

WORK SESSION AND EXECUTIVE SESSION – May 4, 2010

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session and Executive Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:07 p.m., Tuesday, May 4, 2010, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers W. M. Breichner, M. E. Brubaker, F. W. Easton, A. C. Haywood, L. C. Metzner; City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, City Attorney John Urner, City Attorney William Nairn and D. K. Spickler, City Clerk.

Discussion of Strategic Plan

The Mayor and Council met to consider their goals and vision for Hagerstown. 2012 represents the 250th anniversary of the founding of Hagerstown in 1762. As this important milestone approaches, it would be appropriate for the Mayor and Council to consider the challenges and opportunities facing Hagerstown and to consider what they envision Hagerstown to become in the future.

The Mayor and Council took the next steps toward developing a strategic plan for Hagerstown. The discussion focused on the information provided by members of the Mayor and Council and Department Heads reflecting their thoughts on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats impacting Hagerstown.

Based on the responses received from all members of the Mayor and Council and each of the Department Heads, the information is summarized into the following areas of focus:

Most pressing needs facing Hagerstown:

1. Attraction of higher paying jobs
2. Redevelopment of downtown and industrial/commercial buildings
3. Maintaining quality of life through the public services provided to citizens
4. Furthering the financial benefits of annexation
5. Diversifying revenue sources
6. Revitalizing neighborhoods and housing
7. Attraction of higher income residents

Hagerstown Strengths:

1. Good management practices in City government
2. Quality of life and cost of living
3. Excellent community services
4. Hub City (Regional City)
5. City is provider of essential services
6. Proximity to metro area
7. Excellent city staff
8. Home Rule/Municipal Government

Hagerstown's Weaknesses:

1. Low-income neighborhoods with high rental ratio and subsidized housing
2. Constraints and deficiencies in internal operations
3. Declining city revenues and high tax rate
4. Lack of higher paying jobs
5. Lack of investment in downtown and center city residential neighborhoods
6. Struggling economic development climate and vacant buildings
7. Negative perception of community
8. Need for stronger and clearer organizational vision

Most Important Opportunities

1. Redefine city operating structure and external operations
2. Promote quality of life and lower cost of living to attract new residents and businesses
3. Use and promote city resources to direct growth to Hagerstown and generate new revenues
4. Downtown and community revitalization
5. Better maximize use of technology to support city operations
6. Strategic planning

Threats Facing Hagerstown:

1. Budget constraints negatively affecting city operations
2. External factors negatively affecting city budget
3. Economic development leaving the city and/or continuing outside the city in suburbs
4. Increasing risk for investment in city
5. Negative impact of high property tax rate
6. Pressure to dissolve city government or certain city operations
7. Negative perception of community
8. Growing social problems

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, stated the timing of the discussion about the strategic plan is good in connection with the discussion of the budget. It provides the opportunity for the Mayor and City Council to consider what they would like to see for Hagerstown. Staff is prepared to assist the Mayor and City Council however they decide to proceed from this point. The ultimate goal would be for the Mayor and Council to adopt and approve a document that sets forth the direction for the City, developed by the Mayor and Council.

Mayor Bruchey asked how the Council would like to proceed with this information.

Councilmember Breichner believes one of the most pressing needs is the redevelopment of downtown. Higher paying jobs goes along with redevelopment.

Councilmember Haywood stated the Council has to look at and support the commuter population as well. She thinks the Council should review each department and determine how the operations fit within the budget and the guidelines of the analysis.

Mr. Zimmerman indicated it would be helpful to staff for the Mayor and Council to state what their priorities are. Staff could then develop objectives to meet those priorities. The departmental reviews would be a part of developing a plan and matching it to the objectives.

Councilmember Haywood believes an analysis of how things are going right now has to be completed. She stated ideas are less valuable than the operation.

Councilmember Brubaker suggested listing the infill properties and underused sites separately.

Mr. Zimmerman stated one thing that is clear from the responses is that one of the needs is to focus on the vitality of the City.

Councilmember Breichner stated a key to the vitality is re-use of vacant properties. There are many examples of how to re-use property effectively.

Mr. Zimmerman stated if Councilmember Haywood wishes to identify revitalization as a focus area, staff could provide plans and projects to meet this focus. Councilmember Haywood is glad everyone is looking at this seriously. She believes the list doesn't identify anything that is groundbreaking

Councilmember Easton stated the Mayor and Council needs to establish a strategy. Numbers can be reviewed but that doesn't develop a strategy.

Councilmember Breichner asked if the strategic plan includes a new parking deck, a new stadium or Central Chemical. Mr. Zimmerman suggested if the Mayor and Council wish to focus on these projects they should state they are the priorities. There is no funding included in the budget for a parking deck or a new stadium. Funding could be included if the Mayor and Council wish.

Councilmember Brubaker stated if a new stadium is a priority, determining what to do with the surrounding area must be considered. He doesn't believe it should be up to the City to be the lead agency for a new parking deck.

Councilmember Easton suggested using the five focus areas in the old strategic plan and integrate the responses into these focus areas.

Councilmember Haywood stated she thinks the most valuable thing in the list of responses is the verbatim statements. The memo offers a very general summary analysis of the ideas presented. She is willing to review the responses line by line but she thinks

they need to look at the City's operation as a whole. She thinks the budget and the vision for the City has to be combined.

Councilmember Easton stated the 2002 categories should be reviewed to reflect current situations. He suggested developing five to ten categories, which would most likely be individual departments. He thinks there should be more structure to the plan.

Mr. Zimmerman asked if the key performance areas noted match the Mayor and Council's goals.

Councilmember Haywood stated the goals have to be discussed as they relate to individual departments. They cannot discuss revitalization without talking about economic development. Staff is capable of developing projects. The Mayor and Council should develop a business plan and keep in mind how the plan is beneficial overall.

Mayor Bruchey pointed out that a business plan also includes benchmarks. The Mayor and Council have to determine what their goals are. This in turn will provide direction for staff to meet the established goals. This would also include reviewing department operations.

Councilmember Haywood pointed out that a business plan also includes a review the resources that are available to meet the goals. In order to know what resources are available, a clear picture of how things function is necessary.

Councilmember Metzner stated the Mayor and Council needs to have goals. Reaching the goal would include discussing the resources available. The group needs to understand that they can't compare government operations to business operations. The government has limited resources. The Mayor and Council have to figure out how best use the resources available.

Councilmember Haywood stated it would be a waste of time for the Mayor and Council to develop ideas, since staff is capable of developing ideas. The Mayor and Council need to determine how to meet the ideas.

Councilmember Brubaker stated the list is nice, but without strategies, it doesn't get the Mayor and Council anywhere. If the previously noted performance areas are accepted, he would want to update strategies and objectives for the future.

Mr. Zimmerman stated staff thought they were following through with the direction of the Mayor and Council by completing a SWOT analysis and developing the beginning stages of a strategic plan. He stated it would be helpful if the Mayor and Council could provide a definitive direction for staff to work toward.

Councilmember Metzner suggested incorporating the ideas from other council members into a process that would establish a limited number of large goals, review department operations with the goal in mind and determine the availability of resources.

Councilmember Haywood stated the Mayor and Council can't move forward until they know what is holding them back. For example, how can a goal of going green be established until they know why the City isn't green right now.

Mr. Zimmerman stated if the Mayor and Council identified a focus area of livability of Hagerstown, staff could pull thoughts from the SWOT analysis to fit into that area. If five to seven key performance areas are identified, it would provide a clear direction to staff.

Councilmember Haywood suggested that the Mayor and Council identify needs and have staff develop the strategy to address the needs. Councilmember Metzner stated the Mayor and Council should develop the strategy.

Councilmember Easton stated the City needs to look at consolidation, combining of services and working with other entities. Civic organizations should be asked for support and assistance. An example would be equipment for City Park. He suggested providing support in ways, other than money. The City needs to be the center of the community. School children, civic groups, church groups and the City should work together to create community pride.

Councilmember Metzner stated the Mayor and Council's job should be to develop goals and directions, not develop details to reach the goals. He expressed frustration that no direction has been established during this lengthy discussion. He doesn't know how a strategy can be developed without a clear goal.

Mayor Bruchey stated it appears that a consensus of the Council members are agreeable to using the five performance areas as a starting point. He asked Staff to focus on these five areas and incorporate goals and objectives into the outline. This will be scheduled for additional discussion in two weeks.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, had no additional comments.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember M. E. Brubaker had no additional comments.

Councilmember W. M. Breichner attended the Chamber of Commerce meeting and has provided everyone with a copy of the lobbyist report that was discussed.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner had no additional comments.

Councilmember A. C. Haywood had no additional comments.

Councilmember F. Easton had no additional comments.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II attended the Diamond Classic event on May 3, 2010 at the Suns Stadium.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – May 4, 2010

On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember F. W. Easton, the Mayor and Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in closed session to consider the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction, #1; to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation, #8; to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto, #3; and to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice, #7 at 5:21 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, Hagerstown, Maryland. The agenda included item #4, to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State. This item will be placed on the open session agenda for May 11, 2010. The following people were in attendance: Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II, Councilmember W. M. Breichner, Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, Councilmember F. W. Easton, Councilmember A. C. Haywood, Councilmember L. C. Metzner, City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, City Attorney John Urner, City Attorney William Nairn, Larry Bayer, Community Development Manager, Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, Stuart Bass, Comprehensive Planner, and Donna Spickler, City Clerk. The meeting was held to discuss appointments to the Board of Technical Appeals, the status of a loan through a City program, and potential sites for a Washington County project. No formal action was taken at the meeting. On a motion duly made, seconded and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: June 22, 2010