



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

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WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, June 6, 2023, 5:15 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Raymond M. Morriss; Council Members: Eugene Frazier, Jimmy Furstenberg, Laurie Marchini. Richard Cioni was absent

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Richard Rhinehart, Percy Public Affairs

Media: Teresa McMinn, Cumberland Times-News
Kathy Cornwell, WCBC Radio

I. LEGISLATIVE SESSION DISCUSSION - PERCY PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Richard Rhinehart provided a handout, and discussed the 2023 MD General Assembly Legislative Session and the three major priorities for Cumberland that were introduced for consideration. He advised that through the collective efforts by the Mayor, the Western MD Delegation, the bill sponsors, and other local stakeholder support, two of the three bills passed the state legislature and will become law this year:

Senate Bill 518/House Bill 779; Tax Sales – Revisions (Effective June 1, 2023)

Allows for the governing body of a county or municipality to petition the court to be assigned a certificate of sale for a property, or to take title to a property, under specified circumstances in which the holder of a certificate of sale has not pursued or complied with a foreclosure judgment in a timely manner.

Senate Bill 277/House Bill 729; Real Property – Sheriff's Sales – Procedure and Subordinate Interests (Effective 10/1/23)

Establishes that a sheriff's sale of real property extinguishes any subordinate lien or interest on the land being sold. Also specifies that existing provisions related to exemptions do not impair a lien on land affected by a judgment in favor of a local government for real property maintenance violations or nuisance condition violations that is indexed and recorded in accordance with Maryland Rules.

Mr. Rhinehart discussed the General Assembly budgetary outcomes, and advised that the ongoing general fund revenues exceed ongoing expenditures by more than \$150M in fiscal 2024.

Mr. Rhinehart then reviewed notable highlights for the City in Economic Development and Tourism. He advised that the WMSR and the Allegany Museum had worked aggressively with the previous administration to secure increases in operational and capital funding for FY24, but said that even though both organizations were recommended for funding approval, the budget didn't include any capital requests or legislative pre-authorization. He said these projects were stripped based on political preference, not on merit.

Mr. Rhinehart explained that this reaction spurred multiple meetings and a writing campaign, and said that for the WMSC and the Allegany Museum, despite a tumultuous start of the session, they overcame several political hurdles and came away with some laudable state support for their capital and operational needs.

Mr. Rhinehart advised that the Allegany Museum received \$200K that will be provided to the Board of Directors. He also mentioned that Humpty Dumpty Learning Center will receive \$75K for the Board of Directors.

Mr. Rhinehart advised that the WMSR received \$300K in capital appropriations for FY24, and stated that Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority received \$6M.

Mr. Rhinehart stated that moving forward, there were several observations that will be critical for the City to receive future support by the state legislature and the new Administration. He stated that there is still work ahead of us, and said he wants to work on developing priorities in the next few weeks. He also mentioned issues with water and sewer, and said he wants to put together a package for supporters in Annapolis, and meet face to face. He discussed having the Governor visit Cumberland, and said it looks promising. He then opened the floor for questions.

Mayor Morriss said he was pleased with the legislative session, and said Mr. Cohen did a good job working with the legislative staff in writing the bills to find a middle ground. He added that he looks forward to strengthening relationships so the City can speak with a good solid voice for future sessions.

There was discussion about the transition to the new administration, with Mr. Rhinehart saying that his overall view of the session was a success.

Mr. Silka asked for the latest draft of the Cannabis law; Mr. Rhinehart explained that it is substantial, and said he will provide the City with the law and the fiscal law.

II. HOTEL/MOTEL ALLOCATIONS

Mr. Silka advised that at the end of May 19 applications for the hotel/motel tax funding were received, with 18 completed appropriately, and said there is a budget of \$45K. He stated that

there was over \$100K in requests from all organizations, so now is the time to decide who receives how much. He added that Ms. Layton has provided a spreadsheet for each member of M&CC to input the amounts they decide on, and stated that the completed spreadsheets are due next Wednesday, June 14th. Mr. Cohen reminded everyone to not offer recommendations for any boards or organizations they are members of, and to just leave it blank.

III. AGENDA REVIEW – JUNE 6, 2023

Mr. Silka reminded M&CC that all the budget ordinances are up for their 2nd and 3rd readings tonight. He also discussed the sale of 332 N. Mechanic Street (Canada Hose House) for \$156K to the Allegany County Historical Society, with the old fire house at 411 Frederick Street being sold for \$94K, that will be added to the agenda when the time comes. Mr. Silka mentioned the new pay ordinance that updates the City's pay scales, and said a few new positions were added.

Mr. Silka said the Orders are pretty much just housekeeping, and mentioned the sign order for \$80K that will provide standard signage in all parks throughout the City.

Board and Commission appointments were discussed, as was the swearing-in of two new police officers. Also, there are two proclamations to be read and presented.

Mr. Silka discussed the Evitts Creek Watershed timber sale that brought in \$150K, as well as the order for the paving project regarding all the street work done by Columbia Gas.

IV. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Council Member Frazier discussed the upcoming events beginning June 17th at City Hall celebrating Juneteenth, and said he would provide copies of the schedule.

Mayor Morriss mentioned June 6th as the 79th anniversary of D Day, remembering the sacrifices of the men and women of the Allied Forces that day.

The Mayor discussed DelFest, said it was a good turn-out and probably the best weather over that 4-day event they've seen for a long time. He also talked about the Levitt AMP music series which will be every Thursday from June 1st to August 3rd at 6:30 p.m. at Canal Place.

Mayor Morriss mentioned the Allegany Arts Council Plein Air reveal on Friday at 6:00 p.m. at the Shrine Club, and the Wing-Off at the fairgrounds on June 17th. He also mentioned the Farmer's Market, which has moved to Canal Place during the Baltimore Street construction phase.

Council Member Furstenburg had no updates.

Council Member Marchini mentioned that Lita Havens of Schoolhouse Quilters Guild wants to bring kids in during the Plein Air Quick Draw event, and have M&CC stop and say hello. She also talked about the DDC meeting on Thursday and asked for someone to sit in her place in her absence. Council Member Frazier volunteered.

There was discussion about the Virtual Town Hall for the Baltimore Street project on June 27th. There was also discussion about Community Legacy that met today to rank 4 projects that will be presented at the next meeting to vote on. Council Member Marchini added that Ruth Davis-Rogers received a grant from Preservation Maryland for the Methods Class at AC. She also requested any ARPA funds left to help support the art project at the completion of Baltimore Street.

Leadership Allegany was discussed, with new recruiting classes starting up, as well as the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce Lucky Ladies Night Out, which is June 9th.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on: June 20, 2023