

CAN Unofficial Notes on City Council Meeting (Revised)

Monday, August 26, 2024

Commission Chambers - 305 Gay Street

Cambridge, MD 21613

6:00 pm

6:00 pm Mayor convened Commission in Regular Session

Agenda

NOTE: Mayor said that there will be proposed **charter amendment changes to the County Charter on the ballot in November** to be voted on in addition to candidates. These changes were started 4 years ago through a commission called the Dorchester Citizens for Better Government. It was on the ballot, but the referendum failed back then. The county council appointed a commission to investigate and propose charter changes. Asked the city council members to do what they can to learn about these changes and spread the word because they are significant. It is important that the amendments pass this time to bring the charter into the 21st century.

1. Mayor and Commissioners approve agenda as presented 5-0.

2. Hotelier Presentation - Tauhid Islam, Pinnacle Hospitality Group

- Based on the Eastern Shore
- Hotels in Ocean City MD, Rehoboth, Chincoteague, elsewhere
- Started Pinnacle Hospitality Group management company
- Started with buying the 20-room old Anchor Inn in Chincoteague VA. Renovated it. Revenue increased from \$250,000 revenue to \$400,000 in one year.
- Bought land next to old Anchor Inn and built Marina Bay Hotel which is still in service.
- Chincoteague has no public sewer. Built a sewer plant for hotel.
- One new hotel built every year since 2017
- Expressed his interest to CWDI in Cambridge MD. Communicated with Matt Leonard and Frank Narr for 15 months and filled out an application. Renderings and drawings will be shared with city council at another time.
- Cambria Inn franchise brand would be the hotel he would want to put in Cambridge. Paintings and décor geared to the setting in Cambridge. Each Cambria hotel looks unique. Wants to make rooftop restaurant, balconies, pool, community event space. Potential for viewing harbor and sunsets from rooftop.
- Mr Islam wanted the community to know about his work with hotels.
- Tom Hutchinson, MD State delegate, talked favorably about Mr. Islam's beautiful hotels in Rehoboth Beach.
- Brian Roche, Ward 5, Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1, and Lajan Cephas, Ward 2, thanked Mr Islam for presenting to the city council.
- Lajan Cephas, Ward 2, thanked the CWDI members for their volunteer work with the organization. They were present at the council meeting.
- Mr Islam showed video of existing hotels to the council.

Consent Agenda

3. Meeting Minutes, August 12, 2024, Regular Session

4. Crystal Wyatt, Property Manager of **Meadows of Cambridge** will hold "End of

Summer Event” on Tuesday August 27, 2024, from 6pm-8pm, at Meadows of Cambridge Apartments. Requesting noise variance from 6pm-8pm. Please see application for details.
5. Mid-Shore Fishing Club will hold **“Kids Fishing Derby” on Saturday August 2, 2025**, from 7am-2pm at Long Wharf. Rain date of Saturday August 9, 2025.

- **All events for consent calendar approved 5-0**

Ordinances for First Reading - none

Ordinances for Second Reading - none

Old Business - none

New Business

6. Tax Increment (TIF)

a. Council Agenda Report from Acting City Manager David Deutsch

- In order for the city to seriously consider a TIF as a way of financing a unique development project, there should be a policy drawn up. At this time, we cannot accept a TIF application because there is no policy document in Cambridge.
- Looking at Bowie MD TIF policy as a guide which has been in place for 10 years. They are exercising that policy in Bowie now for one district there.
- CWDI needs TIF financing policy to have proper documentation ready when developer comes to mayor and council. Bond council will advise.
- Some of **the key points** of the policies in other Maryland communities worth noting included:
 - An application process with an appropriate application fee.
 - The need for an outside Financial Advisor.
 - Analysis of the “but for” test, which would require a demonstrated need for the TIF, without which the project would not occur.
 - The developer should be responsible for paying all fees and expenses of the City’s consultants.
- The mayor, Steve Rideout, read the policy from Bowie and thought it was quite complete. He is pleased that David Deutsch, acting city manager, suggested that a TIF policy be written.
- **Attorney needs to prepare TIF policy. Motion raised and approved 5-0.**

Meetings

All upcoming department meetings were read and are posted on Choosecambridge.com

Public Comment - none

Department/Division Head Reports

7. Brian Herrmann, Director of Planning, was introduced. He is excited to be in beautiful Cambridge.

8. Administrative Memorandum

a. Council Agenda Report from Assistant City Manager Brandon Hesson

Election 2024 updates-Absentee ballot posted Friday; Landing page now on Choosecambridge.com.

No comments from Police Chief, Captain Todd, or Planning Director.

City Manager Comments

Glenn Steckman, new city manager, will be coming in, Wednesday, Sep 4. This will be David Deutsch's last council meeting. Thanked by mayor for stepping in and helping keep the city running well. Thanked by everyone on the council.

Commissioners' Comments

Sputty Cephas, Ward 4 – In Baltimore for internship program for youths to work for the city. Mr Cephas is attending today's meeting virtually. Excited about second class coming through.

Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1 talked about New Beginnings end of summer get together on Friday. Praised Sputty Cephas on the internship program.

Lajan Cephas, Ward 2 welcomed Brian Herrmann. Asked how much longer money will be spent for the mediation. Thank you to Tom Hutchinson for helping to get the council to a good place moving forward.

Jameson Harrington, Ward 3 did not thank CWDI for their work. He said he could not pretend that they have been cooperative over the past year.

Brian Roch, Ward 5 thanked David Deutsch, welcomed Brian Herrmann. Is excited about the positivity of the meeting tonight and moving forward.

Closed Session

9. Motion to hold a closed Session pursuant to Md. Code Ann §3-305(b)(1); to discuss personnel matters affecting specific individuals over whom the City Council has jurisdiction.

Return to Open Session

The mayor, Steve Rideout and Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1, have been serving on a small committee to sit in on the mediation and meetings with CWDI working through that. Tonight, the mayor stepped off of the committee so that Commission President Cephas could start to attend those meetings.

Meeting adjourned

Written by Alison Kennedy, CAN member