

## **CAN's Unofficial Notes on the Cambridge City Council Meeting – Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>**

The meeting started on time with all members present. A change was made to the agenda to have an additional public comment at the beginning of the meeting. That public comment included 10 to 12 people speaking to the Council about crime and violence in the City. There were suggestions to bring in the National Guard, more community involvement, improvements to the educational system, having more cameras in the neighborhoods and protecting our elderly and handicapped. Speakers talked about four teenage gangs that have over taken specific streets in Cambridge and the lack of enforcement by the court system when it comes to juveniles. All the speakers wanted the Council and the Police to get more involved in solving the crime problem, although most were very complimentary of Police Chief, Justin Todd, and his efforts to install “community policing” in Cambridge.

The Police Chief made comments, in response, on his efforts to get his officers involved in the community and the fact that the Department has taken twice as many guns off the streets this year than last year. The Chief emphasized his efforts to get more officers on the Police force and to use more electronics in surveillance of the streets, especially in high crime areas.

The Council then moved on to the regular agenda which was consumed by a lengthy and heated discussion on the Juvenile Curfew. As background, the Mayor at the last Council Meeting had vetoed the existing curfew extension because it contained fines and jail penalties on the parents, if their children were repeat offenders of the curfew. The Mayor, who was a juvenile Court Judge and is a consultant on juvenile justice all over the country, wanted to do away with the fines and instead put in a CARE team (social workers) to work with the family to solve underlining issues. Commissioners L. Cephas and S. Cephas led the charge to have the existing curfew pass with the fines and then make an amendment to adjust the curfew if needed.

There was a lot of back and forth and allegations made as to who did what when, but in the end, the Council voted not to override the veto by the Mayor. So, the new Curfew Ordinance was read for the first time without the fines, and it

will be brought up again for a second reading and public comment at the September 25<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

At the second public comment section, several citizens thought it was unhelpful for the Council to be so hostile with each other in open session.

Other Business included:

1. Appointment of Sharon Smith and Glen McNamara to the Historic Preservation Committee.
2. Appointment of Pamela Allen and Matt Pluta to the Sustainable Communities Workgroup
3. Appointment of Tabria Cornish and Talibah Chikwendu to the Ward Realignment group.

Notable Meetings

1. Charter Change Listening Session, August 30 at 6 pm at the Empowerment Center, 615B Pine St.
2. Charter Change Listening Session, September 6, 6 pm at the Chesapeake Grove Intergenerational Center Meeting Room, 108 Chesapeake St.
3. Ward Realignment Committee Meeting, Sept 7, 6 pm at Council Chambers, 305 Gay St.
4. Council work session to continue discussion on the former Club Dujour, September 11, 5-6 pm at Council Chambers at 305 Gay St.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43

Chuck McFadden,

President, CAN