

CAN's Unofficial Notes on the Cambridge City Council Meeting of 12/11/2023

By Chuck McFadden

The Mayor opened the meeting at 6pm with a prayer for Dr. Theresa Stafford who is ill. Dr. Stafford is a long-time community advocate and a member of the Dorchester County Board of Education. The Council then moved to amend the agenda by moving the discussion on Ordinance 1232 – which deals with appointments to City Boards — to the January 8th meeting.

The Council approved the consent agenda with no discussion on any item. The agenda included a list of the City's official holidays, approval to surplus old trucks and fire equipment, a Public Art planning grant, a planning contract to turn Cedar St. into a "Green Street" and the appointment of Veronica Taylor to the Heart of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Board.

The Council approved the removal of all the traffic lights in the downtown area and their replacement with stop signs. No discussion by the Council.

The Council approved a \$260,000 contract to replace the existing computer programs with the "Open Gov" program. This program, which will be used throughout the entire City government, is much more interactive and should improve services in several areas, especially code enforcement.

Upcoming Meetings:

Traffic and Safety on Dec.14 at 1pm – a virtual meeting – meet.google.com/etm-geko-xxp

Historic Preservation meeting at 6pm on Dec. 20th at Council Chambers if they have a quorum. The HPC has lost another Chairperson.

Planning and Zoning meeting Jan. 2 at Council Chambers.

Public Comment: There was only one speaker – Shay Sisco, who complained about code enforcement letters and deadlines. She pointed out that her mother’s house was cited because of peeling paint and the City gave her two weeks to fix the problem. Since it is winter and it is often difficult to get a contractor quickly in Cambridge, Ms. Sisco thought the letter was out of touch with reality. Assistant City Manager, Brandon Hesson stated that her mother could get an extension if she followed a further procedure that was not outlined in the letter. Council discussion centered on ways to improve the letter.

The City Manager reported that the City was ending the contract with Oasis for management of the City Marina and that the City will take over that responsibility.

The open meeting ended at 6:52 a near record pace for the only meeting in December. The Council then went into a closed session.