1. Special Called Meeting

Documents:

AGENDA SPECIAL CALLED MEETING CITY COMMISSION JUNE 1, 2020.PDF
MAIN STREET DOWNTOWN DINING PROPOSAL MAY 29 2020.PDF
AGENDA
City of Cambridge
“Special Called”
City Council Meeting
Monday, June 1, 2020
Council Chambers - 305 Gay Street
Cambridge, MD 21613

Special Called Meeting to address recent changes in the Maryland Governor’s Executive Order as it relates to new allowances for outdoor dining at city restaurants.

Notice to Citizens: The City Commissioners are conducting the City business by way of a conference call because of the Corona Virus threat. Citizens may observe the meeting by going on-line to TownHallStreams.com. Citizens may call in their public comments by calling the mayor during the meeting at 410 228-5808.

11:00 a.m. Mayor to Convene Council in Special Session

Public Comment

Requests from the Public

Main Street Proposal for Downtown Dining

Adjourn
May 28th 2020

City of Cambridge
Attn: Mayor and City Council
410 Academy Street
Cambridge, MD 21613

Honorable Mayor and Council,

We respectfully submit to you a proposal for “al fresco” or outdoor dining in downtown Cambridge. We appreciate the swift nature which our community must now act to support its survival.

Strategy and Purpose:

WHEREAS: Restaurants are significant “anchors” to downtowns across the country, driving resident and visitor traffic, supporting the tourism industry, and employing upwards of 50 people per restaurant;

WHEREAS: Downtown currently supports 16 food and beverage businesses, with two additional businesses planning to locate in the downtown this year of varying size, concept and target customer base, making up the greatest density of dining / food / beverage establishment in our City & County;

WHEREAS: Impacts of the current global health crisis have significantly impacted food and beverage businesses causing significant lay-offs leaving many in the industry unemployed;

WHEREAS: The State of Maryland has now elected to make al fresco dining available to food and beverage establishments, with specific health and safety standards in place related to sanitation, masks, and social distancing rules in place;

WHEREAS: The state of Maryland and local leaders recognize the need to make additional outdoor capacity available to restaurants and business, and creative outdoor dining in the densest areas have been encourage by state leaders;

WHEREAS: a plan and strategy has been developed that has aimed to be inclusive of various agencies, as well as the downtown business community including Dorchester County Health Department, Dorchester Chamber of Commerce, Dorchester County Liquor permit office, Dorchester County Economic Development, City of Cambridge Economic Development, City Council members, City police and fire departments, and the SBDC;

WHEREAS: There exists a need to move swiftly to accommodate al fresco dining options in order to retain our key downtown stakeholders in the core of the city’s food and beverage industry.
Business / Stakeholder Dialogue:

Many messages and ideas were floated in the early weeks of May 2020 and informally discussed and shared. In anticipation of potential al fresco dining becoming available we moved to schedule a joint agency and stakeholder brainstorming call which took place online Monday, May 18th 2020. From the City of Cambridge specifically representatives included Patrick Comiskey, City Manager, Carol Richardson, City Economic Development, and Commissioner Steve Rideout all participated in the call. A document with ideas and recommendations was drafted and shared with those that participated in that initial stakeholder conversation. A second downtown business debrief / discussion call took place on Thursday, May 28, 2020 immediately following the Governor’s Thursday, May 26th announcement that al fresco could be available as soon as Friday, May 29th at 5pm.

We present to you our proposal to support al fresco dining in immediate key areas that have the greatest need as a result of available space constraints or simply because there are no available sidewalk or parking areas that they can expand into. Not all restaurants have access to an equal amount of exterior space which would allow them to utilize outdoor dining.

Immediate request to City Council for support:

- Utilization 7 days a week of Cannery Way for nearby restaurants such as Canvasback & Black Water Bakery.
- Utilization 7 days a week of alleyway behind 400 Race Street for outdoor seating and service by The Blue Ruin, DocoVino Wine Bar.
- Street closure for Poplar Street Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays 3pm – 10pm, and Sundays 9am – 1pm for seating and table service outdoors. These are the peak times when seating is needed most and is the quickest way to facilitate al fresco dining in the densest restaurant area downtown.
  o Street closure is recommended for the safety of diners and because of the narrow sidewalks along Poplar Street.
  o Arrange for out-going traffic from “Fat Ricky’s” drive through to exit alleyway along Poplar Street to High Street, utilizing the opposite direction as marked on the street.
- Ability for businesses immediately utilize 2-3 on street street parking spaces for outdoor seating space 7 days a week breakfast lunch and dinner where possible and needed.
- City supply trash bins on days with additional outdoor seating capacity.
- City work towards supply of public hand washing stations and temporary bathroom facilities / services in the downtown to accommodate visitors and the public.
- Waive any permit or application fees for businesses or organizations facilitating outdoor dining.
- Ability for businesses to erect a tent of private property for al fresco dining without permit or application.

Logistical planning considerations related to downtown Al Fresco dining:
• Businesses individually supply tables and chairs to be used in those designated spaces, including set up and break down daily.
• Businesses adhere to a regimented cleaning and seating reservation system and procedure outlined in the Governors Executive Order.
• Business enforce any applicable public space mask requirements / recommendations by the CDC among their customers.
• Businesses, Downtown Cambridge, and Health department work together to identify an agreed upon cleaning regime related to opening outdoor seating areas.
• Plan space usage to avoid overcrowding, businesses responsible for enforcing social distancing among customers. Businesses must clearly define seating areas for their business service area, provide clear instructions and directions for customers. No congregation of customers would be allowed or tolerated. Use of two to four top table seating to discourage group seating.
• Restaurants be in charge of their own designated seating areas, taking reservations for outdoor seating.
• Recommended use of hard surfaces like metal, poly glazed, and plastic for easy of cleaning.
• All plans will preserve ADA clearances along sidewalks

While we had begun this process a few weeks ago, we were encouraged in our request for the above based on Governor Hogan’s statement during his Wednesday evening press conference to look to streets, parks, parking areas to get creative to create diner friendly outdoor seating options for businesses. Our request reflects that hope and tenacity to support our community’s survival.

We also understand that this is not a permanent solution, but we believe is the one that allows for the most immediate implementation, which is crucial to retain and support our downtown restaurant industry stakeholders. We are aware that this may be an interim solution and may need to be revisited as we all go through these unique and uncharted circumstances.

Attached to this letter are visual examples of the proposed outdoor seating opportunities requested above.

We appreciate your support and request that you please contact us directly with your questions and comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Clendaniel, Executive Director
Michelle Barnes, Board President

Cambridge Main Street
Downtown Cambridge
505 Poplar Street, Suite 300
Cambridge, MD 21613
www.downtowncambridge.org
Visual Examples of outdoor seating strategies as identified above:

Protected seating spaces utilizing street parking spaces
Use of public park spaces for outdoor dining / seating:

Use of street spaces:
Use of additional sidewalk spaces: