

# **CAN's Unofficial Notes on the Cambridge City Council Meeting on 1/22/24**

By Chuck McFadden, President, CAN

The meeting began at 6:00 pm with the Mayor speaking about the upcoming State Legislative process. After an amendment adjustment, the Mayor introduced Susan Ahlstrom, Regional Navigator of "For All Seasons" – an organization that deals with human trafficking in Maryland. Ms. Ahlstrom made a 20-minute presentation on the dangers and personal tragedies associated with human trafficking and the need for the City to help her organization deal with the problem. The City Council approved a proclamation opposing human trafficking and promised to do what they can to support her organization.

The Mayor next moved to the Consent Agenda which was approved 5/0. The Consent Agenda included approval of meeting minutes, a Cambridge Police Easter Egg hunt on March 23, the Cubmobile Derby on April 7<sup>th</sup>, the Six Pillars Century Bike Ride on May, 4<sup>th</sup>, the Cambridge Crab Run on May 12<sup>th</sup>, Community Day on September 14<sup>th</sup>, and finally, approval on the Water Tower repair.

The Mayor opened up the meeting to Public Comment and 7 citizens spoke on the new fence installed at Long Wharf which blocks access to the Lighthouse. All seven were against the fence which they described as ugly and blocking access to the Lighthouse, which is a publicly-funded and publicly-maintained facility. They also expressed concern that the fence sends the wrong message to visitors who may want to see the Lighthouse up close. There was strong support of the speakers from Commissioner Roche who said he would help take down the fence. The City Manager took responsibility for the fence and said he would report back to the Council at the next meeting.

There was one citizen who asked about the Planning and Zoning Director, who resigned after an article about him surfaced on local networks.

Police Chief, Justin Todd, stated that the 2023 Annual Police Report will be out by January 24<sup>th</sup>. It can be found on the City's website.

The City Manager provided a number of Agenda Reports as attachments to the agenda, including the following:

1. Neighborhood Code Enforcement Scheduling, January/February Reviews: Academy St, Somerset Ave, Rosemont Ave, Robbins St., Black Duck Court, Brant Way, Old Squaw Court, Ruddy Duck Court, Stone Boundary Rd., Gay St., Bethel St., Cross St., School House Lane, Belvedere Ave., Ames Court, Bradley Ave, Aurora St., Bayle Ave., Virginia Ave., Aurora St., Bayly Av., Virginia Ave., Lincoln Terrace, Allen St., Lincoln Terrace, Allen St., Beech St., Clifton Woods Dr., Bayberry Way, Camelia St., and Weaver Ave.
2. Grant Award of \$1.8 million from FEMA for Shoreline Resiliency design efforts. The City had already put aside \$900,000 for this project. The total cost of this effort will be approximately \$18 million.
3. Traffic Signal removal will begin in mid-February, weather permitting.
4. Draft legislative priorities for 2024, including:
  - a. Housing and Pine St. Redevelopment, which involves a number of programs to improve the housing stock in Cambridge.
  - b. Historic Cambridge City Hall. The City has budgeted \$700,000 for 2024 for this project. The first efforts involve remediation of the environmental hazards in the building. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$10 million.
  - c. Water and Sewer Infrastructure Project, which is estimated at \$20 million, of which \$8.2 million will be spent in 2024.
  - d. Juvenile Justice and Programming. The City is requesting systematic and sustained changes to the State's Juvenile Services program that affects the children of Cambridge.

The four Agenda Reports listed above not were discussed by the City Council in open session. The meeting ended at 7:16.