

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, April 5, 2022, 5:35 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 Cohen, City Solicitor; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services

I. PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA REVIEW-APRIL 5, 2022

Mayor Morriss reviewed the presentations, proclamations, reports, and minutes, and called for any questions or comments. Councilman George inquired about the Filter Building Pilot Study, advising that the update states that it's waiting on M&CC. Mr. Silka replied that he would check on it and get back to Council.

Mr. Silka advised that the 7 orders on the agenda are pretty much all housekeeping, and called for any questions or information needed about any of the orders. He advised that regarding Order 26,989 – Fantasy Gambling, there are 30 licenses available in the entire state of Maryland, and said this order just allows the brick-and-mortar buildings in the City, with the City not being responsible for inspections, etc. since it's all being regulated by the State.

II. HOTEL/MOTEL AWARD OF FUNDING DISCUSSION

Mr. Silka advised that he had had discussions with Ms. Woodring about how to handle the funding awards, and said they came up with 3 categories:

- 1) Certain events are funded every year – consider putting them into a contributions line item (like Dragonboat Races, and basketball tournaments).

Mayor Morriss advised that the City will still be approving these events, but doing it in a different budget. He added that if for some reason there is no event, then there will be no contribution that year.

There was discussion about how to determine the amount of the contribution. Mayor Morriss explained that they will look at the consistency, what level M&CC usually fund, and decide through a budgetary process whether or not to raise the funding amount, if more funds are requested. It was mentioned that the funding will come out of the General Fund.

- 2) Historically, there has been poor record-keeping and accounting of funding. Do we want to be holding people accountable for receiving funds and where funding is spent? Are we willing to let organizations know when they aren't compliant in documentation?

Mayor Morriss discussed “heads in beds.” He stated that by not making the criteria too specific, it gives M&CC more flexibility.

There was discussion about how events/organizations contribute to Hotel/Motel tax itself, if not by the “head in beds” criteria. Mayor Morriss stated that it’s still part of the criteria, but by making it not too specific it allows flexibility.

- 3) How to get the projects before you. In the past there were public hearings, which stopped with Covid. Is M&CC still comfortable with not having public hearings?

There was discussion about how public hearings have been in the past. It was suggested that if more information is needed, staff can get additional information rather than have a public hearing.

Mr. Silka stated that’s how they will proceed moving forward, and said they will inform M&CC which organizations will be separated out into the contributions line item as they go through the budget process.

Consensus on no public hearing

III. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Councilman Frazier reminded about the Fair Housing Proclamation in the regular session tonight, and advised that there would be a Fair Housing event at AC on April 20th from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. to discuss landlord and tenant rights.

Councilman George reminded about the Planning and Zoning agenda item tonight, and said Ms. Morgan Alban, City Engineering Consultant, is working on the organization of neighborhood meetings this summer and fall. He added that they will have a public meeting on April 25th to discuss an amendment to a section of the residential and office zones. He stated that more information will be forthcoming.

Councilman Cioni discussed Let’s Beautify Cumberland’s Day of Caring and Sharing on May 13th, and said City staff volunteers had been organized by Allison Layton, Citizen Services Representatives. He advised that there was a good list of projects throughout the City.

Councilman Cioni advised that concerning Parks and Recreation, BMX track people have heard word of the skate park, and now want to know “where’s ours?” He said they are a nice organization, well organized, but not an extensive group, and he wanted to suggest if M&CC can find some source of money to help them out.

The Councilman also mentioned re-blacktopping Pine Avenue playground and putting up basketball hoops. He advised that Jason Deal, Street Superintendent, said the City has hoops, and said he will talk with Robert Smith, City Engineer, and see if Columbia Gas can help out while they’re working with blacktop in that area.

There was discussion about other playgrounds wanting help to refurbish and open back up. Mayor Morriss discussed David Smith and City Reach, which brought in all their own equipment

and volunteer labor. He said that if an organization wants to partner with the City and raise money for funding, M&CC is definitely open to that.

Councilwoman Marchini discussed the email from Robert Smith regarding an increase of over \$1M for tap money for the Baltimore Street Project, which she stated would require somewhat of a match.

The Councilwoman also advised that Community Legacy met last week, discussing projects, and referenced the Civic Master Plan, which she borrowed from CEDC. She said they will be using that as a guide regarding projects.

Councilman George advised that the Evitts Creek Steering Committee meets April 21st at 10:00 a.m. in Centreville, PA.

Mayor Morriss advised about the Spring Fling Express at the WMSR on Saturdays and Sundays, up to Helmstetter's Curve and back, with games for the kids and family activities. He also mentioned the Frostburg Fliers, and May Dinner Trains, Murder Mysteries and brunches on weekends.

The Mayor also mentioned the Arts Council and the Allegany National Photography Competition and Reception last Saturday, and said a local photographer, Michael Thompson, came in 1st Place for a photo of Constitution Park Pool.

Mayor Morriss also mentioned he and Councilman Cioni had seen Damn Yankees at the Embassy Theatre last weekend, said it was a great show, and added that it is currently still playing.

Brian Gowan, WCBC, asked for more information about 19 Frederick Street. Mayor Morriss advised they have run into some stumbling blocks and said they are going to re-evaluate the building structurally to determine the next steps. He said at this point, they are taking it off the table.

Greg Larry, Cumberland Times-News, asked if acquiring 306 Fayette will help with construction of the new bridge. Mayor Morriss replied yes, and said if it's required by the engineer, it will be removed.

III. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie A. Woodring
City Clerk

Minutes approved August 16, 2022