

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, July 7, 2020
5:42 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey D. Rhodes, City Administrator; Michael S. Cohen, City Solicitor; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Ken Tressler, City Comptroller

I. Discussion regarding proposed legislation to update provisions of the city code pertaining to solid waste pickup

An ordinance was being proposed to update the City Code regarding trash pickup. Mr. Rhodes stated that part of the issues being addressed were raised by citizens complaining where trash containers were sometimes being placed.

Mr. Cohen stated that other issues being address in the ordinance were raised by Burgmeier, the City's solid waste hauler. They asked that changes be made to provide that:

1. Refuse is to be placed in plastic bags regardless whether they are in or outside of a plastic container;
2. The bags cannot be grocery bags; they have to be commercially produced plastic bags.

Mayor Morriss expressed agreement with it being bagged but voiced concern that commercial trash bags would be difficult for some members of our community to purchase.

Councilman Frazier stated that he did not like the idea of bags being required for everything. As long as there wasn't anything liquid that would get on anybody, he didn't see why a bag would be needed. That's what a garbage can is for.

Ms. Woodring noted that some of Burgmeier's concerns also had to do with health issues of their employees. When trash was loose in the can and not contained in bags, handling the loose trash exposed the employees to health risks, especially in this time of COVID-19. Loose diapers were a common problem. Mr. Rhodes stated that statistically, garbage collectors have one of the more dangerous occupations in the country for a number of reasons.

Mr. Cohen stated that as the ordinance is currently drafted, there is a requirement that trash has to be placed in tightly covered containers. People who put their trash in the burgundy recycling totes are not compliant with the City code in place now.

Councilman Frazier added that his concern was for those people who could not afford to buy commercially produced bags; but, considering the health concerns loose trash presents, he is agreeable with requiring bags.

Councilman Cioni feels we are behind the curve on bagging compared to other communities and felt people would get used to the additional cost.

Council provided consensus for the revised code to require that all trash be placed in bags for pickup. It was noted that recycled material did not need to be bagged, and, in fact, should not be bagged.

II. Update from staff regarding efforts to address blight and neighborhood revitalization

Mr. Tressler provided a Power Point presentation regarding Community Development's progress in addressing blight and neighborhood revitalization. The following issues were discussed:

1. Understand the Data - Review and Standardize Lists

- Blight Action Plan (512)
- Tax Sale Properties (613)
- Negligent Property Owners (141)
- City Owned Properties (478)
- Nuisance Tracking with Citizenserve Software
- Incorporate Housing Study Recommendations

Mr. Tressler discussed that the data was recorded in multiple formats so a combined list was needed in order to access by street, owners, etc. The Blight Study provided a list of properties, but many of them were identified by latitude and longitude rather than address, or were in different formats. Staff is working to get everything in the same format so it can be entered into GIS and in a way that will allow us to look at a map and see where the issues are and zoom in and see individual issues with each property. This is an ongoing process.

2. Categorize

Staff will come up with lists of properties to be demolished generated from properties that the City owns, tax sales properties, rehabbed properties, and non-buildable lots that could be offered to property owners for extending their yards. Land banked lots

would be identified as multiple lots that could be adjacent to each other or in areas that we are promoting development such as the Rolling Mills area.

3. Obtain Properties

Staff is coordinating with Economic Development so we are all working in the same direction. After the lists and categorizing, we will prioritize areas by:

- Streets
- Sections of towns
- Rehab of development opportunities
- Safety concerns
- State and/or Federal Funding (demolition monies available)

4. Systematically Sell Properties

Once a list of properties owned or controlled by the City is established, staff will systematically try to sell them or make them productive for the city. Redevelopment areas will be targeted. Disposing of the properties will reduce City maintenance fees attributed to upkeep and mowing the lawn, which can be \$500 to \$700 a year, and those properties will be the first offered for sale. Lots will also be offered to adjacent property owners to allow them to expand their yards.

The process will be to first declare the first round of properties surplus, hopefully at the next Council meeting. Bids will be formally solicited, advertising signs will be put up at each site, and interested parties will be directed to visit the City's website for directions on how to submit bids. The bid will require the interested party to submit the intended use for the property and there may be a riveter clause in the agreement of sale.

Mayor Morriss agreed that it would be good to have one format to be able to access information and have GIS mapping available. The goal will be to get these properties back on the tax roles and to revitalize our neighborhoods. He recommended that consideration should also be given to creating green space throughout the city.

Mr. Tressler recognized Mr. Thacker as a great asset for his knowledge of the neighborhoods and properties.

Mr. Cioni advised Mr. Thacker of a gentleman on who lived on Walnut Street and who needed a simpler process so he can access a lot. Mr. Thacker responded that Mr. Tressler was working on declaring those properties surplus so they can go to bid. He added that Matt Miller had brought up the idea of deconstruction, by which companies use people released from prison to take buildings apart piece by piece, and the pieces are sold to recoup money at salvage stores. Mr. Thacker suggested that the City may be able to stretch its demolition funding by exploring these possibilities.

Councilman Frazier agreed it sounded good as long as it didn't cost more money than just to demolish it.

Mr. Thacker responded that it was going to cost less money and considered a green process because most of it would be recycled and would therefore reduce our landfill bill.

Mayor Morriss stated that the coordination with Matt Miller and the CEDC is crucial going forward for the strategic plan and that he was looking forward to the completion of the Housing Study.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further for work session, motion to move into closed session to discuss negotiation issues with the AFSME Local 553 pursuant to Section 3-305 (b)(9) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Cod of Maryland was made by Council Member Marchini, seconded by Council Member Frazier, and was approved on a vote of 5-0.

The work session adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie A. Woodring
City Clerk

Minutes approved August 4, 2020