistent with the EPA standard for swimming are collected once a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day. ShoreRivers publishes the results on swimguide.org, WHCP radio, and the Choptank RiverKeeper website at ShoreRivers.org. Results last summer from beaches near Pinks Pond, Great Marsh Park, and Willis Street indicated that these beaches were often not safe for swimming. However, the beach at Sailwinds park was safe about 80% of the time last year. (Sailwinds, Inc. is funding sampling at the Sailwinds beach this summer.) Failure rates are highest at all area beaches for 48 hours after heavy rains. Mr. Pluta is particularly concerned about the connection between sewage overflow events and unsafe swimming conditions. Commissioners thanked ShoreRivers and Mr. Pluta for all they do. The City Manager has been added to the distribution list for test results.

Cambridge Waterfront Development Inc. (CWDI) Status Update -- Progress and improvements. “Cambridge Harbor” has been chosen as the branding name for the site. Development of branding materials is underway and will soon be made public. A new approach has been developed to move into the finance, design, and organizational phases of the project. The financing phase is now active in developing long term sustainable income. The plan’s mission and site plan continue to include an open public access space adjacent to the river. Public comment on the tentative site plan is currently being analyzed and will be reported very soon. Demolition and clearing of the site will begin in June. Negotiation around proposals will begin thereafter. Board organization will be developed to ensure stability and full appointment, capability, and accountability to include fiduciary responsibility. The Board must reflect the diversity of the community that will be served by the project with Board members selected through a process of shared collaboration. Bylaws changes are being proposed to bring about the proposed Board organization.

Consent Calendar

2. May 9, 2022, Meeting Minutes
3. Michael Wheatley requested to have "Christmas in July" on July 9, 2022, at the corner of Race and Cedar Streets, from 9:00am to 5:00pm.
4. Buddy Ennals, Jr. requested to have the "Block Party/Unity Festival" on July 30, 2022, at 601 Pine Street from 12pm-8pm.
5. Dr. Theresa Stafford requested to have "Safe Play Friday" on May 27, 2022, from 4:00pm-7:30pm on Greenwood Avenue and Cosby Avenue (including application of sound). Similar events will be held once a month throughout the summer.
6. David Walker of Positive Vibrations Through Atonement requested to have a gathering at the intersection of Greenwood and Cosby Avenue on June 11-12, 2022, with a rain date of June 25-26, 2022, the event will start at 12pm on June 11, 2022 and will end at 3pm on June 12, 2022 (including application of sound).
7. Three contracts for Cornish Park totaling \$225,329.03.

Items 2 through 7 above were approved unanimously.

Ordinances for Second Reading

8. ORDINANCE NO. 1195 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND AMENDING CHAPTER 11 (MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC), ARTICLE II (PARKING) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROHIBITING PARKING ON GREENWOOD AVENUE BETWEEN GLORIA RICHARDSON CIRCLE/CAMELIA STREET AND PARK LANE; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY AND GENERALLY RELATING TO PARKING IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE.
 - A. Second Reading presented by the City Attorney
 - B. Public Hearing.

Speaker #1, representing affordable housing groups interested in ensuring safety and security in the community, reported that the number of unwanted visitors parking on Greenwood Avenue remains a serious problem, relative to safety and security of the neighborhood. The speaker endorsed restricted parking on Greenwood Avenue as proposed.

Speaker #2 recently convened a group to discuss safety and security in the neighborhood, including heavy loitering of unwanted individuals. The group recommended restricted permit parking on Greenwood Avenue and endorsed restricted parking on Greenwood Avenue as proposed.

Speaker #3 noted that permit parking has successfully addressed the loitering problems that have occurred in the neighborhoods that she represents. The speaker endorsed restricted parking on Greenwood Avenue as proposed.
 - C. Council Action. The Police Chief indicated that the Police Department will enforce the restriction if approved. Commissioner Malkus indicated that enforcement would need to be monitored to evaluate whether stronger enforcement is needed. Commissioner Sputty Cephas indicated that loitering will also need to be monitored. Commissioner Lajan Cephas indicated her support for the proposal. The City Manager suggested that a staff team be put together to implement the permitting process. Ms. Escher noted a similar restriction established for the Long Wharf area.

Item 8 was approved unanimously as proposed.

Old Business

9. Administrative Updates: Nominations to Commissions

George Brown – Planning and Zoning Commission. Approved unanimously.

A.C. Elrey – Planning and Zoning Commission. Approved unanimously.

Robin Sample, Bill Clyde – Previously reappointed to Board of Zoning Appeals

Katie Day - Previously reappointed to Ethics Committee

New Business

10. Cambridge Waterfront Development Inc. (CWDI) Updates. See Public Presentation summarized above.

11. Rails to Trails. Ms. Escher updated the Commission on continued conversations with MDOT staff on the Rails to Trails project extending from Cedar Street to Bucktown Road at the airport. Commissioner Malkus indicated that continued maintenance of the trail be included in its implementation

Meetings

June 6 - Budget Work Session

June 13 – Postponed (see below)

June 27 - Regular Council Meeting

Public Comment

Speaker #1 representing the Care and Share organization thanked the Council for approving the July event.

Speaker #2 thanked the Council for supporting the out-of-the-box community activities, including the safe play events, that are planned for this summer. The speaker reiterated the need for representation of the entire community

Speaker #3, a local street preacher, thanked the Police Chief for his assistance in enabling him to conduct his ministry. The speaker noted the importance of knowing our foundation in God to address the problems faced by the community. Healing and repentance are needed in the community.

Department/Division Head Reports

Yvette Robinson – Housing Update. Twenty-five properties have been addressed in the first phase of the Pine Street Redevelopment project. A Pine Street story line is being created to explain how progress has occurred in this project. The HOW program is still being finalized by the State to support home restoration up to \$75,000 per home. Eight new homes are going up on Wells Street and another is being rehabilitated. The Cornish Park contracts have been approved and construction can begin in the fall, to include a much nicer fence. Local artists are being solicited to help design the artwork for the project. A Pine Street Community Meeting will be held in the City Council Chambers on Thursday, May 26 from 5-7 pm to discuss housing, CDBG grants, Cornish Park, etc. June is home ownership month, and a webinar workshop on home ownership will be offered on June 6-8 from 5-8 pm by Telamon Counseling Services (cost = \$50 for materials, call 304-263-0916 for information).

Commissioner Spuddy Cephas noted that Washington Street remains a problem, and Ms. Robinson noted that the Washington Street are is currently under discussion. Commissioners thanked Ms. Robinson for her report.

Ina Holden – Department of Public Works Update. Ms. Holden presented a detailed report on costs related to garbage collection programs under the Chesapeake Waste contract (in effect until the end of this calendar year) and potential costs if garbage collection is brought back into the City. Ms. Holden noted that municipalities are moving toward once weekly collections, curbside recycling collections, and composting. Cost to be considered in bringing garbage collection back in-house include:

1. Number of trucks needed
2. Number of employees, including salaries and benefits
3. Cost of totes for each household
4. Cost of fuel
5. Tipping fees
6. Miscellaneous operating and safety supplies
7. Maintenance Costs

Ms. Holden presented three options for bringing garbage collection back in-house with annual costs ranging between \$1,046,701 to \$699,127. The recommendation from Ms. Holden and the City Manager was to maintain contracted services under a new Request for Proposals (RFP) soliciting bids for a new contract that gives the City the authority to address any service delivery problems as they occur. The City Manager also recommended that the Commissioners consider transiting to a single weekly collection and consider adding curbside recycling. Commissioners thanked Ms. Holden and the City Manager for their report.

Police Chief Lewis. The Citizens Police Advisory Board meets on Wednesday.

City Manager Comments

Mr. Carroll asked the Council to approve June 21 for the Regular Council Meeting in lieu of the cancellation of the June 13 meeting because of a conflict. Approved Unanimously.

Mr. Carroll recommended that he be permitted to move forward with “True Ballot” for conduct of the City election. Approved Unanimously.

Commissioners' Comments

All Commissioners congratulated Cambridge-South High School graduates. They also noted the wonderful events that took place in the City this weekend.

Closed Session pursuant to Md. Code Ann. § 3-305(b)(1) and (7) to discuss personnel matters affecting specific individuals and to consult with the City Attorney regarding the same.

