

WORK SESSION – June 9, 2009

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:04 p.m., Tuesday, June 9, 2009, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers W. M. Breichner, M. E. Brubaker, F. Easton, A. C. Haywood and L. C. Metzner; City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, and D. K. Spickler, City Clerk.

Kathy Woodson, Zion Baptist Church Youth Department, presented a check from the INAM (It's Not About Me) Youth Club, to be used toward the Utility Relief Fund. The INAM Club held a car wash on May 16, 2009 and raised \$ 270.

Status Report: Central Booking, Consolidated Dispatch Center and Other Projects

Chief Arthur Smith, Sheriff Douglas Mullendore and Kevin Lewis, Director of Emergency Services, were present to provide information about the Consolidated 911 Center and other joint initiatives that enhance the operation capabilities of both agencies while making better use of funding.

There are a number of projects currently underway between the Hagerstown Police Department and the Washington County Sheriff's Office/Washington County Department of Emergency Services which are now nearing completion.

Initiatives which are scheduled for completion later this year include the Consolidated 911 Center, the countywide radio system, Central Booking and the merging of the City/County records management system. Ongoing joint initiatives include the Narcotics Task Force, the Washington County Special Response Team, the Western Maryland Crime Lab, the Western Maryland Police Academy, the Gang Prevention Task Force and the Warrant Task Force.

It is the belief of these three governmental agencies that mutual cooperation across City/County lines makes all parties more efficient and effective and gives all Washington County tax payers additional benefit for their tax dollars.

Mr. Lewis stated the Combined 911 Center will provide dispatch services for both police agencies, fire and rescue. It will save money and increase efficiency. He recognized the effort of the employees of all the agencies involved. The consolidation will occur on July 1, 2009. The 911 Center will also be administering the County Alarm Ordinance (which the City of Hagerstown has adopted).

Sheriff Mullendore indicated the new radio system will allow communication to and from all areas of the County. Hagerstown police officers and Sheriff's Department deputies will be able to talk to each other through the radio system. Other agencies may also be part of the radio system.

Chief Smith stated Central Booking will be operational later this year. When this facility is implemented, officers will be able to return to the street sooner.

Medium Range Growth Area Informational Presentation

State law requires that municipalities adopt a Growth Element in their Comp Plans which, once adopted, must be linked to any annexations that occur in the future. The City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan and subsequent amendments in April 2009 have brought the City's plan into compliance with this requirement.

Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, and Stuart Bass, Comprehensive Planner, were present to provide information regarding the Growth Element. The 2008 Plan, as amended, includes the growth demand, land capacity, and infrastructure capacity analysis required by State law to justify the boundaries set for the MRGA. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan defines a growth boundary for Hagerstown, which is the Medium Range Growth Area (MRGA). There is sufficient City water and sewer capacity to serve the projected growth in the MRGA for the next 20 years, but not the ultimate demand for growth. The MRGA is within the designated County Urban Growth Area.

As required by State law, the City consulted with the County on the proposed Growth Element at a joint meeting of the two Planning Commissions in November, 2008. The April amendments offer to explore expansion of MRGA boundaries to serve County economic development priorities, if cooperative arrangements can be devised to provide water and sewer capacity to serve the expanded area since it is known there is insufficient capacity to serve the ultimate demand in the existing MRGA area.

Strategies to increase capacity for future demand include:

1. I & I improvements to remove ground and storm water from sewer system.
2. Water line and main improvements to increase efficiency.
3. Coordination with Washington County on shared capacity.
4. Prioritize service areas.
5. Continue to assess and upgrade with new technology.

All future Annexation Plans must be consistent with the Growth Element, which means no annexations will be approved beyond the MRGA for the next 20 years. The City will not extend water and sewer lines or allow connections to lines outside the MRGA for the next 20 years, unless an exception is granted through the City's Water and Sewer Policy.

The current capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Plant is 8 million gallons per day (gpd). Upgrades are being completed and all projects must be approved by the State of Maryland. The R. C. Willson Water Treatment Plant currently draws 11 million gpd. The City's permit allows 15 million gpd.

FY 2010 Community Legacy Application

Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, and Larry Bayer, Community Development Manager, were present to discuss submittal of an FY 2010 application to the State's Community Legacy Program. Staff needs Mayor and City Council authorization to begin the process for the application. A Letter of Intent is due on June 15, 2009, with the full application being due on July 29, 2009.

Staff is proposing the following projects for the City's FY 2010 Community Legacy application:

1. Home Pride Residential Renovations Grant Program - \$ 200,000
Grants to elderly and workforce home-owners in the Community Legacy area for projects to bring the property up to code and/or to make upgrades to the home.
2. Downtown Living Residential Rehab and Adaptation Grant Program – \$ 300,000
Grants to downtown property owners for projects to renovate existing sub-standard residential units in mixed-use buildings or to adaptively re-use a non-residential building into residential units.

It was the general consensus to authorize the application process.

Curb and Sidewalk Replacement Program – Task Force Creation

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, stated sidewalks improve the livability of neighborhoods, are essential for those with disabilities, and provide safe walk routes for school children and all citizens. Historically the City sends "curb and sidewalk notices" to property owners who abut substandard or deteriorated curb and/or sidewalks in the City. Several hundred notices are sent each year. A typical curb and sidewalk replacement costs the owner in the range of \$ 2,000 to \$ 3,000.

One idea discussed by the last administration is for the City to assume the responsibility of replacing curb and sidewalk. For the City to complete the work, a fund would need to be established to create a pool of money to replace all the deficient curb and sidewalk along overlay streets, where street trees have damaged sidewalks, and to replace random deteriorated curb and sidewalks throughout the City. This fund would be created by assessing a new quarterly fee to each water account or to each parcel within the City. This fund would be used for all curb and sidewalk repairs within the City and the property owners would be relieved of the impact of receiving a curb and sidewalk notice.

Staff is requesting the Mayor and Council to consider creating a task force to study these issues in more detail, to appoint one member of the Council to be on the task force, and provide nominees for the task force to staff by June 16, 2009. The members would then be approved by the Mayor and Council at the June 23, 2009 meeting.

Councilmember Brubaker suggested including a discussion about home owner associations who already collect money from residents for sidewalk repair.

Councilmember Haywood stated the goal of the task force would be to research ways to make it easier financially for sidewalk repairs. She volunteered to be on the task force.

The Mayor and Council agreed to create this task force. Names for consideration are to be submitted to the Engineering Department.

City 2008/2009 Bond Financing Status Update

Alfred Martin, Finance Director, stated the City needs to move forward with the planned City bond financing for major capital projects. For many of these projects, the City is already contractually committed or obligated to move forward under memorandums of understanding with other entities. An enabling ordinance was approved on November 4, 2008.

The City delayed proceeding with the actual sale of the bonds in December or earlier this year due to a significant amount of uncertainty in the credit markets including the municipal bond market. That uncertainty is clearing and the markets have stabilized.

The next step in the bond sale process is for the Mayor and Council to adopt a bond resolution spelling out the details of the bond sale prior to the actual sale. Staff would like to have this resolution approved at the June 23, 2009 meeting. This will allow the bond sale to be completed in mid-July.

As of June 30, 2009, the total bonded debt for the City will be \$ 53.4 million. The average bond issue is \$ 10 million. The last bond issue was in 2006. This bond issue will cover projects that have been deferred since the last issue.

Councilmember Breichner asked when the Roslyn Building renovation was removed from the list. Councilmember Brubaker stated it was deferred for one year in order to provide funding for street resurfacing.

It was the general consensus to move forward in the process.

Discussion of Rules of Procedure

The current Rules of Procedure were adopted by the Mayor and Council on March 28, 2006.

Councilmember Metzner suggested hearing citizen comments before public hearings. He also asked that the wording in 2.7 be changed to reflect the City Attorney shall attend meetings, upon request.

Approval of the Rules of Procedure will be included on the June 23, 2009 agenda.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, reminded everyone the butterflies will be around town until June 20, 2009.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember F. Easton would like to explore the possibility of using paperless meeting packets.

Councilmember A. C. Haywood agreed with Councilmember Easton. She would like to see the Mayor and Council lead a green initiative by example.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner agreed that paperless meeting packets would be a good idea. Concerts continue weekly in University Plaza and City Park. Veterans need to be remembered. He suggested authorizing another veterans trip to Washington, D.C. in the fall.

Councilmember W. M. Breichner mentioned that Lynn Lerew has been the Hagerstown Municipal Band director for 35 years. His contribution and dedication to the City should be recognized. He is encouraged by the number of people participating in Neighborhoods 1st programs.

Councilmember M. E. Brubaker had no additional comments.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II reminded everyone that the City Center Jazz Concerts continue on Thursday evenings through July 2, 2009. A Flag Day ceremony will be held on June 12, 2009 at University Plaza. On June 11, 2009, the City will hold an informational meeting regarding the new 100 percent guarantee America's Recovery Capital (ARC) loans being launched by the Small Business Administration (SBA).

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 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: July 28, 2009