



Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss
Councilman Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Councilman Eugene T. Frazier
Councilman Joseph P. George
Councilwoman Laurie P. Marchini

City Administrator Jeffrey F. Silka
City Solicitor Michael S. Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

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WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, December 27, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Matt Miller, Executive Director-CEDC; Stu Czapski, Economic Development Specialist-CEDC

Media: Greg Larry, Cumberland Times-News

I. DOWNTOWN SURVEILLANCE PROJECT

Mr. Miller provided background on a grant application to the MD DHCD for enhanced security equipment for downtown, and said they were awarded \$100K. He advised that ARK Systems was selected for installation, which when complete, the CEDC will institute 11 new state-of-the-art cameras throughout the downtown area. A secure wireless network specifically for this infrastructure will be installed.

Mr. Miller advised that a portion of the funds was used to purchase surveillance cameras for interested merchants and building owners, and said they worked directly with Ring Security Company and purchased 60 new outdoor cameras, which have been hand-delivered over the past 2 weeks. He added that ARK will begin their process after the first of the year, and explained that the CEDC has submitted a request for a second round of funding from the same program. Mr. Miller also advised that, weather permitting, ARK's work has a completion date of 4-6 months, and stated that these cameras can be utilized by the CPD to go back and look at footage.

There was discussion about the capability for this system to be in patrol cars. Mr. Miller stated that the system is pretty sophisticated, with facial and license plate recognition, but said that would be a question for the CPD.

II. DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE INVESTMENT PROGRAM – PHASE I

Mr. Miller advised that Phase I is complete. Mr. Czapski stated that the press release went out December 8th and an online application process was set up. He advised that they formed a committee of 5 to review applications, with the process opened October 17th and closed November 11th.

Mr. Czapski provided background on what Phase I included, and said it was open to everyone in the primary and secondary district. He stated that there are a number of projects in the works outside the district, and advised that over \$900K in total improvements is slated.

Mr. Czapski discussed Phase II - Infrastructure Upgrade Grant – to upgrade water and internet. He said that application process opens January 9th and closes February 10th.

Mr. Miller advised on Phase III, which is a business attraction component that encourages new or existing businesses to locate or expand downtown, as well as a rental assistance program to facilitate businesses moving into the downtown. He added that the program has been very well received and said it was designed to focus on some of the smaller “mom and pop” shops who may not be able to afford the match.

Mr. Czapski advised that it’s a reimbursement program with invoices required to be submitted to receive funds, and stated that they are given 18 months to complete the work.

There was discussion about researching grants for economic impact development programs for businesses impacted during the construction phase. Mr. Miller advised that they have looked but have not found any funds specific to that purpose. He said they will continue looking. Mayor Morriss stated that those businesses may be better off in years 4, 5, and 6 – maybe a loan program would be better.

Council Member Marchini gave kudos to Mr. Miller and Melinda Kelleher for the good job of promoting the online presence of businesses, online classes, etc. that have been offered.

Mr. Miller explained that COVID allowed businesses to adapt their model to help withstand walk-in traffic and rely more on internet business, and said hopefully that helps them through this process. He advised that the construction phase will not inhibit walk-in traffic for any length of time.

III. CEDC GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr. Miller provided an update on the Baltimore Street mitigation efforts, and said the meeting for interested stakeholders, businesses and residences who may be affected is scheduled for February 23rd at 6:00 PM at City Hall. He said that in conjunction, a marketing strategy plan is being produced with the DDC which will encourage people to come downtown for shopping and dining, to basically say “we are open, excuse the mess”.

Mr. Miller provided information on the George Edwards Fund, and said the CEDC has been collaborating with ACED, having submitted 3 Notices of Intent (NOIs). He explained that the

program has been created by the State as a legacy for Edwards, with both private and public entities able to apply.

There was discussion on outreach from the public. Mr. Miller advised that he has gotten 3 right now, but anticipates several more. Mayor Morriss said that maybe with good publicity, there will be more interest from private industries. Mr. Miller explained it's a 1-page application, and said the infrastructure portion is \$50M in funding - \$20M the first year and \$10M in each of the next 3 years. He advised that this will economically benefit the immediate Western MD region specific to Allegany, Washington, and Garrett Counties. He added that if coupled with the Rural Economic Development Fund implemented by Governor Hogan, there's an additional \$10M. Mayor Morriss stated that job creation, expansion, or retention are things that will be rated by the board.

There was discussion on if people attend the Economic Development Group meetings. Mr. Czapski stated the good ones do. Mr. Miller stated that inquiries alone will inundate you. There was discussion on lots of free resources that help small businesses, that a percentage of people don't tend to know about. It was noted that there are only 2 businesses – BB&T and Peskin's on Baltimore Street - that are empty right now, which Council Member Marchini said is great considering where we were last year.

Greg Larry inquired how everything was going with funding. Mayor Morriss explained that it's going good, with a start date of April 3rd, and said it's all coming together one way or another. Mr. Larry asked if there were any steps left for the City to do. Mayor Morriss advised that it's all in the developer's hands now.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Allison K. Layton
City Clerk
Minutes approved on April 4, 2023