



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 S. Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Silka, City Administrator; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Matt Miller, CEDC Executive Director; Representatives from Raz Development, Zach Elyasi and Paul Kelly

Media: Bryan Gowans, WCBC Radio

Greg Larry, Cumberland Times-News

I. RAZ DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION – MEMORIAL HOSPITAL SITE

Mr. Miller made introductions all around, and went over the purpose of this meeting, which was to reach out to RAZ regarding the Memorial Hospital site. He advised that the contract is fully executed as of February 1, 2023, and said they are officially in their due-diligence period. He provided some background on Zach Elyasi of RAZ, along with an additional partner, Paul Kelly, and mentioned projects they have worked on together. Mr. Miller talked about how the Memorial Hospital site was just what RAZ was looking for, and said the parking garage already there will fit in nicely with the 250 apartment units housed in two buildings Mr. Elyasi has in mind for the property. He added that they will be geared towards retirees or starter-homes.

Mr. Elyasi provided background on his company and said it's not all about money, and said what makes the difference is what is to be done with the money. He explained their concept is the funds they make, they take to the community to help the poor, and said they just finished an orphanage for 300 children.

Mr. Elyasi said he's excited about this community, and said this project has come a long way. He explained that he wants to mold the project so that it draws people to the area. He said he's happy to answer questions about the budget, and the look and feel of the project.

Mayor Morriss stated that they are anxiously awaiting the true proposal, and wants to see drawings. He added that it's a fabulous opportunity for that piece of property.

Mr. Elyasi discussed average construction cost and timeline, due diligence period - looking underground, electric, water, fiber optics, and surveying. He reviewed the development period, the look and sizing of units, etc., and said they will apply for permits by September 2023, explained that he's hopeful to have an expedited permitting process in order to begin construction.

Mayor Morriss advised that the City's permitting process is more streamlined than Montgomery or Prince Georges Counties, and explained that a staff member will be assigned to this to ensure the project is moving as quickly as possible.

Mr. Elyasi fielded several questions from Council. He advised that typically a building goes up in 18 months, which doesn't include roads, etc. which take longer than a building. He stated that their biggest projects in DC have been in the 150-200-unit range, but said key construction costs are higher. He said for the Memorial Hospital site, they need to see what falls within the 4-story limit, and advised that as of now they have over 400 units in the development project, and said this would make it over 600, so size-wise, this is one of the bigger projects - 10 acres.

Mr. Elyasi discussed considering using local talent for construction, but said roads will take time. He advised that they envision a community park, pool, maybe some small retail space such as a small grocery store, but no heavy retail components. Maybe a coffee shop. He said they will be seeing what fits, and said they don't want to over-promise.

Mr. Elyasi stated that amenities will be in the design phase - community center with pool, dog park, something to bring people outside together.

M&CC expressed their excitement to have RAZ Development here, and said they are looking forward to them being a member of the community, and also looking forward to working with them on this project.

II. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton

City Clerk

Minutes approved on April 4, 2023