

WORK SESSION AND EXECUTIVE SESSION – September 9, 2008

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Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session and Executive Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 9, 2008, 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, and D. K. Spickler, City Clerk.

Maryland Theater's Wind Down Friday

A major goal for the Arts and Entertainment District is to increase the foot traffic in the downtown. Thanks to the efforts of the Maryland Theater's Wind Down Friday program, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people in the downtown late on Friday afternoons and early evening.

Under the leadership of Jenni Hatcher, the Maryland Theater has held Wind Down Fridays for each of the past seven Friday evenings. Each week, local businesses sponsor live music and a light buffet in the court yard of the theater. Attendees pay a nominal cover charge to attend with the money being used for a new digital sound system for the theater. The program has been so well received that next year's dates are already being booked.

Ms. Hatcher stated there is a positive change in the community and the event draws a large group each week. Cindy Blackstock, Community Development Coordinator, and Brenda and Laird Bush, members of the Theater's Circle of Friends, were also in attendance. Wind Down Friday will continue through the end of October.

Park for People with Dogs

Cindy Blackstock, Community Development Coordinator, and Junior Mason, Parks and Recreation Supervisor, were present to provide a status report for a park for people with dogs. In June 2007, Mayor and Council granted approval for staff to investigate the feasibility of the creation of an Off-Leash Dog Park. In November 2007, staff recommended Mills Park as the location best suited for the purpose. Staff was authorized to investigate funding sources and gather input from the neighborhood in close proximity to Mills Park and the community at large.

On May 8, 2008, a community forum was held at Northern Middle School Auditorium. Presentations were made by Junior Mason, City of Hagerstown Parks and Recreation, Rych Pullen, Hagerstown Area Dog Owner's Group (HA-DOG), and Paul Miller, Washington County Humane Society. Upon completion of presentations, the floor was open for public questions and comments.

Registration prior to the forum showed participants were divided equally in their support or opposition to the proposal. As the citizen comments were made, it was noted that the opposition was directed at the location rather than the concept. Mills Park, staff's recommendation as a proposed site, had been under utilized and lost its playground equipment as a result of vandalism in February 2008. Concerns for the development of a park for people with dogs at this location by the residents were stated as: increased traffic, noise from barking, inadequate parking and size not adequate for proposed use.

Proponents for the creation of a park of this nature stated benefits as: creates a social venue and green space for pet owners, socialization and exercise of dogs assists with their well being and temperament, and new residents are coming to the City from areas where this type of amenity already exists.

With citizen support of the concept rather than the location, staff seeks approval to further explore other locations that a park for people with dogs could be created. Staff anticipates returning to Mayor and Council in December to discuss including a dog park in December's Program Open Space request.

Councilmember Nigh reported that County Commissioner Kristin Aleshire indicated at the forum that locations in the county should also be considered. Councilmember Brubaker suggested that Program Open Space funds for the City and the County could be combined to create this park.

It was the general consensus to consider other locations and discuss the park with the County Commissioners.

Trick or Treat Night

It was the general consensus to hold Trick or Treat Night on Friday, October 31, 2008 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Trick or Treat will be held on Friday, October 30, 2009 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Annual Safety Report

Kevin DeHaven, Safety and Loss Control Coordinator, presented the annual safety report. A total of 986,115 hours were worked by City employees during Fiscal 2008. The Total Cases Incident Rate was 5.27 during FY 2008. This is the lowest rate during the past five years. The utilization of light-duty greatly reduces the worker's compensation losses. Heart claims have resulted in higher medical costs. A mandatory fitness program could help reduce the City's worker's compensation rates.

The City will continue to provide the training necessary to educate employees in the safety programs that directly affect their safety and health. A goal for FY 2009 is to continue the training opportunities that have been offered. This goal, as always, involves the direct input from each department. Personal safety is not the sole responsibility of the

City alone; everyone shares in that responsibility. The key to a safe workplace is the employees; education of those employees provides the starting point to gauge success.

Mr. DeHaven indicated the Hagerstown Police Department has implemented a no smoking policy for new hires. He is hoping the Fire Department will implement a similar policy.

Donation from Hagerstown Trust for University Plaza

Deborah Everhart, Director of Economic Development, stated Hagerstown Trust has offered a donation to establish shade sails in University Plaza. Hagerstown Trust employees were placed in various committees/teams and given \$500 to donate for a community project. Debbie McCabe, along with her team, met with the City to explore ideas for doing a project downtown. Decorating University Plaza with banners, flowers and shade sails had been identified as a capital project to improve the physical character of downtown to make it more attractive for new businesses and residents in the 2007 Downtown Economic Strategy. Thus, this improvement was readily embraced by this Hagerstown Trust committee.

Staff would like to publicly thank Hagerstown Trust for their generous donation for the enhancement of University Plaza. Staff will bring the final layout for review by the Mayor and Council in the near future.

Ms. Everhart indicated the price per shade sail is approximately \$ 150.00. Councilmember Brubaker asked if the price includes the cost of hardware and mounting. Councilmember Nigh asked about the durability of the sails.

Staff was asked to obtain firm costs and determine locations for the sails. A question was also asked about the responsibility of maintenance for the sails once they are installed.

World War II Veteran's Trip

The next bus trip to Washington, DC will be a City event. Therefore, Karen Giffin, Director of Community Affairs, is authorized to sign contracts for the trip.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, provided information to the Mayor and Council to show how weather situations are monitored.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember P. M. Nigh asked who is responsible to repair sidewalks when handicap signs are removed. On September 14, 2008, Antietam Fire Company will hold a community celebration recognizing their 200th anniversary. The Maryland Theater is a

good asset for Hagerstown. She thanked Tom Riford, Convention and Visitor's Bureau Executive Director, for his enthusiasm about Hagerstown and Washington County.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner had no additional comments.

Councilmember K. S. Cromer had no additional comments.

Councilmember M. E. Brubaker attended the Suns celebration for the Federal Little and Pony League players. It was a fun afternoon and evening. He thanked the little league for the team picture and baseball. He asked that this be displayed at City Hall. He attended the Washington County Emergency Services ceremony today at City Park.

Councilmember A. Parson-McBean stated Wind Down Friday attendance is growing. She expressed condolences to the Henderson family.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II attended the Washington County Emergency Services service at City Park to honor Jeffrey Wroten and Officer Christopher Nicholson who lost their lives in the line of duty. A tree was planted in memory of each officer. The walk of honor was unveiled during the ceremony. The County Commissioners have agreed to donate one of four flag poles at the walk. It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to donate one of the flag poles. The cost is approximately \$ 800.00. The event at the Suns game on August 31, 2008 for the Little League and Pony League players was very good.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – September 9, 2008

On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in closed session at 5:05 p.m. to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State, #4. The following people were in attendance: Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II, Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, Councilmember K. S. Cromer, Councilmember L. C. Metzner, Councilmember P. M. Nigh, Councilmember A. Parson-McBean, City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, City Finance Director Alfred Martin, Economic Development Director Deborah Everhart and City Clerk Donna Spickler. The topic was to discuss a proposal to annex two properties. No formal action was taken at the session. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: September 23, 2008