



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 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, September 17, 2024; 5:15 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; Michael Cohen; City Solicitor; Bobby Smith, City Engineer; Shannon Adams, Fire Chief; Melinda Kelleher, Director of the DDC

Media: Teresa McMinn, Cumberland Times-News, Kathy Cornwell, WCBC and Hannah Fout, WCBC

Sandra Roeder, Public

I. DISCUSSION ON THE CHURCH/BUTLER ALLEY PARKING ISSUE

Mr. Silka addressed all in attendance regarding the Church/Butler Alley Parking issues that were previously discussed and before handing the discussion over to Melinda Kelleher and Bobby Smith, he added that the City is looking for clear direction for staff on how to proceed with addressing the parking issues.

Mr. Smith updated that handicapped parking spots have been removed and Church Alley and has been striped with parking spots. The loading/unloading signs have also been removed and Rose's has installed chains to prevent parking. The City is not providing private parking spots or lots anywhere downtown with the exception of the Cumberland Arms, which is a private lot.

Mr. Smith's question to the Mayor and City Council was if they prefer enforcement of the right of way because at this time parking is taking place in the fire lanes. Councilman Cioni clarified if the signs would be on the right-hand side coming off of Frederick Street, and Mr. Smith confirmed, and added that the issue is not lack of parking but instead understanding and people parking wherever they choose, which leaves the issue of how the Police Department enforces parking without any signage.

Mayor Morriss responded to Mr. Smith that the right of way has to be enforced even if that means no parking on the right-hand side. In the event of an emergency that would prohibit emergency personnel from passing, the City would not be enforcing the law.

Councilwoman Marchini clarified with Mr. Smith the amount of parking spots with meters, and he responded there are five or six off of Frederick Street on to Church/ Butler Alley and at the end of Butler Alley there are four parking spots that will be converted to ParkMobile. Ms. Marchini asked about whether parking spaces could be used to lease monthly to individuals who live in the buildings that back up to Church/Butler Alley, who have resided for long periods of time and do not have close parking available to them. Mr. Silka responded that the City could lease all of the spaces and mentioned the issue of allocation of spaces vs. residents would need to be addressed and mentioned charging a residential rate.

Melinda Kelleher spoke about merchants who work at some of the businesses and when they leave at night, they have issues of being blocked in from cars. She indicated that Mr. Smith, the Fire Marshal and herself walked the area and the Fire Marshal confirmed that there would be an issue with EMS passing through in the event of an emergency with parking in place as it was on that particular day. The issue is believed to be that people have been parking there for so long without being told otherwise and merchants are calling regularly to voice their complaints about this issue. Merchants are also parking in unmarked spaces and blocking entrances.

Mayor Morriss about the idea of leasing parking spaces for residential use and said that a plan for execution needs to be determined. Once that plan is in place, no parking signs would be posted and enforcement of the right of way the entire length of the alley would be implemented. Mr. Silka added that an Ordinance would be crafted regarding leased spaces and criteria to lease the parking space would need to be met, meaning a person would need to be a resident of a building and the offer for the leased spaces could be made to those already residing there. Ms. Marchini suggested taking metered parking spaces and allowing residents who have lived in the building over an extended period of time, to have first choice of the spots they prefer. Mr. Silka added that getting rid of the meters and leasing parking spaces generates revenue for the City. Ms. Kelleher added that it also allows a building owner to offer paid parking to a buyer, should they sell the building.

Mayor Morriss offered that the whole left side could be used as leased parking spaces and the parking spaces are premium parking spaces directly behind the resident's building. Mr. Silka indicated that he would work on getting a policy in place for review at a later meeting. Mr.

Smith also mentioned that he and Mr. Cohen need to address the issue with the encroachments with the dumpsters. Mr. Adams added that the current parking situation creates an issue with access to sprinklers in the event of an emergency.

II. DISCUSSION ABOUT THE CITY'S MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Silka addressed the Mayor and City Council about the City's Mission Statement that was discussed last October during the Council Retreat. He wants to define how to write a mission statement and shared a PowerPoint presentation stating that a Mission Statement is a brief, concise statement about general values to guide City goals. The Mission Statement should explain why we exist and what we are doing right now. Mr. Silka said there are four important questions to think about when writing the statement; Who are we, what do we do, why do we do it and who do we do it for. A few things to keep in mind when writing: is it too long, too general, not clear but vague and boring, unbelievable and unachievable. Mr. Silka advised against using buzz words and recommended keeping it simple when drafting the statement:

- Is it clear and concise
- Is it distinctive or memorable
- Does it clearly state the purpose of the City
- Does it indicate the primary function or activities of the City

Mr. Silka asked members of Council to draft their key points and then we will continue the discussion, hopefully creating a statement that can be approved.

III. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

Mr. Silka deferred to Mr. Smith to explain Order # 9 on the agenda. Mr. Smith shared that the City has bid on an energy savings service and explained how Centrica would help reduce energy costs related to the project. Although the same bills would continue to be paid, the remaining funds would be allocated to the energy company and an escrow account would be held for the period of time agreed upon for a return. There are some projects that will be taking place at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) stemming from 2020 when the City had to shut down an Anaerobic Digester due to a leak on the Methane tank and the cost to process biosolids has increased excessively. The contract with the current vendor expires next year so the question of who will process the biosolids moving forward needs to be addressed. Mr. Smith continued that there is an immediate return in addressing the issue with the methane tank and putting Anaerobic Digestion back into the operation. Currently the bills are a fixed component and the variable rate is based on the amount of tonnage. They are receiving poor quality sludge to process right now and if we could send them higher quality sludge, it would reduce the dry tonnage, which would reduce our cost. Centrica is looking to do three projects for the City, getting the Anaerobic Digester back on, a solar component to put panels down at Donahue Field and switch gears. The Solar panels would be used to knock the peak energy

demand down. The switch gears were installed in 1978 and have reached life capacity, and are a component in the solar panels. At this time, there would likely be a 6–7-year performance period until savings area realized.

Councilman Furstenberg asked Mr. Smith how long the contract is and how long replacement is needed. He responded that the approval from Mayor and City Council would be to approve the contract, if the City does not agree with the amount proposed the contract states that company can recoup their costs. Mr. Silka explained that this has been vetted to make the needed improvements and is financially in the best interest of the City. Mr. Smith added that Centrica would bring in their own labor for the project, so the City would only be spending money already being used. Once the contract is available, it will be presented to the Mayor and Council to see what the performance period would look like and if it ended up being successful, could be extended to other projects.

Mr. Silka also brought up Order # 11 regarding free parking at City lots and meters in the downtown area on Thursday, November 14 through Saturday, November 16, 2024 for the Ribbon Cutting ceremony and events to follow.

IV. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Councilman Frazier mentioned Heritage Days was the best he has attended in years. He spoke with several vendors and they shared how well they did and that they are looking forward to returning next year.

Councilman Furstenberg met several visitors from out of town who to take yard signs showing support of downtown businesses. Mayor Morriss added that he had spoken with residents that are new to the area and they mentioned how much they like the area and also asked for signs to display in their yards in support of downtown businesses. Councilman Cioni added that he had spoken with some people that grew up in Cumberland but have relocated to CA and CO and mentioned that they would do anything to come to a city like Cumberland.

Councilman Cioni shared that the Parks and Recreation Board met last week, and with Halloween approaching to keep an eye out for the parade date. He also mentioned that Friends of the Park and Ryan Mackey are going to be putting together a program and they might be asking for donations.

Council members asked for an update for the Skatepark and Mr. Silka responded that it is being reviewed by the State and there is hope for construction in the Spring. Mr. Smith added that the Engineering Department is currently bidding on the project for construction.

Councilman Cioni mentioned that Let's Beautify Cumberland (LBC) met as well and close to \$800 was raised for the clock at Heritage Days. LBC is hoping to have the clock in place for New Years Eve.

Councilwoman Marchini updated that the Downtown Development Commission (DDC) and Baltimore Street Redesign still continue to meet to plan for the Ribbon Cutting ceremony November 14, 2024 and that 18 new businesses will be open by that day. They are providing assistance to any building owners for window displays for that particular day and mentioned that the Wills Hotel will have renderings in their windows as well. She also mentioned that while she was working the booth at Heritage Days she spoke with several people who were considering moving to the area and were inquiring about housing prices and how helpful it was to have Ruth Davis-Rogers and Melinda Kelleher, who have just recently purchased homes, to give some perspective on the topic.

Ms. Marchini spoke about the grand opening weekend and mentioned the scavenger hunt on Saturday, November 16, 2024 with a theme of "Rediscovering Your Downtown". There will be walking tours available after the luncheon, music on Saturday from 2:00-9:00. Also, a meeting with MERJE design for Wayfinding was attended. Ms. Marchini shared that the Whiskey Rebellion was well attended and that she participated in the 3M Bike Challenge. Meetings are still being held for the Winter Festival and mentioned that sponsors for Friday after Five or Farmers Market for next year are still needed. She also spoke about Captain Burt and the heartfelt and knowledgeable presentation he gave to the South Cumberland Business Association.

M. Marchini continued that Brook Lierman, the Maryland Comptroller, visited Cumberland and will be attending the grand opening ceremony. The Dragonboat race is this Saturday and reminded everyone that 100% of the donations go to the YMCA. Mr. Cioni spoke to the YMCA, saying how many elderly and children they serve, and Ms. Marchini added that it is much more than a gym and really is a non-profit organization.

Mayor Morriss updated all that he attended a Maryland Avenue meeting and mentioned the importance of Wayfinding for new visitors coming to Cumberland and connecting them to points of interest downtown. Heritage Days was a great success and he appreciates that it is becoming more related to the history of Cumberland with the George Washington review and the representation from 1755 when he was here for the Virginia Militia and then from 1794 when he came for the Whiskey Rebellion. The history of the event along with vendors with food, crafts and entertainment, made it a great weekend.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on October 1, 2024