

WORK SESSION – March 14, 2006

US 40 at Edgewood Drive Intersection Improvements – Joint Discussion with
Washington County Commissioners and State Highway Administration

This portion of the Work Session was held at the Washington County Office Building, Room 255 on Tuesday, March 14, 2006. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. In attendance were: Mayor Robert E. Bruchey, II, City Council Members K. B. Aleshire, K. S. Cromer, P. M. Nigh, and L. C. Metzner, City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, City Attorney John Urner and City Clerk D. K. Spickler. Councilmember A. Parson-McBean was out of town at a conference and was not in attendance.

State Highway Administration representatives were present to discuss the US 40 at Edgewood Drive Intersection Improvement. The project is located at the intersection of US 40 and Edgewood Drive in Hagerstown. The purpose of the project is to improve the capacity of the intersection.

The US 40 project limits would be 1200-1300 feet east and west of Edgewood Drive. US 40 will provide a third thru lane in each direction that provides bicycle compatibility by the reconstruction and widening of the existing shoulders.

The Edgewood Drive project limits would be approximately 1200 ft. east and west to US 40. Edgewood Drive will provide two left turn lanes, one thru lane, and one thru/right shared lane in each direction.

The proposed intersection level of Service in 2010 is anticipated to be C and D classifications and by 2030 at C, D, E and F classifications.

The total project cost estimate is \$ 11,934,000. Preliminary engineering is estimated at \$ 652,000. The cost for obtaining right-of-ways is \$ 3,491,000. Utility costs are estimated at \$ 2,813,000. Construction costs are anticipated to be \$ 4,978,000.

The City, County and SHA partnered to complete an extensive study of the US 40 corridor in 2004. The total cost of the study was \$ 103,000 with each party contributing one-third of the cost. SHA has previously committed and spent \$ 217,000 for Preliminary Engineering. The remaining cost required to complete all phases of this project is \$ 11.718 million. The SHA representatives stated the project has been proposed to have a one-third cost sharing agreement between the City, County and State, which would be approximately \$ 3.906 million for each party.

Councilmember Metzner pointed out that the intersection will still be at an unacceptable grade after spending \$ 11,000,000. Gary Rohrer, Washington County Director of Public Works, stated the construction of R. Paul Smith Boulevard would help alleviate some of the traffic at this intersection. The SHA representatives stated a grade of C or D is not unreasonable for that intersection.

Councilmember Aleshire pointed out that City taxpayers would, in effect, be contributing to the cost of this project three times if a three way split is used. Commissioner Kercheval asked if there could be a discussion with the SHA on funding levels.

This portion of the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m. The remainder of the meeting was held in the Council Chambers at the City Hall, beginning at 5:00 p.m. There was no City Attorney present at this portion of the meeting.

Deerfield Knolls Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Stuart Bass, Comprehensive Planner, and Bruce Pitts, Applicant, were present to further discuss the Deerfield Knolls Planned Unit Development.

Staff has discussed increasing the size of the PUD requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. One problem that has been identified with respect to the Zoning Ordinance is the 5 acre minimum required for a PUD, which is perhaps too small an area and makes it difficult to include a variety of housing types. This has been identified as a possible text change, along with some other standards, such as a mix of uses or housing types. That being said, the Ordinance requires 5 acres, this proposal meets that standard, and is fully compliant with existing regulations.

A second item of concern is the extensive use of garages and driveways fronting the street, which will create a streetscape of garage fronts. The historical pattern of Hagerstown is that the buildings are pushed to the front of the street with detached garages to the rear and the preference of the Planning Department is that new development should follow this pattern.

With respect to the street right of way widths, the extension of Mineral Avenue, as shown on the Concept Plan, is a 40' ROW with a sidewalk on one side and a landscape strip on the other. The proposed new street, Peleton Street, is shown as a 45' ROW with a sidewalk on both sides. It is important to distinguish between the right of way and the actual paved cart way or travel way. Both streets will have a standard 24' travel way. The Planning Department would prefer narrower street widths for local residential neighborhoods. Standard city street requirements detail a 60' ROW with sidewalks required on both sides. However, the Engineering Department has indicated a willingness to consider alternatives and has worked with the developer on the design of the concept plan.

Councilmember Aleshire stated these units are described as townhouse units. They are not really townhouses, since there is no subdivision for each and no land is involved. Mr. Pitts stated the plan specifies they will be ownership condominium units. Councilmember Aleshire expressed his concern that the units may become rental units.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he discussed the access for emergency services with the Fire Marshal. He is concerned that this will not be addressed prior to possible approval of the PUD.

Councilmember Metzner and Councilmember Aleshire asked that a deed restriction be included so that garages could not be turned into living space. This has to be done in order to meet the off-street parking requirements. Councilmember Metzner asked who would enforce the restriction. Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, stated it would be a zoning violation.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he is not in favor of approving the PUD. His concerns include: density, backs of homes facing the street, fire department access and the size of the lot-lots.

Councilmember Metzner asked that the fire and rescue access information be provided prior to approving the PUD. Councilmember Cromer and Councilmember Nigh agreed. Councilmember Aleshire indicated Fire Chief Gary Hawbaker stated he was concerned about the amount of water pressure and how limited access would be with parking on the street.

Councilmember Metzner asked that the developer work with Councilmember Aleshire to address his concerns. There has been a problem with this property for at least ten years. There are limitations to what can be done with it. One option is to have it remain as green space. However, this is not currently "nice" green space.

Mayor Bruchey asked what could be done to increase the water pressure. Michael Spiker, Director of Utilities, stated a line could be tied to Burhans Boulevard. Mayor Bruchey expressed concern about the location of the stormwater management ponds and how close they are to the street. He hopes the issues can be addressed. He asked that Councilmember Aleshire and Mr. Pitts discuss these issues and provide revisions to the plan, in anticipation of approval of the PUD.

Maryland Heritage Area Authority Grants

Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, was present to discuss ideas for Heritage Area grant applications by the City. Staff must prepare the necessary applications for the selected projects by the March 22nd submittal deadline to the Washington County Planning Department.

The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area in Washington, Frederick, and Carroll Counties is scheduled to be certified by the Maryland Heritage Area Authority in May 2006. Certification will make certain for-profit projects in Hagerstown eligible for State tax credits and certain public sector and non-profit projects in the downtown "target investment zone" eligible for State tax credits and certain public sector and non-profit projects in the downtown "target investment zone" eligible for State Heritage grants.

The process for grant review is submittal to the Washington County Planning Department by March 22, 2006. Steve Goodrich at the County will gather the Washington County applications and forward them for review on March 30 by the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will rank and prioritize the applications and forward to the applications to the Maryland Heritage Area Authority by the April 3, 2006 deadline.

Eligible projects are ones which implement recommendations in the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan or are consistent with recommendations in the Plan. The recommendations for Hagerstown's target investment zone are outlined in the City's 1997 Comprehensive Plan and are as follows:

1. Interpretive Plaques
2. Directional Signs
3. Banners
4. S. Potomac Street Streetscape Project
5. A & E Parking Deck Gateway Element

Two other projects are being reviewed. They are renovations for the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and a museum by First Hose Volunteer Fire Company.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to submit grant applications for the five projects identified for the 2006 round of heritage area grants. Formal authorizations will be included on the agenda for the March 28, 2006 meeting.

Trash Collection and Recycling Update

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, stated in subsequent meetings with the contractor Allied Waste, a slight modification is being recommended for the trash collection program.

Staff is requesting that the current Friday and Saturday trash collection be shifted to Thursday and Friday in the North and South area. Staff is also suggesting that when the six major holidays occur, a holiday plan of shifting all collections by one day be used.

The advantages of this suggested program are:

1. There would no longer be any trash set outs in the downtown (or anywhere in the City) on Friday nights, unless there is a holiday.
2. All zones would have service three nights instead of four since some services occur the same night. This will help with the perception that materials are sitting out "all the time."
3. There would no longer be any scheduled Saturday collections.

Staff is developing a unique zone map and collection calendar for each zone. They plan to send these to everyone receiving a blue co-mingled bin, and to post them on the website and publish them in the newspaper.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to approve the recommended changes.

Containers will be distributed within the next two weeks.

Gang Awareness

Police Chief Arthur Smith, Todd Dunkle, Hagerstown Police Department, and Captain Bob Leatherman, Washington County Sheriff's Department, were present to provide information about gangs.

Chief Smith stated it is hard to find a place that does not have gangs. He indicated the biggest threat is from MS 13, which uses senseless violence. They are not in this area yet, but they are close. Public education is the key to making people aware of the presence of gangs. He recommended that all City employees, postal carriers, and Washington County employees attend a gang awareness meeting.

Officer Dunkle stated there are gangs of Bloods in Hagerstown. It would be best to establish a baseline definition and notify everyone of the definition. From this definition, reasonable enforcement tactics could be established.

Councilmember Metzner heard Officer Dunkle's presentation and agreed it would be beneficial for all city employees to hear it. Mayor Bruchey stated the presentation audience could be expanded to include the other people mentioned.

Mr. Zimmerman stated two sessions have already been held and more could be scheduled.

Captain Leatherman stated there is a coordinated effort of law enforcement and elected officials to educate the public and to get everyone involved. The Washington County Gang Task Force has been established. The steering committee has appointed an assessment team. The goal of the education and awareness programs is to increase safety for families and youth. Prevention is one of the key topics of the task force.

It was mentioned that a number of people released from the Department of Corrections are choosing to stay in Hagerstown. Councilmember Cromer suggested talking with the Delegation about this problem. Mayor Bruchey stated this has been done. However, Maryland does not prohibit parolees from staying in the area after they are released. Some States do have this prohibition.

City Administrator's Comments

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, had no additional comments.

Mayor and Council Comments

Councilmember P. M. Nigh stated she received a parking ticket while attending the Board of Public Safety meeting. She has paid the ticket.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner extended sympathy to the family of Danny Rice, a retired City employee who passed away this week. He was a kind, gentle man.

Councilmember K. S. Cromer also extended sympathy to Mr. Rice's family.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire had a list of questions regarding the total compensation study that he would like the consultants and staff to review. He pointed out that the \$ 11 million for road improvements at US 40 and Edgewood Drive will bring the intersection up to passable, but it will need additional work.

He congratulated Jamison Door Company on their 100th Anniversary.

Mayor Robert E. Bruchey, II stated Councilmember Parson Mc-Bean is attending the National League of Cities Conference in Washington, DC and is unable to be at this meeting. He thanked the BluesFest Committee for the fundraiser that was held two weeks ago. The event was paid for before it started. On-line stream video is now available on the City's web page.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and City Council, on a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember K. S. Cromer, the meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: _____