**CAN’s Unofficial Notes on the City Commission Meeting and Budget Work Sessions of June 21, 2022**

The Cambridge City Council Meeting of June 21, 2022 was a dual meeting. The first part from 6:00 pm to 7:10 pm was a Council meeting and the second part from 7:10 pm to 7:35 pm was a budget workshop on the FY23 Budget.

Council Meeting:

The Council Meeting centered on Ordinances that needed to be passed, as follows:

1 .Contract for Cornish Park Basketball Courts resurfacing - $20,500 approved 5/0

2. Contract for Bayly Road Sidewalk Project - $152,600 approved 5/0

3. Ordinance to approve the City Budget, as amended – approved 5/0

4. Ordinance to set the City Tax rate, approved 5/0

5. Ordinance to purchase 601 Chesapeake Court for $537,500, approved 5/0

6. Ordinance to sell 700 Philips St to Groove City Black Heritage & Culture group for $3,535. Approved 5/0

7. Ordinance to repeal Ordinance #s 881,882 and 934 regarding the by-laws of the Historic Preservation Committee, approved 5/0

8. Ordinance to require real estate contracts in the Historic District should state that exterior improvements are subject to approval by HPC. Approved 5/0

9. Ordinance that allows the Planning Commission to deviate from the Sign Program in Cambridge, Approved 5/0

The Council then went into a lengthy discussion led by Commissioner Roche about turning Poplar St. into a one-way street on a pilot basis. The idea is to extend the side walk on the RAR side by 10 feet and set up Jersey barriers to project the people. There would be no parking on Poplar St. The street would be one way going from the Gay St./Race St. intersection to the High St. intersection. In addition, all traffic lights would be removed at that intersection and the High St./Glasgow intersection. All the Commissioners were in favor of the idea; however both Commissioners Cephas wanted to contact business owners and making any amendments before voting on the issue. The subject was then opened to public and 4 businesses testified and all were against the pilot. After more discussion the pilot was passed 3/2.

The final item of the Council meeting concerned the up-coming Mayoral election. The City Manager had hoped to get the timeline started this week but due to difficulties with the contract it will have to be delayed two weeks which puts the election in the middle of August.

Other news that came out doing the meeting:

1. 3 new police recruits graduated from the Police Academy
2. Council members toured the Hearn building which a contactor wants to turn into 53 one and two bedroom apartments
3. The Mill St. School has a developer who wants to convert the school into 8 luxury apartments and 10 townhouses on the back lot.

Public Comment:

1. Charles McFadden spoke on the budget to make 4 points:
   1. The Council is raising salaries in an inverse order – more for the lower level employees, less for the top. This gives the lowest level worker in DPW a $4,384 annual raise and the head of DPW a $3,336 raise. This is the third time in the past 5 years this approach has been taken causing a salary compression within the organization, Recommended a $40,000 wage study to be done.
   2. Requested that the Council provide funding for Council President Cephas Gun Violence task force to start any recommendations
   3. Requested a review of all the ARPA funds targeted to non-profits. $500,000 in FY22 and $1,250,000 in FY23. Thinks the numbers should be reduced to fund fire equipment and fix up Old City Hall.
   4. Recommended the Council set up a Marina Committee to proposed solutions to the complex problems the marina is facing.
2. A woman spoke (did not get the name) and requested that the Council **not** spend $537,500 for the Chesapeake Court property and use the money elsewhere.

The Council Meeting was adjourned at 7:10 and then the Council went immediately into the budget work section.

The City manager wanted to make 5 amendments to the draft budget based on comments from the Commissioners at the last budget meeting, they are:

1. $50,000 for the Police department for the Spot Shooter program
2. Increasing Community Policing by $100,000 but postponing that expenditure until FY 24 so it would be a two year effort.
3. Spend $200,000 to stabilized City Hall so it would not fall down, estimate to refurbish it is about $5 million
4. Take $200,000 from the $500,000 economic development budget and target it for Cambridge Harbor development
5. An additional $30,000 was allocated for wages and a wage/classification study.

All items were approved 5/0 without discussion

The City manager then introduced the 4 business funds as follows:

1. The New Special Projects fund, $13.3 million. This fund is an accumulation of all the grants the City receives and has dozens of projects from sidewalk repair to the $6 million in ARPA funds that the City received from the Federal government. There is a long list including dozens of projects that will use the ARPA funds. Approved 5/0 with no questions asked.
2. The Sanitary Sewer Fund, $4.7 million. Two questions from Council on when construction will start on the sewer problem on Water St. – answer about 18 months and when will the construction start on the Trenton St. pumping station – answer 18 months. Fund approved 5/0
3. MUC, $2.6 million, Approved 5/0, no questions asked
4. The Marina Fund, $681.500, approved 5/0 no questions asked.

Commissioner Roche asked for $100,000 for two traffic circles, raised crosswalks and signs. Approved 5/0

The Council did not allow any public comments at this meeting, although they did at the last budget work session (unsure why).

Meeting adjourned at 7:35.

Notes prepared by Charles McFadden, President, CAN