

CAN's Unofficial Notes on the Cambridge City Council Meeting of May 13, 2024

The Mayor opened the meeting at 6:00 with a moment of silence focusing on gun violence. He went on to ask for amendments to the agenda of which there were two. Sputty Cephas wanted to change the consent agenda to remove the item concerning Bank signatures since he is a bank manager and has to recuse himself from the vote. Brian Roche wanted to add an item to the agenda asking for a vote of the council to approve the addition of the new stop signs and the removal of the traffic lights downtown. His suggestion was added to new business.

Lucas Thorpe, Executive Director of the nonprofit, All-4-Love, then gave a presentation on that organization. The focus of his group is to mentor teenagers. His group provides listening sessions for teens, as well as counseling on colleges, trade careers, life skills, etc. All-4-love counseled 58 teenagers last year and 28 so far this year.

Arleace Green from the State's Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience then made a presentation about financial assistance to businesses and non-profits hurt by the recent Baltimore Bridge collapse. Businesses can get low interest loans with long terms if they were affected by the down turn in business due to the bridge collapse. The program runs until December 30th of this year.

The Council approved the Consent Agenda consisting of prior meeting minutes and public events. There was the first reading of Ordinance 24-01 which would allow the City government to apply for an \$800,000 block grant from the State for the Mace's Lane Community Center. The second reading and public comment will be on May 20th, 2024.

Under old business, the Council re-approved \$450,000 for repair of a bridge on the private road leading to the Hyatt Hotel. The re-approval lengthens the time over which the \$450,000 would be paid out.

Under new business, Brian Roche wanted the Council to approve the new stop sign program downtown and to approve removing the traffic lights. The new Acting City Manager, David Deutsch, asked for a delay until he had time to meet

with the staff on the issue. Commissioner Atkiss asked if the Council was supposed to get public input before approving the stop signs. Her question was not answered, and the Council went on to approve Commissioner Roche's proposal contingent on staff approval. The public will have no additional input.

Shay Lewis-Sisco made three comments during the Public Comment section. The first commended the City's efforts on gun violence; the second endorsed the new stop signs; and finally, she commented on excessive speeding in her housing development. She was the only person who spoke during the Public comment Section.

The new Acting City Manager Deutsch said that the insurance company that covers the City for accidents gave a \$175,000 refund because of the great safety record of the City. Safety pays was his motto.

During the Commissioner's comments, Commissioner Roche raised two issues. First, he lobbied for an extra \$93,000 for traffic improvements in the 2025 budget, and second, he criticized the City for suing CWDI and therefore, in his opinion, stopping all the forward progress. According to Commissioner Roche, the City is at fault for stopping the project, and CWDI was held faultless in what he termed Phase 1. His opinion was disputed by Commissioner Atkiss.

The meeting ended at 7:00 pm and went into closed session to talk about litigation.

Chuck McFadden,

President, CAN