



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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WORK SESSION

City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502
Tuesday, April 22, 2025; 4:00 pm

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

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Matt Miller, Executive Director of CEDC; Stu Czapski, Economic Development Specialist

Media: Kathy Cornwell, WCBC and Theresa McMinn, Cumberland Times News

Two members of the public

I. UPDATE ON CEDC MARKETING GRANT

Matt Miller opened the meeting and provided an update on a grant the CEDC received from the Rocky Gap VLT Program that will be used to help update the current marketing plan. Marketing Consultant Lydia

Savramis has modernized our online presence and established multiple social media platforms for broadcasting. A substantial amount of following has occurred through countless adds, fliers and promotional clips.

The CEDC has contracted with Resimplifi, a software development company specializing in compiling and organizing commercial real estate data. This program includes an embedded map on the website that displays available commercial properties within the city. It optimizes site searches by providing a comprehensive list sourced from all commercial real estate databases. Additionally, a visual representation of the city will be incorporated into the program to highlight all available listings, ensuring that users are aware of properties that may not appear in a standard commercial search.

Property listings on an MLS are public information. Scrubbed through Resimplifi software, any properties not on an MLS must be requested. Resimplifi has provided a contract that allows the CEDC to use the listings from their site. A link to the CEDC website is also available from the City's website. From the CEDC website, a tab entitled "Site Selection" will direct users to the map.

II. UPDATE ON SPARC RESEARCH

The CEDC was awarded a \$100K grant from the George Edwards fund for the addition of SPARC Research. A total of \$60,000 will be allocated for job creation incentives, with an additional \$40,000 designated for the associated costs of building out office space. To qualify for the incentive, new hires must hold full-time positions, be employed at the Cumberland office, and receive compensation that is at least twice the minimum wage or have an annual salary exceeding \$62,400. The positions must be created within three years to avoid the repayment of the incentive.

Build-out expenses include a vault locking system for sensitive information, a security system, cubicles, work stations, and other associated costs that do not include furniture. New positions for the

Cumberland office have been posted, and recruitment has begun. A signed lease has been received at the Rosenbaum building in Suite 203 and is expected to occupy the office space in May. Anticipation is for 10-15 jobs to be created at the Rosenbaum location.

III. UPDATE ON DOWNTOWN COMPREHENSIVE GRANT PROGRAM

Stu Czapski updated that all five projects in the façade improvement program have been completed. \$35K is left from the grant funds, and \$20K will be budgeted for the Pershing Street project, though it is still uncertain if that will begin. Residential facades are progressing slowly, and there is a balance of \$135K from the initial \$350K. The Comprehensive Investment Program (CIP) combines State, County, and City funds. County and State funding total \$770K, with the majority allocated for upper-story residential and façade grants.

The Façade program had a total project cost exceeding \$1 million, with the CEDC contributing \$400,000. For the residential sector, the total project cost surpassed \$5.5 million, all from private investments.

Regarding the Business attraction grant, the CEDC is committed to five companies. 11 Full-time positions and 28 Part-time positions have been created. There is room for five more companies, assuming they fall in the primary taxing district.

IV. GENERAL CEDC BUSINESS UPDATE

Matt Miller updated the CEDC submitted the Baltimore Street project for consideration for the Maryland Department of Planning Sustainable Growth award. The project was selected as one of three awards and received high praise from elected officials. Due to this recognition, they have been contacted by organizations such as the American Planning Association and Leadership Maryland to host tours of downtown. An award from the Department of Planning was received as well.

As a result of the Ride into History fundraiser, a budget of \$5K is available for outdoor furnishings for downtown restaurants, as well as a plan to purchase new umbrellas that will match the current streetscape design.

Matt ended by noting the increase in foot traffic downtown and inside the Rosenbaum building, especially with the opening of the new barber shop. A considerable amount of private investment is taking place downtown, and new projects outside the grant are also taking place.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on May 6, 2025