

# Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

## WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
4:40 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members: Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier, Joseph George and Laurie Marchini.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeffrey Silka, City Administrator; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Matt Miller, CEDC Executive Director; Mike Getty; Kyle Talente and Matt Cardin, RKG Associates

Media: Greg Larry, Cumberland Times-News

### **I. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTATION - RKG ASSOCIATES – DRAFT CEDC STRATEGIC PLAN REASSESSMENT**

Matt Miller introduced once again Kyle Talente from RKG Associates, and noted that as this process has been going on for several months, and said now it's kind of in the home-stretch. Mr. Miller explained that this presentation today would be an overview of what the final Strategic Plan document will look like. He added that today they are looking for M&CC's feedback, comments, questions, or concerns.

Mr. Talente provided a PowerPoint presentation (attached to these minutes) and reviewed:

#### **GOALS**

Mr. Talente advised that developing a Council-endorsed economic plan vision is one of the most important goals, and said having Council support and endorse the plan vision is a critical component to move forward. He added that the CEDC should be the "switchboard operator" for all things economic development in the City.

#### **REPORT**

#### **BRIDGING VISION AND REALITY**

#### **RECOMMENDED APPROACH**

Mr. Talente advised that current staffing is able to handle focusing on business retention, expansion and development of existing assets, but said the City does not have staffing and resources for the rest. He added that marketing outreach and grant writing is the next logical step for advancement.

## **ROLE OF THE CEDC, EVOLVED**

Mr. Talente advised that communication needs to improve within the City, and said there also needs to be interaction with other community partners.

## **CURRENT STAFFING AND RESOURCES**

Mr. Talente advised that their recommendation is to have the DDC manager rolled under the CEDC, but said that may not be something that could be done readily. He explained that at the very least, the DDC should be co-located within the CEDC building in order to build a synergy of relationship. He also mentioned that the Board of Directors needs to participate in implementation.

## **RECOMMENDED STAFFING ADDITIONS**

Mr. Talente mentioned in-kind contributions or volunteerism to augment staffing, and added that between FSU and ACM, the City has access to potential interns to do data management or data collection.

## **BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION**

Mr. Talente advised that this is a good way to try and continue to build the City/County relationship.

## **ASSET DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Talente spoke about the commercial node plan done seven years ago that focused on other commercial nodes in the City. He said that now that the City has done the downtown plan, there needs to be similar efforts for all its other commercial nodes, and to determine best uses for each part of the City.

Mr. Talente also spoke about housing diversity, and said the connection between economic development and housing is universal, and said if there's not the right amount or right kind of housing, it will be difficult to attract workers to the community. He advised to use the CEDC for acquiring disposition of property, which will put the City in the position of making better deals.

## **MARKETING COMMUNICATION, AND OUTREACH**

## **ORGANIZATION AND COORDINATION**

Mr. Talente advised that everyone needs to relinquish their illusion of control, to get more things done and get better at what is being done. He also spoke about the community considering a joint City/County economic development organization, and said from a professional perspective they believe it's in the best interest of all of Allegany County.

## **TOOLBOX DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Talente discussed revolving capital fund and using ARPA dollars as a potential in a one-time investment in the capital improvement program, which he said is used expressly for real estate acquisition, disposition, development, investment, etc.

## DISCUSSION

Mr. Talente opened the floor for questions and comments.

Councilman George asked Mr. Talente to be more specific on areas where the M&CC could have improved upon, mistakes made, etc. that was shared with him by management or the board of directors. Mr. Talente advised that often times there were Community Development issues brought to the CEDC to solve, that were not CEDC-related. Speaking on communication, he explained that the biggest challenge not having a defined set of measurables/metrics that M&CC want the CEDC to address. He also recommended a retreat so both sides can talk, occurring on a yearly basis. Councilman George stated that the CEDC and the board of directors need to recognize the staff they have and develop their measurables and what they can accomplish, given their resources.

There was more discussion on the topic, with Mayor Morriss stating that it's incumbent on M&CC to work on things together with the CEDC and County to achieve goals, and said he agrees that communication needs to get better. It was mentioned that certain personnel changes in the CEDC have made things better, and that having the new City Administrator now going to be sitting on the CEDC board will also improve things.

Greg Larry, Cumberland Times-News, inquired about the recommended new position of Marketing and Grant Manager, and asked if staff at the County or the CEDC were able to do that job. Mr. Talente advised that the recommendation would be a new CEDC staff member to create outreach strategy both internally and externally, and to commit a certain amount of time to grant writing.

There was discussion about metrics and goals and responsibility for those. Mr. Talente advised that the primary funder is the City, which he said needs to define expectations and make sure the CEDC is addressing them, and added that both sides bring forth metrics.

There was discussion on connectivity between the CEDC and staff at City Hall regarding real estate acquisition, blighted properties, etc. Mr. Talente advised that if the City is acquiring properties for an economic development purpose, then it needs to flow through the CEDC; if acquiring for a community development purpose, then no, because it's not CEDC's job.

Mayor Morriss stated that ultimately if the City is not increasing jobs and population then it's not meeting the goal to make a great community; so all the measurables can be done, but job creation is the ultimate goal.

Mr. Talente stated that by creating an environment for companies to thrive, that will bring expansion, which will create jobs.

Mr. Miller advised that he would sent the PowerPoint presentation and final plan to M&CC, with the final subject to be reviewed by CEDC.

**II. MAYOR AND COUNCIL UPDATES**

There was discussion about a utility charge/garbage complaint from 801 Washington Street, and an issue about the property going from two units to one.

There was discussion about a tour of the Goethe Street properties, and how many were on the tax sale.

There was discussion about the Union Rescue Mission, with Mayor Morriss saying that the prior director of the CEDC was the impetus for the Mission being on the CEDC's plate, and said it should not be there. He added that he has no problem taking it off their plate.

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marjorie A. Woodring  
City Clerk

Minutes approved June 7, 2022