

WORK SESSION AND EXECUTIVE SESSION – August 31, 2010

EXECUTIVE SESSION – August 31, 2010

On a motion duly made by Councilmember W. M. Breichner and seconded by Councilmember L. C. Metzner, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in closed session to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto, #3 at 4:03 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, Hagerstown, Maryland. 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, John Lestitian, Department of Community and Economic Development Director, Deborah Everhart, Director of Economic Development, Alfred Martin, Finance Director, Michelle Burkner, Accounting Manager and Donna Spickler, City Clerk. The meeting was held to discuss acquisition of a City Center building for future reuse. No formal action was taken at the meeting. On a motion duly made, seconded and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

WORK SESSION – August 31, 2010

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session and Executive Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 5:10 p.m., Tuesday, August 31, 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, and D. K. Spickler, City Clerk.

Strategic Planning Session

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a Strategic Plan that was created based on the combined responses (from the Mayor and City Council and Staff) to a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The responses were reviewed and placed into categories to develop objectives as a foundation for setting goals.

This proposed Strategic Plan includes Vision and Mission Statements along with four Focus Areas, each of which have an accompanying Goal Statement. The heart of the Strategic Plan is the list of Objectives which are in each of the four focus areas.

Brue Zimmerman, City Administrator, stated input from the Mayor and Council on the objectives stated and focus areas would be helpful. He anticipated that the plan would be adopted in September, 2010. Following adoption, the plan can undergo subsequent amendments in future years as new objectives are identified.

Focus Area #1 is a prosperous community. The goal statement is to create incentives and programs to attract higher paying jobs, increase private sector investment, and market Hagerstown as the premier community for residential and economic development.

The following are objectives for Focus Area 1:

- A. Participate in a community partnership to develop a Parking Master Plan for Downtown by July, 2011 with the goal of identifying site and capacities for future parking facilities.
- B. Complete the Comprehensive Rezoning Plan by October, 2010
- C. Plan for revitalization of Municipal Stadium, or the construction of a new multi-functional stadium, September 2010 to March, 2013
- D. Begin review of bridge over Antietam Creek at Professional Court tied to annexation and future development, September, 2010
- E. Public/Private Partnership to create a high-tech corridor in City Center
- F. Stimulate re-development of City Center
- G. Create a "Creek Walk" of retail and commercial businesses in the area between Dual Highway and Mt. Aetna Road on the East Side of Eastern Boulevard, April, 2011

Councilmember Haywood asked for details about a Creek Walk. John Lestitian, Director of Department of Community and Economic Development, indicated the walk would be from Eastern Boulevard to the MELP area. This would be a multi-purpose area leading into the entire East End area. People attending events at Municipal Stadium could walk to the commercial area. Councilmember Breichner suggested extending the walk to the Stadium.

Councilmember Haywood is concerned that the infrastructure in the Antietam Creek is not secure. The decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources may include refurbishing. Walking trails should not be constructed until the City knows what DNR is planning.

Councilmember Brubaker thinks this idea is premature without a cost and impact review.

Councilmember Haywood would like to focus on waterways as a whole and promote an evaluation of the waterways in Washington County. The Creeks needs to be safe for recreational uses but there are issues that need to be addressed.

Mr. Zimmerman suggested changing the wording to indicate a feasibility plan would be developed.

Councilmember Haywood suggested forming a committee to create a plan. She stated it will be important to talk to the Antietam Watershed Preservation group and the Kiwanis Club.

Councilmember Breichner suggested making the date of September for D (Bridge over Antietam Creek) later. Mayor Bruchey suggested using information already gathered for a study in order to determine what the City's role in the project will be.

Councilmember Brubaker does not support any funding for the project unless proceeds from the property across the road are shared with the City. He wondered why the City would take the lead on this project.

Mayor Bruchey believes the Council is in favor of expanding the City's boundaries to increase revenue to help offset the increasing cost of living for residents. This Strategic Plan gives the Mayor and Council the opportunity to develop plans and ideas for projects. It does not mean every project will be completed or pursued. Councilmember Metzner agreed.

Councilmember Brubaker stated the bridge should have been required when the new hospital was started. Councilmember Breichner agreed. Councilmember Brubaker would support completing a preliminary feasibility study but he does not want the City to be perceived as a leading partner in the project. Councilmember Haywood stated the City should not be the leading partner. The City's analysis of the plan should be the understanding that it is achievable.

Scott Nicewarner, Director of Technology and Support Services, indicated if the Mayor and Council feel the project is important it could stay on the plan as a feasibility study.

Councilmember Easton stated if the City brings all the parties to the table to discuss the project they've done their part.

Councilmember Breichner suggested changing the wording to "cooperate with the County and the State on a plan for revitalization." This would include plans for Eastern Boulevard.

Mr. Lestitian indicated Staff is looking at where fiber could be run to market high tech companies. It was agreed to combine Item E and F.

Focus Area #2 is a vibrant, active and livable community. The goal statement is to focus on specific areas, buildings and projects that create a rich, social and culturally vibrant community.

The following are objectives for Focus Area #2:

- A. Completion of the N. Potomac St. Sidewalk Project by September, 2010
- B. Create an image campaign for Hagerstown and City government, start date of October, 2011
- C. Create and implement a regional campaign to market Hagerstown as the place of choice to live by March, 2011
- D. Develop plan for adaptive Fairgrounds Park grandstand use, January, 2011
- E. Review/update the East End Development Plan
- F. Redevelop remaining lands of the Massey property to compliment the expansion of the Washington County Public Library

- G. Development of “pocket parks” program as part of a Parks Strategic Plan Initiative, July, 2011
- H. Complete commercial/residential redevelopment projects in City Center

Councilmember Breichner suggested including other development goals at Fairgrounds Park, such as the Cannon Avenue entrance. Councilmember Metzner suggested discussing the entrance at a work session.

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, stated the original Fairgrounds Park redevelopment proposal would be reviewed and updated if there is interest. Mayor Bruchey believes the City is missing a great opportunity for a concert venue at Fairgrounds Park.

Councilmember Easton suggested making the date for Item B (Image campaign) earlier than October, 2011. Mr. Lestitian indicated the Leadership Team is working on this project and determined October, 2011 would be a realistic date. He indicated a “go live” date could be set for Spring. This is a separate initiative from Hagerstown Advance. Hagerstown Advance is exclusively for business investment. This initiative would be for all businesses and residents. It would bring as many people together as possible. Councilmember Haywood indicated the rationalization for the expense of Hagerstown Advance was that it would rebrand Hagerstown. She wondered why a separate initiative is being developed.

Mr. Lestitian indicated staff agrees the initiative has to be properly coordinated. The initiative will target different audiences for different things. The City needs to reach out to the surrounding area to get people here. The City also has to reach out to residents in order to promote the City Center and the City. The branding that occurred through Hagerstown Advance is not going away. An image campaign will be used to reach out to younger people.

Councilmember Haywood asked for an update of the effectiveness of Hagerstown Advance.

Councilmember Breichner stated the City and County have to work together on the Massey property. The building needs work. He would like to see a trolley system for downtown. This was studied at one time but the County was not willing to cooperate.

Councilmember Brubaker suggested looking at a trail from the Prospect area to the East End. He stated the East End Development Plan was not adopted by the City. If the City develops a plan, it should be completed by the planning department. He would like the City to take the lead in developing comprehensive strategies.

Councilmember Easton suggesting including a plan for assisting non-profit organizations in non-monetary ways. Some suggestions would be email blasts, Channel 6 and billing inserts. He would also like to develop a plan for promoting volunteerism. His idea would be to have a core group of volunteers to call on. Mr. Lestitian stated the DECD is working on a plan for promoting volunteer services.

Councilmember Easton would like to see Hagerstown as a choice destination. Until this occurs, he would like to explore ways to get people who visit the area to visit Hagerstown. An example would be the people who shop at Prime Outlets.

Because of time constraints of some Councilmembers, discussion of Focus Area #3 and Focus Area # 4 will be scheduled for a later date.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, reminded residents that refuse collection will be one day later next week due to the Labor Day holiday.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember F. W. Easton stated the Fifth Annual Rubbish Roundup will be held on September 18, 2010.

Councilmember A. C. Haywood urged people to participate in the Rubbish Roundup. She thanked staff for their work on the strategic plan.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner stated Ken Krell passed away this week. Dr. Krell was a member of the Charter Review Board. He expressed condolences to Dr. Krell's family.

Councilmember W. M. Breichner asked if speed and red light cameras are going to be discussed again. Councilmember Metzner stated the Board of Traffic and Parking have reviewed red light cameras and are waiting for an agenda time to discuss their review with the Mayor and Council. Councilmember Breichner pointed out these items are being reviewed as a way to help the community and save lives.

Councilmember M. E. Brubaker stated the Mayor and Council are trying to find ways to help reduce costs and deal with fiscal adversity. The City is looking for good strategies with limited funding. He commended staff for their work on the strategic plan.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II thanked staff for the presentation at this meeting. The Strategic Plan is a work in progress and will probably be for the next six months.

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 6:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: September 28, 2010