



# 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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## 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 13, 2024; 4:00 pm

**PRESENT:** Mayor Raymond M. Morriss; Council Members: Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier, James Furstenberg, Laurie Marchini.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Matt Miller, Executive Director – CEDC; Stu Czapski, Economic Development Specialist - CEDC

Media: Teresa McMinn, Cumberland Times-News

#### I. DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

Mr. Stu Czapski began with an update regarding the Downtown Comprehensive Investment Program. He discussed Phase I, the façade portion of the program, which had about \$400,000 to disburse. At this juncture, about half of the funds, \$190,981.93 have been disbursed. Out of 24 total properties, 11 are finished and three properties have received their first draw. The projects are continuing smoothly, however, a few of the properties must wait until the street is finished or further along to use lifts. The remaining \$213,668 of the funds have all been committed, however, there are a few projects that haven't used the total amount of funds which were awarded so those funds will be reapportioned closer to the end of Phase I, as needed.

Mr. Czapski continued updating on the status of Phase II, Residential and Upper Story Development, and indicated that seven residential properties in total were awarded, with one that is complete and one that has received their first draw. This is done in two draws unless requested otherwise.

Mr. Czapski continued into an update on Phase III, Business Traction Grant, where there are a total of 12 businesses working through the process. Mr. Czapski mentioned that two of the 12 businesses may not qualify. Mr. Czapski restated the requirements to be eligible, which

were 1) had to have a lease of at least \$800 a month; 2) needed to be a full-time business (not seasonal); and 3) the business was required to create a minimum of 3 full time positions or 6 part time jobs in the City. He stated that it would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for any combination of full and part time positions, as long as they meet the required 96 hours per week in total.

Councilwoman Laurie Marchini recalled Phase II having two arms to it, business attraction and technical assistance. Mr. Czapski replied that the technical assistance piece of grant was \$20,000. He is working on a \$5,000 grant for technical assistance portion.

Councilwoman Marchini clarifies that there is then \$15K left in the technology assistance part of Phase II, which is good to know for businesses possibly needing help with marketing assistance or website design.

Mr. Matt Miller mentioned that its typical with larger grant programs that a few of the projects won't finish out to the original amount they initially plan for, while Mr. Czapski explained that some projects went over budget, for example, such as windows ending up being more expensive than they originally thought due to historic requirements.

Councilwoman Marchini continued that the Historic Preservation Commission has not denied anyone, and has put in great efforts to work with everyone and Mayor Morriss followed up by mentioning that Historic Preservation is citizen friendly! Mr. Czapski added that one of the first things he does when dealing with people needing historic preservation assistance is to give them Ruth Davis-Rogers' card, and that everyone has been very happy with their dealings with her. Ongoing discussion pointed out that the new interest in our downtown is very exciting, and a few of the businesses downtown have coordinated their grand openings to coincide with the conclusion of the construction downtown.

Councilman Rock Cioni stated he is happy to see that The Allegany Arts Council was able to remain downtown, knowing that was very important to them. They will be located in the building next to Loft 129 when they have to move out of their current location on N. Centre St. Mr. Miller stated that the building wasn't for sale, but that the building's owner worked with them because they wanted to be downtown. He continued that that our interest was in keeping the Allegany Arts Council downtown in the Arts District and had looked at several different options. The Arts Council was leaning towards acquisition rather than a lease and it was a mutually beneficial opportunity to work with community partners like Mr. Larry Jackson (the building's owner).

## **II. DOWNTOWN SURVEILLANCE PROJECT**

Mr. Matt Miller provided an update on the surveillance project, indicating that things are moving right along, and hopefully after tomorrow, Phase I will be complete. Mr. Miller provided some photos of the actual camera locations of the Phase I cameras. They are mounted on buildings at 19 Frederick St., 49 N. Liberty St., 16 N. Liberty St., 9 N. Centre St., 44, 118 and 152 Baltimore St. There are two cameras placed on the Lila Building at 81 Baltimore St. and lastly on 19 S. Liberty St. Additionally, Mr. Miller provided some photos of the footage these cameras would actually be collecting when live. He's very happy with the photo coverage downtown.

Mr. Miller shared photos showing Phase I which indicates all cameras in red that have completed installation and are live and recording.

Mr. Miller shared photos showing Phase II which shares locations in yellow where work is hopeful, pending funding. The camera locations in these photos are numbered in order of priority, which was determined by the Police Department. Mr. Miller is awaiting more quotes and then will be able to assess the budget to determine which can proceed. ARK is working separately with the police department to overhaul their command center and where this footage will feed to. The cameras will be monitored in the Public Safety Building by the Police Department.

Rounding out Phase II, there are only two privately owned buildings in question that Mr. Miller is working on having the cameras installed on. The building owners are more friendly, and seem like they will be easy to work with. Mr. Miller indicated that the other two building locations are publicly owned structures, parking garages and with Council blessing will put cameras up on those structures. Once the pricing quote is received, it will help determine what of Phase II can be accomplished.

Councilman Eugene Frazier questioned if the recordings would start the next day, Mr. Miller replied that they are currently recording, but will not be live until tomorrow.

Mr. Miller indicated that Police Chief Chuck Ternent has been in contact with him about his excitement regarding the new surveillance cameras.

### **III. GENERAL CEDC UPDATES**

Mr. Miller gave an update on the Messick Road project reminding everyone that about two years ago, they jointly purchased a piece of property to develop as opportunity presented itself. They've been working closely with Century Engineering to finalize a conceptual plan. He continued that the next step was to clear timber off the land and was referred to Shannon Farrell, who is the Forestry Consultant the City utilizes. He's been working with Mr. Farrell closely and was provided an appraisal of the timber on the site. The appraisal came back at about \$24,000, which wasn't much and given that the interest was in clearing the land, they proposed a trade of services by having the contractor come in and clear the land in exchange for the timber.

It was put out to bid and yielded one response from Western MD Lumber who was willing to do it. As of last CEDC Board of Director's meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, they entered in to a contract to move forward. Mr. Miller connected Western MD Lumber with engineers and will use the future intentions for the site and coincide with those plans to gain access to the property. The loggers will use their access points to clear a path to the top of the property, helping to gain access to the top of the property and have also agreed to create a landing site on the first pad side by clearing out and flattening the site.

Mr. Miller stated that then things would move to the second phase – earth movement. He's received an estimate from Century Engineers, and once the timber is cleared, he will be looking for grant funding to handle the excavation of the land. This would provide for a cleared site that can be accessed to show the potential it has, even if it is not 100% marketable.

Mr. Miller continued that they've entertained some interest in businesses locating on the site, two from in City limits and one from outside the City. This has only been through organic outreach and word of mouth, which definitely shows that the interest is there for this location.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton  
City Clerk

Minutes approved on: March 5, 2024