

# Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

## WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, July 9, 2019  
4:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members: Seth Bernard (entered at 4:44 p.m.), Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier, and Laurie Marchini.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeffrey D. Rhodes, City Administrator; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Paul Kelly, CEDC Executive Director; Matt Miller, CEDC Economic Development Specialist

### I. BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, AND ATTRACTION EFFORTS

Matt Miller, Economic Development Specialist, went over the Business Expansion and Retention PowerPoint Presentation that the CEDC put together, and invited Council to come in and talk one-on-one with him as well.

Mr. Miller went through the presentation, discussing the “3 legs” of Economic Development, discussed the CEDC’s roll in business retention and expansion, new jobs and capital investments, and general statistics about focusing on current businesses to help them grow.

Mr. Miller discussed the BRE Outreach Approach and Methods, strategy, and key BRE components like assisting with company-specific job fairs and rapid response for massive lay-offs. He went over outreach methods and strategies used such as roundtables and focus groups, business meetings, social media, business walks, cold calls, etc. Mr. Miller also went over the CEDC Strategic Plan’s Objective #5 (Execute Greater Coordination Efforts with Workforce Development) and #7 (Retain and Nurture Existing Businesses) from the plan.

Mr. Miller went over the Manufacturing Roundtable, which highlights a solid group of businesses that account for approximately 7K jobs collectively. He spoke about including core group of plant personnel to add to the basic conversation, and having the business representatives steer the conversation. He said through that you can obtain informative data that can be used to create action items. Mr. Miller went over actions items he has attained in the course of about a year and a half:

- Manufacturing focused job expo in coordination with DLLR
- Coordinated with Board of Education and invited kids from the Career Center to attend as well
- Became involved with Focus on Future event to help it grow and include other counties
- Attained more manufacturing and health care industry representation

Mr. Miller advised that the industrial maintenance curriculum at ACM directly came out of the roundtables, saying that manufacturers had a common issue of filling positions in an industrial background. He said that through the roundtable effort, including ACM, manufacturers formed a subcommittee to help steer the curriculum to give correct certifications. He added that they are getting ready to have their 2<sup>nd</sup> graduating class, and 20-25 people have retained a local position. Mr. Miller advised that ACM has worked with National Jet and Northrup Grummond, which both have a high demand for machinists, and said that ACM is working with those employers to figure out how best to use grant monies.

Paul Kelly, Executive Director of the CEDC, advised that the CEDC is part of a network that includes ACM and Frostburg, and other folks, with a push to immediately identify the need in an area and what's missing, in terms of skills and training. He added that ACM is adapting their curriculum to do just that, and the program is catching on pretty quickly. Mr. Miller advised that the group has been used to assist with the Western MD Works Initiative, as well as the Workforce Resource Symposium.

Mr. Miller discussed the top five industry needs:

- Workforce – several initiatives – overarching need
- Transportation – CEDC is working with the county to enhance public transportation
- Housing – housing study – Bridges to Opportunity
- Child Care – working with local non-profit to assist an expansion
- Infrastructure – increased broadband connectivity

Mr. Kelly advised that he and Mr. Miller try to steer discussion away from workforce and training when at the meetings, but it always comes back around to that. He added that businesses hopefully would grow if there were more amenities and attractions to keep young people in the area.

The discussion turned to child care, with Mr. Miller stating that a lot of larger employers have attempted to install their own child care facilities on-site, but found it to be a huge expense and hassle. He advised that there is a local non-profit that operates a day care, and has the capacity to expand, and the CEDC is putting a lot of focus on helping them do so. Mr. Kelly stated that to his knowledge there is no entity that has a main mission of enhancing and improving affordable child care in the area. Mr. Miller added that they have identified an available workforce that have to stay home now because it's cost-prohibitive to go to work. There were conversations about the YMCA and child care, which they do as an after-school program only, with Mr. Miller stating the CEDC will look into that, as well as the religious communities allowing their facilities to be used for day care. Mr. Miller added that brick and mortar day care facilities are expensive and full of regulations, so it's important to realize these kinds of initiatives.

## **II BUSINESS WALKS, BUSINESS VISITS, AND BRE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES**

Mr. Miller spoke on Business Walks, saying this is a newer concept, which involves basically finding a cluster of new businesses and canvas them by walking in the door and introducing yourselves, and try to learn as much as you can about them. There was discussion on the details of this strategy,

with Mr. Miller advising that the BRE Team would be made up of CEDC, County and State representatives. He added that letters would go out prior to the walk, and the CEDC is working on the BRE approach for the entire area, and would be done quarterly depending on density of the businesses.

Mr. Miller spoke next on Business Visits, saying it's a pretty straight-forward approach, and he tries to do one a week in conjunction with County and State representatives. He added the visits are pre-planned, and they discuss issues, concerns, and help provide solutions.

Mr. Miller advised on BRE Partnership Initiatives, and listed other organizations and groups that fall under that partnership. He added that the CEDC stays in pretty constant contact with almost all of them.

Mr. Kelly and Mr. Miller provided information on the Autonomous Technology Center Steering Committee and Mr. Miller's involvement, and advised that there was a study of where to locate the Autonomous Technology Center, and said they are still trying to figure out the size of the tract of land needed, configuration of the land – slopes, icy roads, etc. – but there is no preferred site at this time. They added that the potential is to locate it near FSU or the airport, although no site has been favored.

Mr. Miller showed a list of CEDC Partnerships, which range from local organizations, to FSU and groups in Garrett County, to State agencies. He also discussed using and applying key BRE information for business recruitment, formation, talent attraction, etc.

### **III. GOALS - MOVING FORWARD**

Mr. Miller touched on some goals moving forward: the roundtable concept, business visits, analyzing supply chains of larger companies, actively engaging area youth, effectively marketing successes, and also formulating a small business BRE plan to minimize the negative impact during the Baltimore Street redevelopment. He also touched on making sure the City had an adequate disaster relief plan.

### **IV. UPDATES – M&T BANK BUILDING**

Mr. Kelly provided an update on the M&T Bank building, saying that the CEDC acquired the building the last Friday of June and they will issue a press release soon. Mr. Kelly stated that on a practical level the CEDC tries to do a lot of community assistance work by connecting folks wanting to start a new business to proper organizations or channels, or the CEDC helps them.

Mr. Kelly advised that there is a more formal association getting together in the area (Garrett, Bedford, Mineral, Allegany), with the goal being to use all of their assets as pull to do business attraction, so as not to duplicate efforts, but to consolidate them.

Mr. Kelly stated that Mr. Miller deserves a lot of credit, as he has become a “go-to” for the area, and many come to him for resources. He added that Mr. Miller is fully integrated with the county and commerce.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

With nothing further, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. into Closed Session pursuant to Section 3-305 (b) (4) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss proposals for the development of the East Side School site.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie A. Woodring  
City Clerk

Minutes approved October 1, 2019