



Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss
Councilman Richard J. “Rock” Cioni
Councilman Eugene T. Frazier
Councilman James L. Furstenberg
Councilman Brian R. Lepley

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 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502
Tuesday, December 16, 2025; 5:00 pm

PRESENT: Mayor Raymond M. Morriss; Council Members: Richard J. “Rock” Cioni, Eugene Frazier, James Furstenberg, Brian Lepley.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Ruth Davis-Rogers, Historic Preservation Planner; and Amy Baker, GIS Specialist

Media: Greg Larry from the Times-News, and Kathy Cornwell from WCBC

I. DISCUSSION SURROUNDING THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNER POSITION AND POSSIBLE REORGANIZATION

Mr. Silka discussed the Historic Preservation Planner job description and the proposal to merge positions to fill the opening. Due to the City's constantly changing needs, Code Enforcement was downsized years ago, with tasks split among staff, so there is no Planning Department with a dedicated planner today.

Cumberland does not have full-time historic Preservation needs, which is why Ruth's position also included other duties overseeing special projects, grant applications, and the Comprehensive Plan that fell outside of her capacity.

A job description outlining the duties required for the Historic Preservation/City Planner position has been drafted. The ideal candidate would have experience in Comprehensive Planning and knowledge of zoning. Mr. Silka believes Community Development could benefit from such a blended position, given the current focus on Code Enforcement and Revitalization.

II. DISCUSSION ON CORRECTING AND EXPANDING THE LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mr. Silka advised that the current map contains errors and turned the discussion over to Ruth Davis-Rogers and Amy Baker.

Ruth explained that Doug Macy, while marketing 208 Market Street, mistakenly believed the location was eligible for tax credits under the Arts and Entertainment District. Research clarified that this was not true, and modifications would require discussions with the State of Maryland. Locally, a revision and approval from the Mayor and City Council can be sought to address the situation for the Historic District.

Historic Preservation is an economic driver that has generated over \$10M in tax credits in downtown over the last four years. The location was an old brewery, so the size alone provides substantial space for conversion into a large business or housing. The tax credits would provide a nice incentive for the investment. Ruth turned the discussion over to Amy Baker to address some issues with the district mapping.

Amy reviewed the Ordinances that created the districts beginning in 1978 with the Historic Preservation Committee and showed on the presentation how the districts were later combined, forming the Canal Place Preservation District and what is known as the Local District.

The first boundary was done by hand, and parcels were designated to areas that did not belong. Since then, GIS technology has advanced, and the projections have changed. Research was conducted to identify the entities that owned the parcels. The proposal is to revise the parcel boundaries to align with the technical requirements.

III. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Mr. Silka noted that when the Historic Preservation Commission agenda was published, it was hacked, and anyone with business on the agenda received invoices from the County of Cumberland in Carlisle, PA. The incident was reported to the authorities immediately.

Mr. Silka and Ruth Davis-Rogers attended the Economic Mobility cohort in El Paso, Texas, last week, as part of a grant that was received. Engagement with a consultant showed how we could transform the attainable housing plan into an agency or 501 (c) (3) for a five-year strategic plan. The goal is to move people from renting to home ownership while providing education on home ownership in an effort to increase the demand for homes

IV. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF DECEMBER 16, 2025

Mr. Silka updated on the following agenda items:

- Order #5 is reconciling the 2024-25 budgets (*Mr. Silka reviewed specific areas of the summary with Council, see Handout*)
- Order #6 for the ENOUGH grant. Appreciation goes to Renee Knisely and Courtney Thomas-Winterberg for their assistance with the applications.

V. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Winterfest was well attended and many stores remained open for the event.

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on January 6, 2026



Closed Session Minutes

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

2nd Floor Conference Room

Tuesday, December 16, 2025; 4:15 p.m.

On December 16, 2025, the Mayor and City Council met in public session beginning at 4:15 p.m. in the 2nd floor Conference Room of City Hall for the purpose of immediately closing the meeting to A) discuss Board and Commission appointments, B) receive legal advice from the City Solicitor relative to the terms and conditions of a particular lease agreement and C) receive the advice of the City Solicitor regarding the Tolling Agreement with CSX. Authority to close the session is provided by Sections 3-305(b)(1)(i) and (b)(7) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

MOTION: Motion to enter into Closed Session was made by Council Member Frazier seconded by Council Member Cioni, and was passed on a vote of 5-0.

PRESENT: Council Members Richard Cioni, Jimmy Furstenberg, Eugene Frazier, and Brian Lepley

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison K. Layton, City Clerk; and Michael Cohen; Solicitor; Robert Smith; City Engineer; and Chief James Pyles