

CAN Unofficial Notes on City Council Meeting

Monday, October 7, 2024

Commission Chambers - 305 Gay Street

Cambridge, MD 21613

6:00 PM

All ward commissioners are present

Mayor Rideout is absent

President and Ward 2 commissioner Lajan Cephas conducts the meeting

Agenda

1. #9 on agenda is removed.

Agenda is amended and approved by city council members 5-0

Presentations from the Approved Guests

2. Keita Bailey from Dorchester County Behavioral Health Services

Presentation Topic: Narcan Demonstration/Training

- Narcan is for Opioid Overdose.
- An “overdose” can mimic other health issues such as a diabetic seizure.
- Narcan will not harm a person if it is administered and turns out to be a health issue.
- Things to look for if you find a person you suspect has overdosed:
 - Lighter skin has a purplish cast
 - Darker skin is gray and ashy
- If you are by yourself, give individual the first dose of Narcan in the nostril tip.
- Call Emergency Medical Transport (EMT). EMT needs to take them to hospital. Person must be watched for 2 hours.
- If you get individual aroused, use second cartridge in the nostril tip.
- There is a Narcan Box on Cedar St across from Bradford House. There is also a Narcan Box at Dri-Dock parking lot.
- Narcan cannot be kept in the car or in a purse. It is affected by extreme weather conditions.
- All the city council members thanked Ms. Bailey for the presentation.

Consent Agenda

3. Meeting Minutes, September 23, 2024, Regular Session

4. **Dorchester Elks Lodge #223** will hold “**Elks Parade**” on

Saturday October 26, 2024, from 3pm-7pm in the 600 block of Pine Street.

Please see application for details.

5. **Trick or Treating, Thursday October 31, 2024**, from 6pm-8pm

6. Amendment of Contract of Sale, Radio Station Acquisition

a. Council Agenda Report from City Engineer Carl “Bucky” Jackson

- A contract was drawn up between the owner of the land, WBOC, and the City of Cambridge in May 2024.
- This property is important to the Flood Mitigation part of the Make Cambridge Resilient Initiative because:
 - First, with the purchase of the property, the configuration of the berm is not constrained by this property, reducing costs.
 - Second, and more importantly, the low-lying area where the antenna is located can now become a large stormwater management area instead of using valuable land in Gerry Boyle Park, significantly reducing costs.
- The project designer has estimated savings at over \$500,000 if the radio station property is purchased.
- Two property appraisals were obtained, one in the amount of \$460,000, and one in the amount of \$465,000. WBOC, the current owner of the property, has agreed to a purchase price of \$465,000.
- WBOC returned the contract with minor modifications reviewed and accepted by the City Attorney.

- **Fiscal Impact:** The City has set aside funds for this purchase as part of the Fiscal Year 2025 budget.
- **Equity Impact:** By purchasing this property, Gerry Boyle Park will be kept as large as possible for community use after the stormwater retention requirements are met for the Make Cambridge Resilient Initiative.
- **Environmental Impact:** Stormwater management is a large concern with the Make Cambridge Resilient Initiative. The additional area provided by this purchase will increase the storage capacity and increase the quality of the stormwater that eventually goes into the Choptank River.

The contract between WBOC and the City is attached to the city council agenda for 10/07/24 at choosecambridge.com.

7. Public Works Agreement, Egypt Road Solar Field

a. Council Agenda Report from Planner I, Holly Baldwin

- This Public Works Agreement (PWA) was drafted to replace a previous PWA for single-family subdivision on the same parcel.
- The new PWA conveys that all construction, monitoring, maintenance, and subsequent needs related to the Egypt Road Solar Array, landscaping, and Storm Water Management will be the responsibility of the Developer, Egypt Road Solar, LLC.
- The agreement includes repaving Egypt Road from Maryland Route 16 to the outside boundary of the City.

Details about the project and the PWA are attached to the city council agenda for 10/07/24 at choosecambridge.com.

Motion raised to approve all items on the Consent Agenda; seconded and approved by all city council members 5-0.

Ordinances for First Reading – none

Ordinances for Second Reading – none

Old Business

8. Appointment of Members to CWDI Board

a. Council Agenda Report from City Manager Glenn Steckman

- At the August 12, 2024, Council meeting, Mayor Stephen Rideout reported that Council nominated two candidates to CWDI.
 - Gaver Nichols, to fill the vacant seat of Richard Zeidman. Mr. Nichols is a licensed architect in the Commonwealth of Virginia, State of Maryland, and State of New Jersey. He is also certified by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and is a member of the Northern Virginia American Institute of Architects.
 - Natalie Chabot, to fill the seat of Dion Banks. Ms. Chabot served as the Director of Economic Development with the City of Cambridge from 2008 and 2015, as well as the Director of Tourism in Caroline, Dorchester, and Alleghany Counties. She coordinated the acquisition of the former site of Governor’s Hall from the State of Maryland to the City of Cambridge.

Motion raised to approve appointment of Gaver Nichols; seconded and approved by all city council members 5-0.

Motion raised to approve appointment of Natalie Chabot; seconded and approved by all city council members 5-0.

- **Sputty Cephus, Ward 4**, commented that he would only approve CWDI board if it reflected diversity like the community. Right now, it does reflect diversity. He is not against the appointments of the 2 new members. However, he hopes there can be a discussion about filling the other vacancies on the board when that occurs.

New Business

9. GFNY Race Agreement (removed)

10. Vacant and Underutilized Property Tax Abatement - 2721 Ocean Gateway (Property Tax I.D. 07-139691)

- a. Council Agenda Report from Assistant City Manager, Brandon Hesson
- Staff was contacted by Mr. Curtis Snyder, interested in possibly locating a business at 2721 Ocean Gateway.
 - The subject property qualifies for the Vacant and Underutilized Property Tax Abatement program.
 - Mr. Snyder would like to remove the existing building which is an old, unsightly cashier gas station storefront, to remove the liability of someone getting hurt on the property.
 - If he removes the building now, without approval, the property will not be eligible for the program.
 - Staff is asking that city council approve a Vacant and Underutilized Property Tax Abatement, to be applied at the time when development of the new commercial building has been completed.
 - By qualifying this property now, we are simply acknowledging that it is eligible. The approved tax abatement will end after June 1, 2026, if no improvement has been made to the property.
 - **Fiscal Impact** The City of Cambridge will continue to receive property taxes on the subject parcel, but by incentivizing improvement, it is assumed there will be a long-term benefit.
 - **Equity Impact N/A**
 - **Environmental Impact: N/A**

More details about this Tax Abatement on 2721 Ocean Gateway property are available in Mr. Hesson's report attached to the city council agenda for 10/07/24 at choosecambridge.com.

Motion raised to approve 2721 Ocean Gateway property for Vacant and Underutilized Property Tax Abatement program. Motion seconded and approved 5-0.

11. FY2025 Budget Amendment, Vehicle Purchase

- a. Council Agenda Report from Finance Director, Perry Peregoy
- Follow up on direct purchase of a Ford truck whose payment was approved in budget of FY2023 (approx. \$40,000) but never done. This was brought up at last city council meeting but there was no vote.

Motion raised to amend budget of FY2025 for truck. Motion seconded and approved 5-0.

Meetings

All meetings posted on choosecambridge.com/

Motion raised to approve all meetings. Motion seconded and approved 5-0.

Public Comment

- Leonard Hyer asked for permission to clean up area at end of Cambridge Creek (to the left of Super Soda on Cedar Street and behind the Arena Pool). The actual address is 107 Virginia Ave. Land is owned by Dorchester County.
- He wants to pick up trash, on land and in water, test the water for pollutants and catalog what plant and animal species live in the water area.
- He envisions that this could be an area that is utilized as an educational and/or testing site for environmental science.
- **Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1**, commented that the police have worked with Shore Rivers to clean up areas around the city like that. The area that Leonard Hyer is talking about was restored to a more natural wetland, at some point in the past, after everything was pulled out for drainage. There are resources and connections in the city to help Leonard with his project.
- **Brian Roche, Ward 5**, commented that the area was cleaned up in the past and testing was done. There was data collected on the site and it should still be available. There actually was a leaking sewer in that area that was uncovered and corrected. Worked with the organization, Chesapeake Bay Watershed, from Pennsylvania. The water was tested by Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth.

Department/Division Head Reports

- **Finance Director, Perry Peregoy** commented that the audited financials should be done by early part of November 2024.
- **Asst City Manager, Brendon Hesson** commented that the update from the Permits and Codes Enforcement Division had to be pushed back but it will be completed very soon.

City Manager Comments

12. Administrative Report from City Manager, Glenn Steckman from October 4, 2024.

- On Friday, October 4, 2024, attended a meeting with the elderly senior housing at the Conifer Village.
- Talked about concerns they have – management and code enforcement are top of list.
- Mr. Steckman says that this is the second meeting he has attended where the seniors feel that their concerns are not being taken seriously.
- He wants them to know he does take all the concerns seriously and plans to continue the conversation with them by scheduling a follow up meeting.
- He encouraged the seniors to come in and see him or contact him by phone to discuss concerns.

Commissioners' Comments

Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1, commented that she rode along with Police Officer Webber on Friday night from 7:30 PM to 10:30 PM. She sees how well the police know the city, the neighborhoods, the high risk areas and the families. She mentioned that it is the high holy days of the Jewish religion which is a time for reflection. She wished everyone a good new year.

Jamison Harrington, Ward 3, commented he has continued admiration for city staff and police.

Lajan Cephas, President and Ward 2, agreed with Jamison Harrington.

Sputty Cephas, Ward 4, and Brian Roche, Ward 5, had nothing more to add.

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 PM.

Written by Alison Kennedy, CAN member