



*CAN member meetings are announced in advance and open to the public.
Everyone interested in CAN is invited to attend.*

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CURRENT LINKS

- CAN’s Website – <https://cambridgecan.org>
- JOIN CAN FOR FREE – <https://cambridgecan.org/join-can/>
- CAN Meeting Minutes – <https://cambridgecan.org/category/meetings/>
- CAN Meeting Videos – <https://www.facebook.com/WHCPRadio/videos> or
<https://www.youtube.com/@whcpstudio4716>
- CAN’s City Council Meeting Notes – <https://cambridgecan.org/category/news/city-council-notes/>
- CAN’s Planning & Zoning Notes – <https://cambridgecan.org/category/news/p-and-z/>
- CAN on Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cambridgeassociationofneighborhoods>
- Contact CAN – cambridgecan.org@gmail.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Chuck McFadden, President, CAN

After years of attending the Cambridge City Council meetings, I decided to change things up and attend the Dorchester County Council meetings. I am amazed at how fast the meetings are and how aligned all the Commissioners seem to be. I will use the July 15th meeting as an example of what the meetings are like. First, the Council met in closed session for an hour and a half before the public meeting. The public meeting lasted 45 minutes which included public comment of 15 minutes about the lack of transparency in the meeting.



Here are some of the comments about the meeting from the public. The County Council agenda is only one page while the City agenda is over 100 pages because they include all the backup data. The County provides no dollar amounts in the agenda on any of the items of which it votes. The County does not provide any background information on what it is voting. The County does not state where the funding is coming from, i.e., the general fund, state or federal grants or other sources. The County uses initials that only make sense to people working every day in the system, such as GOCCP which I would explain to you if I knew what it stood for.

The second issue with the County Council is that everyone votes the same on every issue. While it is nice that the five Councilmen get along, it is concerning that they all vote the same on every issue. It would seem that the Council would want to bring up questions about certain issues and maybe disagree with the approach taken by the County administration. None of this is done in public which leads one to believe that things are discussed in the closed session which is against the "Open Meetings Act".

I am not sure why the County Council wants to keep things closed. County Council President George Pfeffer said it was too hard to do a full agenda with background data like the City does. It is hard to understand his logic since the Cambridge City Council government, which has a much smaller staff, can do it.

Talk to your County Commissioner and ask for more transparency in Dorchester County business.

CAMBRIDGE CORNER

CAMBRIDGE REAL ESTATE TRENDS

Fred and Martha Phillips-Patrick

National Residential Real Estate Developments:

According to Freddie Mac, after declining slightly for five consecutive weeks, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage moved slightly higher this week following a stronger than expected jobs report. Despite ongoing affordability challenges in the housing market, home purchase and refinance applications are responding to the downward trajectory in rates, increasing by 25% and 56%, respectively, compared to the same time last year. At the end of June, the 30-year fixed rate mortgage was 6.72%

How did Cambridge fare in this market environment in June 2025? Let's see.

Cambridge Market Update:

Realtor.com characterizes Cambridge as a Buyers Housing Market, which means prices tend to be lower and homes stay on the market longer. In June 2025, the median home price in Cambridge was \$305K, trending up 3.4% year-over-year. However, the median home sold price was \$224K. On average, homes in Cambridge sell after 46 days on the market. The trend for median days on the market has gone down since last month, and down slightly since last year. Given market conditions, buyers are now offering more bids with contingencies and inspection requirements. Homes in Cambridge sold for 2.02% below asking price on average in June 2025.



Sales

Currently, Realtor.com shows that there were 208 homes for sale (143 single family homes and 65 condos, townhouses, and multifamily units) in the Cambridge area, a 10% decrease in single family homes over May. There are also 43 farms and plots of land. The asking prices range from \$9,000 for a small plot of land on Wisteria Dr. to \$3,100,000 for a 46.4-acre farm on 4890 Drawbridge Road.

Realtor.com details that in June 2025, 40 houses, condos, and townhouses were sold in Cambridge. The properties sold ranged in value from \$91,000 on Church Creek to \$880,000 on David Green Road.

5529 Whitehall Rd	\$560K	815 Blue Wing Ct	\$205K	817 Blue Wing Ct	\$205K
805 Blue Wing Ct	\$205K	117 Mimosa Dr	\$270K	813 Blue Wing Ct	\$205K
600 Widgeon Way	\$210K	710 Stiles Cir	\$147K	709 Governors Av	\$220K
10 West End Av	\$169K	807 Blue Wing Ct	\$224K	210 Red Bill Ln	\$275K
178 Regulator Dr N	\$400K	207 Buena Vista Av	\$290K	105 Albermarle Ct	\$415K
1417 School St	\$750K	500 Seaway Ln	\$385K	1100 Hambrooks Bld	\$575K
313 Maryland Av	\$387K	811 Blue Wing Ct	\$224K	500 Seaway Ln #24	\$385K
5 Oak St	\$240K	2139 Winterberry Ln	\$390K	2143 Winterberry Ln	\$390K
2147 Winterberry Ln	\$390K	5016 David Greene	\$880K	2141 Winterberry Ln	\$390K
2137 Winterberry Ln	\$390K	2145 Winterberry Ln	\$390K	5306 Cedar Dr	\$205K
2361 Church Creek	\$ 91K	900 Marshy Cv #405	\$270K	802 Blue Wing Ct	\$200K
1633 Race St	\$225K	101 Sailors Ln	\$291K	506 Red Bill Ln	\$259K
900 Marshy CV #307	\$275K	911 Peachblossom Av	\$131K	345 Shipyard Dr	\$310K
409 Bayly Av	\$170K				

As can be seen above, seven similar homes were sold on Blue Wing Court, and six similar homes were sold on Winterberry Lane in June.

Cambridge Real Estate Market Developments

The quality of a school system has a substantial impact on desirability of homes located in its area. Recently, the US Department of Education cut \$624,000 in federal funding to Dorchester County Public Schools that supported a variety of programs, including teacher training and English Language Lerner programs. One more challenge for the County and City to meet.

According to the Dorchester Star (July 9, 2025), DCPS communication specialist Casey O’Bier emailed the Star Democrat, and stated that: “DCPS would need to reallocate existing funds to sustain programs that were originally funded through some of these federal grants or eliminate various programs in a worst-case scenario.” O’Bier stated this as one of the district’s central concerns.

The Dorchester Star went on to report:

“The federal funding cuts to education come at a time when Dorchester County Public Schools are already struggling financially.



In January, DCPS faced a budget deficit of \$10.19 million, which they reduced to \$5.59 million in March. To further reduce the deficit, DCPS got rid of their after school and summer programs.

The county had to reduce staff sizing, but Superintendent Jymil Thompson said he wants to keep class sizes small and retain teachers at all costs.

The Board of Education has been making concerted efforts to move DCPS from 23rd out of 24 school districts — including Baltimore City — in state education ranking, but the federal funding cuts make those efforts more difficult.

“Moving forward, we will be proactively looking closely at unique ways to reallocate pre-existing funds to support the inclusion of these federally funded programs which are a major asset to Dorchester County Public Schools and the enrichment of its students,” O’Bier said.”

Strengthening Code Enforcement to Protect Our Neighborhoods

Barbara Knepp – Historic West End

For years, the City of Cambridge has invested significant time, staff resources, and taxpayer dollars responding to the same properties with the same code violations – season after season, year after year. These chronic offenders not only waste city resources but also damage neighborhood appearance, reduce property values, and erode the morale of residents who follow the rules.

Under the leadership of Building Safety Specialist Sandra Wyatt, we’ve seen measurable improvements in enforcement, and she continues to work diligently. This persistent problem, however, is not the result of staff neglect. It is a systemic failure – one that demands stronger legislative tools and a modernized policy framework. Sandra and her team need full support to make lasting change possible.

The Pattern: Delay, Avoidance, and Manipulation

Each spring and summer, the cycle restarts. Lawns grow wild, sidewalks become overrun with weeds, and trash piles up. Residents report the same properties again and again. In response, property owners often make only superficial fixes – cutting just the visible grass or doing the bare minimum to avoid penalties. Then, the neglect resumes. This isn’t ignorance, it’s manipulation of a system that relies too heavily on complaints and is too lenient with repeat offenders. And it’s no secret who the habitual offenders are.

Year after year, it’s the same absentee landlords at the top of the list – those who collect rent while allowing their properties to fall into disrepair. Their names are familiar to City staff and residents alike. Yet the current enforcement framework allows them to continue this cycle unchecked, undermining neighborhoods and exhausting public resources. A small number of properties are monopolizing city time while dragging down entire neighborhoods.



The Impact:

- **Blight:** Unmaintained properties project abandonment and disinvestment.
- **Burnout:** Code enforcement officers are stretched thin, spending too much time on chronic violators.
- **Frustration:** Residents who follow the rules are left feeling ignored and disillusioned.

No enforcement team, regardless of their dedication, can solve this problem without the authority and tools to act decisively. Cambridge is a city that values pride, beauty, and order. But unless we stop rewarding neglect with repeated warnings, the same properties will continue to set us back. Chronic violators, often absentee landlords, exploit leniency and loopholes, knowing the consequences are minimal. This has created a cycle of neglect, decline, and frustration. To break this cycle, I respectfully ask that the City Manager work with the City Council to implement the following reforms:

1. Escalate Penalties for Chronic Violators

Why we need it: Current penalties are too low to serve as a deterrent. When fines are seen as just another cost of doing business, there's no incentive to comply.

Why it would work: Escalating fines, starting with a warning but increasing sharply for repeat offenses, send a clear message: neglect will not be tolerated. Many cities have adopted this model successfully, using tiered penalties, court citations, and liens to compel compliance.

2. Make Rental Licenses Contingent on Property Maintenance

Why we need it: Many of the worst offenders are rental properties owned by absentee landlords who collect rent while ignoring basic maintenance.

Why it would work: Tying rental licenses to code compliance gives landlords a compelling reason to maintain their properties. License suspension or revocation for ongoing violations would ensure accountability, protect tenants, and uphold neighborhood standards.

3. Fund and Staff Neighborhood-Based Enforcement

Why we need it: Our centralized enforcement model is stretched too thin and largely reactive. Officers can't monitor every area effectively.

Why it would work: Neighborhood-based enforcement allows for localized monitoring, faster response times, and stronger community relationships. Cities like Durham, NC and Baltimore, MD have seen significant improvements after adopting this model.

4. Automate Abatement for Repeat Overgrowth Violations

Why we need it: Overgrown yards are highly visible signs of neglect. They attract pests, present safety hazards, and depress property values.

Why it would work: After a documented history of noncompliance and proper notice, the City should be empowered to cut the grass and bill the owner – placing unpaid fees as a lien if necessary. This shifts the burden of cost to the violator and allows for swift, consistent action.



5. Make Code Enforcement Data Public and Accessible

Why we need it: Lack of transparency allows chronic violators to operate without scrutiny and leaves residents uncertain about whether their complaints are being addressed.

Why it would work: Public dashboards or searchable databases improve accountability and build trust. Cities like New Orleans, San Francisco, and Philadelphia have seen success by making this information accessible to the public, enabling community oversight and targeted policy improvements.

These reforms are not about punishment, they are about restoring fairness, equity, and dignity to our neighborhoods. They give the City the tools to act swiftly, consistently, and effectively, and they support the dedicated staff who have been doing their best under inadequate conditions for far too long. Let's make pride, order, and beauty the norm, not the exception, in every part of Cambridge.

City of Cambridge OpenGov Portal

During the last CAN meeting, Glenn Steckman (Cambridge City Manager) recommended that Cambridge residents use the OpenGov Portal to access building services information, report citizen concerns, apply for permits, submit HPC applications, and property rental registrations.

To access the portal, go to the Choose Cambridge.com website; open the "Residents" page; and, then click on the OpenGov Portal. You will need to create an OpenGov account by clicking Apply Online if this is your first time using the Portal. In addition to the OpenGov Portal, there is a Cambridge Police Department (CPD) Complaint/Compliment online form.

If you have an emergency or a public safety issue that needs immediate attention, please call 911 or the City of Cambridge Police Department non-emergency number (410-228-3333).

We also encourage you to sign up for alerts to get emails about announcements, upcoming meetings, etc. On the Choose Cambridge.com website, click on "Notify Me". Type in your email address as indicated and select Sign In. If you prefer text messages, enter your phone number and select SAVE. You will be able to "subscribe" to notifications for specific meeting agendas, alerts, calendars, etc.

Contacting Chesapeake Waste

As of August 1st, customers of Chesapeake Waste will no longer need to route issues through the City of Cambridge. Residents should contact Chesapeake Waste directly with concerns, including missed pickups. Contact them by phone at 410-742-0099 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays, or via email at Service@chesapeakewaste.com.

Residents wishing to begin trash collection service or acquire additional totes must contact the Department of Public Works (DPW) at 410-228-1955 so that they can be added to the City's billing system. The DPW will pass the request to Chesapeake Waste and they will then deliver tote(s) within three to five business days.



Residents wishing to schedule bulk pickup should contact Chesapeake Waste at 410-742-0099 or Service@chesapeakewaste.com. Chesapeake Waste may collect waste between 5am and 5pm on either Mondays and Thursdays or Tuesdays and Fridays. All trash should be placed in a tote at curbside the evening prior to a scheduled pickup.

Waste collection will not occur on Dorchester County observed holidays when the landfill is closed. Holidays for the remainder of calendar year 2025 are Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

COMMUNITY NEWS – COOPERATING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

CAMBRIDGE EMPOWERMENT CENTER

Judy Prah

Pre-K Learning Program is now open for Fall 2025 Registration

Program will begin in September for ages 3, 4 and young 5, Monday to Thursday, 9 to noon. Registration fee: \$25 (no income eligibility requirements) and MD State Licensed. Call 410-901-1397 or pick up an application at the Empowerment Center, 615B Pine St., Cambridge; Monday-Thursday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

News from our Summer Program

The Cambridge Empowerment Center extends heartfelt gratitude to all the donors and Foundations supporting our summer learning program. Earlier this spring, facing uncertainty about whether we could secure sufficient funds to deliver a comprehensive program, we reached out for donations and submitted numerous grant applications. Thanks to the Waddell Foundation and the steadfast support of additional contributors, we are able to offer a robust nine-week program, running 32 hours per week, to 45 children ages 5 to 13 from Dorchester County.

We also recognize the generous backing of the following organizations: The Pauline F. and W. David Robbins Foundation Trust; Choptank Electric; Bondservants; City of Cambridge; Women and Girls Fund; Partners in Giving, Inc.; and, The J2W Foundation. Many local citizens also contributed personally. Together, this community support has made a lasting difference for the children and families of Dorchester County.

Participants will benefit from a blend of academic support and engaging enrichment activities, an opportunity that is especially meaningful this year, as the county's school system will not be providing summer school. Beyond serving local children, the program also provides summer employment for eight local residents, including four college students.



MAIN STREET GALLERY

Our guest artist, José Ramirez, is an amazing plein air painter! He paints what he sees, what he knows and what he loves, he says. We think you'll love his oil paintings and watercolors when you see them in the gallery.

MORE THAN LINES AND COLOR by José is a fabulous collection of local scenes painted in oils and watercolors. The exhibition will take place July 5 to August 31, 2025. Come see his work alongside our member artists' works. Gallery is open 11-5, Friday - Sunday or shop online at mainstgallery.net



CAN MISSION, MEMBERSHIP, BOARD of DIRECTORS, and COMMITTEES

MISSION. The Cambridge Association of Neighborhoods (CAN) fosters neighborhood cohesion and community involvement to enhance the quality of community life for all residents of Cambridge through community events, social activities, and neighborly assistance. CAN protects and enhances properties in Cambridge by improving building and zoning codes, supporting adherence to those codes, and engaging constructively with City Government, including the Historic Preservation Commission. CAN's Bylaws can be found on the CAN website at <https://cambridgecan.org/welcome/about/bylaws/>.



MEMBERSHIP. CAN welcomes members from **all Cambridge area neighborhoods** (broadly defined) who are interested in organizing and working together, building a diverse membership reflecting the diversity of Cambridge residents. **Membership is FREE** – information is available on the CAN website at <https://cambridgecan.org/join-can/>

CAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS. CAN is governed by a Board of Directors elected by CAN members at its annual January Business Meeting. Board Members: President – Chuck McFadden; Vice President – Roman Jesien; Treasurer – Dave Thatcher; Secretary – Alison Kennedy; Members at Large – Andre Duerinckx, Mary Ellen Jesien, Brad Rice, Sharon Smith, Donna Tower, and Judd Vickers.

CAN HOUSING QUALITY COMMITTEE – PLANNING AND ZONING ISSUES. The Housing Quality Committee monitors issues affecting the quality of housing and the maintenance of property values in the City, including code enforcement. Committee members attend Planning Commission meetings to monitor zoning-related issues and report the information to the Board and membership. *Please contact* Chuck McFadden at Raqtime31@gmail.com to volunteer.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – SOCIAL EVENTS & ‘NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS’. "Neighborhoods" are organized by small groups willing to work together to address neighborhood issues through small social events and "neighbor-helping-neighbor" activities. The **Social Events Subcommittee** organizes community-wide events. *Contact* Chuck McFadden at Raqtime31@gmail.com to volunteer.

CAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE – WRITERS NEEDED. CAN'S Communications Committee needs writers, including volunteers to take unofficial notes at public meetings. *Contact* Chuck McFadden at Raqtime31@gmail.com to volunteer.

POWER WASHER AVAILABLE - CAN has an electric power washer available to members. Contact Chuck McFadden at Raqtime31@gmail.com.