

CAN City Council notes July 24
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In a regular city council meeting Monday, commissioners heard from Cambridge residents fed up with sewage overflow, dog waste and a house converted into a drug recovery location.

In most cases, council members and police Chief Justin Todd concluded there were limited remedies to the complaints.

While City Manager Tom Carroll took note of the area on Race Street where a woman said sewer pipes backed up during recent rain storms, another resident urged the council to treat the ongoing sewage overflow along Water Street following rain storms as an emergency. Cambridge currently is looking to fund a \$20 million water and sewer project.

The problem with owners who allow their dogs to defecate on neighbors' lawns is that police aren't likely to issue a citation based solely on the word of a complainant, Todd said. He suggested that officers could visit the offending dog owner and apprise them of the city ordinance that places a fine of up to \$100 for violations, and then subsequently issue a citation if there were more violations, but did not elaborate on what evidence would be required. Animal control regulations governing loose dogs are enforced by Dorchester County, he said.

Council members agreed with the resident who complained about a pop-up drug recovery group home on Race Street, stating that people recovering from drug use are ill-served to be located too close to other such facilities. However, Commissioner Brian Roche noted that people in recovery must be treated as disabled, and protections in federal and local laws protect their right to reside together in most cases.

In other actions, council members debated the merits of reinstating construction "impact fees" on water and sewer service for new buildings. The impact fees were struck down by the council in 2008 during the recession that followed the mortgage lending collapse. Carroll noted that since that time, Cambridge would have collected \$500,000 - \$800,000 on impact fees, had the fees been in place.

Council member Laurel Atkiss encouraged the reconsideration of impact fees, especially she said since ARPA money was something the city can no longer rely on. Roche countered that impact fees could discourage builders, and that fees for regular water and sewer service over the years would yield more money than one-time impact fees. The council agreed to consider the matter in later sessions.

The council conducted a first reading of various ordinances to acquire properties in the Pine Street neighborhood for a total of \$71,000 that include property that was in the family of civil rights leader Gloria Richardson, and other property that could be used to provide community gardens for food-insecure families.

In a special mayoral citation, Mayor Steve Rideout recognized Mya Woods, who was chosen as Queen of University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Maggie Young, a senior at Johns Hopkins University, made a presentation about lung cancer screening, the most deadly cancer, she said. She urged city leaders to help raise awareness of lung cancer screening availability through physicians' offices and health service agencies.

In closing comments, commissioner LaJan Cephas urged officials and organizations to advance efforts to expunge the records of people convicted of marijuana law violations, as provided by the Maryland General Assembly as part of the law that recently legalized recreational cannabis sales. Those convictions targeted people of color, she noted.