



Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss
Councilman Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Councilman Eugene T. Frazier
Councilman James L. Furstenberg
Councilwoman Laurie P. Marchini

City Administrator Jeffrey F. Silka
City Solicitor Michael Scott Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

2nd Floor Conference Room
Allegany Museum
3 Pershing Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, May 21, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Raymond M. Morriss; Council Members Eugene Frazier, Jimmy Furstenberg, Rock Cioni and Laurie Marchini.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Michael Scott Cohen, City Solicitor; Bobby Smith, Director of Engineering and Utilities; Chuck Ternent, Chief of Police; Shannon Adams, Fire Chief and Mark Gandolfi, Comptroller

Media: Teresa McMinn, Cumberland Times-News
Kathy Cornwell, WCBC Radio

I. Smoking on Baltimore Street Discussion

Mr. Silka asked if the City would consider banning smoking on Baltimore Street due to the littering and the amount of time that maintenance is spending cleaning up cigarette butts, mentioning that people are breaking in to the receptacles to get butts out. Mr. Silka asked if the Council members had an interest in looking in to the issue, and Council agreed they are interested.

Mayor Morriss mentioned he thinks it is something we need to take a real serious look at, mentioning that the boardwalk in Ocean City, does not allow smoking. He feels it needs to be Baltimore Street and the parklets.

Councilwoman Marchini referenced the Veteran's Memorial Park right there across from the Creamery that when the planting for the Day of Caring and Sharing happened, it took most of the day to clean up the cigarette butts and 3 days later it was littered again. Chief Ternent remarked about the boundaries that are already in place for skateboarding and asked if they could be used for smoking as well. Mr. Silka responded that at this time the focus would be on Baltimore Street.

Mayor Morriss ended the discussion stating that if that does not fix the issue at hand, expanding to the side streets would be discussed. Starting with specific locations, within the first 50 yards from Mechanic Street and first 50 yards from George Street, where the real issue is.

II. Review of the public meeting agenda of May 21,2024

Mayor Morriss reviewed the agenda.

Mr. Gandolfi discussed the ordinances and mentioned that tonight is the first reading of the six budget ordinances. He highlighted that there have not been any changes since the last budget presentation, so an overview was presented to the Council to bring some of the highlights together. The first reading would be tonight, and the second and third readings would be at the June 4th meeting and then voted on. Mr. Gandolfi went on to mention that these ordinances support the City's budget for Fiscal Year 2025, also establishing water rates, with a 20% increase. The City is also doing a 3.5% COLA for all employees across the board, that will satisfy some of the union agreements.

He also mentioned that Health insurance rates are going up 3.5%, and the City expects to spend ARPA funds in 2025

Mr. Gandolfi continued that this year is turning out very well, and the City is expecting a \$3.3 million surplus ending June 30, 2024 and anticipates in December submitting a consent for future projects. This allows the department to control the unassigned fund balance to try and maintain surpluses and not deficits. Assigned funds are used for revitalization and capital projects and different things that could cause a deficit. The assigned fund balance is something that can be moved by the Comptroller, moved around and can be unassigned if needed. It's not a permanent placement but it does help with managing the bond rating.

Council member Cioni asked if they should anticipate anything coming down the pike, such as a mandate on the city that might have even more effect on the water rates or sewage rates? Mr. Silka responded that our anticipated upgrades to the \$40 million water project are there, and that they are not aware of any.

Bobby Smith further responded that as far as the infrastructure goes, the City is constantly looking at it and trying to find ways to include water line projects in all of their upgrades to try to mitigate and that Council is aware of the projects that the department is looking at. He did mention that they are foreseeing some issues with the sewage department and that will be addressed when the time is right.

Mark Gandolfi further added that the budget does include \$160,000 for water line replacements in-house. The water department has been replacing water lines in different areas and there is money in the budget for improvements. Despite the water rate increase, we are still at a better rate than some of our surrounding areas. That increase will take the City from a \$1.8M cash deficit to a \$450,000 cash deficit. The city is still trying to mitigate the increases to households the best that they can.

Mr. Silka discussed Order No.3, setting a fee of \$1,500 for pool sponsorships, when organizations want to sponsor a free swim day at the pool. Ryan Mackey from the Parks and Recreation department researched past revenue from other free swim days and recommended that the fee be set at \$1,500.

Mr. Silka clarified that it would cover a full day of the pool being opened, and if someone wanted to host an event after hours, we would have to determine labor costs if staff would have to come back in.

Councilwoman Marchini questioned what would happen if a sports team wanted to have a group swim, like an after-season party, and Mr. Silka responded that the fee would be per person. He explained that this sponsorship amount would differ as it would allow admission for everyone during the course of the day.

Councilman Cioni mentioned that he wanted to look in to admission fees for kids that do not have the money to use the pool and any kind of funding that the city may provide for this.

Councilwoman Marchini asked for an explanation of a tolling agreement.

Michael Scott, City Solicitor explained that a tolling agreement means that all deadlines are stopped. You would be able to avoid having to file an answer to a complaint or filing a pleading or suit because it holds the passage of time in standstill for all legal purposes, allowing people time to engage in discussions in an effort to resolve the dispute.

III. Mayor and City Council Updates

Councilmen Frazier updated that the Ed Taylor cemetery organization is hosting a ceremony at the cemetery on Baltimore Ave at 2:00 on Sunday May 26, 2024. And, also made mention of HRDC and the services that they provide for the citizens in the area of all ages, anyone that needs their services they can call 301-777-5970.

Councilwoman Marchini discussed that the Historic Preservation approved the plans for the clock at Hendershot community park as well as the approval of the pollinator garden at Emmanuel Episcopal along with signage, paint color, etc. She reminded that the Tyler Bastian field session in Oldtown is May 31-June 10, 2024 and that the site is believed to be the dwelling of Thomas Cresap, who is one of the most important frontiersmen in Maryland. She also reminded that the Farmer's market is back and that the hours are Thursdays from 9:30-1:00, with music from 10:30-12:30. She mentioned Pepper on a Plate and recommended visiting if you have not yet. She ended with the mention of Delfest happening this coming weekend.

Mayor Morriss discussed the event at the Carver community center on May 18, 2024. A walk through was provided for the public to see the conditions and to talk about the plans moving forward. Because there is a lot of work that needs to be done, an engineering study has been put together to provide an idea of what is truly needed in order to complete the project. City Engineer Bobby Smith did a great job of providing a schedule of how that will happen. Now that funding has been provided from Congressman Trone, we can begin this work and begin making it a true functioning community. Councilman Cioni inquired about the condition of the roof and the City Engineer advised that 2 years ago some spots had been repaired and they seem to be still serving its purpose

Mayor Morriss concluded with a reminder that the rest of the week is Delfest, and for everyone to enjoy their time out there.

Adjourn: 6:18 p.m.

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on: June 18, 2024