



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

MINUTES

M&CC Regular Public Meeting
57 N. Liberty St. Cumberland MD

DATE: December 19, 2023

I. OPEN SESSION – 6:15 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

PRESENT:

Council Member Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Council Member Eugene T. Frazier
Council Member James L. Furstenberg, III
Council Member Laurie P. Marchini
President Raymond M. Morriss

Also Present: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison K. Layton, City Clerk; Michael S. Cohen, City Solicitor; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services; Ruth Davis-Rogers, Historic Preservation Coordinator

IV. Statement of Closed Meeting

Mayor Morriss announced that closed meetings had been held on December 12, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. and on December 19, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. and read into the record summaries of those minutes which are attached hereto and made a part of these minutes as required by Section 3-306 (c)(2) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

V. Presentations

1. Presentation of Employee Retirement Awards

Rhonda DeVault, Human Resources Department - Mayor Morriss read a statement, saying Ms. DeVault started in May of 1999 in Community Development, transferring to the Human Resources Department in July of 2013. The Mayor said Ms. DeVault was a

great employee and added a lot of heart to the City. He added that Ms. DeVault and HR Director April Howser have done a fantastic job taking care of the City's employees and benefits.

Gerald "Jake" Myers, Fire Department – Chief Adams spoke of Mr. Myers's 28.5 years with the department, saying he had spent a lot of time on the ambulance in the early years. He was promoted to equipment operator where he finished out his career. Chief Adams stated that Mr. Myers did his job well, and is going to be missed very much.

2. Recognition of the Allegany High School Boys' Soccer Team for their record setting season and first trip to the State Championship Game

Mayor Morriss read the Certificate of Recognition and said how proud the City is for the great job the team and coaches have done this season, and in the years leading up to this. Council also relayed their appreciation.

3. Presentation of the Historic Preservation Commission's Historic Preservation Plan by the Lakota Group

Ruth Davis-Rogers, Historic Preservation Coordinator, introduced Nick Kalogeresis from the Lakota Group, saying that Cumberland has embarked on its first ever historic preservation plan. She stated that the Lakota Group will guide the City in the future on how to use its historic assets to help move forward. She added that they had interviewed many consultants, and have been happy with the Lakota Group. She said tonight is the presentation of the final version of the plan.

Mr. Kalogeresis said it's great to be back in Cumberland and thanked Ms. Davis-Rogers for her help and energy. He said community involvement has been great and provided a PowerPoint presentation giving an overview of the process. He said the objective was to assess the existing historic preservation program. He stated that Cumberland has been practicing preservation for more than 50 years and said it's time to see how things are going. He advised that they will go over challenges and successes and how to conduct a good community engagement program in the ten years going forward.

Mr. Kalogeresis stated that they have gotten different perspectives from community engagement and stakeholder listening sessions, open houses, etc., and said findings show a strong desire to promote more heritage-based tourism. He stated that to expand that they need to maintain historic infrastructures and residential neighborhoods, and need to know how to promote and recognize cultural and ethnic backgrounds. He added that there are six main chapters in the presentation for planning.

Mr. Kalogeresis advised that a lot of commercial buildings downtown are important, and said any building over 50 years old is considered historic. He stated that there are five places here on the national historic register, which provides benefits to owners and investors.

Mr. Kalogeresis advised that they discovered more population decline in the historic registered districts – lower income, lower homeownership - which shows a challenge in these areas.

Mr. Kalogeresis went over planning priorities, saying housing and neighborhoods are #1. He discussed finding additional historic districts and said education and outreach are critical.

Mr. Kalogeresis reviewed key strategies, discussing the use of preservation as a method for revitalizing, which will provide diversity of housing choices in Cumberland. He discussed promoting and enhancing existing programs, and creating new incentives that spur investment.

Mr. Kalogeresis talked about Cumberland's comprehensive neighborhoods housing rehab program, and said the City should keep building on that and find other resources and leverage existing incentives. He also mentioned modifying the existing loan program, and said that as far as economic growth, Cumberland should be marketed as a choice place to live, and mentioned upper story residentials and Air B&Bs.

Mr. Kalogeresis discussed heritage documentation, future districts, and the need to recognize African-American heritage in the community, which was lost during urban renewal years. He said for future registered landmarks and districts, they need to be sent to the MHT to be nominated.

Mr. Kalogeresis wrapped up his presentation talking about advancing the local presentation program; doing updates to preservation ordinances to clarify, and talked about what goes to staff-level review vs. commission review.

Mayor Morriss thanked Mr. Kalogeresis and stated he has been impressed with what has been done over the last year – the detail, and how the Lakota Group has approached community engagement. He said this is a good guideline for going forward, and said the ideas presented fit in well with the City's preservation program.

Council Member Marchini thanked the Lakota Group for being approachable and for their great participation, and said she likes the overall approval with economic development and the neighborhoods. She also thanked Ms. Davis-Rogers for her work.

Council Member Cioni said you don't have to walk far from here to see examples of what people have done, and said they need to encourage more to preserve.

VI. Director's Reports

Motion to approve the reports was made by Council Member Furstenberg, seconded by Council Member Cioni, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

(A) Administrative Services

1. Administrative Services Monthly Report for November 2023

(B) Public Works

1. Maintenance Division Monthly Report for November 2023

(C) Fire

1. Fire Department Monthly Report for November 2023

(D) Police

1. Police Department Monthly Report for November 2023

(E) Utilities - Flood, Water, Sewer

1. Utilities Division Flood/Water/Sewer Monthly Reports for November 2023.

VII. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Council Member Frazier, seconded by Council Member Marchini, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

1. Approval of the Closed, Work, and Regular Session Minutes of December 5, 2023, and the Closed Session Minutes of December 12, 2023.

VIII. Public Comments – Agenda Items Only

All public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person

IX. New Business

(A) Orders (Consent Agenda)

Mr. Silka reviewed each Agenda item and Mayor Morriss called for questions or comments. **Motion** to approve all items was made by Council Member Frazier, seconded by Council Member Marchini, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

Order 27,376 - authorizing the Acting Chief of Police to accept a FY23 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant award in the amount of \$14,138 to purchase forensic equipment to be utilized by the Cumberland Police Department and the Allegany County Sheriff's Office.

Order 27,377 - authorizing appointments to the Downtown Development Commission, Parks and Recreation Board, Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and the Evitts Creek Steering Committee.

Order 27,378 - authorizing a City contribution of \$15,000 toward the Cumberland Economic Development Commission's Downtown Comprehensive Investment Program - Phase 3.

Order 27,379 - authorizing the renewal of the contract with Farrell Forestry LLC to provide professional consulting forestry services with an amended scope of work for the Evitts Creek Watershed (City Project 2022-41-SRVC) for a one-year term beginning February 2, 2024 in the amount not-to-exceed \$30,000.

Order 27,380 - approving a Special Taxing District (STD) property tax exemption of \$1,042.76 for 55 Baltimore Street, owned by David Romero for the 2023-2024 tax year.

Order 27,381 - authorizing the sole source purchase from L/B Water Service, Inc. for the purchase of Sensus RNI and Sensus Analytics Software for a five-year term from November 13, 2023 through November 12, 2028 in the amount not-to-exceed \$174,989.21.

Order 27,382 - approving the proposal from SADA Systems, Inc., to provide a Google Workspace Enterprise Plus Account for the City's use of Google mail and Google

applications for a term of three (3) years, effective December 6, 2023 through December 6, 2026 in the amount not-to-exceed \$97,925.75.

X. Public Comments

Dana Tinnen, 223 Wallace Street, spoke regarding the Smiles Program he is spearheading, and thanked everyone for their support and contributions. He extended an invitation to join him on Sunday, December 24th at the Souls Won Cathedral to meet with City leaders.

Mandela Echefu, Wheelzup Adventures, 86 Baltimore Street, advised that he had been to two government meetings today and had some letters to give M&CC to introduce them to plans his business is working on for next year. He said he has noticed an opportunity for teams in the NICA (National/International Cycling Association), and said that at Wheelzup and in the community they have four certified coaches now. He said cycling is one of the only sports you can participate in with your kids and grandkids, and said he'd be happy to send M&CC more information on this. He also said he's asking for support, specifically at Constitution Park, and said there's a lot of interest with all the teams around here, but nowhere to race, or there are courses that are too difficult. He said he has engaged the local schools and counselors, and will have a team next year. He added that as people move to our community, it is a resource/amenity that will be of interest to them, and said they have a big backing from the TREK bike company, which can provide great discounts to team members.

In answer to questions from Council, Mr. Echefu stated that it's not hardcore trail riding, and said most training happens on campground roads. He also stated that the courses are not as long as the ones at Rocky Gap – not 4-5 miles. He said certain sections are timed, with chilling in between. He added that coaches go through training and background checks, and said the goal is to have reps from the Garrett County team. He mentioned that they have a few sessions at the library and invited families to come hear about it. He said it's not about competition – it's about getting kids there and creating a healthy lifestyle. Mr. Echefu envisioned a trail encompassing Constitution Park and Allegany College, with all communities having access, and the return being immense.

Mayor Morriss thanked Mr. Echefu, and said in talking with staff, this has been part of the City's plan. He said he loves what Wheelzup is doing for the community, and said with the skatepark and BMX as well, it's about engaging other youth that don't fit into traditional sports. He said he appreciates what Wheelzup is doing.

All public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person.

XI. Adjournment

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Minutes approved on January 2, 2024

Raymond M. Morriss, Mayor

ATTEST: Allison K. Layton, City Clerk