



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, April 11, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Council Members: Richard Cioni (via phone), Eugene Frazier, Jimmy Furstenberg, Laurie Marchini

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss was absent. Council Member Marchini officiated

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Matt Miller, Executive Director – CEDC; Stu Czapski, Economic Development Specialist; Ruth Davis-Rogers, Historic Preservation/Planner

Media: Teresa McMinn, Cumberland Times-News

I. COMPREHENSIVE INVESTMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Czapski provided an update on the program, and said it is in full mode, with Phases I, II, and III in process. He stated that work is proceeding in Phase I, with some having taken first and second draws. He explained that Phase II closed on February 10th, with 8 qualified applicants, and said the committee met and distributed the money and agreements were sent. Mr. Czapski added that Phase III opened March 6th with 4 applications already, it's open until funds are expired, and explained that they are earmarking funds and once verified, they can make the draw.

Mr. Czapski advised that for the infrastructure grant there were 19 properties that took the water upgrade, and 25 that took the fiber upgrade. He explained that people can hook in later, but it will be at the owner's cost and they will have to dig up and restore the sidewalk, and anything that's been displaced.

There was discussion about the 37 new residential units, and the amount of grant dollars allocated. There was also discussion about the rental assistance portion. Mr. Miller stated they've made the investments in the buildings, now they need to be occupied. He also explained the primary and secondary section of the DDC, and said there will be \$500 rental assistance per

month for the first 6 months. Mr. Miller added that rent is \$1/sq.ft., which he stated was low, but said rates will go up as the downtown becomes more of a retail destination.

It was noted that Melinda Kelleher had mentioned that there 22 new businesses have opened in the last 2 years in the downtown area. Council Member Marchini stated that it's important to put that number out there to show all the new businesses and how the Baltimore St. Project has already impacted the area. She noted that the McMullen building has 13 apartments total, and there have been over 30 applicants, adding that the building is full now.

There was discussion about moving the development up the side streets once the downtown mall is completed, with Council Member Furstenberg saying that he can see this extending all the way of Centre Street. Mr. Miller stated that there are definitely other areas of interest. There was also discussion about having built-in customers now in the residential stories above the shops, in addition to tourists coming from the Scenic Railroad, the Towpath, or the GAP Trail.

II. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL SITE UPDATE – RAZ DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Miller offered thanks for allowing the development team to come in and speak on February 14th. He advised that the official contract execution date was February 1st, and said RAZ is in the midst of their 120-day inspection period and putting together more formal plans. He explained that the next step is working with City staff and County Economic Development staff. He added that the program will provide RAZ incentive to build in a timely fashion. It was mentioned that Mr. Tressler, Mr. Silka and Mr. Miller met yesterday to answer questions.

There was discussion about the groundbreaking date, which Mr. Miller stated would depend on the ability to solidify the incentive package before July 31st. He said that assuming all zoning and permitting approvals are complete, they could break ground early next year. He added that their incentive package is tied directly to their investment. Mr. Miller noted that RAZ also needs to do an engineering analysis on the parking garage, and said conservatively speaking, the estimation is for 200 units.

III. DOWNTOWN SURVEILLANCE PROJECT UPDATES

Mr. Miller advised that there is roughly \$150K secured through a neighborhood safety program for this project, to implement full comprehensive surveillance throughout the downtown.

Mr. Miller stated that he met with the representative of ARK Systems, discussed the next steps, and did a walk-through of each camera's placement downtown. He explained the installation process, and said all were well-received and welcoming. He noted that there are 13 state-of-the-art cameras, and said they are working on agreements. He said folks have been very responsive and open to working with the CEDC. He also mentioned 60 Ring Doorbells were distributed to downtown business owners that are set up and running.

Council Member Furstenberg went back to the first topic, and asked about bathrooms downtown. Mr. Miller advised that there are 2 now, and they are Portland Loos. He said there's a science behind the restrooms – they are not inviting, which avoids people spending more time in them than necessary.

Mr. Miller went back to surveillance cameras, advising that they have a meeting with the manufacturer, the CPD, and the IT Department to show functionality, possibilities with software, etc. He said the cameras are meant to deter crime and make people feel safer.

IV. GENERAL CEDC BUSINESS UPDATE

Mr. Miller advised on general business updates. He stated that they continue to apply for grant funding for projects around the City, and said they are hoping to make positive announcements soon for funding from outside sources to push things forward. He said they are always looking for ways to keep the ball rolling.

There was discussion about advertising, with multiple suggestions brought up, from videos created by Dave Romero, to social media, to the Re-imagine Cumberland website. Mr. Miller said they are taking the rebranding initiative, and said they chose Re-imagine Cumberland as the brand. He stated that the new website is very comprehensive to keep information flowing, and said it's a portal for all citizens and visitors to go online and see what is happening right now. He stated that this is the most effective and efficient way to get information out currently.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on: May 2, 2023