CAMBRIDGE MATTERS – November, 2022

 Mayor Stephen Rideout

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Well, it has been a month since I was sworn in as Mayor, and there has been little time to take a break. Community events, meetings with different agencies, nonprofits, and individuals along with listening to you in the community on the street, over the phone, and during clean up days has been just part of what I have been doing.

Just reading the materials for the city council meetings so that I knew what was being proposed has taken time over the weekends and the Monday before the meetings. I have also been reading the many proposed contracts that city council was considering to be sure that they made sense to me, were aimed at what we are trying to achieve, and protected the city. I know that is what we pay others to do but I need to be able to explain something to you when you ask.

While there is much being done and much to do, the work of city council over these past two years and the largess of the state and federal governments have put the city in the best financial position that I have seen since moving here. We have great working partners in the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) with several ongoing projects. We have developers such as Charlie Fairchild, Cross Street Partners, the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, and others that are fully engaged in making Cambridge a better place to live.

We have a police department that is refocusing its vision for Cambridge and all of us in reducing crime and making all parts of the community safer places to be. While there is no quick fix with immediate visible results, the planning and implementation of strategies are well along the way for the community to see some rays of hope and progress. Chief Todd and his leadership team understand the importance of collaboration with Sheriff Phillips and the State Police in finding and prosecuting those who commit crimes here and are also committed to finding ways to prevent crime and delinquency.

While much is happening, there is much to do. In particular, the most important partners for solving the many social issues here are you the members of our community. That community is both in and outside of the city. Another partner can be the county council once the outcomes of the November election are known.

We need you to help, to volunteer, to let me know what is happening that is good for our community and what is not. We cannot begin to solve our challenges unless we know about them. The one constant that I hear in my community conversations is that we need to find better ways to collaborate in how services are provided and implemented here.

That will be one of my ongoing priorities over the next two years. It is also one of the priorities for Moving Dorchester Forward, a nonprofit that is focusing on how to support after-school programs, parent and community engagement, court involved and diverted children, early childhood learning, and mental and emotional health issues here.

Something that you can do is begin to develop your own community groups or let the Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods know about your group if you already exist so that we can really develop a full community response to the multiple challenges that are present here. Remaining in silos is not the answer. With your help, we will see a community that will come together and make the kind of change that we all want to see.

Thanks for reading.

Steve