

# **CAN's Unofficial Notes on the Cambridge City Council Meeting of May 20, 2024**

The Mayor opened the meeting at 6:00 with comments on the homeless situation and the need for more support for our neighbors who are having difficulties in their lives. Commissioners L. Cephas and L. Atkiss attended the meeting via zoom. After the agenda approval, the Mayor introduced Carl Snowden of the Caucus of African American Leaders.

Mr. Snowden wanted the Council to pass a resolution to rename the Fredrick C. Malkus, Jr. Bridge to the Gloria Richardson Memorial Bridge in honor of the late Civil Rights leader. Mr. Snowden made an impassioned plea to the Council and had two Pastors speak in support of his proposal. The Council stated that it was not prepared to make a decision and needed a fact finding effort by the staff before making any decisions.

Ms. Kim Miller and Ms. Sharon Smith, Board Members of the Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN) then made a presentation on the recent survey done by CAN on the YMCA moving to Cambridge Harbor. Ms. Miller explained that CAN used Survey Monkey and only one vote per person was allowed by that system. CAN received 636 responses of which 85% wanted the Y to stay at its present site. Only 12% thought that it was a good idea to move. Ms. Miller showed several slides on the different comments received by CAN. She noted that all the data for the survey would be sent to the Council, YMCA, CWDI and anyone with an interest in seeing the underlying data.

The Council then approved the Consent Agenda which included past minutes and requests for special events.

The Council then moved to approve the following Ordinances:

Ordinance 1239 is the FY2025 budget. The budget had to be amended because the purchase of the new fire truck was left out of the 2025 budget. The cost of the fire truck is \$1.7 million and will be delivered in September. In order to offset this large expenditure the Finance Department proposed the following:

\$100K from sale of retired RF vehicles; \$250K reduction in CWDI litigation reserve, \$200K reduction in Economic Development reserve; \$250K in the Marina reserve; \$200K in ARPA funds: and a \$700K drawdown of the General fund reserve. The General fund still has a \$1.3 million reserve. In addition \$35K was added to the Police budget for a drone and accessories, \$15K for Police telephone expenditures and 50K to the Marina fund for electrical expenditures. The 2025 budget is very comprehensive and is the best presentation I have seen the City make. The Council also like the budget and passed it 5/0. The second reading will be June 10<sup>th</sup>.

Ordinance 1236 was a second reading to purchase property on Douglas St. There was no public comment and the Council passed it 5/0.

Ordinance 1237 amends the City's Unified Development Code to remove some of the restrictions on growing Medical Cannabis in the City. There was some discussion on whether or not the amendments allowed for the outdoor growing of the plant. The outdoor facility has an 8ft fence, alarms and 24 on sight security so the Council was comfortable with including that in the amendments. The City Attorney asked for more time to get the language right so the amendment was postponed.

Ordinance 1238 is for the purchase of land at 2 Queen Av. for \$465K. This land is on the river next to Great Marsh Park and housed the old radio station which was flooded out years ago. The land will be used as part of the Shoreline Restoration project. It was approved 5/0.

Resolution no. 24-01 allows the City to apply for a block grant of \$800K for the Mace's Lane Community Center. It passed 5/0.

In the public comment section, the assistant to Fredrick Malkus spoke but did not give her name. She stated the Senator Malkus did a lot of wonderful things for Cambridge and the bridge name should not be changed.

Betsy Malkus also spoke in favor of keeping the name of the bridge the same as it has always been.

Dave Thatcher, a CAN board member, stated that naming buildings and bridges after people is a bad idea and can be very divisive. He said just name it the Choptank River Bridge.

The Commissioner's comments were around the naming of the bridge and reflected President's Cephas comments which were that the Council is in a fact finding mode and is not ready to make any statements yet on the name of the bridge.

The Meeting then went into closed session at 7:40.

Notes by Chuck McFadden, President, CAN