

WORK SESSION AND EXECUTIVE SESSION – January 16, 2007

Work Session – January 16, 2007

Mayor Robert E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session and Executive Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:05 p.m., Tuesday, January 16, 2007 in the Council Chambers at the City Hall. Present with the Mayor were City Council Members M. E. Brubaker, K. S. Cromer, L. C. Metzner, P. M. Nigh, and A. Parson-McBean, City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, City Attorney John Urner and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

Introduction of Cindy Blackstock, Community Development Coordinator

Larry Bayer, Manager of Community Development, introduced Cindy Blackstock, who was recently hired as the Community Development Coordinator. Ms. Blackstock will be working closely with the Neighborhoods First groups and wants to create a vibrant community in Hagerstown.

Tusing Warehouse Proposal – Development Plan and Contractual Agreements

Deborah Everhart, Director of Economic Development, presented the development plan and contractual agreements for the transfer of the Tusing Warehouse to Milton Stamper, trading as City Theater, LLC.

The proposed use of the property includes a renovated structure and addition for use as a multi-cultural event center which will be available for conference/business meetings, dance groups, recitals, art shows and musical entertainment. The second floor will be available for banquets, weddings, private and community based groups. The developer has also offered to work with the City to use the building as a staging area for city events likes Blues Fest and Augustoberfest. Plans include a 20'x 70' addition to the west wall of the building which will house a new elevator, stair tower, mechanical room, restrooms, dressing rooms and a staging area.

Next steps for the developer include submittal and approval of the site plan for the addition and application for building permits. The project is exempt from the excise tax and would be eligible for sewer allocation on a first come first served basis through the SCAP. Next steps for the Mayor and Council include the introduction of an ordinance which would accept the offer to purchase the property for \$ 110,000 and authorizing the sale of the property.

Ms. Everhart also presented a more defined diagram of the proposal. She noted that the building addition still is the same number of feet from the west side but extends another 50' +/- than the original proposal. The parking spaces will be relocated. There is room to accommodate the relocated spaces. The City will retain a perpetual agreement for parking on the lot.

The effect of the proposal on the Blues Fest and Augustoberfest has been preliminarily discussed with Community Affairs, Engineering and Public Works.

Councilmember Metzner asked if these festivals will be held in the same location. Karen Giffin, Director of Community Affairs, stated the committees will have to review the proposal. Stages and seating may have to be relocated. Councilmember Metzner expressed concern that the development of the building will have a negative affect on these festivals.

Eric Deike, Public Works Manager, stated there will need to be additional space around the building during construction. Some of the parking spaces on the north and south end of the building may be usable.

Councilmember Metzner stated he would not approve a contract if the festivals are negatively affected. Mr. Deike stated changes have been made to the festivals over the years and those changes proved to be beneficial. He cited the example of moving the festival from the parking deck to the parking lot. Councilmember Metzner stated he would wait to hear from Carl Disque, Chairman of the Blues Fest Committee.

Ms. Giffin stated the logistic committees for each group have scheduled meetings to discuss the plans. Mr. Deike stated he believes they can make the plan work. Mayor Bruchey agreed. He stated the stages would be placed in the best location for sound quality.

Councilmember Parson-McBean stated this proposal was accepted because it would have the least impact on the festivals. She stated the City needs to move forward.

Ms. Everhart stated any of the proposals would have an impact on the west side of the event area. Most of the people presenting the proposals indicated they would welcome the festivals. Councilmember Metzner stated he was not aware that all the proposals would have an impact on the festivals.

Councilmember Nigh asked how the City would deal with a new owner if the building is sold. She stated she is not in favor of selling the building.

City Attorney John Urner indicated a statement in reference to future owners could be included in the agreement. Councilmember Brubaker is not comfortable with an outside architect certifying when the plan is complete. Mr. Urner stated this has not been a problem before. Councilmember Brubaker stated the required repairs to the building should be very specific.

It was the general consensus to discuss this again after the logistics committees for Blues Fest and Augustoberfest have met.

Washington County Museum of Fine Arts Report

Joe Ruzicka, Executive Director, presented an informational booklet about the museum. He stated extensive work has been completed around the museum and in City Park. The collaboration and cooperation between the City and the Museum is very important. A special celebration is being held on January 26, 2007 in recognition of the 75th anniversary. The Festival for the Arts was held in September and was very successful. New initiatives include an after school arts program.

The Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Ruzicka for the partnership between the City and the museum.

Pen-Mar Regional Association of REALTORS

Tamar Osterman and Jeff Matthews, Pen-Mar Regional Association of REALTORS, were present to provide information about their organizations. They also provided Mayor and Council members with a copy of their annual report.

The Association has identified the revitalization of the City of Hagerstown as its primary public policy focus for 2007. They are working to develop a series of classes for REALTORS about smart growth, the benefits of city living, and how to market the City to prospective home buyers.

Councilmember Parson-McBean thanked the group for having a section in the annual report about gentrification. The entire community is feeling the affects of gentrification.

Painted Mural on Elizabeth Hager Center

Eric Deike, Manager of Public Works, and Kevin Moriarty, Washington County Arts Council, were present to discuss the mural that was painted onto the Elizabeth Hager Center in 1996.

The mural depicts a history of Hagerstown through its people and familiar architecture. The Washington County Arts Council, State Arts Council and the City of Hagerstown provided the funding for this endeavor.

In a short amount of time, the mural began to deteriorate and pull away from the brick façade. In 2001, painting repairs were made. However, the mural continued to deteriorate. It appears that the brick façade did not receive the appropriate preparation for the mural to adhere to the brick properly.

Estimated costs to make the repairs have varied from \$ 5,000 to \$ 20,000. Even if the repairs are made, the remaining portions of the mural will continue to pull away from the brick. Mr. Moriarty is in agreement that the mural be removed from the façade. The façade could be left bare or a new mural could be painted onto the building.

Councilmember Metzner agrees. He would like to see more murals in Hagerstown. Councilmember Parson-McBean stated other cities have been successful with murals. Councilmember Brubaker would rather leave the mural in tact until something new is planned.

Mr. Deike and Mr. Moriarty will meet to determine the easiest and most cost effective method for removing the mural.

American Institute of Architects (AIA) Planning Study of Lee and Sycamore Street Area

Sharon Disque of Hagerstown Neighborhood Development Partnership, and two members of the local group that worked with the AIA Team, Sam Powell and Mike Gehr, gave a presentation on the AIA Planning Study of the Lee and Sycamore Street Area.

Last year, Hagerstown Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc. received approval of planning assistance from the American Institute of Architects for a project to study the redevelopment potential of the area south of downtown in the vicinity of Lee and Sycamore Streets. A team of planning experts was assembled from around the country to assist with the Hagerstown project. A three-day planning event occurred in November.

The City's draft Comprehensive Plan is recommending that this area be rezoned with a new mixed-use zoning classification and that a study be done with a recommended redevelopment concept plan. The Planning Commission will review the concept plans after the Mayor and City Council have reviewed the AIA study results.

The area studied has been named the Marsh Run District. Recommendations from the study include:

1. Conversion of the area from industrial to mixed use, with a heavy concentration of residential.
2. Connect the area to the nearby neighborhoods
3. Enhance "gateways" to Downtown Hagerstown
4. Build upon the principles of sustainable design

The areas image is easily changed. It is a strategic, amenity-rich location that will support a quality project and stimulate further improvements. If the area is not improved, or remains a place to hide undesirable activities, Downtown will decline.

Councilmember Brubaker pointed out this plan is not in the final stages yet. A lot of work and collaboration will be necessary to continue with the plan. Mayor Bruchey thanked the committee for working on this project.

City Administrator's Comments

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, reminded the Mayor and City Council that a budget work session is scheduled for January 26, 2007 at 1:00 p.m.

Mayor and Council Comments

Councilmember M. E. Brubaker had no additional comments.

Councilmember K. S. Cromer stated she cannot support the City being involved with the group who is opposing the hospital's anticipated relocation. She would not approve spending taxpayers' money to oppose the move. She thinks one of the things the City can do is try to make the transition as smooth as possible and on the City's terms.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner urged the hospital board to acknowledge to the community that they are the group that continually causes delays in the project. For example, the board did not seek zoning approval in a timely manner. He stated if the City wanted to delay the move, the Mayor and City Council would not have approved a flow transfer agreement for the sewer service that will be necessary.

Councilmember P. M. Nigh expressed her concern about the problems at the existing hospital. There are floors that are not being used and staff is not large enough to take care of the patient load.

Councilmember A. Parson-McBean stated the un-insured need to be insured. She is concerned that people are turned away from Urgent Care because they don't have funds. The next meeting of Building Community will be held on January 22, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. The Black Achievers Gala will be held on January 20, 2007. She attended the celebration in memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. at Hagerstown Community College.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II applauded the Bartels, who are continuing their efforts opposing the hospital's relocation. The quality of care provided needs to be top quality. The hospital relocation needs to be treated the same as any development project.

Executive Session – January 16, 2007

On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in closed session at 6:08 p.m. to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice, #7. No formal action was taken at the session. The meeting was held in the Council Chamber, 2nd floor at the City Hall. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: