

WORK SESSION – February 10, 2009

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:07 p.m., Tuesday, February 10, 2009, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers M. E. Brubaker, K. S. Cromer, L. C. Metzner, P. M. Nigh and A. Parson-McBean; City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, City Attorney William Nairn and D. K. Spickler, City Clerk.

Play Camp Operations for the 2009 Season

Lewie Thomas, Recreation Facilities Manager, was present to report that staff would like to continue with the Hagerstown YMCA, Memorial Recreation Center, Inc. and Girls Incorporated of Washington County for the 2009 Summer Camp Program. Last year's requirements were met and the camps were successful.

The proposed funding is as follows:

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|----|---------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Hagerstown YMCA | \$ 34,827 |
| 2. | Memorial Recreation | \$ 17,000 |
| 3. | Girls, Inc. | \$ 15,000 |

It was the general consensus to include approval of the play camps on the regular session agenda.

City of Hagerstown Economic Development Initiative

Karen Giffin, Director of Community Affairs, and Deborah Everhart, Economic Development Director, were present to report the Economic Development Initiative is moving forward. Tim Latsbaugh, 2nd Floor Media, Ty and Terri Fleetwood, Fleetwood Design, Kate Rader, Ridge Runner Publishing and Rich Daughtridge, High Rock Studios, were also present.

As a way to easily identify the City's action plan to drive economic development diversity, higher wages, and neighborhood revitalization, the term "Choose Hagerstown" was coined during the pre-production and project planning phase. Now that the project is underway, this document serves as an update to the project, along with an anticipated timeline for completion of milestones to achieve an overall deadline of May 4, 2009.

The assembled team has met several times, with and separate from city officials, to develop a core logo and brand foundation that will be a strong platform for the initiative going forward. A more fitting name was researched and the name of HAGERSTOWN ADVANCE was selected. Hagerstown is identified in the name, and then supported by "Advance," therefore supporting the advancing and assertive economic development progress planned and anticipated for the people, businesses and overall community of Hagerstown. Key areas were identified and include CityCenter, Gateway District,

Stonehouse District, South Corridor, East Corridor and North Corridor. It was suggested to combine the name downtown and center city to describe the downtown area.

The initial step of branding concepts has been completed, and has enabled the team to continue groundwork in planning the web platform, database and marketing strategies. The team's progress includes primary wireframe documents, outlining a home page and interior page templates for the web platform. Additionally, progress includes design composites for the home page of the web platform that fully incorporates the elements of the wireframe documents, the color styles, logo(s) and brand direction established.

Next steps include final approval of this work, and design composites for interior pages of the web platform, and asset inventory meetings for each area to assist in database and marketing strategy development.

Mr. Latsbaugh showed the group the website, hagerstownadvance.com. This will highlight projects that are in process and the incentives that are available. A link to this website will be included on the City's, County's and Economic Development's websites. The information will also be available in hardcopy form.

A short break was taken to repair the microphone system.

Ms. Everhart indicated the Economic Development Department works with existing businesses and attempts to attract new businesses. She stated these tools will be an enhancement for economic development efforts and will be used to promote Hagerstown and will help address the importance of filling the upper floors.

Elizabeth Hager Center Mural Replacement Proposal

Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, Alex Rohrbaugh, Planner, and Gordon Newman, Hagerstown Beautification Advisory Committee (HBAC) Chair, were present to further discuss the mural replacement.

On January 13, staff and the HBAC presented a recommendation to replace the Elizabeth Hager Center mural with several enlarged, framed historic photos celebrating Hagerstown's heritage. The HBAC received a quote for \$ 1,060 per photo. Staff recommends pursuing a mini-grant application to the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area for one-half of the cost or up to \$ 2,500. The remainder of the project cost would be covered using the Downtown Beautification account from the General Fund. The deadline for the grant application is March 2, 2009.

At the January 13th meeting, the Mayor and Council requested staff explore two alternative ideas raised by the Bartels and Councilwoman Parson-McBean. The Committee contacted Josh Arantitis, an artist from the Mosaico Group that proposed to paint a mural on a synthetic cloth that would be installed on the building. The existing mural would have to be removed in order to install the canvas on the building. Mr. Arantitis estimates that the synthetic cloth the new mural would be painted on would last

15 to 20 years. The cost estimates of the proposal range from \$ 26,625 to \$ 30,625. Staff does not expect this proposal would qualify for the Heart of Civil War Heritage Area grant.

Staff also researched Councilwoman Parson-McBean's suggestion that involves removing expired advertisements from billboards and converting them into bags. Staff contacted the City of Orlando, FL regarding this project. An outdoor advertising firm in Orlando contracted with a company that recycles old billboard advertisements and banners to make the bags for the National League of Cities conference last November. The cost of this project was not available.

The HBAC reviewed the alternative ideas at their meeting on February 4, 2009 and decided to remain with their original recommendation to remove the existing mural and replace it with four enlarged, framed historic photos. This project would cost \$ 4,300 or more (Public Works) to remove the murals plus \$ 4,240 to have the framed photos prepared. Staff feels confident that the City should be able to receive a \$ 2,120 grant to cover half the cost of the photos.

Councilmember Parson-McBean stated her original question was if the same process of removable billboard canvas could be used. She asked if artwork could be put onto the billboard material and changed periodically. Mr. Rohrbaugh stated he understood the base material would not be the same. Ms. Maher indicated placing the artist canvas on a billboard type of material would increase the estimated cost.

Mr. Newman reiterated that the HBAC considered many options and alternatives and have recommended what they feel to be the most economical.

Councilmember Nigh, Councilmember Cromer and Councilmember Brubaker suggested making the photographs larger. Councilmember Metzner accepted the recommendation.

Mr. Newman stated the wall could be filled with photographs, if funding is available.

Mayor Bruchey stated the City needs to move forward with removing the mural. He suggested completing that step and then determining what to put on the wall.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and Council to apply for the mini-grant and to move forward with removing the existing mural. Subsequent treatments will be explored further.

Community Legacy Grant for Alms House

Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, and Larry Bayer, Community Development Manager, were present to discuss the possibility of releasing the grant funds for the Alms House adaptive re-use project.

The City acquired the Alms House in November 2004 with the intent of removing the blighting influence cast by the vacant and deteriorating building and thus assisting with the revitalization of the neighborhood. In 2006, the State of Maryland awarded the City an \$ 85,000 Community Legacy grant to assist with the project to locate a developer who would acquire and renovate the building for adaptive re-use for housing and some other non-residential use. At the time, it was anticipated that the City would donate the building to the developer, plus provide \$ 100,000 of CDBG funds and \$ 60,000 lead paint abatement funds towards the project. It was anticipated that the developer would contribute \$ 420,000 towards the renovation costs.

While the City has not been successful in securing a developer willing to take on this project, it has undertaken the necessary repairs to abate the property maintenance code violations at the property. While the State indicated that the City could have used the \$ 85,000 to assist with these renovations costs, it would have committed the City to undertaking the project outlined in the Community Legacy application and so the grant funds were not used for this work. The zoning ordinance's landmark overlay on the property becomes effective on February 26, 2009.

The City has received extensions to the deadline for this project, however, the State of Maryland would like to recapture this grant award if the City does not intend to undertake the adaptive re-use project in the very near future.

Councilmember Nigh asked if Community Legacy grant funding could be applied for to assist with a civil war museum. Ms. Maher indicated it could be. Councilmember Nigh stated Mary Haines and Virginia MacGruder have a great deal of historical information about the Alms House.

Councilmember Brubaker doesn't think the City should release the grant because something will eventually be done with the Alms House.

Staff expressed concern that future Community Legacy Grant funding approval may be affected by this outstanding grant.

Councilmember Parson-McBean stated Secretary Skinner has shown interest in the Alms House. She suggested applying for the grant but for assistance with a historical walking tour of several locations, including the Alms House.

Councilmember Cromer asked if the money could be used for code repairs and then turn the property over to a developer to complete the adaptive re-use project. Mr. Bayer stated the developer would have to do a mixed use project.

Councilmember Brubaker asked if the grant could be used if the project was housing only. Ms. Maher will research this question.

This \$ 85,000 could not be used for preparing the building for use as a museum. An application for the new project (museum) could be submitted for consideration.

Councilmember Brubaker would like to know how operating costs would be handled if the building was a museum.

Mayor Bruchey stated Mary Haines had asked to be able to present her information at this meeting. He indicated Ms. Haines would be asked to attend a future meeting. After staff receives the information about a housing only project, the Mayor and Council will discuss this issue again.

Maryland Legacy Grant for Alms House

Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, was present to discuss the Maryland Legacy Grant program. The State is accepting applications for heritage grant projects. The focus of the City's applications in the past has been on the City's Target Investment Zone for the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, which is a certain portion of the downtown. Any capital grant request must be limited to this area. Non-capital grants (i. e. interpretive plaques) can be for projects anywhere in the City, since the entire corporate boundaries are located within the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area.

In the past, funding was received to assist with interpretive plaques, pedestrian directional signs, downtown lightpole banners, sidewalk widening on S. Potomac Street and the Doleman Collection Assessment and Feasibility Study project.

An idea for a non-capital grant proposal is to request a \$ 5,000 grant to allow the City to create 15 interpretive plaques for historic buildings and sites along some proposed walking tour routes. The \$ 4,000 - \$ 5,000 match for the grant could come from the same source as the other plaque projects – the Downtown Beautification account in the General Fund.

An idea for the capital grant proposal is for a \$ 100,000 grant to allow the City to expand the sidewalk widening and enhancement project to the first block of N. Potomac Street, which is within the Target Investment Zone.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and Council to apply for the maximum amount permitted. If the grant is awarded, the Mayor and Council would still have to approve the project before any work began.

Comprehensive Zoning Map Amendments Phase I and Proposed Mixed Use Zoning Districts and Amendments to 2008 Comprehensive Plan to Comply with HB 1141's Requirements for a Growth Element and a Water Resources Element

Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, and Stuart Bass, Comprehensive Planner, were present to discuss rezonings that are associated with the Comprehensive Plan that was

adopted in 2008. This is an attempt to look at existing zoning and amending the zoning map to meet the Plan's recommendations. This is Phase I of the recommended changes.

The following are the Comprehensive Rezonings, by issue, in Phase I

1. Issue Downtown – C3, R2, R3, R4 to D-MU, also C3 to C2
2. Issue 1: Park Circle, Locust Point – R2, R3, C2 to C1
3. Issue 2: South Potomac Street, across from Bester Elementary School – IR to R2
4. Issue 3: Mill Street Area (Hager Park) – R2 to R4
5. Issue 4: East Side of S. Mulberry Street, near Ray Street – C2 to R2
6. Issue 6: Virginia Avenue to W. Howard Street – C2 to C1
7. Issue 7: W. Wilson Boulevard, S. Burhans Boulevard, and Virginia Avenue – C2 to R1
8. Issue 8: South Potomac Street near W. Howard Street – IR to C2
9. Issue 12: Frederick Street between Eastern Boulevard and Commonwealth Avenue, Hayes Avenue area – C2, IG, IR, R1 to C2, R3
10. Issue 13: 1st Street Industrial Area – IG to IR
11. Issue 14: NE Corner of S. Locust Street & Lee Street – R4 to R2
12. Issue 15: Houses in 200-300 Blocks, Frederick Street – C2 to R4

Changes recommended in the Comprehensive Plan include a revision to the existing C3 District, which is the downtown area, a new neighborhood mixed-use zoning district, and a new zoning category for planned industrial areas.

With respect to Downtown, the Plan recommends a new zoning district that would take the place of the current C3 district. This is the Downtown Mixed Use District. Substantive changes are minimal compared to the current C3 District. Basically, the district is being renamed and some new construction development standards are being added.

The Neighborhood Mixed Use District is a new district designed to apply to areas where the City envisions a seamless combination of residential, commercial, office and institutional uses, possibly resulting from a special study or master planning efforts. The idea is to provide standards which would allow and encourage traditional neighborhood development.

The Industrial Mixed Use District is a new district designed to provide locations for light industrial parks, office parks, research and development facilities, hi-tech communication and technology facilities, trucking and distribution facilities, and minor commercial uses that support job centers.

The Planning Commission is recommending amendments to the 2008 Comprehensive Plan to comply with the new State requirements (via H.B. 1141) for a Growth Element and a Water Resources Element. The deadline for compliance is October 1, 2009. (The mandatory stormwater management element will come later following completion of the County's Water Resources Element study.)

Many of the requirements were included in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. Most are clarifying or minor in nature. When the amendments for the growth element are adopted, the City will not be able to annex properties outside the medium range growth area. A land use plan has been developed to assist with growth outside the City. Amendments are proposed in various chapters to comply with the regulation. The Maryland Department of Planning reviewed the City's plan and their recommendations are included in the proposed amendments.

Public Hearings have been scheduled for February 24, 2009 to receive public input on Phase I of the Comprehensive Zoning Map Amendments, the proposed mixed use Zoning Districts (ZT-2008-02) and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to comply with HB 1141.

Draft Resolution of Ballot Question

William Nairn, City Attorney, presented a draft ballot question to submit to the voters asking if the election date for city elections should be changed.

It was the general consensus that the question would be placed on the General Election ballot, rather than the primary election ballot.

Councilmember Brubaker wants to make sure voters understand the results of the question is not binding. The Mayor and Council would still have to pass a charter amendment to make the change.

Councilmember Metzner stated the Mayor and Council should follow what the voters want. Councilmember Cromer agreed.

It was suggested that the City purchase back page advertising space to let voters know voting yes to the question means changing the election date. Voting no means not changing the election date. Mayor Bruchey stated notices should be placed on Channel 6 as well.

Councilmember Nigh asked if it is true that the City would not pay anything if the election date is changed to coincide with the presidential election. She asked what the actual cost would be for the City to run the election. She suggested using different methods, such as paper ballots, to decrease the costs. Voters should be made aware of the cost information as well.

Councilmember Metzner stated it would be appropriate to request from the Election Board, in writing, verification of the costs to the City if the election date is changed.

Councilmember Brubaker suggested that the word election be changed to elections after Presidential to include both the primary and general dates.

It was suggested to not use the Article and Section numbers in the question. This information may be required by election law.

The changes discussed will be made.

CITY ADMINSTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, reported the Cramer Alley project will begin this week. He handed out a summary of significant community and organizational needs and recommended future plans as identified by City Department Managers.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember A. Parson-McBean thanked Deborah Everhart, Economic Development Director, and Karen Giffin, Director of Community Affairs, for their assistance with a letter to Senator Cardin. The correspondence is a stimulus request for funding to encourage small businesses to come to Hagerstown. She expressed disappointment that her request for information regarding options for the Elizabeth Hager Center was not fully explored.

Councilmember M. E. Brubaker reported the Washington County Coalition spent the day in Annapolis last week talking to legislators.

Councilmember K. S. Cromer asked that the sewer problems on W. Wilson Boulevard (as reported to her in an email) be discussed at a work session. Mr. Zimmerman indicated information was provided to the Mayor and Council stating the City policy is that maintenance of lateral lines are the property owners' responsibility.

Councilmember Cromer reported that children are riding bicycles and skateboards in the parking decks. This is a traffic hazard and she asked that the police department look into this.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner stated something needs to be done about the number of liquidation signs that are placed all over the city every weekend. He recommended having city employees remove the signs immediately when they are placed in the right of way. He asked staff to provide a recommendation for a stricter regulation prohibiting this type of sign.

Councilmember P. M. Nigh urged utility customers to make arrangements to pay their bills. The council members cannot forgive a bill. She asked for volunteers to assist American Little League, which is facing financial trouble.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II attended the grand opening of Golden Corral. Golden Corral gave him \$ 200.00 to donate to a charity. He asked that the donation be given to the Community Free Clinic.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and City Council, on a motion duly made, seconded and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: March 31, 2009