

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, March 1, 2022
5:00 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey Silka, City Administrator; Michael S. Cohen, City Solicitor; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Robert Smith, City Engineer; Chuck Ternent, Chief of Police; Keira Shilling, President, Cumberland Jaycees; Doug Widdows, Skate Park Committee

I. AGENDA REVIEW – MARCH 1, 2022

Mayor Morriss reviewed the Agenda reports and minutes, and Mr. Silka advised on the two Unfinished Business ordinances. Ordinance No. 3908 (*2nd and 3rd Readings*), accepting the bid of EZ Out, Inc. for the purchase of several surplus properties from the Round II bids: 32 Laings Avenue; 105-107 Fifth Street; and 305-307 Fifth Street for a total of \$600, and authorizes the execution of a deed to convey the properties.

Ordinance No. 3909 (*2nd and 3rd Readings*), repealing City Code Sections 2-171 to 2-175 pertaining to the City's purchasing policy, and re-enacting them with amendments, and enacting Section 2-177 pertaining to Change Orders. Mr. Silka noted that City Comptroller Mark Gandolfi provided a much-detailed review and explanation of the changes at the ordinance's first reading.

Mr. Silka called for any questions or comments regarding the Consent Agenda orders, saying that they were pretty much standard business and housekeeping. Councilman George advised that he will be abstaining from the vote on Order No. 26,966, due to the fact that his wife is treasurer of the FCRC. Mr. Silka noted that Order No. 26,967 provides for outfitting four Ford Interceptor vehicles recently purchased as police cars.

II. SKATE PARK LOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Silka provided a PowerPoint presentation, and advised that on the November 23, 2021 meeting, staff asked to look at the project and come back with recommendations from M&CC. He said an internal working group was formed with City Staff, and advised that they met internally a few times to review location options.

Mr. Silka stated that they had met with the skatepark group on January 4, 2022, and said that they had posted a survey on several platforms. He advised that the survey was posted in February and contained 6 questions, with 488 total responses across the 4 platforms. The consensus of the responses was that 72% are residents of Cumberland, most responding lived in either the City, Allegany or Garrett County or WV, most wanted the location to be Jaycee

Field with Constitution Park coming in second, and households mostly had 2 persons interested, with the age group being post-high school.

Comments, suggestions and concerns made up the last question, with Mr. Silka advising that the majority of the comments were positive and welcoming. There were fewer negative comments that ranged from a waste of money, vandalism/drug use, and money being put to better use.

Mr. Silka advised that the skatepark group made the recommendation of Jaycee Field as their preferred location, and said the internal working group also looked at Jaycee Field, along with Mason Sports Complex and Constitution Park.

Mr. Silka provided background on the benefits of having a skate park, saying that it provides a non-traditional form of recreation, interested people must travel to the nearest skate park, and added that the venue would provide a tourist attraction as well as a place for events and competitions. Mr. Silka then reviewed the location factors, which include visibility of the facility, traffic flow, impact on neighborhoods, accessibility, costs, and several others listed in the PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Silka advised that the design of the park would be done by Spohn Ranch Skatepark of Los Angeles, CA, and said the base cost of design and construction will be in the \$500K range, and said this does not include any site work cost.

Mr. Silka reviewed potential costs, and said a Jaycee Field site would be around \$806K, but to do it right it could be as high as \$1.4M due to parking and road upgrades. He advised that for a Constitution Park site the cost ran around \$698K, with Mason being approximately \$644K.

Mr. Silka reviewed site analysis for each location and the PowerPoint presentation provided photos of each site with overlays and explained upgrade costs for the different improvements needed. He noted that a stormwater facility is at the Jaycee Field site that can't be relocated, and said that is one concern for this location. He said that Constitution Park is their third choice, and explained that it would be a little bit easier and cheaper site to construct, but the drawbacks include no adequate parking and it not being a synergistic area for a skate park.

Mr. Silka advised that Mason Sports Complex is their top recommendation, said it would be a little cheaper to pull off, and explained that the complex is already geared for field activities, it has the BMX track next to it, and said it is synergistic with a skate park. He stated that this is a multi-use site for families, and said it's easily accessible by car, and the complex is already a regional asset. He explained that it meets the largest percentage of site factors, and would be the lowest estimated development cost of the three locations.

Mr. Silka advised that the next steps would be for M&CC to review and ask for input from the Parks and Recreation board. He explained that if this project goes forward, there is no funding available from the City's side, and said they would need to find funds. He advised that the County has pledged \$250K, and said he would recommend getting a commitment of those funds if this goes forward. Mr. Silka said that \$410K seed money has been provided by the Community Trust Foundation to allow for fundraising, advised on some sales happening and an auction coming up, and stated that there is momentum in the City for various fundraising. He noted that the City still has a \$500K to \$600K deficit, and said that this is queued for a 2023 project which will give time to locate funds and allow Engineering to catch

up. He added that the worst thing for this project is to approve it now and start building it now, as there are already too many big projects in line.

Mayor Morriss commented on the in-depth study Mr. Silka presented and said it hit on the key points. Ms. Shilling questioned about the skate park being located at Mason Sports Complex with other projects going on there. Mr. Smith explained that the 78" pipeline project there will not affect the skate park, and he also answered a question from Council regarding the tennis courts that had deteriorated, saying there were not sufficient underdrains to pull the water away, and advised that if CSX allows the pipeline the courts will get refinished and the water will be mitigated. He added that if Mason Sports Complex is the site for the skate park, underdrains would be installed.

It was stated that the Jaycees would support the Mason Sports Complex site. Mr. Widdows stated that Mason Sports Complex is the best site available in the area, and advised that the BMX track needs upgraded, too. He said he knows people that can help with that. There was more discussion about fundraising. Ms. Shilling and Mayor Morriss both agreed that once the location has been established they can get serious about fundraising, and as the project develops along with the Jaycees help, the partnership will be marketed and the project will move forward as a unified front. Councilman George stated that they need to do a better job of getting the public to recognize that this is a public private partnership and not all tax dollars. He also recommended having the Parks and Recreation board approve the project at their next meeting and move forward from there.

Mr. Smith advised about Galaxy Field at Mason that was just replanted because it was a stockpile for the CSO tank. He said it may be taken out and get reconfigured, and wanted the soccer community to be aware. There was also discussion about Bauer Field being rebuilt for multi-use, and about maybe utilizing Jaycee Field for a soccer field, with Ms. Shilling advising that the Jaycees will help with improvement to that field. Councilman Cioni advised, however, if that happens the girls softball team would have to be notified since they are planning on using Jaycee Field.

Mr. Silka advised that the PowerPoint presentation would be on the City's website tomorrow morning.

III. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the work session adjourned at 5:35 p.m. With a motion from Councilman Frazier, seconded by Councilman Cioni, the meeting moved into closed session.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie A. Woodring
City Clerk

Minutes approved on June 21, 2022