

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

City Hall Council Chambers
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, April 13, 2021
4:30 p.m.

This meeting was held via Video-Conference

PRESENT: Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members: Seth Bernard, Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier and Laurie Marchini.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey D. Rhodes, City Administrator; Michael S. Cohen, City Solicitor; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services; Robert Smith, City Engineer; Matt Miller, CEDC Executive Director; Stu Czapski, Economic Development Specialist

I. AGENDA REVIEW – APRIL 20, 2021

Mayor Morriss reviewed the Reports and Minutes on the agenda and called for any questions or comments. Being none, Mr. Rhodes reviewed **Ordinance No. 3885**, up for its 2nd & 3rd readings:

Ordinance No. 3885 – granting Shenandoah Cable Television, LLC the non-exclusive right to use the City’s public rights-of-way for the delivery of high-speed internet service to Frostburg State University.

Mr. Rhodes advised that this ordinance will allow Shenandoah Cable Television, LLC to use the City’s public rights-of-way for the delivery of high-speed internet service to FSU, and explained the route the fiber will take. Mr. Smith advised that in exchange, the City will get access to twelve strands of fiber at six locations for cameras for the CPD, and potentially for traffic control. He added that they will need a future agreement in order to allow the company to sell access within the City to businesses, and the strands the City is getting in exchange cannot be sold to another entity.

Mr. Rhodes reviewed the Orders on the Consent Agenda:

Order 26,779 – authorizing the execution of an agreement with the MD Historical Trust for \$100K in funding through the African-American Heritage Preservation Program for assisting with critical stabilization needs at Carver School, and approving a 100% match from the City.

Mr. Rhodes advised that the match from the City is budgeted and said this will allow for some badly needed rehabilitation for the building from damage that has occurred over the years.

Order 26,780 – accepting the Sole Source proposal from Amazon Web Sources to provide hosting and support services for FY22 for an amount not-to-exceed \$28K.

Mr. Rhodes advised that this is an ongoing relationship for cloud-based support services.

Order 26,781 – approving amendments to the CDBG Program 2019 Annual Action Plan, effective April 20, 2021, to include allocations for the 2020 S. Penn Playground Project, the 2019 PHA FCH Sidewalk Project, and the 2019 Admin./Program Income.

Mr. Rhodes advised that this will allow for allocation of some unused administrative funds for the two projects listed in the order.

Order 26,782 – accepting the bid from Carl Belt, Inc. for the Decatur St. 24” Crosstown Water Main Replacement Project (31-17-W) in the lump sum cost of \$3,112,885.95, contingent upon MDE approval.

Mr. Rhodes advised that this is the water main that has been so problematic over the last decade, and said the City has \$4.3M secured for this project, so Belt’s bid was very welcome. Mr. Smith advised that the award is contingent on MDE approval, with an August 2021 start date.

Order 26,783 – accepting the Sole Source proposal from Hertrich Fleet Services, Inc. for one 2021 Ford Expedition 4WD XL Regular Length in the amount of \$40,077, using joint pricing through Howard County, MD Contract #4400003197.

Order 26,784 – approving the submission of CDBG 2021 Annual Action Plan proposed projects to the DHCD for funding totaling \$797,370.

Discussion:

In answer to a question from Council about the viability of the Carver project, the Mayor explained that they have to get their board in order before the grant can be given to them.

Mr. Smith discussed the gas company currently working on Decatur Street, and advised that this water main replacement job has been coordinated from day one, saying that Columbia Gas will be out of there well before the City starts the project.

Mr. Cohen discussed the Shenandoah Cable Television fiber, saying the agreement gives them the use of the City’s rights-of-ways so they can establish a link between their system and Frostburg State University to provide the college with cable, and they need to go through the City to reach FSU. He advised that there doesn’t need to be any excavation, or poles erected, saying they will use existing utility poles. He added that in exchange, the City gets 12 strands of fiber to be used for stop lights and traffic cameras, resulting in an approximate five-figure benefit to the City. He added that there’s also the possibility that this company may want to partner with the City and provide cable TV here at a later date.

II. CUMBERLAND GATEWAY- MARYLAND AVE. PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Miller advised that fill has been brought in to prepare for the construction of Phase 1 buildings. He said that the developer, Ed Scott, has submitted Phases 2 & 3, and should be taking place relatively soon after Phase 1 has commenced. He added that Mr. Scott has released some names of potential tenants that he has been speaking with, and said he is aware the City has a very specific target.

Mr. Miller relayed how pleased he was to be able to see some visual progress, and said that construction of the Verizon Wireless building should be first, then the 4-tenant strip mall, and development easterly towards Maryland Avenue from there. Mr. Miller also advised that Mr. Scott was working on handing contracts to a couple of homeowners that want to sell.

Mr. Miller said tenants are starting to come to the table more and said they are seeing interest from national brand businesses they hadn't expected, and added that this project should be successful in the near future. Mayor Morriss said he believes they see Cumberland as a growth area with potential and reviewed Phases 1, 2, and 3.

Mr. Smith advised that he had a conversation with Ed Scott about tomorrow's meeting regarding a traffic change on Cecelia Street, and asked for two members of Council to attend the meeting and get the temperature of those that attend. He reviewed a couple proposals that will be on the table:

1. Opening the entire length of Cecelia Street for 2-way traffic, with a channelizing median to the south and a "no-left-turn" at the intersection of Cecelia Street and Maryland Avenue due to its proximity with the off-ramp of I-68. Preferred method
2. Phase 3 – fast food drive-thru: 2-way to the Verizon entrance – least preferred method

There was discussion on who would attend the meeting, with Mayor Morriss advising that he had it on his schedule, and Councilman Frazier advised that he would attend. There was also discussion about if more than 2 Council members could attend, just to be there to listen and learn, with Mr. Cohen stating there shouldn't be any problem.

III. BALTIMORE STREET ACCESS PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Miller advised that the public roll-out video that he and the Mayor co-hosted 3 weeks ago was shared on social media and had received great feedback. He added that in the video three different renderings were released of what the final product will look like, and said that they brought into context what we've been working towards.

Mr. Miller further advised that they received notification this afternoon that the capital grant award amount has been increased in an additional \$250K, making the total award for this year \$750K, which narrows the need for local funding. He added that things are wrapping up with William Cochran with the work group now meeting bi-weekly rather than weekly, and said as things progress, the work group will morph into a marketing committee. He stated that there have been discussions on the mitigation plans for businesses as well, and said they will continue to be up front and work with problems as they arise, while being as transparent and open as possible.

Mr. Smith advised that he intends to submit PS&E package to MDOT this Friday, which will be the first of several rounds and comments from State Highway, and said it's a big step. He added that the first round of comments will probably be about 8 weeks from now.

Mayor Morriss expressed his thanks to all the hard work from everyone to get where we're at now, and Mr. Miller agreed, saying there has been a lot of hands on deck for a long time, and commended all who have been a part of the process, and looks forward to pushing it forward.

IV. CEDC STRATEGIC PLAN RE-ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Mr. Miller advised that Mr. Czapski was given this project to spearhead, and said that Mr. Czapski was part of the original steering committee on the initial strategic plan.

Mr. Czapski advised that within the last week they've received several questions from the ARC, and said the responses have been drafted and will be submitted tomorrow. He added that he's optimistic that these will be the last questions, and then they'll get the official okay.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie A. Woodring
City Clerk

Minutes approved May 18, 2021 _____