**CAN Notes on the City Commission Meeting**

**Monday, February 24, 2025 - 6:00 pm**

[**https://townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location\_id=87&id=63769**](https://townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=87&id=63769)

**Attendees:** Mayor Lajan Cephas and All Ward Commissioners

**Agenda**

(Mayor and Commissioners approve or amend the agenda as presented.)

Change request: Mayoral request to switch the order of item #2 and #4.

*Motion raised to accept amended agenda and seconded.* *Commissioners’ vote was 5-0.*

Additional agenda request: Brian Roche would like to provide a letter of support to Shore Rivers who wants to support a workforce grant program for 8 Dorchester County public school students. The letter is due before the next city council meeting.

S Cephas, President - Did all commissioners get a copy of the letter? All said yes.

*Motion raised to accept amended agenda and seconded. Commissioners’ vote was 5-0.*

**Presentations from the Approved Guests**

**Citations and Proclamations -** Honoring Former and Current African American First Responders and Fire Company Members for Black History Month

* Citations awarded by the Mayor to First Responders.
* Proclamation Honoring Cambridge-Dorchester Lodge #27 FOP
* Thomas R Hurley, President of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #27, gave a tribute to a former police officer, Randolph Jews, first Black uniformed policeman in the State of Maryland.
* Greg Meekins spoke about his experiences as a fire fighter over the years and the close connections that he made.

**Presentation -** Audrey Johnson, Executive Director of Maryland Office of Social Equity (Virtual) and Courtney Davis, Deputy Director of the Office of Social Equity (Virtual)

Presentation Topic: 2023 Cannabis Reform Act and Funding for Cambridge Representatives from the Maryland Office of Social Equity, gave a virtual presentation on the topic of cannabis tax revenue going to all the counties in Maryland. Dorchester County will be sharing the proceeds with Cambridge. This tax revenue will go into a Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund also known as CRRF and paid through the Comptroller’s office. Dorchester County will begin to receive a little over 1% of the CRRF fund quarterly. Although the first payment will be approximately $47,000, the amount will fluctuate each quarter. This will be split with the city of Cambridge. The city manager said that the amount coming to Cambridge is between $9,000 - $12,000 for this quarter. The top three investment areas recommended are mental health and substance abuse services education, after-school programs and housing and homelessness prevention services. Counties are not limited to these choices. It is unclear how long these funds will continue. The fund is subject to public review and reported annually to the state.

**Consent Agenda**

* Meeting Minutes, January 27, 2025, Regular Session
* Proclamation for Endometriosis Month
* Carly Stockus, Executive Director of Baywater Animal Rescue will hold “Run Fur Their Lives 5K Fun Run/Walk” on Saturday April 19, 2025, from 7am to 10am at 104 Tech Park Drive. Please see the application and map for additional details.
* Letter of support from Chesapeake Bay Trust for Shore Rivers’ proposal for MidAtlantic Environmental Justice Fund. This is a workforce grant program for 8 Dorchester County public school students.

**Ordinances for First Reading** – none

**Ordinances for Second Reading**

ORDINANCE NO. 1244 AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND TO AMEND THE CITY’S UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR THE PURPOSES OF: 1) PROVIDING THAT RESEARCH, EXPERIMENTAL, TESTING LABORATORIES SHALL BE A PERMITTED USE WITH CONDITIONS IN THE INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICT, ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS FOR SUCH USE, AND AMENDING TABLES 1 AND 2 OF THE UDC FOR CONSISTENCY THEREWITH; AND 2) AMENDING MINIMUM YARD REQUIREMENTS AND MAXIMUM BULK STANDARDS FOR INDUSTRIAL LOTS; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY AND GENERALLY RELATING TO ZONING IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

a. Second Reading

b. Council Agenda Report from Director of Planning, Brian Herrmann

This proposal does four things:

* Increases the maximum building height in the industrial zoning district from 50 feet to 70 feet.
* Will require a portion of an industrial zone building that is 50 feet in height and fronts upon a collector or through street to step back its front facade by 10 feet ensuring that any height above 50 feet would not be visible from the street.
* Would infuse design standards regarding setbacks frontage elements and the general form with neighboring structures.
* Establishes the land use as a conditional use as opposed to a permitted use for that facility that tests explosive or toxic materials.

*Motion to open public hearing and seconded. Commissioners vote is 5-0.*

c. Public Hearing – No comments

*Motion to close public hearing and seconded. Commissioners vote is 5-0.*

d. Council Action

*Motion to amend Ordinance 1244 and seconded. Commissioners vote is 5-0.*

**Old Business –** None

**New Business**

RESOLUTION NO. 25-01 - A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND TO AUTHORIZE THE APPLICATION FOR AND RECEIPT OF UTILIZING PROGRESSIVE LENDING INVESTMENTS TO FINANCE TRANSFORMATION (“UPLIFT”) FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 – CHESAPEAKE COURT PROPERTIES (THE “PROJECT”), IN THE AMOUNT OF $3,900,000, WITH SUCH FUNDING TO BE PROVIDED EITHER DIRECTLY BY THE

STATE OF MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (“DHCD”) OR THROUGH OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR AGENCIES OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

Staff have worked with the city attorney to prepare Resolution 25-01 to authorize the application for and receipt of Utilizing Progressive Lending Investments to Finance Transformation (“UPLIFT”) funding for fiscal year 2025 – Chesapeake Court Properties from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the second phase of the HOW project, called Uplift in the amount of $3,900,000. Project Funding will support the construction of eight (8) homes that will be sold to low- to moderate-income families, which will provide a material benefit to the City and its residents (Pine Glen Development at Pineglenhomes.com).

1. Council Agenda Report from Eddie Crosby, Housing Programs Manager
* Progress on the HOW project The Home Ownership Works (HOW) project on Douglas Street is rapidly taking shape, with our first four homes under construction, and are expected to be fully completed by the summer of 2025.
* Hosting community outreach event – 01/22/25 Attendees expressed a strong interest in the HOW homes on Douglas Street. 01/30/25 Met with members of the Rotary at the Intergeneration Center to discuss the Cambridge Healthy Homes Program (CHHP) that develops housing initiatives to create a home environment that is safe and healthy. 02/03/25 Met with the Early Childhood Advisory Council, presenting plans under the HUD Lead Capacity and Reduction Grant.
* Fiscal Impact: Douglas Street Homes Progress Update: 42% Complete
* Equity Impact Benefit to Low– and Moderate–Income Persons: Housing to provide affordable home ownership units for sale to buyers who meet the low– and moderate–income threshold restrictions.

*Motion to open public hearing and seconded. Commissioners vote is 5-0.*

1. Public Hearing –
* Laurel Atkiss, High St – It is very gratifying to see the houses going up on Douglas St and providing low-cost housing to the city.
* Jermaine Anderson, Alpha Genesis – Loves seeing the houses being built on Douglas St and the positive changes coming to the neighborhoods.

*Motion to close public hearing and seconded. Commissioners vote is 5-0.*

1. Council Action –
* S Lewis-Sisco, Ward 2: Wanted times on the Home purchasing meetings taking place on 04/5/24 and 04/12/25 at Packing House. Is it open to the public whether one is purchasing a home or not? Answer: Times of mtgs – 10 AM – 2:00 PM. Open to all. Anyone can fill out an application at Pineglenhomes.com. They should also reach out to the city housing department, Ed Crosby, about the home buying program.
* B Roche, Ward 5: Is there lending involved with the buyer? Answer: Progressive Lending is being provided by the state to build the homes; The buyer must get their own mortgage for the home purchase. The seller is the city. Ed Crosby explained how the program works. Will come back to have a meeting with the commissioners and explain the program thoroughly if they want.
* B Summers, Ward 1: How is the $3.9M budget developed? Answer: The developer, Home Partnership, Inc., develops the budget. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) approves the budget.
* B. Summers, Ward 1: When the city receives the budget, why aren’t bids sent out to several developers to get the most houses at the best price? I would like to see the budget and what fees the developer is receiving. Answer: The way the grant is set up, the developer is the prime and the city is the sub. Putting it out to other developers was not an option.

*Motion to approve Resolution 25-01 and seconded. Commissioners vote is 5-0.*

Award of Contract, Comprehensive Plan

PowerPoint Presentation from Director of Planning, Brian Herrmann

* The Planning Commission needs approval to hire consulting services, Able City East (ACE), to complete a comprehensive plan for the city of Cambridge.
* Five (5) bids came in. ACE was the lowest bid and the best contract - $168,000.
* The consultant will work with the following sub-contractors: Lane Engineering, infrastructure assessment, Thornton Tomasetti, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, Kittleson & Assoc. for mobility and transportation, Zanetta Illustrations for illustrations and renderings, Daedalus Advisory Services for Economic Development.
* This is a 12-month contract with ACE with an option to extend it for 6 months.
* Go to choosecambridge.com in agenda packet under 2/24/25 to see contract detail.

 *Motion to approve ACE contract for comprehensive plan raised and seconded. Commissioners vote is 5-0.*

**Meetings**

All meetings approved and posted on the city website.

**Public Comment**

* Laurel Atkiss, High St – Commented that she would like to see the city council closely follow CWDI. She reminded the council that the waterfront property should be designed to bring in revenue to the city and boost the economy.
* Alison Kennedy, Garden Lane – City council meeting with CWDI should be more than quarterly. Shared at the last board meeting that they were designing the infrastructure. The firm doing this design is not the master developer.

**Department/Division Head Reports**

**City Manager Comments**

Administrative Report from City Manager Glenn Steckman - February 21, 2025

* The City Manager started Saturday hours for citizens to come with questions and concerns.
* Cannery Park – next phase of the project will be starting soon.
* Cannery Way – improvements will be made to walkway areas.
* Mr. Steckman and the mayor met with Secretary Day to give him city project updates.
* Senior Center monthly outreach meeting was conducted.

Organization Financial Request Process

* Community/Organization Financial Request Form requested by Ward 2 commissioner. The city has not previously had a formal process.

Human Resources Generalist Job Description

* The city manager, Glen Steckmann, requested that an HR generalist be hired to assist the Director of Administrative Services, with the daily functions of overseeing the human resources responsibilities and activities. The salary stated for the HR generalist position is listed at $73,000 to $83,916. An in-house candidate has been identified. Mr. Steckmann stated that the discussion could be continued at the next city council meeting. It will require a budget amendment which must be voted on, but the city manager said that typically, that is not done in the present budget year. The only thing that the commissioners would have to vote on at the present time is raising a motion to request the hire of an HR generalist.

Discussion

* The commissioners asked questions about the budget amendment, how many city employees there are, when the HR manual was going to be done and more.
* The mayor stepped in and replied that a vote must be taken.
* She encouraged the city commissioners to make an appointment with the city manager to discuss any questions they still have.

*Commissioners voted regarding raising a motion to adopt a job description for an HR generalist: 1 Aye, 3 Nays, 1 Abstain. The mayor said it would be brought forward to the next council meeting.*

**Commissioners’ Comments**

Commissioners continued commenting on the HR discussion. Mr. Steckmann asked for the closed session to be cancelled due to the late hour.

*Motion to cancel the closed session and seconded. Commissioners vote is 5-0.*

**Closed Session** – cancelled.

**Adjournment:** 9:05 PM

*Notes taken by CAN member A. Kennedy*