



# 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

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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, January 21, 2025; 5:15 pm

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Chief Ternent, Michael Cohen; City Solicitor

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

#### I. QUEEN CITY PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS

Mr. Silka initiated the discussion in regards to the pedestrian underpass and distributed photographs that were captured from the Police Department of the current conditions. He turned the discussion over to Chief Ternent who went on to explain that a lot of hours and payroll are spent daily maintaining the underpass and the last four to five months the conditions have progressively worsened.

In the past year 114 cases have been created for various issues. The underpass is a CSX asset that is maintained by the City, and they are in favor of a temporary closure to clean and evaluate a path moving forward. There are known drainage issues, tar leaking from the ceilings and human waste being disposed, conditions that are hazardous and not acceptable for staff to be exposed to.

It was suggested that an Order be added to the next Agenda for a temporary closure to restore the underpass to acceptable conditions, all of Council unanimously agreed.

## **II. NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES LINE WARRANTY PROGRAM**

Mr. Silka began a discussion regarding National League of Cities (NLC) line insurance and spoke of a customer who had a leak from the meter to her house which increased her bill to an amount she could not afford. The City did work with her on the amount but she still could not afford the cost to repair the line.

The program for the NLC is a warranty program and is voluntary, so no cost for the City to offer to residents. The cost for the program would be added to the customer's bill and 10% of the premium is collected by the City. The program employs its own contractors to fulfill the job and is available to anyone using City lines and is available for water, sewer and plumbing.

A discussion ensued among all of Council and it was agreed to have an order and contract drafted for legal review.

## **III. REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA OF JANUARY 21, 2025**

- ❖ Mayor Morriss reviewed the Agenda with Council.
- ❖ Mr. Silka referred Council to Ordinance 4005 and advised that a motion to substitute Exhibit A (Plat) is needed. Michael Cohen explained the reason for the modification.
- ❖ Order 27, 636 pertains to The Gordian Group and their participation in the Maryland DGS project, this allows us to avoid bidding.
- ❖ It was agreed by all to remove Order 27, 639 from the table until a consensus is reached and to schedule a meeting for public input.

Mr. Silka recommends receiving input from staff and says that parking signs are not enforceable without a FT person to manage it. Currently the Wayfinding Plan is in progress, we want to avoid incurring duplicate expenses.

A discussion ensued around the idea of a temporary sign for 30-minute parking and the issue of no enforcement to back it up. All of Council agreed that a

meeting should be scheduled for the downtown staff and the public to voice their concerns or raise questions.

- ❖ Orders 27, 639 and 27,640 will be removed from the agenda.

#### **IV. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES**

- ❖ Groundhog Day will be celebrated on February 3, 2025
- ❖ For the Wayfinding meeting renderings were presented with 3 different design ideas for signage for downtown.
- ❖ PACE took last week and was well-received by those who attended. A meeting took place with the USDA and the Governor's staff to discuss the issues we are facing at the water treatment plant as well as discussing funding for the project which is pushing \$45 Million. Key speakers highlighted issues the State is facing and budget deficit.
- ❖ The Greater Cumberland Committee held a meeting to discuss housing opportunities and how to help first time home buyers. Garrett County discussed their strategies as well.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.  
Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton  
City Clerk

Minutes approved on February 4, 2025

# Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

## Closed Session Minutes

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

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room

Tuesday, January 21, 2025; 4:30 p.m.

The Mayor and City Council of Cumberland will meet in public session beginning at 4:30 p.m. in the 2nd floor Conference Room of City Hall on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, for the purpose of immediately closing the meeting to receive legal advice regarding pending legislation and to receive legal advice relative to the proposal for the settlement of Juan A. Arrisueno, et al. v. Frederic L.J. Baker, et al., Circuit Court for Allegany County, Maryland, Case No. C-01-CV-23-000057 and to discuss the settlement with City staff. The authority for the closure of the meeting is set forth in Section 3-305(b)(7) and (8) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

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

**PRESENT:** Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members Richard Cioni, Jimmy Furstenberg, Brian Lepley and Eugene Fraizer

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison K. Layton, City Clerk; City Solicitor Michael Cohen