**Unofficial CAN Notes on City Council Meeting**

**Monday, November 25, 2024**

**Commission Chambers - 305 Gay Street**

**Cambridge, MD 21613**

**6:00 pm**

Mayor Rideout present; All Ward Commissioners present

**Agenda**

1. Mayor and Commissioners to approve or amend agenda as presented.

**Motion raised to approve Agenda and seconded. Approved by all commissioners present 5-0.**

**Presentations from the Approved Guests – none**

**Consent Agenda**

2. Meeting Minutes, November 4, 2024, City Council Work Session

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

4. Commissioner Laurel Atkiss, Founder of DoCo Pride will hold “Pride in December 2nd Annual Foot Parade” on Saturday December 14, 2024, from 6pm-8:30pm beginning at Blue Ruin Plaza on Gay Street. Please see application for route details.

5. Bill Christopher, from **Cambridge Chamber of Commerce,** will hold the “**Cambridge Ice & Oyster Festival” from January 17- 19, 2025**, at Cannery Way, City parking lot behind Chesapeake College and parking lot next to old City Hall building. **Festival will be held on Saturday January 18, 2025, from 11am to 7pm** on Gay Street. Please see application for additional details.

6. Proposed List of Official Council Meeting Dates for 2025

* Council Agenda Report from Executive Assistant, Tyasia Johnson

7. Official List of 2025 City Holidays

**Motion raised to approve Consent Agenda and seconded. Approved by all commissioners present 5-0.**

**Ordinances for First Reading**

8. ORDINANCE NO. 1243 AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND TO AMEND § 4.2.3(D)(10) OF THE CITY’S UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE (“UDC”) FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING THAT

SMALL-SCALE AND COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS MAY BE LOCATED ON MOSTLY WOODED LOTS, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A

FAIR SUMMARY AND GENERALLY RELATING TO ZONING IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

* Council Agenda Report from Director of Planning, Brian Herrmann
* At the 11/12/24 city council meeting, it was brought up that The Planning & Zoning committee voted positively on a text amendment to Ordinance 1243 for 1 small solar energy system and 1 community scale solar system on a wooded lot, less than 10 acres in size.
* There was a discussion about the solar energy systems plan at 11/12/24 meeting. Brian Roche, Ward 5 commented that Institutional Solar removes good land from within the city limits. The 10 acre lot talked about is a lot of land, wooded and the lot would be cleared. Brian Roche is not in favor of taking the land for an institutional solar field. Institutional solar is funded by outside sources for tax relief and other breaks that will not benefit the community in the long run.
* Second reading and Public Comment will be done at the 12/9/24 city council meeting.

**Ordinances for Second Reading – none**

**Old Business – none**

**New Business**

9. Award of Contract for Trenton St. Pump Station

- Council Agenda Report from City Engineer Carl “Bucky” Jackson, P.E.

* The Trenton Street sewage pumping station, which serves most of the City core, has exceeded its expected service life.
* It is nearly 90 years old and was last upgraded 40 years ago.
* In September 2022, the City contracted with consulting firm George, Miles & Buhr (GMB) to perform detailed design and permit services for a new pump station. The design of the new pump station is now complete.
* The Request for Received approval from the MD Dept of Environment. P and permit has been received.
* Proposal (RFP) for the construction project scheduled for release in early December; estimated construction start February or March 2025. It is about a 15-month project.
* The Engineering Department would like to extend GMB’s design contract so they can complete construction phase services during construction. The fee will be an amount Not To Exceed $100,000 in fiscal year 2025, and an amount Not To Exceed $100,000 in fiscal year 2026.
* These amounts will be reduced if and when the Engineering Department hires a junior engineer to slowly take over many of the tasks in the GMB would complete.

Comments

Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1 – Excited to see what we can accomplish. We have seen positive results in West End sewer project.

**Motion raised to approve replacing Trenton St. pumping station and seconded. Approved by all commissioners present 5-0.**

10. RESOLUTION NO. 24-05 A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND REPEALING RESOLUTION NOS. 21-03 AND 21-07 REGARDING THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE AND

THE CITY HALL RESTORATION COMMITTEE

* Council Agenda Report from Special Projects Coordinator, Cheryl Hannan dated 11/8/24.
* The Technology Committee and Historic Municipal Building Renovation Committee were formed by resolution in 2021. **Resolution 24-05 is being presented to sunset these committees.** Although the Technology Committee had several regular meetings in 2021-2022, the main purpose of the committee seems to be addressed within the responsibilities of the staff of the city who have built plans to acquire technology such as OpenGov, moving City operations to be more efficient and transparent.
* The Historic Municipal Building Renovation Committee was never formed. Staff have been working with the council to identify and obtain funding, but until a significant amount of the estimated $10.5 million required is secured, a committee is premature. In addition, when a committee is needed in the future, the scope of purpose is likely to be different than in the current resolution as well as the composition of the membership. When there is a commitment to funding, the Historic Municipal Building Renovation Committee can be re-established.

**Discussion**

**Jamison Harrington, Ward 3**

* He commented he is concerned that if the Historic Municipal Building Renovation Committee is dissolved, there would be a lack of input from the Rescue Fire Company for the Train Garden. It could be pushed out of the building. He would like to see the Train Garden given permanent space when the Historic Municipal Building Renovation Committee becomes re-established.

**Cheryl Hannan, Special Projects Coordinator**: The Train Garden is a time-honored tradition and means a lot to citizens of Cambridge. However, at the present time, there is no plan where the Train Garden will be, moving forward. Establishing a permanent place for it in a new building would depend on a number of things including any decisions made for the new building.

**Brian Roche, Ward 5**

* In addition to Jamison Harrington’s point, he wondered if there should be documentation following this Resolution to address issues discussed at this meeting and include input from the stakeholders.

**Glenn Steckman, City Manager**

* He has been looking at plans that were written in the 2008/2009 timeframe. There is a lot of information available about this building.
* He has been talking to the current fire chief and former fire chief for the past two months.
* Originally, the thought was that the Train Garden would go into a meeting room and be set up and torn down seasonally. The City Manager, Assistant City Manager and Fire Chief met last Friday. The placement of the Train Garden in the building would affect how the layout of the building would happen. Discussions would have to occur with the architect. It is neither a customer nor employee friendly building.
* The goal of the City Manager and staff has always been to get as many offices moved from Washington Street to a new City Hall to make it more like a one-stop shop.
* Since 2021, when the Historic Municipal Building Renovation Committee was formed the staff has done the following.

 -New roof

 -Historical easements

 -Asbestos and hazard mitigation should start soon. Going out to bid on that.

 -Painting of the clock tower scheduled for Spring ’25.

 -Still need to board up the old hose tower. That will probably need structural steel. The building has

 been open and there is a lot of bird waste in that area.

The city has a rough price on outstanding renovations cost still to be done on the building from October 2023. Every year the renovations are delayed, the price is raised exponentially (roughly between $400,000 - $500,000). These renovations should really be dealt with and sources of funding explored if the building is to be saved.

Discussion

**Brian Roche, Ward 5 -** Old City Hall should qualify for Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) funding

**Cheryl Hannan, Special Projects** – The MHT made recommendations as to what needed to be restored to qualify for funds. It was focused more on the exterior of the building. The inside renovations the funds would cover are not as rigorous as the overall renovations inside need to be.

**Glen Steckmann, City Manager** – There has been discussion about gutting the building and putting in a more modern interior. However, there are beautiful elements that should be saved such as the wood flooring. This is still an ongoing discussion. The city manager wanted the council to know that there have been actions taken on the building since 2021 when the committee was formed.

**Brian Roche, Ward 5** – Every year I have been on the city council, the Old City Hall renovations were top priority.

**Mayor Rideout** – Are you going to come back to the city council with 2 options – one building layout with the Train Garden and one without (requiring set up and tear down seasonally).

**Glen Steckmann, City Manager** – Right now our plan is to include the Train Garden because it is so beloved by the community at large. That will require adding on to the building because there is not enough space for all the offices required and the Train Garden too. The renovations right now will cost roughly $8,000,000 to include Train Garden.

**Cheryl Hannan, Special Projects** –Have to decide if the Train Garden should be set up all year round or set up/tear down as has been done for years.

**Sputty Cephas, Ward 4** – Asked concerned city commissioners if they would like to keep the Resolution intact. He will make a motion to approve if others are OK with this.

**Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1** – If we leave it intact, we have to man it and activate it.

**Mayor Rideout –** This committee was created 3 years ago. No one has been appointed to it. If we keep it active, management will say we have to man it with people and do what with it? We are expecting a proposal from the city manager including the Train Garden. The next city council can decide what to do at that point when the proposal is issued. The committee can be reactivated at that point if that is the direction the majority wants to go.

**Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1 –** She has worked closely with the Train Garden over her time in office. She has faith in the community that they will support the Train Garden at the old city hall building in the future. She feels that it seems right that the committee be reigned in at the present time and reactivated when the time is right.

**Brian Roche, Ward 5 –** This resolution is more of a housekeeping issue. We do have a commitment by city staff and the new council coming in, to support keeping the old city hall intact and a vibrant part of downtown.

**Motion raised to approve Resolution 24-05 and seconded. Approved by all commissioners present 5-0.**

**Meetings**

Approved meetings on choosecambridge.com

**Motion raised to approve all meetings and seconded. Approved by all commissioners present 5-0.**

**Public Comment**

1. Resident Mya Woods
* Read a letter from another resident, Geri Leigh Farrow, that called out Lajan Cephas, Ward 2 and Council President, and her campaign.
* In the letter, Farrow said she was working at Conifer Village at Cambridge, an apartment complex for seniors, when she observed that Cephas had entered the building to canvas by using the system the building has for visitors seeing a particular resident.
* Ms. Woods was stopped by Mayor Rideout stating that public comments must be made to or about the entire council, not a single commissioner.
* Woods went on to ask that the city’s elected officials make sure they make decisions with the residents’ best interests at heart.
1. Michael Jones, a resident of New Horizons Apartments
* Told the City Council he has seen people come in and out of his apartment for campaign reasons.
* He recounted an experience where he received a knock at his door and later found a campaign flier at his door.

**Department/Division Head Reports**

11. **Development Report, Renewal of Neighborhood Walks**

- Council Agenda Report from Assistant City Manager, Brandon Hesson

**Sidewalks**

* Earlier this year, the code enforcement division had two vacancies and the walks were paused.
* Now that the division is back up to full speed, the walks will continue. Between now and the end of the year, staff will be in the following neighborhoods: - Willis Street - Brian Circle and Lance Drive - Wood Duck Drive - Church Creek Road - Canterbury Drive - Hughlett Street - Franklin Street - Canvasback Way - East Applebee Avenue - West End Avenue - Willis Street - Crusader Road - Fairmount Avenue - Winters Court - Talbot Avenue and Glenburn Avenue

12. **Engineering Department Update**

- Council Agenda Report from City Engineer Carl “Bucky” Jackson, P.E.

**Marina:**

* A wave screen has been installed around A and B docks that will significantly reduce wave action within the marina. The next phase of the wave screen will be on L dock, which is on the Yacht Club side. Also, A dock was reconfigured to allow more and larger catamarans to use the marina for long term and short-term docking.

**GIS Technology:**

* We are pursuing a cloud-based enterprise solution that will significantly expand the use of GIS by the City staff

**Wastewater Treatment Plant**:

* Pump upgrades scheduled for the Southside pump station are scheduled for completion in January

 **Projects:**

* West End Sewer project: Nearing completion with paving scheduled for the week of Nov. 25.
* Trenton St. pump station: See above under Trenton Pumping Station
* Road Resurfacing: The annual contract is scheduled to begin in late winter/early spring when the asphalt plant is back up and running.
* Cannery Park Pavilion: Building project is complete, currently installing sidewalks and lighting.
* Housing areas: Providing inputs for the site work for Douglas Street houses, Chesapeake Court, and the Camper St. new housing areas.

**City Manager Comments**

13. Administrative Report from City Manager, Glenn Steckman from November 22, 2024

* Announced there will be a Dec 16, 2024, work session to review the audit of the city.
* City Council President, Lajan Cephas, presented a citation to the mayor.

**Commissioners’ Comments**

**Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1**- Conifer Village residents have been reaching out to her about “problems with their building being infiltrated.” She expressed dismay and dissatisfaction that elected officials are disregarding the measures taken to protect vulnerable populations. She feels it affects the community negatively that rules can be bypassed for self-serving actions.

**Lajan Cephas, Ward 2** – Canvassing is not illegal.

**Jamison Harrington, Ward 3** – Expressed dissatisfaction over the steps taken by other council members to get the young woman, Mya Woods in trouble at her school 3 years ago for coming forward with a complaint about a member of council’s actions. An incriminating letter was sent by 2 city council members about an article of clothing she was wearing 3 years ago that they found to be inappropriate. Applauded her step to come forward today to express another complaint about a council member’s actions.

**Sputty Cephas, Ward 4** – Thanked Mayor Rideout for leading them through the last few years. Thanked the city for providing Thanksgiving to needy members of our community.

**Brian Roche, Ward 5** – Thanked Mayor Rideout for his service to Cambridge.

**Motion raised to adjourn and seconded. Approved by all commissioners present 5-0.**

**Adjourned at 7:05 PM**

Notes by Alison Kennedy, CAN Member