

CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

- 1. Two senior members of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recently resigned to protest inadequate enforcement by the City of HPC determinations and Unified Development Code (UDC) requirements. What is your position on actions the city should take to enforce HPC determinations and UDC requirements?**

The City has indeed been inconsistent with and not yet effective in its enforcement of rules for far too many years. It is for this reason that I personally drafted the language for Council's top goal: *Be inclusive, consistent, and fair retaining, assisting, and attracting businesses with consistently applied rules and processes.* And to implement this, I support the City's reorganization which places code enforcement, planning, historic preservation, community development, housing, and economic development under one department, the Department of Development.

We need to see this reorganization through, and I will do so if elected. While I view the recent HPC resignations as unfortunate, I also view it as a chance to hit reset with how we do all these things, and I am working to get the city better tools, systems, and more people to achieve consistency, fairness, and inclusivity.

- 2. If elected, do you intend to live in the Ward you will represent for the remainder of your term?**

Yes.

- 3. The Shoreline Resiliency Committee has proposed constructing a seven-foot berm at the shoreline from Long Wharf to Great Marsh Park. Do you support this proposal?**

The issue of sea-level rise and increased tidal infiltration into certain parts of Cambridge, especially the West End along the Choptank is already at the forefront of things that will need a great deal of attention in the coming months and years. We as a council have encouraged the pursuit of many grant programs and opportunities, and recently the City applied for \$17.7million in funding from a variety of sources for design and construction of whatever form the Shoreline Resiliency effort takes.

I believe it is premature to simply give an up or down vote on a 7-foot berm because that is not the only option being considered. Many other options are also being discussed including living shorelines with natural habitat and vegetative features. This could include horizontal levees, beach nourishment, tidal marshes, and significant grasses and vegetation. Seawalls or berms can have some significant disadvantages because they are vulnerable to destabilization from the water, they disrupt the aesthetics of the surrounding homes and can decrease property values, and they cut off habitat from the water. They also require significant maintenance and can create a long term liability that the City might not be able to afford.

## CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

### Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

There are other options that consider a combination of options based on the topography of the specific properties along the shore. One size does not fit all so simply saying “yes” or “no” to a berm limits our options. If such a berm were constructed, it would need to be with the assent and general approval of the surrounding and bordering property owners after much discussion and public hearings on the matter. Moreover, the potential short and long term effects of it would need to be examined in detail. That’s why it is so crucial at this stage that we do everything we can as a city to secure significant funding for designing a workable solution.

**4. Currently the Hearn building is slated to house 44 moderate income apartments. Do you agree with this? If not, how do you think the Hearn Building should be repurposed?**

I do not agree with this in any way shape or form, and I do not support this plan in any way, as their plan is not for moderate income units. Their plan would make the vast majority of the units low-income.

The current NCALL and Green Street proposal is primarily subsidized by the federal low-income housing tax credit program. The proposal includes the exorbitant cost per unit constructed of \$475,000 per unit. Those costs and that proposal alone are far from the best use of our tax dollars. Moreover, Green Street is seeking more than 40 years-worth of tax incentives and abatements. Studies have proven time and time again the concentrating low income in one building has a negative impact not only on the surrounding neighborhood, but on the residents themselves, denying them any means of upward mobility.

The Hearn building development will be most successful if it can be a market rate property with a variety of mixed uses and incomes, including a significant commercial, retail, or office component on the ground floor. This has been a proven viable use in multiple building in our historic downtown core. Every one of our apartment buildings downtown that feature several floors of market rate apartments above have a commercial element at street level, and there is such a demand for them that there is a waiting list. Examples of such buildings are The High Spot, Ava’s, Blue Ruin, Blackwater Bakery, ShoreLife Home & Gifts, and Bombay Social just to name a few. These modern and well-designed market rate apartments are completely full and are occupied by young professionals, teachers, nurses, and many in the service and hospitality industry.

A market-rate concept as currently exists downtown is by far the best such option and approach, and there are two different plans that are being discussed that are completely the opposite of Green Street’s proposal. It is not too late to ask the State to steer this ship in an entirely different direction and to find a way to embrace these more modest and proven market rate approaches for our historic downtown business district.

## CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

### Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

As much as I see the value in using large historic buildings or facades for future development, there is little to no advantage or benefit to the City in Green Street's proposal, and concentrated low income housing at the center of our downtown could have a seriously negative impact upon the economic development of the city.

- 5. Currently, single family homes that have been converted to multifamily units must revert to single family use after being vacant for 90 days. Enforcement of this provision has been inconsistent. Are you in favor of consistent enforcement of the requirement?**

Yes. Unless there are significant extenuating circumstances that warrant continuing the multifamily use, this provision should be enforced regularly and consistently. Moreover, we should be considering incentives to convert existing multi-family dwellings back to a single use and looking at many options available to making those conversions possible. As a city, we should be encouraging and supporting single family homeownership wherever and whenever possible.

We need to also streamline many of the permitting processes that inhibit property owners from performing the necessary repairs or improvements to multifamily use properties such that it is easier to convert them to single use.

- 6. What should be done about development of the Mill Street School property?**

Two months ago, when the Mill Street issue was at the forefront of discussions and a zoning text amendment was being considered by the City, I was very pleased and fortunate to be able to have several meetings and discussions directly with a group of Mill Street neighbors and CAN members. They were extremely thoughtful and knowledgeable, as well as pragmatic in their approach.

As the City Council liaison for Planning & Zoning, I have followed the Mill Street School issue directly for several years, and prior to serving on council I examined in detail the multiple different proposals and plans. While I believe the current proposal for redevelopment of the building is a viable one, every effort should be made to look to the future of wholly or individually owned units within the building, most likely in the form of a condominium approach.

I believe the building can and should be an asset to the surrounding neighborhood, with significant park and open space encircling a restored building. But any further attempts to tweak the zoning or adjust the current rules to the benefit of the developer must be avoided. The most recently proposed text amendment which originated in planning and zoning that myself and Commissioner Roche pushed to reject would have made too many accommodations for the developer. The residents of the Mill Street area and the West End made many compromises over the years for the current zoning as it stands, and I saw no reason to amend or stray from their well-reasoned points of view. As such, we were

## CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

### Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

fortunately successful in addressing the concerns of the neighborhood and defeated the text amendment.

#### **7. The Municipal Marina has not been properly maintained for years and now needs extensive renovation. How should the renovation needs be addressed?**

The city Marina is a huge asset to the City of Cambridge, for residents, for tourism, and for the vitality of our downtown businesses. It can and should be a priority for the city, its budget, and for the many grant opportunities that the city pursues. Marinas in general tend to have difficulty covering costs and upkeep, however that does not make them a liability, particularly for a waterfront community such as Cambridge.

I have long advocated for significant investment in the Marina to address many of the issues caused by the last renovation. Because of the design, there is significant wave action within the marina, so much so that boats can roll and bang against one another. This in turn causes many longer-term slip owners to not want to dock their boats at our marina.

With our support, the city has pursued and recently obtained a \$430,000 grant for wave action remediation in the marina. It is my hope and expectation that this will alleviate many of the wave action issues that are inhibiting the vitality of the Marina. We are also examining the cost of slip fees, as there are significant pier replacements that the city is planning for in the coming year. It is vital that we continue our efforts to make the marina a destination for boaters across the Chesapeake and residents alike.

#### **8. How should the city address the rising rate of violent crime? What can be done to address the recent increase in dangerous traffic violations downtown and elsewhere in the city?**

**Crime:** We have made great strides in the past two years in growing and expanding the police department with better and more competitive salaries. I personally brought forth a measure to provide property tax incentives for police and first responders to own homes within the city – when a police officer lives and works in your very own neighborhood, it can have a tremendous positive effect.

We have also invested significant amounts of time and resources to get our officers better tools and equipment, including over 100 new cameras at our parks and downtown. The new “Shot Spotter” system is already reaping benefits, as it recently pinpointed two perpetrators with illegal weapons and got them and their guns off the street. We have also placed our Council’s and CPD’s focus on Community Policing – getting the officers directly involved with the people in each neighborhood to engage the citizens in a collaborative effort to prevent crimes from occurring. We have also invested significant resources into retention bonuses to keep our good officers here. As a Commissioner, I have

## CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

### Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

made sure that we have been responsive and have fulfilled every single request put forth by the Chief of Police. We have a long way to go in our efforts combatting crime in the city, but I will continue to do everything I can to support the efforts of CPD and to provide them with any of the resources they ask for.

**Traffic Violations/Speeding:** While enforcement of traffic violations is always one focus of CPD, their primary focus should be fighting crime as stated above. That's why I have supported the efforts of the traffic and safety committee to study and implement many outside-the-box solutions for traffic calming. Simply ticketing speeders is only a temporary solution. We need to make our streets and neighborhoods safer for the residents by providing traffic calming efforts (curbing, bump outs, 4 way-stops, circles, and other proven mechanisms) that will provide a better and longer term solution to these problems.

**9. Are you in favor of relocating the YMCA to Cambridge Harbor? If not, where should it be located? What should happen to its current location?**

This is a complex issue, with numerous considerations both positive and negative, that will potentially impact our community in many ways. As a community, everything is in the very early stages of discussion on this matter, and I don't think it does the City of Cambridge any benefit to entrench positions before many of the plans and concepts are fully fleshed out. There is much more discussion that needs to be had.

First, I will say that it was unfortunate timing on the part of the YMCA and their public meeting on the matter seemed a bit rushed at this point. However, we as a city need to proceed from the understanding that the YMCA is its own private entity, with its own Board and as such it has the very real ability to relocate wherever they desire to move – even out of this county entirely if they so choose. That would be the worst possible outcome, one that we should make every effort to avoid, and so I firmly believe that we should consider all of the possibilities.

The Y has a long history in this community. As a youth I volunteered and helped with the effort to bring a YMCA to Cambridge in the first place – many of us in the community remember selling bright red t-shirts that said “Y-Not?” as part of that effort to make the Y in Cambridge a reality. So, it's perfectly understandable that there is a passion and a community “ownership” of it – there should be.

However, we have been told that when you look at and consider the YMCA of the Chesapeake's facilities in Easton, Chestertown, and others, there is a level of frustration among many of the members and those in the community that used to be members but went to other gyms. The Members have asked why can't we have a new and larger, more modern, state-of-the-art facility? Renovation of the current building and grounds would require an outlay of expenses that may not prove to be cost effective as compared to constructing an entirely new facility.

## CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

### Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

As part of the RFP process put forth by CWDI (the development corporation created with local appointees from the city, county, and state), the Y submitted a very preliminary proposal expressing interest. CWDI is tasked with the development of the almost 30-acre Cambridge Harbor property, and through its many years and through its predecessors, and decades of public engagement, carries the overall vision for the property. Many people have asked – what of the loss of tax revenue to the city for that portion of the property that the Y would encompass, since the Y is a non-profit? The simple answer to that is that not all aspects of the Cambridge Harbor property will be tax generators for the City. Over 7 acres of the 30 acre property will be devoted to open space and public access.

There is an important concept in development that is known as site activation. This is where a certain aspect of an overall project is considered as an asset or amenity. Much like my discussion of the City Marina above, the Marina is an amenity to the community, and a site activator for tourism in our downtown. Similarly, the golf course at the Hyatt is not a primary revenue generator – golf courses are costly and have significant upkeep. The Hyatt golf course sits in the center of 300 acres of prime waterfront property - yet no one questions its usefulness or that the fairways alone take up 30 acres (more than the entire Cambridge Harbor site) of waterfront real estate. Why? Because it is a tremendous amenity to the guests of the Hyatt and residents of the condos and townhomes there. It is also a site activator for the new single family homes that are about to be built there, and brings people to the property.

So, some have suggested that a state of the art YMCA located on a small portion of the property near the Visitors Center and beach would instantly create interest and activity at that part of our city. Its central location and proximity to Route 50 would allow for a much expanded Y membership and easy access to other residents of county and region. Its availability to the residents of the entire city and the nearby public transportation could make a huge difference to the Y's growth, and their stated intent is to relocate the Y headquarters to Cambridge, bringing over 60 jobs.

Additionally, there could be some positive effects that Y members and families could have on further activation of the commercial development on the site. Regular attendees at the Y, working out or watching a soccer or basketball game, would then be able to stroll along the waterfront promenade and grab some ice cream or meet friends for dinner at the Harbor or downtown. All of this would be conditioned on careful and deliberate public input throughout the process of potentially relocating.

The last consideration is what would happen to the existing Y property? Many people are concerned that it would become another Mill Street School problem, with a derelict building slowly crumbling and bringing the entire neighborhood down. That is a VERY valid concern and I would not be in favor of saving the existing building in any form. If the Y were to move, I would immediately work with council to rezone the property so that no institutional use could occur there. We would immediately have our Planning

## CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

### Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

Department develop what is known as a “small area plan” to be put in place such that the entire property could only be developed in keeping with the surrounding homes and be totally residential. Single-family homes along Talbot and Somerset, with an alley between them, that mimic the style and quality of that neighborhood. One added benefit of this aspect is it would significantly offset any loss in tax revenue on the Cambridge Harbor property for the Y.

As you can see, it is a complex issue that deserves much more conversations and public discussions and planning. We would be doing the City a disservice if we simply dismissed OR embraced the idea totally and completely at this stage, and the public must be part of the discussions.

**10. Climate change is already causing damage in Cambridge. What would you recommend to address the effects of climate change?**

In addition to our efforts with the Shoreline Resiliency Initiative, I have supported the efforts to install solar panels at the public safety building, place EV charging stations at several city lots, and replace our aging city fleet of vehicles with cleaner, more energy efficient options. The two Teslas the city purchased for CPD as part of a pilot project have been maintenance free for the past two years, with zero emissions, and their power use is offset by the solar panels at the PSB. These efforts will continue, and we will continue to explore green initiatives wherever we can.

**11. Please describe one additional issue that you think the City needs to address.**

Collaboration between City and County leadership. City leadership believes in this. The new County Council seems also to believe in collaboration. I look forward to working with them. There are many areas of overlap that we could eliminate to make better use of our collective finances. I would like to eliminate redundancies and inefficiencies so that we can maximize our limited resources. As an example, when CPD arrests someone, they get booked in the city and THEN go to the county jail for booking. This is a tremendous waste of time and resources. That is why we are looking at centralizing the booking in one place, which will free up our officers to do their job more efficiently.

So, every effort we can make as a Council to improve the collaboration between the City and County will be worthwhile.

## CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

### Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

#### **BIO OF CHAD MALKUS**

I was raised in Cambridge on my family's farm on Egypt Road next to Blackwater Refuge. I graduated from Cambridge-South Dorchester High School in 1990, where I was Junior and Senior Class President. In 1994 I received my Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education & English from Clemson University in South Carolina. I later received my J.D. from the University of Baltimore School of Law and was admitted to the Maryland Bar in 2002.

I practiced law throughout the State of Maryland for two decades, focusing in the areas of land use, corporate & real estate law, environmental & wetlands law, and trusts & estates. I currently serve as a Vice President and Senior Fiduciary Advisor for a national banking corporation. I also teach Trusts & Estates and the capstone course in Financial Planning at the Purdue School of Business at Salisbury University.

Last year, I was appointed by Governor Hogan to the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Areas Commission for the State of Maryland. I have been an active part of the Cambridge business and professional community for many years, serving on numerous Boards and Charitable Committees. The revitalization of Cambridge's historic downtown district as well as its scenic waterfront has been a driving passion of mine. I served on the Board of Cambridge Mainstreet for many years, eventually becoming its President. I have also served on the Boards of the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce. At the State level, I have served as Chairman of the March of Dimes gala, and as President of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Alzheimer's Association.

As an attorney in Dorchester County, I served as President of the Dorchester Bar Association and as counsel for Dorchester Planning and Zoning. For almost 20 years, I have been the founder and organizer of the annual Kite Festival at Sailwinds Park. Over the past few years and through my efforts with my employer, I organized and we funded the new mural at Chesapeake College, the new Christmas decorations at the Cambridge Lighthouse, and the annual golf tournament to benefit the Dorchester Center for the Arts. I also drafted and championed zoning legislation to allow for farm wineries in Dorchester County and I successfully led the effort to co-name Great Marsh Park after Gerry Boyle. Most recently, I spearheaded the effort for new fencing and substantial improvements to the Cambridge Cemetery and the Cedar Street gateway.

I have greatly enjoyed serving the citizens of Ward 5 over the past few years and I ran for city council after working behind the scenes for much of my life. There is still a lot of work left to do in the City, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work for the citizens of Ward 1. I have lived in Ward 1 many times throughout my life, including in the West End and later Glasgow Street, and now in Longboat. I want to continue our work towards realization of the shared vision for a vibrant waterfront district, a thriving Main Street, a safe, walkable community, fixing our aging water and sewer infrastructure, and cutting much of the red tape that impacts businesses and homeowners in Cambridge.