



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 Scott Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

MINUTES

M&CC Regular Public Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers, 57 N. Liberty St., Cumberland

DATE: December 05, 2023

I. OPEN SESSION – 6:15 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

PRESENT:

Council Member Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Council Member Eugene T. Frazier
Council Member James L. Furstenberg, III
Council Member Laurie P. Marchini
President Raymond M. Morriss

Also Present: Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services (filling in for City Administrator Jeffrey F. Silka); Allison K. Layton, City Clerk; Michael S. Cohen, City Solicitor; Media representatives

IV. Statement of Closed Meeting

Mayor Morriss announced that closed meetings had been held on November 28, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. and on December 5, 2023 at 4:30 p.m., and read into the record summaries of those meetings which are attached hereto and made a part of these minutes as required by Section 3-306 (c)(2) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

V. Proclamations

1. Proclamation commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Cumberland Historic Cemetery Organization

Mayor Morriss read the Proclamation and presented it to Edward Taylor, Jr., President of the organization. Mr. Taylor thanked M&CC on behalf of all their members. He stated

that since 1983, his organization has erected and restored almost 800 monuments that cover a variety of American history. He stated that this year was very special because they have placed so many monuments up and down the East Coast. He said they are grateful for the recognition.

VI. Director's Reports

Motion to accept the report was made by Council Member Furstenberg, seconded by Council Member Cioni, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

(A) Engineering

1. Engineering Department Monthly Report for November 2023

VII. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Council Member Frazier, seconded by Council Member Marchini, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

1. Approval of the Closed, Work, and Regular Session Minutes of November 21, 2023, and the Closed Session Minutes of November 28, 2023.

VIII. Public Comments – Agenda Items Only

No comments

All public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person

IX. New Business

(A) Resolutions

1. **Resolution No. R2023-06** (*1 reading only*) - Declaring the intent to reimburse expenditures paid with respect to two (2) separate projects generally identified as police vehicles and Municipal Service Center Fuel Station from proceeds of "Reimbursement Bonds" in accordance with U.S. Treasury Regulation Section 1.150-2.

READING: The Resolution was submitted in title only for its reading and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

(B) Orders (Consent Agenda)

Mr. Tressler reviewed each item on the Consent Agenda, and Mayor Morriss called for questions or comments. **Motion** to approve all Orders was made by Council Member Furstenberg, seconded by Council Member Cioni, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

Order 27,372 - authorizing appointments to the Historic Preservation Commission and Parks and Recreation Board.

Order 27,373 - approving the Goals and Strategic Initiatives derived from the Mayor and City Council's Retreat/Goal Setting Session.

Order 27,374 - authorizing the execution of a reimbursement and release agreement with Columbia Gas for the restoration work on Greene Street from Smallwood Street to Baltimore Street for a lump sum payment to the City of \$189,018.39.

Order 27,375 - approving budget appropriations and transfers for fiscal year 2022-2023.

X. Public Comments

Dana Tinnen, 223 Wallace Street, spoke about seeking contributions/support from M&CC for his 2nd annual Christmas Smiles project, which he stated served over 40 families last year. He stated that donations are not coming in as fast as he'd like, and said he fears he may not be able to reach the mark for 40 families.

Council Member Frazier asked how much his mark is this year. Mr. Tinnan said there's no mark, just trying to get gifts, etc. for 40 families, but said it would be around \$1000, although he has not collected from the boxes around the City yet. He discussed how to go online and make a donation, saying that Council Member Furstenberg was a heavy donor last year, and said he started late this year, but is in talks with Toys for Happiness for next year.

Ed Taylor, Jr., 400 S. Allegany Street, spoke on behalf of the CHCO. He stated that the homeless problem is becoming an issue - vulgarity, drug use, nudity, and inappropriate urination, and proposed that the Daughters of the American Revolution lease Riverside Park from M&CC for \$1/year, which he will pay indefinitely. He said if the land is leased, it would eliminate the issue of it being public property, and would allow the DAR to have any issues taken away by the police.

Peggy Keene, 309 Skyview Drive, LaVale, also spoke about the homeless issue, and reiterated what Mr. Taylor said. She said she has had previous conversations with the City but nothing can be done because this is a public park. She discussed the various structures removed due to problems. She said they would like to see more visitors at the George Washington Headquarters building, and said they are ready to offer tours with notice. She said they need to take back the park and stop feeding the homeless there.

Mayor Morriss said he understands the concerns and shares them. He said that M&CC will take a look at leasing the property and see if it's something that can work. He noted that the people that think they are doing the right thing by feeding these people are just enabling the situation and making it worse.

Council Member Cioni asked Ms. Keene if she knew of a precedent where an organization has done something like this that has worked. Ms. Keene replied that no she doesn't, but said she worked a while ago with an organization, and said they didn't have this problem because they had a group to check the properties. Mr. Taylor stated that down South, Sons of the Confederate Veterans have taken on some parks, with the cities still mowing, but taking the liability off the cities.

Council Member Marchini asked if when it's leased, does it cease to be public property. Mr. Taylor replied that anyone can still walk through there, but said it will give the DAR the ability to call the police. Mayor Morriss stated that they can call the police now, if they are witness to any of these issues. He said he will see if their idea will work, but said they need to be aware that they can call the police any time issues are witnessed. Mr. Taylor stated that they have, and said a lot of times it doesn't work out.

April Awad 716 Columbia Avenue, brought pictures and an email from Craig Adams for M&CC and said she lives next to the Queen City Flea Market. She spoke about what used to be

an alley behind her house – not on her property. She stated that Craig Adams contacted the owner of the flea market, Mr. Kline, and said that the alley has completely collapsed, and there used to be a retaining wall there that has crumbled. She added that at the top there is a foundation where a house supposedly used to be. She said looking over her gate, the whole thing is going to go. She asked if this could be investigated, saying the erosion is bad, there's a pipe sticking out, and said it will eventually cause her shed to crumble down. She said it's a massive problem, even if the City stabilizes the hill.

Mayor Morriss advised that they will get the Engineering Department to determine boundaries and have Code Compliance look into this to see what the remedy will be.

Peter Cooper, 734 Washington Street, spoke about moving to an apartment here from Michigan 2 years ago. He said he hasn't personally seen anything, but said an "awareness campaign – if you see something, say something" might help people understand that they need to do something. He said the same stories go around – police were never called – nothing is said. He added that the walkability in Cumberland is great, and asked that the City always be accommodating to pedestrians.

The Mayor advised that they will always keep Cumberland as a walkable city.

All public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person

XI. Adjournment

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Minutes approved on December 19, 2023

Raymond M. Morriss, Mayor

ATTEST: Allison K. Layton, City Clerk