



*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

The City Council had a lengthy argument at Monday’s meeting over Ordinance 1257 which deals with group homes. So, what are group homes and why should I be concerned with some zoning issue? There are three major categories of group homes – assisted living, sober houses and mentally impaired/behavioral issues houses. Federal law mandates that these homes be treated the same as any single family home. The City has been trying for two years to bring its zoning codes up to Federal standards.



On Monday night, the City staff brought forth its effort in Ordinance 1257 which was developed almost two years ago and went through a lengthy Planning Committee process. The Ordinance does bring the City in compliance with Federal law but allows for an unlimited number of group homes to be clustered together and has no licensing/inspection requirements. The concentration of group homes was the core issue facing the Council.

There have been several court cases, especially in California, that have successfully challenged the concentration issue and the courts have allowed for a 650 foot limitation between group homes. Three members of the Council (Brett Summers, Frank Stout, and Brian Roche) wanted this limitation put in the Ordinance to protect neighborhoods from being overwhelmed by these group homes. The two other members (Sputty Cephas and Shay Lewis-Sisco) wanted to pass the Ordinance and then go back and start the process over to include the limitation. The final vote was 3 to 2 **not to pass** Ordinance 1257 as is but to send it back to the Planning Commission to adjust the language.

Three CAN board members testified against passing the proposed Ordinance and wanted three issues addressed. First, there should be limitations on the concentration of group homes as in the California. Second, there should be licensing and inspections on a regular timetable to evaluate these homes as Easton does. Finally, Cambridge has over 3,000 rental units and should charge landlords a fee so that we can hire code enforcement officers. Laws without enforcement are useless, so let's put some teeth into our enforcement.

Cambridge is a particularly vulnerable community when it comes to group homes because it has a number of large homes at very modest prices. So, unless we have some protection, you could see 4 or 5 group homes on your block that would change the neighborhood from a residential to an industrial zone which I believe is not what most residents want.

CAN will continue to monitor the situation but the CAN Board and the three dissenting City Council members need your vocal support.

CAMBRIDGE CORNER

CAMBRIDGE REAL ESTATE TRENDS

Fred Phillips-Patrick

National Residential Real Estate Developments:

According to Freddie Mac, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage moved lower this month, continuing a recent trend. The 30-year fixed rate is now 6.27%. As rates continue to drop, the number of homeowners who could refinance is expanding. Combined with increased housing inventory and slower house price growth, these rates also are creating a more favorable environment for those looking to buy a home. How did Cambridge fare in this market environment in September 2025? Let's see.



Cambridge Market Update:

Realtor.com characterizes Cambridge as a Buyers Housing Market, which means sold prices tend to be lower and homes stay on the market longer. In September 2025, the median listing home price in Cambridge, MD was \$330K, trending up 10.6% year-over-year. The median home sold price was \$270K, down from July. Homes in Cambridge sold for 1.03% below asking price on average in September 2025.

Sales:

Currently, Realtor.com shows that there were 224 homes for sale (157 single family homes and 57 condos, townhouses, and multifamily units) in the Cambridge area. There are also 40 farms and plots of land for sale. The property asking prices range from \$13,000 for a small plot of land on Hubert Street to \$2,500,000 for a mansion on 1301 Broadview Drive. Realtor.com details that in September 2025, 51 houses, condos, and townhouses were sold in Cambridge. The properties sold ranged in value from \$53,000 at 414 Willis Street to \$630,000 at 2702 Marsh Elder Drive.

602 Wells St	\$240K	2702 Marsh Elder Dr	\$630K	503 Maryland Dr	\$265K
301 Belvedere Ave	\$385K	5644 Clifton Woods	\$375K	511 Goldsborough	\$247K
2717 Marsh Elder Rd	\$528K	2132 Winterberry #C	\$326K	1507 Race St	\$ 60K
409 Pine St	\$ 95K	502 Edlon Park Dr	\$209K	1301 Race St	\$150K
5294 Bucktown Rd	\$245K	207 Somerset Ave	\$225K	36 Algonquin Rd	\$349K
1600 Race St	\$146K	209 Choptank Ave	\$125K	5729 Ross Neck Rd	\$400K
24 Oak St	\$220K	4928 Drawbridge Rd	\$250K	427 Camper St	\$ 77K
160 Regulator Dr N	\$429K	604 Water St Apt 2	\$275K	2192 Winterberry Ln	\$317K
8 Riverside Wharf	\$390k	12 Riverside Wharf	\$432K	302 Academy St 301	\$465K
103 Buena Vista Ave	\$199K	437 Willis St	\$143K	5508 Mallard Ln	\$335K
2102 Winterberry Ln	\$305K	2104 Winterberry Ln	\$275K	2106 Winterberry Ln	\$290K
2110 Winterberry Ln	\$275K	5305 Spring Dr	\$170K	2112 Winterberry Ln	\$435K
2108 Winterberry Ln	\$290K	801 Blue Wing Ct	\$234K	2103 Church Creek	\$365K
211 West End Ave	\$185K	2188 Winterberry Ln	\$353K	2202 Winterberry Ln	\$460K
414 Willis St	\$ 53K	301 Muir St #201	\$455K	518 Marshy Cove	\$300K
604 Water St #604-3	\$245K	5963 Indian Quarter	\$550K	202 Choptank Ave	\$260K
5503 Bonnie Brook	\$285K	414 High St	\$180K	5138 Paw Paw Rd	\$465K

As can be seen above, ten similar homes were sold Winterberry Lane in September.

Cambridge Census Data Information

Gemini summarized Dorchester’s recent Census information as follows: “Census data show that Dorchester County is experiencing gradual demographic shifts, with a slight decrease in its White, non-Hispanic population and growth in the Hispanic/Latino population, now about 6 percent. The county's population has slightly decreased overall, though its age distribution is shifting, with the 65 and older group growing significantly while the 35-49 group has declined. These changes indicate a slowly diversifying community that requires careful planning for future resource allocation and services.”



According to Cambridgespy.org, “Dorchester’s economy continues to show strain. The poverty rate is estimated at 20.1 percent, which is among the highest in the state, and has decreased slightly from 20.3 percent in 2010. Employment is dominated by private wage and salary work, which accounts for 71 percent of jobs. Government employment accounts for 19 percent, and approximately 9 percent of workers are self-employed.”

“These figures point to a reliance on wage-based jobs and limited growth in entrepreneurial or large-scale economic sectors. With higher poverty rates than neighboring counties, Dorchester faces particular challenges in workforce development, access to opportunity, and long-term financial resilience.”

FUN FACTS AND LOCAL LORE

Martha Phillips-Patrick

Cambridge was founded in 1684 as a plantation port and authorized as a town site by the Maryland Colonial Government in 1686. According to one account, in Colonial times when the British laid out a port town, they often formed a roadway that led straight from the waterfront to the highest point on the land and then called the road High Street. They’d often put the courthouse and the jail and the church at the crest of the High Street so they were protected from flooding. That “high” spot became the center of town, “a center where one could get judged, punished and redeemed all on the same street corner.” Cambridge is one of only two towns on the Eastern Shore that still follows this High Street layout. The other is Chestertown in Kent County.

PRESERVING CAMBRIDGE’S HERITAGE (Without Losing Our Sense of Humor)

Barbara Knepp, Historic District

(Guest Commentary - Opinions expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the position of the CAN Board of Directors.)

This is my third article in a series aimed at raising awareness, educating residents, and advocating for stronger code enforcement in Cambridge. The purpose is to show why enforcement matters, what happens when it fails, and how fair, consistent enforcement can solve many neighborhood problems – from blight and safety hazards to declining property values and resident frustration. Well-documented studies confirm that effective code enforcement improves livability, reduces crime, stabilizes property values, and strengthens community pride.

How the HPC Keeps Cambridge’s Character Intact

Before you replace a window or railing, meet the commission that helps preserve the unique beauty that makes Cambridge, Cambridge. If you’ve ever replaced a window in our historic district, you’ve likely met the Historic Preservation Commission – better known (affectionately or not) as the “Hysterical Preservation Commission.” Don’t worry, they’re not the enemy of your porch plans. Their main job? Keeping Cambridge’s unique charm intact, with a fair dose of wit and wisdom.



Why Preservation Matters

Cambridge's historic fabric is no accident – it's the visible record of perseverance, craftsmanship, and care that connects past generations to the present. This goes far beyond the West End; the neighborhoods of Pine Street and Downtown are filled with historic details worth celebrating. For newcomers, grab a map at choosecambridge.com and see how these areas connect.

James A. Michener, who wrote the 1978 saga *Chesapeake* about life along Maryland's Eastern Shore, once called Cambridge's High Street "the most beautiful street in the USA." That wasn't just flattery – the HPC works diligently to help keep it true. Their mission is vital: protect property values; support neighborhood revitalization; and, preserve the beauty that draws visitors to Cambridge. Just as important, they ensure fair and consistent enforcement. Most property owners work hard to follow the rules, but when a few skip the process, it hurts everyone's investment and pride. Consistent standards keep things peaceful and fair for all – longtime locals and newcomers alike. Think of it this way: Code Enforcement keeps your house safe, yards maintained, and sidewalks passable; HPC keeps it looking like Cambridge, not just anywhere.

Hidden Dangers: Protecting Our Historic Homes from Speculation

Large historic homes are more than just beautiful buildings – they are anchors of Cambridge's character, culture, and community. Unfortunately, these properties are increasingly becoming targets for speculation. Investors, seeing their size and charm, often view them as quick-turn opportunities - sometimes converting them into multiple units, assisted living and group homes, or other forms of middle housing that can permanently alter both the property and the neighborhood's stability.

Recently, there has been talk of allowing these large historic homes to serve as a solution for "missing middle" housing. This is a dangerous idea. Cambridge already has plenty of underutilized housing stock that can meet demand without slicing up our historic treasures. Cutting these homes into multiple units risks destroying original details, architectural integrity, and the character that makes Cambridge special. Large historic homes are irreplaceable, and using them for dense housing fundamentally undermines the story they tell about our city's heritage. Without strict oversight, speculative conversions often result in the loss of craftsmanship – historic railings, woodwork, and facades replaced with cheaper, modern materials. The result? Homes stripped of their soul, neighborhoods destabilized, and Cambridge's unique charm eroded.

Thankfully, there's a positive trend: more and more of these large homes are being purchased by single families committed to true preservation. These owners restore their properties with care, reinvesting in neighborhoods, and demonstrating that Cambridge's grand old homes can be both livable and historically authentic. That's why strict oversight and enforcement are so critical. The city's 90-day rule, for instance, requires that once a multi-use property has been vacant for 90 days, it must revert to its original use. We must insist that the city enforce this rule consistently, as it has proven to be the number-one igniter of revitalization in the West End. Proper enforcement prevents speculative conversions, preserves community character, and ensures that historic homes remain true to their original purpose.

Enforcement also ensures that any new use or renovation remains transparent, compliant, and consistent with the city's Historic District Guidelines. Public awareness and vigilant code follow-through protect



property values and maintain the unique identity that makes Cambridge a place people choose – not just to visit, but to belong. Ultimately, preservation is about more than nostalgia – it’s about stability, pride, and stewardship. When we protect our homes, we protect the story of Cambridge itself.

Code Enforcement vs. HPC: Who Does What?

It’s easy to get confused here. Code enforcement is all about safety – sturdy porches, leak-free roofs, well-kept yards, and safe sidewalks. The HPC is about aesthetics – design, materials, and authenticity. While their roles sometimes overlap, the difference matters: code officers aren’t historians, so it’s up to residents to notice when something historic is being replaced without review. Consistent enforcement ensures fairness and transparency, so every project is treated according to the same standards.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Code Enforcement</u>	<u>Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)</u>
Main Goal	Keep properties safe, sanitary, And structurally sound	Keep them historic, beautiful, and unmistakably Cambridge
Focus Areas	Structural safety, sanitation, unpermitted work, weeds, junk	Windows, roofs, porches, siding, fences, additions
Guidelines	Int’l. Property Maintenance Code	Cambridge Historic District Guidelines, Ordinance 814
Oversight	Building Safety Services & City Code Enforcement	Volunteer HPC and City staff (Dean Gunderson)
Typical Violations	Tall grass, unsafe decks, broken windows	Vinyl replacing wood, missing trim, unapproved work
Philosophy	“Don’t let it fall over.”	“Keep it historic and unmistakably Cambridge.”

Behind the Acronym: Meet the Commissioners

The HPC isn’t a shadowy clique – they’re dedicated volunteers who love old buildings more than most people love their pets. Their toughest task? Staying consistent. Every historic home is unique, and commissioners work hard to keep decisions fair – even when homeowners’ hearts (and wallets) are involved. They make site visits, rain or shine, to ensure each ruling honors Cambridge’s character. Current members are:

- Tim Crosby (Chair): Architect, preservation expert; term 2023–2026
- Janice Olshesky (Vice Chair): Historic research and engagement; term 2024–2027
- Bronte Lake: Design review specialist; term through Aug 2028
- Joel Leifer: new appointee through Aug 2028
- Jeanette Pawlek: Historic interiors expert; term 2024–2027
- Scott Hawk (Alternate): New appointee; term through Aug 2028

Supporting the HPC is Dean Gunderson, city preservation lead. As historian, project manager, and “therapist” for anxious homeowners, Dean is the go-to for all HPC questions – whether you’re eyeing solar panels or unsure if that old railing is “historic enough”. Contact: dgunderson@choosecambridge.com or the



City Planning Office at 410-228-1955. Dean's mission is to keep the process transparent, consistent, and as stress-free as possible.

Getting Started: Your Renovation Roadmap

Renovating in the historic district? Here's a simplified process:

- Review the *Cambridge Historic District Guidelines* and *Ordinance 814*. Find both on choosecambridge.com under HPC.
- Submit your *Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)* application one month before the meeting.
- Include photos, materials, and plans. The HPC reviews all exterior changes, including those not visible from the street.
- Attend the next meeting or watch the livestream. Discuss your project in person for smoother approvals.
- For deeper history, check the *National Register nomination report* for Cambridge's district.

Spotting Common Oversights

Safety passes inspection, but style keeps the neighborhood's heart beating. Residents are Cambridge's preservation superheroes – sometimes a phone call or a quick photo can help save a century of craftsmanship. Watch for:

- Vinyl replacement of old wood windows
- Porch makeovers that erase historic railings
- Removing shutters, doors, or trim without approval
- Roof or chimney changes that clash with the home's era
- Modern additions, sheds, or fences that feel out of step
- Satellite dishes that are visible from the street – they must be discreetly placed
- Removal or damage of historic trees that contribute to the character of the property

Historic District Disclosure

Homebuyers in the historic district sign a special disclosure to ensure everyone understands the unique responsibilities and protections that come with owning a historic property. This disclosure is both a tool for owners and a safeguard for the community, ensuring that everyone knows their role in protecting the city's architectural heritage. It helps new residents appreciate the significance of their property while preventing unintentional violations that could compromise Cambridge's historic charm.

- **Transparency:** No "I didn't know!" surprises. Buyers are informed about the rules, restrictions, and expectations before they purchase, including which alterations require HPC approval.
- **Prevention:** Reduces the risk of fines or enforcement actions by clearly outlining what modifications are allowed and what require review.
- **Protection:** Ensures that the city's character and historic integrity are preserved for current and future residents. This protects the neighborhood from inappropriate changes that could harm property values or the overall aesthetic.
- **Value:** Properly maintained and historically preserved homes maintain or increase in value. Historic homes, when cared for according to guidelines, are highly sought after and can be a lasting investment.



- **Guidance for Renovation:** The disclosure helps new owners understand that changes to the property must align with Cambridge's Historic District Guidelines, including windows, roofs, porches, siding, fences, and other key features.

Get Involved, Stay Informed

Attend, comment, or just listen – you'll find preservation debates are passionate, informed, and sometimes unexpectedly entertaining. Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday, 6:00 PM at 305 Gay Street; and live streamed at *Townhallstreams* (Cambridge, MD). You can find upcoming projects, guidelines and agendas on the city website. If you see an HPC sign on a property, it means a project is up for review.

Preservation Is Partnership

The HPC isn't about control – it's about care. Its role is to protect Cambridge's beauty and integrity not by overregulating, but by ensuring everyone plays by the same fair rules. Preservation isn't about freezing Cambridge in time – it's about honoring its story while writing the next chapter together. The homes, porches, and streetscapes we preserve today will define how future generations experience Cambridge tomorrow.

COMMUNITY NEWS – COOPERATING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

ONE MISSION CAMBRIDGE

Rebekah Kosten

As the leaves turn colors and temps begin to cool, we are busier than ever. Every day we are open, more than 80 neighbors walk through our doors to receive food, counseling, and resources. In September, the One Mission Cambridge food pantry served 451 different households (a total of 973 people). What a joy and privilege it is to see lives touched and transformed by God's love!

But this mission is not ours alone. We cannot achieve this work without support from individuals, local churches, and service groups. You can help make a significant impact in Dorchester County by volunteering, providing financial support, and praying for our neighbors. When believers unite, the light of Christ shines even brighter!

Thanksgiving Community Dinner: Come one, come all! We invite you to join us for our annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner on Monday, November 24th at 1:00pm at 801 Race Street. In 2024, we had over 400 attendees, and we hope even more neighbors will join us this year!

This Thanksgiving dinner would not be possible without the generosity of our incredible Community Partners. Thank you to the following:

- Cambridge Police Department
- Paul Davis Restoration



- Taqueria Floritas
- Cambridge Wesleyan Church
- Simmons Center Market
- Carmela's Cucina
- The Garden Church
- Grace Methodist Church

If you feel led to make a donation to help support this event and the year-round community support provided by One Mission Cambridge, we encourage you to do so! One Mission Cambridge can accept cash, checks, or online donations. Please contact Rebekah at Fundraiser@onemissioncambridge.org or 443-205-9311 if you have any questions.

Festival of Wreaths: Save the date for our Festival of Wreaths fundraiser taking place on December 13 from 11am-2pm at the Cambridge Wesleyan Church (801 Race Street). This fun event will feature a tricky tray raffle where you can win beautifully-decorated wreaths and Christmas decor, a roaming Santa Claus, a bake sale, a hot chocolate bar, kids crafts, a reading of the Nativity Christmas story, and more!

Also, if you are interested in volunteering at the One Mission food pantry or any of their events, please email manager@onemissioncambridge.org.

CAMBRIDGE EMPOWERMENT CENTER

Judy Prael

Please mark your calendars for **Brunch with Santa**. This event will be held Saturday, December 6 at the Elks Lodge #223, 618 Pine Street.

We still have openings in our Pre-K and After-School programs.

Pre-K Program

- For 3-5 year olds: building social skills and learning Pre-kindergarten basics for a good start!
- Physical activity: fun learning experiences and getting to control the need to move!
- 100% favorable parent survey after our first year
- Just \$25 per child from Sept. until the end of the school year
- 9 AM-noon; Monday through Thursday

After School 2025-2026

- After school help with homework
- After school snack
- Focus on Grade Level Reading
- Just \$25 per child from Sept. until the end of the school year
- 3:00PM - 5:30PM; Monday through Thursday



How to Enroll Your Child?

- Call us at 410-901-1397
- Send us an email (childcare@cambridgeempowermentcenter.org) and we'll call you.
- Stop by and check us out.

About the Cambridge Empowerment Center (615-B Pine Street, Cambridge MD)

The Cambridge Empowerment Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the educational and personal development of youth in the Cambridge area through academic programs, enrichment opportunities, and community engagement. After-School, Pre-K or Summer - every child learns something if they come to us.

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY GARDEN AT WAUGH CHAPEL

Kathy Burtman, Master Gardener

Did you know that since 2015, a community garden has flourished behind the historic Waugh Chapel at 425 High Street? The mission of the Cambridge Community Garden at Waugh Chapel UMC is to "Plant Seeds of Hope to Grow Food for Change." The "back yard" of the church provides a wonderful space for home gardeners to grow a wide variety of vegetables and flowers and also promotes community connections.

There are a total of 52 raised beds that veteran gardeners and eager newcomers manage throughout the growing season. Dorchester County Master Gardeners Kathy Burtman and Robin Herman oversee the community garden providing expertise, encouragement, and an abundance of time and effort to ensure production and upkeep of the gardens.

One of the 52 beds is dedicated to herbs for use by all the gardeners. Another is dedicated to perennial pollinator plants. Each year, any unclaimed beds, usually averaging about three, are planted for local food banks. We had a very productive harvest this summer – over 200 pounds of produce was donated to One Mission Cambridge.

To rent a bed or for more information, email Kathy Burtman and Robin Herman at communitygardenwaughchapel@gmail.com. The rental fee for the season is just \$5 per bed! Your fellow gardeners look forward to welcoming you in the Spring.

CHOPTANK WRITERS

Are you interested in sharing your writing with a positive, supportive audience and receiving constructive feedback that may help you improve writing skills, foster motivation, and gain fresh perspectives? If so, we invite you to join Choptank Writers. All genres are welcome. Founded in 2009, Choptank Writers meet each Wednesday from 2:30-4:30 pm at the Dorchester Center for the Arts in Cambridge, MD. Contact: Judy Holland at jleeholl@gmail.com.



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; Acting Treasurer – Mary Ellen Jesien; Secretary – Alison Kennedy; Members at Large – Andre Duerinckx, 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 Raqttime31@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 Raqttime31@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 Raqttime31@gmail.com to volunteer.

POWER WASHER AVAILABLE - CAN has an electric power washer available to members. *Contact* Chuck McFadden at Raqttime31@gmail.com.