



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 Council Chambers
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, October 20, 2022, 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Raymond Morriss, President; Council Members Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier, Joseph George, Laurie Marchini

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Silka, City Administrator; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Robert Smith, Director of Engineering and Utilities; Matt Idleman, Deputy Director, Engineering; Richard Reinhardt, Percy Public Affairs

Media: Chris Myers, WCBC Radio

I. PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA REVIEW, OCT. 20, 2022

Mr. Silka provided background on Order 27015 - Tradition Energy 24-month contract. He advised that hedging on inflation, the 36-month contract was too long, and he is hoping rates come down. He said the current rates of .0809 per kilowatt in Pennsylvania, and .929 in Maryland are more than double the energy costs the City was paying under the expiring contract's rate. Mr. Silka stated that they have a coalition with Allegany County, City of Frostburg, and LaVale Sanitary District pitching together to get the best rates, and said these rates were just published 7 minutes ago. He added that they need to sign tonight, as rates only good for 24 hours, and said the current contract expires November 1, 2022. He added further that they have been watching this for several months, and it is difficult to predict.

Robert Smith advised on Order 27,107, saying that the paperwork from State Highway omitted writing lighting into the contract, so the original contract was significantly under budget, and said the 20% reflects that to cover lighting. He added that they will submit it in December, and said the consultant needs to have it done by the end of December.

There was discussion about the price of the F-150 super cab XL pickup, with everyone agreeing that \$41K is a good price.

There was discussion about the properties being transferred, and the company C Corp, that is purchasing five properties. Mr. Tressler advised that Jared Court, who owns C-3 Improvements, is working on a lot of properties in the area, and will either rehab, turn them into rentals, or flip them. Mr. Tressler explained that Mr. Court submitted bids on all 7 properties, and won 5 of them. He said they brought him in and questioned him on the timeline, and said he proved that he had the crew and manpower and could handle all of them. He added that he also has Allegany St. 107-109, and said he is local.

Mr. Silka discussed Order 27103, and said the CPD FY23 State Aid for Police Protection Fund Grant is \$242K more than they typically receive.

II. PRESENTATION BY RICHARD REINHARDT, PERCY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, on GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPRESENTATION

Mayor Morriss introduced Mr. Reinhardt, and Mr. Silka explained why he was here today. Mr. Silka stated that he felt the City lacked representation in Annapolis in terms of a full-time lobbyist working for us. He said that Mr. Reinhardt's name came up frequently as he has worked for organizations in this area, and he wanted him to come to talk with the M&CC.

Mr. Reinhardt took the floor, and provided background on his career in state politics, and said he has worked for State Senator Jennings for 6 years, and then spent 4 years as a lobbyist for Towson State, followed by 18 months as Director of Government Affairs for the Maryland State Chamber of Commerce. He said he has worked in both private and public sectors. He stated that he was recruited by Governor Hogan to work under the MD Dept. of Labor Secretary, Kelly Schultz, gaining experience in Work Force Development. He stated that the WMSR and the Allegany County Museum were his first 2 clients when he was recruited 4 years ago by Alexander and Cleaver to be part of their contract lobby team.

Mr. Reinhardt stated that his job is to provide the bridge to Annapolis, especially with a new governor and new senator coming in next year, and said he will be the City's voice in Annapolis. He added that he would like to represent Cumberland, see potential for growth, and connections in the area, and said Annapolis has too many moving parts for Cumberland to be out in the dark.

Mr. Reinhardt opened the floor for any questions on the proposal? He said that he can provide tangible reports and plans to see deliverables are hit. He discussed manageable goals, and said prep work is important now to understand priorities for next year. Mr. Reinhardt emphasized communication, and said he is available to meet with clients 24/7, and generally meets with them once a week. He explained that he will work closely with MML, as well as MACO, and said he works behind the scenes to put the client out front. He added that they will coordinate meetings with sponsors of bills and sign the City up for hearings in Annapolis.

Mr. Reinhardt discussed the next governor and transitions, and stated that he has maintained strong relationships with the current delegation. He advised that he also works with PG County, and Gaithersburg.

Mr. Reinhardt stated that the major item in the strategic plan is to see both budgetary committees come to Western Maryland and Cumberland to see what we are doing, see on-going

developments in downtown, have the opportunity to ride the train, and see the museum and what is happening in the area.

Mr. Reinhardt concluded his presentation by saying that M&CC can feel free to reach out to him directly if there are any questions.

Mayor Morriss advised that it's a good time to consider having Mr. Reinhardt as a lobbyist, and stated that since redistricting, the City has lost its local representation in Annapolis. He added that the timing is good to have someone there year-round.

III. DISCUSSION ON ASSIGNING CARVER EASEMENT

Mr. Silka talked about assigning a Carver Easement. He stated that City Solicitor Mike Cohen was unable to attend, and said they are requiring a deed of easement, which in turn is required by the Maryland Historic Trust. He provided information on title search, preparing the deed, etc., and said the cost will be between \$5K-6K. He explained that as Carver has no income, the City is footing the bill on this.

Mayor Morriss stated that this is something that has to be done for Carver to move on, and discussed what the board is doing currently; looking for grants, sustainability study is done. He added that the Carver board should take on the cost of refurbishing, but said they likely will request help from the City.

There was discussion about the pace being very slow, and a bit of controversy a few months ago that was a non-issue.

Mr. Silka inquired if M&CC had any reservations going down this path.

Consensus: No reservations

IV. DISCUSSION ON THE CONSTITUTION PARK SPLASH PAD

Mr. Silka provided an update on the splash pad, and Mr. Idleman provided an update on pricing. He shared graphic of how it will look, and said that costs came in higher than originally discussed.

Mr. Idleman discussed both Option 1 and Option II, explained the differences in the projects and in the costs associated with each.

Mr. Idleman also discussed anticipated maintenance costs for a splash pad, which will include labor (city staff), winterizing, general clean up, etc.—costing approximately \$8K per year.

The floor was opened for questions.

M&CC discussed costs: the new deck, upgrades to the guard shack, electrical and sidewalk work, and rest room upgrades. Mr. Idleman said that the expected grant didn't come through, and reviewed Options 1 and 2 again:

Option 1: install splash pad with \$600K of ARPA funds

Option 2: upgrades and other work in the park, without the splash pad,
About \$260K of ARPA funds.

Mr. Idleman advised that with these numbers, M&CC needs to make a final decision on the splash pad. He stated that they need to vote at the next meeting so items can be ordered.

M&CC discussed the useful life of splash pad equipment. Mr. Smith stated they have a 10-year life. The Mayor questioned whether it is that big a value to the pool area to have the splash pad on site. They discussed the \$8K necessary for maintenance, plus the cost of upgrades 10 years from now, considering inflation.

Mr. Idleman advised that he has site plans they can look over. Mr. Silka stated that a decision needs to be made now if the work is to be done in the spring.

Mayor Morriss had reservations about the splash pad – he’s not sure it adds enough value to the park. He said other upgrades need to be done, but questioned if the City would be getting enough out of the splash pad. Council Member George stated that M&CC have been telling the public all along that they are putting in a splash pad.

Council Member Frazier said stated that personally, he would like to have the splash pad, saying it will draw people to the park.

Mayor Morriss stated that he sees all other upgrades as an investment in the park and that alone will make the park worthy of attending, but he stated that he’s not sure that adding the splash pad adds that much value. He said the park itself with the grills/picnic tables, etc., gives value to the park.

Mr. Silka advised that this is a community asset decision, and stated that it is expensive for a stand-alone amenity like that. He stated that it’s tough to justify - if you add the \$\$ to the pool, you can realize the benefit, but from a management perspective, it’s not an easy decision. Mr. Silka added that the previous project put splash pad on a 0-grade with the pool to utilize the same plumbing, etc.

There was discussion about the ongoing maintenance of the Constitution Park pool, with Mr. Tressler advising they do a little bit every year. In answer to a question, he said he can find out the attendance numbers/amount of usage.

Council Member Marchini said that she would like the splash pad outside of a fenced in area so people can use it without cost. M&CC talked about considering this project over the next 2 weeks; Council Member Frazier wanted to discuss it and give the answer by Monday, with Mr. Smith saying he would like to put it on November 1st agenda.

Mr. Tressler talked about Hagerstown’s splash pad, which they’ve had less than 10 years. He stated the he would like to ask Hagerstown how their usage changed after the addition of the splash pad.

V. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Council Member Frazier talked about “Boo on the Bricks” on October 29th, which is a family - friendly event with trick-or-treating and a costume contest. He added that all invited to participate. He also mentioned that the Halloween parade is next Wednesday.

Council Member George stated that he met with the Evitts Creek Steering Committee this morning., and said new officers were elected.

There was discussion about the clean up on the second timbering, and it was noted that Brooke Cassell held the bond money until the clean-up was completed. Everything is all good now.

Council Member Cioni discussed Parks and Recreation losing their Chair Person, Emily Hendershot, and said she needs to be replaced, along with needing a new Student Representative, as the current one is too busy with Senior school work and can't continue on the P&R board. There were suggestions of asking the Board of Education, or the Student Government Association.

Council Member Marchini advised on the DDC meeting last Thursday and said the HPC is moving along well. She provided a run-down of all the holiday events downtown.

- Window decorations contest is kicking off on November 21st and going through the holidays.
- November 25th is the tree lighting; the tree will stay where it has been in the past
- The New Year's Eve downtown Ball drop will return.
- JZ's Pub opened Friday
- Gus and Oliver's children's clothing store opened.
- Businesses downtown are suggesting free parking during the holidays and during construction.

Council Member Marchini discussed the recent ARC conference, and said herself, Mayor Morriss and Council Member Cioni attended. She advised that Cumberland showed off very well, and said they all thought it was a very worthwhile event.

The Mayor discussed the day spent with the ARC reps; scenic train ride, dinner at Ottaviani's enjoyed the train trip from Frostburg to Cumberland, and dinner at Ottaviani's. Mayor Morriss got to speak with Governor Hogan and Gayle Manchin. He said the ARC has funding for a variety of things. The Mayor also mentioned that he and Council Member George attended the Fall MML Conference in Annapolis; Council Member George noted that MML had some excellent seminars.

The Mayor discussed funding for the Baltimore Street project. Council Member Marchini stated that they are getting technical assistance from 5 different vendors who are working with them to beef up social media pages and work on websites, and said it's now in the hands of a professional. She also advised that they got a call from Congressman Trone's office – he will be visiting Monday 4:15-5, and said all are invited to do a walking tour with him downtown.

Council Member George suggested that the next elected officials take a rotating committee assignment so everyone has a chance to be more well-rounded and bring a fresh perspective to the committee with a different council person looking at things.

II. Adjournment

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison K. Layton, City Clerk

Minutes approved March 21, 2023