

CAN's Unofficial Notes on the Cambridge City Council

Meeting of November 13, 2023

The Mayor opened the meeting as usual at 6:03 and introduced the first of two speakers.

Kourtney Postley, Division Coordinator for Lead 4 Life started the presentation on their services. Lead 4 Life Organization has just come to Cambridge and they offer a number of programs to help the community. The two areas they focused on were people returning to the community from prison. They help these individuals with a mentoring program, assistance getting started in the community, help with getting jobs, re-establishing licensing, funds for medical and dental assistance, mental health issues, and life coaching. The second program was assistance with gun intervention with teens. They had several programs to identify youths with weapons and how to deal with that issue. They also wanted to interface with the police in that effort.

Valerie Davis gave an emotional presentation on homelessness in Cambridge. Ms. Davis works for Delmarva Community Services which helps in finding shelter for individuals and families in need of help. She was concerned with the lack of facilities in Cambridge and the growing number of elder homeless people, especially women. She commended the Salvation Army who provides the largest shelter in Cambridge but said the City needs to do more in getting people off the street especially with the coming of winter.

The Council then moved on to the consent agenda which contained approval of past meeting minutes, upcoming civic events and three items of interest:

1. HOW (Home Ownership Works) program, sub recipient agreement- This lengthy title gives Cambridge \$3 million from the State to build single family homes in the Pine St. district. This is very positive development for the City.
2. The Council approved an Arts and Entertainment District Advisory Committee as required under the Act. The Committee has several areas of responsibility under the State program in order to get special tax credits for artist and art projects in the District.

3. Somerset Ave/ School St. traffic calming project. The City will try painted areas and bump outs to try to calm the speeding on Somerset. This is a long time problem for the residents and hopefully this will help.

The Council then approved at first reading Ordinance 1232 which defined responsibilities of citizens representing the City on Board and Commissions. They also approved Ordinance 1233 which rezoned several parcels of land from General Commercial to Downtown/Waterfront Development District. There was no discussion on either of these Ordinances.

Under Old Business, the Council approved going forward with the Traffic Study implementation plan which would remove all the traffic lights in the downtown area and leave those walking on their own. Councilman Spuddy Cephas wanted more community and business information before going further and the Council agreed to waiting until December before starting. What is being proposed is as follows: Remove the traffic lights at

1. High St. and Glasgow
2. High St. and Poplar St./locust St.
3. Race St./Poplar St. and Gay St.
4. Race St. and Muir St.
5. Gay St. and Muse St.
6. Gay St. and Academy/Spring St.

The report said it would make traffic go smoother and people walking safer and that the business community was in total agreement. Commissioner Cephas was not so sure everyone agreed so there is an extended period of community input. So if you want to comment, you need to contact your Commissioner. This is the only chance you are going to get.

Departmental Reports:

George Hyde, the City engineer submitted a report to build a stage/pavilion at Cannery Park.

Ina Holden presented a new City employee plan that gave an option on which medical insurance a City employee could get.

The City Manager introduced the new plan for Code enforcement which will have a scheduled process on which streets the City is focusing on. The following is the first list to be reviewed.

- Robbins St.
- Glasgow St.
- Mace Lane
- Academy and Light St.
- Maryland Ave. and Rambler Rd
- Patamoke Way
- Pleasant St.
- Radiance Drive

This is part of a whole process to revamp the City's code enforce process.

Other City updates are as follows:

The City is trying to work with CWDI (Cambridge Waterfront Development) to make some adjustments to their approach to get more tax revenue for the City and County. CWDI is reluctant to make any changes.

The City has not come to an agreement with Oasis for the management of the Marina for next year. Oasis has agreed to extend through the first quarter next year to work out the contract.

The City has hired Drew Koslow, an Environmental Program Manager from a three year grant. He will work on shoreline resiliency and storm water management. He is a welcome addition.

In other great news, George Hyde has agreed to stay on board for another year. George has been the City Engineer for a number of years and has a wealth of knowledge. He is also a very nice guy.

The City received a \$320,000 grant from the Federal Department of Transportation to improve the bicycle lanes in Cambridge.

The Council went through the 128 page agenda in an hour and four minutes and ended the open meeting at 7:07. They then went into closed session.

Chuck McFadden,

President, CAN