Unoffical City Council Notes

City Commission Meeting Monday, June 9, 2025

Commission Chambers - 6:00 pm

Mayor (L. Cephas) convened Commission in Regular Session

Ward Commissioners present 1(Summers),2 (Lewis-Sisco),3,(Stout)4(S. Cephas). Ward 5 (Roche), commissioner is absent.

**Agenda**

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

City manager, G. Steckman, asked that item #17 be removed. It needs to go back out for RFP.

Discussion

F. Stout, Ward 3 advised removing the discussion, public hearing and the vote on the budget until Roche returned to the next meeting on June 16.

President S. Cephas pointed out that he and Ward 2 commissioner, S. Lewis-Sisco would not be present at the June 16 meeting. He continued that there would be no city council meeting on June 23rd because the commissioners will attend the Maryland Municipal League Summer Conference in Ocean City. He felt that the commissioners should not delay voting on the budget because there had already been much discussion about the budget previously with B. Roche, Ward 5, present.

Mayor Lajan Cephas suggested the vote could be delayed but not the discussion. She added that the commissioners needed to provide directions to the city staff on any deletions and additions to the budget so they could balance it by July 1st. She continued that the public hearing should go forward because there were community members present that wanted to speak. It was determined that after the public hearing was held, the commissioners would discuss what they would do.

*Council Action*

President Cephas amended his Motion to remove #17 as requested by city manager and seconded. Commissioners present voted yes 4-0.

**Presentations from the Approved Guests**

1. Dividend Check
2. Presentation by Chesapeake Employers Representative

* Presented to the city for their good year in 2022. The city had minimal losses.
* Chesapeake declared a $15m dividend to their policyholders that were profitable in that year.
* City received $174,182.00 check from Chesapeake Employers.

1. Sharon Wilson
2. Topic: Concern Regarding Enforcement on Property

Lives at 4143 Washington St. Corner of Academy and Washington.

* Citation given for $200 fine bricks that fell down on her property by Department of Public Works.
* Wilson showed pictures of the fallen bricks in the garden and on other side of wall.
* Dept of Public Works Inspector checked her brick clean-up (on the asphalt) and said it was not good enough and still hazardous.
* She feels the citation is unfair.
* She checked other properties in town and felt there were many properties in a more hazardous condition than hers.

**Consent Agenda** Please see applications, maps,routes for additional details.

4. Meeting Minutes - a. April 14, 2025, Regular Session,b. April 28, 2025, Regular Session,

c. May 5, 2025, Special Meeting,d. May 12, 2025, Regular Session,e. May 19, 2025, Regular Session

5. Captain Antione Patton, CPD will hold “Dad on the Doc Fishing” on Saturday June 14, 2025, from 8am to 12pm at Gerry Boyle Park at Great Marsh.

6. Veronica Taylor, Executive Director of Groove City Black Heritage & Culture Group Inc, will hold the following events:

a. “Second Saturdays on Pine Street” on June 14th and July 12th from 12pm to 4pm in 600 Block of Pine Street. Road closure from 12:30pm to 4:30pm on Pine Street from Cedar to Cross Street.

b. “Groove City Culture Fest” on Saturday August 16, 2025, from 2pm to 8pm in the 600, 700 Block of Pine Street and Cornish Park. Road closure from 2pm-8:30pm

7. Kamel Hopkins, Naail Thompson, and Takii Smith will hold “GrooveNik” on Friday June 20, 2025, from 5pm-11pm at Gerry Boyle Park at Great Marsh. Rain date of Saturday July 12, 2025.

8. Jason Parker, President of Teen Ministries will hold “Harvestime Swoosh” on Saturday June 21, 2025, from 7am-3pm at Cornish Park. Rain date of Saturday July 12, 2025.

9. Kirsten Hurley, Youth Action Council Advisor of Dorchester County Health Department will hold “After Hours Pool Party” at Dorchester County Pool located at 105 Virginia Avenue from 6:30pm-8:30pm. Requesting police presence.

10. Mayor Lajan Cephas will hold “Move with the Mayor, Older Americans Month – Spring Mental Health & Physical Activity Challenge” on Friday June 27, 2025 from 10am2pm on the corner of Cedar and Race Street, City Lot. Set up will begin at 9am. Rain date of Saturday June 28, 2025.

*Council Action:*

Motion raised to adopt Consent Agenda as presented. All Ward Commissioners voted yes, 4-0.

**Ordinances for First Reading**

11. ORDINANCE NO. 1249 AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND TO AMEND THE CITY’S UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING THAT COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS SHALL BE EXEMPT FROM THE CURRENT 350-ACRE LIMITATION ON LAND AVAILABLE FOR MEDIUM, LARGE, AND COMMUNITY SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS WITHIN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY AND GENERALLY RELATING TO ZONING IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE -Read by Patrick Thomas, City Attorney

a. Council Agenda Report from Director of Planning, Brian Herrmann- waiting to read at next meeting

12. ORDINANCE NO. 1250 AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND TO AMEND THE CITY’S UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DELETING THE REQUIREMENT THAT SETBACKS FROM THE BUILDING LINE TO THE PROPERTY LINE ALONG U.S. ROUTE 50 SHALL BE AT LEAST 50 FEET; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY AND GENERALLY RELATING TO ZONING IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE -Read by Patrick Thomas, City Attorney

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a. Council Agenda Report from Director of Planning, Brian Herrmann- waiting to read at next meeting

13. ORDINANCE NO. 1251 AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND TO AMEND THE CITY’S UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING THAT MIXED-USE GROUND FLOOR RETAIL SHALL BE A PERMITTED USE IN THE DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT – CORE, GENERAL, AND CENTER SUBDISTRICTS AND DELETING LANGUAGE INCONSISTENT THEREWITH; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY AND GENERALLY RELATING TO ZONING IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE -Read by Patrick Thomas, City Attorney

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a. Council Agenda Report from Director of Planning, Brian Herrmann - waiting to read at next meeting

**Ordinances for Second Reading**

14. ORDINANCE NO. 1246 FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND TO ADOPT AND APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET APPROPRIATING THE NECESSARY FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026.

a. Second Reading

b. Council Agenda Report from Finance Director, Perry Peregoy

Public Hearing (on Budget)

* Eric Sanner, Vice Chairman of temporary homeless shelter.
* Sanner said that their organization raised $100,000 from the community last year without a campaign effort. This year, there will be a campaign.
* They will need the monetary support from the city because the problem of homelessness in the area is growing.
* Partners with Delmarva Community Services and others.
* Money goes toward supporting people in the shelter. Evening meals provided by the community.
* During the winter, it was up to 70 people. Now it is about 20 people.

Discussion

S. Lewis-Sisco, Ward 2 – Is education given to people on how to handle finances, get a job, etc. Answer: Yes

F. Stout, Ward 3 – applauds the shelter on raising their own money to support the homeless.

G. Steckman, City manager – The temporary homeless shelter was made a non profit so they would be eligible for grants and funding streams for non profit. County stepped up and provided some things that were needed such as frozen food in a truck.

S. Cephas, President and Ward 4 – Thank-you for your work

Patricia Sanner, wife of Eric Sanner

Wrote a grant to the state for money to start a smoking cessation program.

Funds will be paying for initial start up.

A bike share program that will help the homeless become mobile.

The number of homeless will go up - people cannot afford the rental prices that have gone up considerably.

Public Hearing closed

*Council Action*

Motion to delay amending the ordinance 1246 and seconded.

*Discussion*

S. Cephas, President and Ward 4 – suggest we change motion and have discussion on what we want taken out or added to ordinance.

Motion was withdrawn and motion raised to have a discussion about the ordinance and the budget.

Motion was withdrawn and changed to ask to have vote on June 17.

Motion vetoed – 2 Yes Votes, Ward 1, 3 AND 3 No votes, Ward 2, Ward 4, Mayor as tie breaker.

*Discussion*

1. The $190,000 increase for police salaries and benefits would be left to city staff to determine where to get the money. (During the course of discussion between commissioners and city manager, there were places the commissioners agreed could be taken – WBOC cell tower that is inoperable, and the city has not been able to find a grant to get it fixed ($75,000), merit wages for city staff ($35,000), money slated for CWDI ($72,000).
2. Non profit budget ($45,000) stays intact (All for Love and Empowerment Center will get their money now for their summer programs).
3. Christmas lights and/or truck purchases ($12,000) stays intact.
4. City staff salary adjustments stays intact ($125,000).
5. The donation to the homeless initiative stays intact ($25,000).
6. The money for Cannery Way and the North Star Village will be held by the city and not Alpha Genesis and will only be used for construction (no consultants or other expenses) ( $112,000 ).
7. The new position of “Housing Advisor” changed to “Tenant Advocate”.

*Council Action*

Motion raised to adopt Ordinance 1246 and seconded. Ward commissioners all voted yes, 4-0. City Budget is approved for $17,974,250.00.

15. ORDINANCE NO. 1247 FISCAL YEAR 2026 TAX RATES AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND TO ESTABLISH THE ANNUAL TAX LEVY FOR REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026.

a. Second Reading

No change in tax rate since 2023

b. Public Hearing

No questions/concerns

*Council Action*

Motion raised to adopt ordinance 1247 and seconded. all Commissioners vote yes, 4-0.

16. ORDINANCE NO. 1248 AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND AMENDING CHAPTER 2 (ADMINISTRATION) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENACTING A NEW § 2-13, ENTITLED “MAINTENANCE RESERVE”; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY AND GENERALLY RELATING TO THE FINANCES OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

a. Second Reading

b. Public Hearing

no participation

G. Steckman, City Manager –

* Initial $500,000 put into the maintenance reserve fund.
* Gave the parameters for the maintenance reserve financial management going forward. Add $50,000/yr to get to $1m in reserve.

B. Summers, Ward 1 –

* Asked about city manager confidence that he can find the necessary funds for the CPD needs to hire new personnel and meet pay increases w/o going into general fund or maintenance fund.
* Answer: City manager said that they may have to go into general fund a little bit but not maintenance.

G. Steckman, City Manager -

* The other outstanding need is to replace HVAC system in Public Safety Bldg. It is 17 years old and cannot be repaired anymore. Recommendation to float a bond to buy a new HVAC system for the Cambridge Police Dept building.

*Council Action*

Motion raised to adopt Ordinance 1248 and seconded. All ward commissioners present voted yes 4-0.

**Old Business** none

**New Business** none

(ITEM #17 was **REMOVED**)

17. Clarification of Developer Services Agreement, MLS Listing Agency Selection Process, and Recommendation

a. Council Agenda Report from Housing Programs Manager, Ed Crosby - **REMOVED**

**Meetings**

*Council Action*

Motion raised to approve all meetings. Commissioners voted yes 4-0.

**Public Comment**

1. John Hanson President of HOA in Longboat Estates.

* Learned that group home moved into one of Longboat’s single family homes.
* Facebook survey was given to the residents.
* 88% of homeowners do not want group homes in their development.
* A group home came in and they had no clue that this was happening.
* They have no information about the residents of the group home.
* They have retained legal representation.
* Longboat Estates is not against assisted living individuals but it is concerned about the safety of the residents of the group home and residents of Longboat.
* House is near the water and worried about liability if someone goes into the water.
* Jeannette Ventura is head of this group home and went before the Planning and Zoning meeting in May 2025 to get group home approved.
* Will come up before the City Council in July 2025.

L. Cephas, Mayor – We are supposed to be having a work session on group homes soon. There is not a date set for this.

G. Steckman, City Manager – Meeting will happen in July.

B. Summers, Ward 1 –

* Do you know from your lawyer if your HOA regulations hold sway over federal housing regulations on group homes? Answer, John Hanson: Not as yet

S. Cephas, Ward 4 and President –

City has a “Permitted Use” chart. HOAs may not be in sync with what the city allows and doesn’t allow.

P. Thomas, City Attorney spoke to this – Depends on what law is being talked about. Gave some examples. More will be discussed at the work session.

2. Marty Stipe from Longboat Estates

* Lives next to empty home.
* Has been empty for 2 years.
* Does not know what is happening with this home.
* Cannot reach the proposed owners.
* Contractors said that everything has been approved.
* Planning and Zoning meeting coming up is key for the Longboat residents.

3.Woman from Agape Temple of Praise Ministries on Center St –

* concerned about speeding is area around the church on Robbins St. Wants speed bumps.

S. Cephas, President and Ward 4–

* He said he did forward the area around the church (Center St and Robbins St) as a candidate for traffic calming solutions
* There will be traffic calming solutions.
* $8000 set aside for traffic safety – place in each Ward

City Manager –

* The Traffic and Safety Committee is scheduled to have a meeting where they will decide what areas of the city need traffic calming solutions the most. Center and Robbins is one of the areas.
* Speed carts have been put out to remind people how fast they are driving.
* CPD will be reminding summer programs for kids that they must look both ways on busy streets.

4.Ms. Perry walks every day on Race St/Wash St. Wears bright orange vest when she walks.

* Was knocked down by dog that was not secured in the yard. She screamed and owner came out.

G. Steckman, City Manager –

* That part of Race St 1102 is owned by the state.
* No dog is allowed to run loose. He will look into it.

S. Cephas, Ward 4 and President –

* This is in Ward 4. Resident has already called state attorney. This dog has been reported before.
* Please send me an email.

5.Paul Siegart – Longboat Estates.

* Attended Planning and Zoning Meeting in May
* Ms Ventura spoke at the meeting and went directly to the city instead of going to HOA.
* She does not live there as she said.
* She just wanted to open this group home there.

**City Manager Comments**

18. Administrative Report from City Manager Glenn Steckman dated June 6, 2025

a. Undoing Racism Community Organizing Workshop

b. Dorchester County Extreme Cold Weather Emergency Plan dated April 2025

c. Cambridge Police Department FY26 Budget Proposal dated June 2, 2025

* Wants dates/times to finish commissioners Retreat.
* Will be able to fill grants coordinator by July 1. Had excellent candidates.
* Another joint meeting in August with CWDI.

**Mayor and Commissioners’ Comments**

B. Summers, Ward 1 – Kent County YMCA bus tour – 24 seats. Would like to build new facility in Cambridge.

CWDI voted to hire a broker.

Ward 2 - Attended Eagleman event for the first time after invite from Angie Hengst.

At the park, no equipment for youth. Dirt bikes are still an issue in the community.

President - Old neighborhood Greenwood and Cornish where the homicide occurred.

Mayor – words about homicide. Praised police.

Attended start of Eagleman.

Closed Session NO CLOSED SESSION

Adjourn – 9:24 PM

*Notes written by A. Kennedy, CAN member*