



# 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

---

## Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

### WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, February 7, 2023, 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members: Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier, Jimmy Furstenberg, and Laurie Marchini.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeff Silka, City Administrator; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services

**Media:** Bryan Gowans, WCBC Radio

#### **I. PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA REVIEW FEBRUARY 7, 2023**

Mayor Morriss reviewed the Public Hearings on the Bond Issuance and the CDBG 2023 Annual Action Plan, and reviewed Ordinance 3938 regarding the Bond Issuance, up for its 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings. There were no questions on any of the Consent Agenda items.

#### **II. HOMES FOR CUMBERLAND PILOT PROGRAM EXTENSION**

Mr. Tressler provided background on the program and noted that it is expiring in the coming year. He said the intent is not for the credit to last into perpetuity, and said they are also asking the County for a rebate. He advised that the City's recommendation is not to extend.

Mayor Morriss advised to check with the County on their recommendation and get back to M&CC. Mr. Tressler agreed to come back with a recommendation for the 31 properties.

There was discussion about the properties and the PILOT period, and it was noted that they get generous lengths of time for their credits. In response to a question from Council, Mr. Tressler advised that he will send out a list of the 31 properties. He said if the City doesn't extend, they will get a full tax bill on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **III. NEW TAX AND UTILITY PAYMENT PROCESSING AND PROCEDURES**

Mr. Tressler advised that the new system is a sleek, more modern process, and can accept all kinds of payment methods, including Venmo, PayPal, etc., and will encourage online payment methods. He explained that this will save a lot of processing and mail postage, and added that the City will no longer accept credit cards over the phone

Mr. Tressler stated the Tax and Utility Department will discontinue taking calls at City Hall, and explained there will be an interactive voice system associated with the program that will accept the utility payments. He said customers paying by credit card will be assessed a 2.5% fee that goes directly to the credit card processor, not to the City. He noted that this will mean approximately \$150K in savings a year in credit card processing fees. Mr. Tressler added he is planning to send out a press release, with the new system becoming effective some time around the end of March.

### **IV. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES**

Council Member Cioni advised that the Parks and Rec board met last night. He mentioned that Shelly Minnigh from the YMCA is on the board, and gave kudos to the new Parks and Rec Director Ryan Mackey. He said staff has already been lined up for P&R Day Camp, and stated they may request some Bower Fund money to make enhancements to the Day Camp facility. Mr. Cioni also mentioned they are looking for individuals to do educational presentations for 7–11-year-olds.

Council Member Cioni advised on Let's Beautify Cumberland, commenting on how good Giarritta Park looks and the work that's been done there. He noted that the Day of Caring and Sharing will be May 19<sup>th</sup>, and said they are looking for projects.

There was discussion about planters and "work in progress" signage for on the approaches to the bridges to make them more visually appealing. Council Member Furstenberg mentioned cleaning up the trash on the Maryland Avenue exit, and said he would join that group. Mr. Cohen suggested pulling weeds on Kelly Road.

Council Member Furstenberg advised that he will get with Joe George to get up to speed on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Council Member Frazier said he had nothing right now.

Mayor Morriss talked about the PACE Reception in Annapolis recently, which he and Council Member Marchini attended. He said he felt that this was one of the most productive PACE receptions ever. He mentioned that incoming Comptroller Brooke Lehrman, Director of the Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs Molly Byron, and Darrell Anthony from the state DNR were in attendance. He said the meetings were informative and said it was a chance to develop good relationships. The Mayor also mentioned that the Canal Place board also set-up meetings and the big focus was the Cumberland River Park. He discussed the amount of funding Ms. Lehrman was trying to get for this project, and said it finally has some wind behind it. He also mentioned a lobbyist working with them to review proposed bills for the City.

Mayor Morriss discussed the Senator George Edwards Fund, saying the 1<sup>st</sup> order deadline was January 31<sup>st</sup>. He advised there were lots of requests from all the Western Maryland counties, with

the funds to be distributed over a 2-year period. He mentioned that the match would be either 10% or 20% depending on the scope of the project, and said awardees will be notified at the end of March, and again after July.

The Mayor advised the Hooley Plunge is March 4<sup>th</sup> for anyone who wants to take the plunge or support others doing so.

Council Member Marchini advised this Thursday is the Luncheon/Information session for the HPC Cumberland Tax Incentives from 11:30 – 2:00, and said registration is required. She mentioned that representatives from the CEDC and several historical organizations will be in attendance.

Ms. Marchini mentioned the final Party on the Bricks has been decided against due to an Easter event the following weekend. She advised that the mural on the Board of Ed building is complete, and said the ribbon cutting will be soon. She also mentioned that Jacob from the DDC has resigned, and Melinda is advertising the opening, and added that there will be an event for those most affected by the Baltimore Street construction, on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at Allegany HS from 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., with Triton Construction representatives in attendance.

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton

City Clerk

Minutes approved on April 4, 2023