



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 Scott Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

MINUTES

M&CC Regular Public Meeting
57 N. Liberty Street, Cumberland, MD 21502

DATE: January 28, 2025

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 Brian R. Lepley
President Raymond M. Morriss,

Also Present: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison K. Layton, City Clerk;
Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Chief Ternent

Mayor Morriss welcomed all attendees and their input concerning the parking issues on Baltimore Street.

IV.

Hayden Ort-Ulm – representing his business Basecamp Coffee in the Rosenbaum Building feels that ParkMobile will dissuade patrons from visiting downtown. It was his impression that one of the reasons for the renovation was to allow customers to park and quickly access a business. He feels that the Wayfinding signage and One-hour parking would allow for easy access and the ParkMobile signage will cause conflict. Affordable parking options also need to be available for business employees. He remarked on the positive traffic that downtown is receiving and feels implementing parking fees should be considered after businesses have had more time to recover following the re-opening.

Mary Beth Pirolozzi – expressed that the renovation is beautiful and she is excited for the success of downtown. Noting the struggle businesses have experienced with three years of COVID and the renovation this decision is too impulsive and will discourage visitation. Employees parking for extended periods of time should be addressed by the business owner.

John Wunderlick – thanked the Mayor and City Council for providing the public the opportunity to speak. He mentioned Frostburg having parking meters and the app and within months they were eliminated. He inquired as to why and was told the decision was due to receiving negative feedback and they reverted back to 2-hour parking signs and monitor the parking with cameras.

Jan Wundrlick – thanked the Mayor and City Council for their time to allow the public to speak on this issue. She mentioned the parking on Centre and Liberty Streets with 10-20 minutes and 1-hour free and does not feel fees for all parking are necessary. Parking is free on weekends and evenings but during the day you would be resorted to an app to patron businesses. She mentioned current parking ticket rates of \$25 and if not paid in 30 days an additional charge of \$25-30 with no forgiveness is applied. This is not an incentive to return if you are faced with those fees.

Becky and Tom Ferelmen – discussed the impact paid parking can have on local businesses and addressed negative affects these policies had in various cities across the US, some which have a greater population than Cumberland. A few areas cited were Princeton, NJ, Coldwell, ID, Hickory, NC, Battleboro, VT, Haverhill, MA, El Paso, TX, Davis, CA. The implementation of paid parking caused a significant decline in customer visitation and revenue.

If communities with greater population than Cumberland struggle with these changes, Cumberland is more likely to face greater challenges due to the declined population. With the easy access to downtown from I-68, the C&O path and the Great Allegany Passage draw outdoor enthusiasts who contribute to the City revenue. The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad attracted 32K visitors in one year,

and 36K cyclists, illustrating the importance of tourism. Tom referred to his gallery and noted that they have received visitors from Richmond, Rockville, Morgantown, Pittsburgh, Hagerstown and Frederick. The implementation of paid parking could be detrimental to this trend and discourage visitation in the future.

Gayle Griffith – thanked the Mayor and City Council for allowing the public express concerns. She went on to explain that in the 1980's the Book Centre was being opened on N. Centre Street and had significant response in that location. Street parking in front of the location was very valuable to the business and she was very supportive of the plans to reopen Baltimore Street. With less than 2- months of traffic since the re-opening, she feels it is a bit presumptive to implement parking fees. She suggests booting offenders abusing parking and feels that more time is needed to see what kind of visitation is experienced during warmer weather.

Chris Meyers – a resident and business owner on Liberty Street, greeted the Mayor and City Council and mentioned his disappointment of no copy of the intended implemented parking Ordinance or supporting data for public review. He went on to express his opinion of confusion with parking signs and parking times on different streets and stated that standardized parking throughout the City would simplify any confusion. He also, mentioned a known parking issue with downtown employees on streets other than Baltimore Street, which is where the parking concern is. If enforcement is being pursued for one street it should be pursued for all of the downtown streets along with adequate lighting. He went on to add that residential parking has not been addressed as was already brought up at a previous meeting. A Handicap person can park anywhere for uncertain amounts of time with a permit and this Ordinance does not address this issue.

Rob Fout – owner of the gun shop in Ridgeley, wanted to be sure the problem is being solved. He went on to add that parking is an asset and the value is determined by who parks there. Increased patronage determines this value. Parking spots being appropriated for 8 hours could be converted in to 16 customers visiting a business. His recommendation is for 1-hour free with validation by an app that is validated by a business, the next 30 minutes would be a \$1, second hour would be \$5, third hour \$10, fourth hour \$20

Larry Jackson – greeted Mayor and City Council thanking them for allowing time to hear concerns from residents and went on to say that the DDC was concerned with the parking Ordinance because they were not included in the decision process. He pointed out the complaints of people abusing parking spaces and brought up the fact that this is not the case because there is currently nothing posted indicating this is not allowed. He suggested using ParkMobile for off street parking lots and for on street parking, consistent signage indicating the terms. This eliminates the concerns for those who may not want or feel comfortable using an App. He is concerned

about discouraging people from returning downtown despite the positive feedback and response being received.

Becky McClarren – expressed that being a part of the committee that oversaw the project was very thrilling to observe. She feels some time should be taken before implementing parking and stated that perception is reality, and charging parking is not very welcoming to our community.

Ed Mullaney – business owner and Chair of Let's Beautify Cumberland (LBC) suggested the creation of a parking advisory group to create additional parking. He went on to mention that he spent some time looking in to those parking for extended periods of time and addressed the concern with them. With a lot of other issues being faced with downtown, implementing parking fees should not be taking place at this time.

John Michaels – assistant director for resources for independents, an advocacy group for individuals with disabilities and a commissioner for disabilities for the State of Maryland. On a recent visit to Baltimore Street, it was noted that of the 16 total spaces, only 2 are designated as handicapped and he would like to see a total of 8 spaces. He went on to explain the issues one would face parking in a garage with mobility issues. He explained that he would like to conduct an accessibility survey by placing elected officials in wheelchairs to experience the challenges faced navigating downtown with those obstacles.

Donna Monteleone – spoke of her business that was not affected by the construction but since the reopening has experienced a significant increase in business. She feels it would be discouraging to enforce parking fees at this time.

Adrienne Monroe – advises she has been a part of downtown since she was 15. Her father owns M&M Bake shop and she has never experienced Baltimore Street being open and says that clientele has increased since the opening. During the construction the shop suffered sales and faced the thought of having to possibly close, now that the street is opened up, they are starting to see an increase and fear charging for accessible parking will turn customers away that come from all over to support the shop.

Frank Fry – with Morton's Jewelry Store has been on Baltimore Street since 1934 and has repeatedly heard the complaints concerning parking. He expressed his enthusiasm with the current influx in traffic to the mall and feels that charging for parking takes that opportunity away. He feels that the parking App will be difficult for most senior citizens to use and suggests free short-term parking for 1 hour.

XI. Adjournment

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes approved on February 4, 2025

Raymond M. Morriss, Mayor

ATTEST: Allison K. Layton, City Clerk