

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members: Richard Cioni (via phone), Eugene Frazier, Joe George, and Laurie Marchini.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey Silka, City Administrator; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Matt Miller, CEDC Executive Director; Stu Czapski, Economic Development Specialist; Jonathan Hutcherson, Chairman-CEDC Board of Directors

I. FINAL DRAFT - CEDC STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN REASSESSMENT

Mr. Miller introduced Jonathan Hutcherson, Chairman of the CEDC Board of Directors, and provided background on the Strategic Economic Development Plan, and also provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Hutcherson advised that the final point today is plan adoption in order to move forward. He stated that the plan was divided into four sections: 1) history of the plan, 2) goals and objectives, 3) CEDC Organization, 4) summary and wrap-up.

Mr. Hutcherson discussed the Strategic Economic Development Plan, which he stated in 2014 brought about the creation of the CEDC as a separate entity. He commended the M&CC's decision at the time to take a bold action seven years ago, and said it has greatly benefited the City. He also discussed business and misconceptions, and said a good idea doesn't mean a successful business – it's all about the execution. He thanked Mr. Miller and the team for moving this forward.

Mr. Hutcherson went over all the strategic studies and plans over the years, and said the CEDC has utilized all of them. He provided photos of multiple projects, stating there is one goal – a single unified Cumberland corridor design.

Mr. Hutcherson discussed why the plan gets updated, said it can serve as a good checkpoint, and stated that the world, including Cumberland, has changed significantly in the last two years.

Mr. Hutcherson went over the finalized goals, and stated that the main one is to develop the CEDC, which he stated has been done, and then discussed enhancing coordination, increasing public support, creating jobs, and improving Cumberland.

Mr. Hutcherson reviewed the chapters of the Strategic Plan Report, and said regarding Socioeconomic Analysis, Cumberland will continue to see population decline due to job loss through 2026, and said focus should be placed on creating diverse jobs that won't be as affected to economic downturn.

Mr. Hutcherson advised that with more products being cheaper online, there is less demand for goods and services at a local level. Regarding real estate, he also noted that the City has little or no developable land; however, he did say that there has been a recent uptick in attracting professionals.

Mr. Hutcherson reviewed Target Industries, and discussed UPMC as being a boon to the area, saying there will be ancillary effects, such as pharmaceutical companies and other providers that will want to be close to them. Regarding tourism, he stated that the GAP trail is probably one of the most powerful assets the City has.

Mayor Morriss questioned Mr. Hutcherson on remote business services, and asked if there was anything out there for internet access besides Atlantic Broadband. Mr. Hutcherson advised that there were a few, but said they will be very expensive for the time being. He stated that where the City is going to be in two years will be very different from now, but in a good way.

Mr. Hutcherson discussed Implementation Strategy, and stated that prioritizing things should come first, along with the CEDC staying focused on the mission, and said the CEDC should not be thought of as a catch-all for other stuff. He advised that their Board of Directors has always wanted to be more self-sufficient, and said that's one of things they'll do moving forward. He also talked about the partnerships they've made, and asked that the CEDC be thought of as an investment that will yield a long-term payoff.

Mr. Hutcherson reviewed Recommended Approach, and discussed business retention and expansion. He discussed how much work the CEDC is doing, having only two people to do business attraction, and said it's a lot of time and expense, along with keeping up with all the various projects, and added that right now the focus is on small businesses, entrepreneurs, and telecommuters.

Mr. Hutcherson reviewed the role of the CEDC, saying first and foremost is just running the business. He said the more the CEDC can help the City by them being a 501-3c, the better, and asked that the City take advantage of them in that respect. He discussed land-banking and talked about leadership and developing forward-thinking approaches.

Mr. Hutcherson briefly discussed current staffing and resources, and their recommended staffing additions; Marketing and Grant Manager, Ombudsman, and an Entrepreneurial Development Specialist.

Mr. Hutcherson discussed the Top 5 Changes from the 2014 plan, discussed the collaboration between entities, and said the Messick Road project is a great example. He also discussed coordination and recognition of efforts between the City and the CEDC, better technology, UPMC Western Maryland being a game-changer, and improved access to continuing education and workforce training.

Questions and Comments

Mayor Morriss thanked Mr. Hutcherson for the presentation, and stated that the CEDC's growth, and plan implementation is a logical progression.

Councilwoman Marchini discussed workforce development, and about it being an impediment to bringing people here and expanding. Mr. Miller stated that the answer is bridging the gaps between the private sector and the education system. He said the CEDC has been working on

how to enhance the Focus on the Future program, and stated that within their manufacturing roundtables they have created curriculum to help fill workforce needs.

Councilman George stated that Cumberland's region needs to speak as one voice to Annapolis and to D.C., because of our limited resources. There was discussion about the Greater Cumberland Committee and the City reciprocating resources with them and other entities.

Council and Staff thanked Mr. Miller and Mr. Hutcherson for their presentation.

II. BALTIMORE STREET ACCESS PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Miller advised that the Engineering Department had sent the documents again to MDOT last week for a cursory review by Federal Aid, and said they are anticipating getting the project to bid in August.

Mr. Miller discussed a new grant they received through the DHTD, and said they were awarded close to \$100K for expanding surveillance capabilities on Baltimore Street.

Mr. Miller stated that they are currently overhauling the Baltimore Street website (www.historiccumberlandcitycenter.com) and said it is being done through a grant they obtained for over \$4K. He said the entire process should be finalized by the end of August.

III. MESSICK ROAD PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Miller advised that the new tenant that has been discussed has commissioned and finalized their survey for their 3-acre parcel, and are working to finalize their engineering drawings. He also advised that the new tenant would like to break ground on the project by the end of summer, and said the CEDC will issue a press release with the tenant's name and more details in the upcoming weeks.

Mr. Miller stated that Engineering has submitted a \$125K grant application to the ARC for the expansion of City water and sewer services.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved November 1, 2022