



# City of Hagerstown, Maryland Status & Information Report No. 2 for 2009

January 16, 2009

To Mayor Bruchey and Members of the City Council:

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

❖❖ JANUARY 2009 ❖❖						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6 4 pm Work Session	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 4 pm Work Session	14	15	16	17
18	19 Holiday City Offices Closed	20 4 pm Joint Meeting with Board of Ed	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 4 pm Budget Retreat  7 pm Regular Session	28	29	30	31

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

- CITY FARMERS MARKET PROMOTIONS.** A staff group met with the vendor liaisons to discuss all the promotions for the year at City Farmers Market.
- NEWSPAPER.** The Director of Community Affairs met with the Executive Editor Jake Womer of the Herald-Mail this week to discuss a number of issues and to tour City Hall. Also, the Publisher of the paper John League visited the Director of Community Affairs to discuss advertising and other issues.
- TELEVISION/RADIO.**
  - The Director of Community Affairs scheduled the Today In the Valley tapings with Mark Kraham of WHAG TV. The shows will promote a variety of events and programs for the City. A year-long calendar was put together. A similar one will soon be done for the Good News Hagerstown Shows.
  - A year-long promotional calendar was also created for Mr. Lou Scally and WJEJ.
- WESTERN MARYLAND BLUES FEST.** The Main Committee of the Western Maryland Blues Fest met this week to discuss plans for the festival slated for May 28, 29, 30 and 31.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Washington County Hospital.** Washington County Hospital staff continues to explore a location in the downtown area for an Urgent Care Facility. Staff is assisting in the search. Several locations are under consideration.
- Good News Hagerstown.** Staff had the opportunity to go on Air this week to talk about Downtown Restaurants, library expansion, Discovery Station and the Maryland Theatre.
- Downtown Hagerstown Event Venues:** The final touches have been made for a new brochure highlighting all

the downtown event facilities and food services. This is a joint project with the City of Hagerstown and the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

4. **Hager Hall Conference and Event Center at the Clarion:** Hager Hall Associates purchased Condo 1 which consists of the 30,000 sq. ft. Convention Center, restaurant (operated by Barefoot Bernies), and the night club (operated as Cancun Cantina West) . A total renovation of the convention center has been completed, and they are working closely with the Clarion Hotel to bring back the large conferences and events that have been lost over the past few years. The Clarion Hotel has also been renovated by separate ownership. Both facilities are beautiful, and if you have an opportunity please take the time to stop by and see the improvements.

## ENGINEERING & CODE ADMINISTRATION

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1. **City/County T.R.I.P. Team** We are working with the County to share information regarding the “Level of Service” of traffic intersections that affect both agencies. We have assembled data on the operation of intersections rated in recent traffic studies so we can identify locations that have deficiency issues that can be addressed as development occurs. This is all part of the T.R.I.P. team efforts by both agencies to identify where roads/streets need to be widened, new streets built, or where signal upgrades are needed.
2. **South Prospect Street** We attended the Historic Heights Neighborhood meeting where that group asked us to investigate the possibility of placing two mid-block chicanes to reduce speeding. We also discussed the sidewalk and street tree issues. Staff is including over \$200,000 in the CIP request to address the street tree issues on this street alone.
3. **Units Condemned for No Heat** Two units at 311 Reynolds Avenue were condemned on January 13, 2009 for no heat or electric. The owner was given 48 hours to secure the property. Our department is working with the owner to correct numerous violations.
4. **Welcome** We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Jeff Swan as our new Engineering Designer I. Jeff will lead our efforts in surveys, map updates, GIS, annexations and other related work.
5. **City Area** We offer this trivia for the week:
  - City area at the end of 1993: 9.87 square miles
  - City area at the end of 2008: 11.54 square miles
6. **Failure to comply with Refuse and Recycling Ordinance and Fines Administration**  
To encourage compliance with City Code Chapter 117, *Recycling and Refuse*, Code Administration is stepping up enforcement of the ordinance regarding set-out times, placement of refuse, and types of receptacles for collection and refuse storage. A graduated warning and fine schedule for violations has been created and follows:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Warning/Fine</u>
Initial notice of violation	Warning only, no fine
1 <sup>st</sup> enforcement action	\$25 fine
2 <sup>nd</sup> enforcement action	\$50 fine
3 <sup>rd</sup> enforcement action	\$100 fine
4 <sup>th</sup> enforcement action	\$200 fine

7. **Allowing occupancy of rental units without an interior inspection**  
Courtney Beard has been issued 12 citations for permitting occupancy of a rental unit without an interior inspection in the preceding 36 months. The citations cover four different multi-unit properties he owns in the City, with associated fines being \$500 per citation.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

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1. **Door to Door** - On Monday, January 12th, the Hagerstown Fire Department visited approximately 130 homes in the Calvert Terrace area as follow-up to Saturday's fire. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate smoke alarm protection and provide timely fire safety advice.

Since we had already visited the area during our May neighborhood canvass, most homes had an adequate level of protection. Still, we installed a total of 65 alarms in 30 households. Of interest, many of the installations occurred in homes where residents told us in May that they were "OK" and didn't need us to perform a safety check. What we did on Monday night proves the worth of doing post-fire visitations and taking advantage of windows of opportunity.

While we encountered a few rude people on Potomac Heights, the majority of residents were elated to see us and welcomed our people into their homes.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

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1. **Employee "HIP" Award.** The City awarded Mark Holtzman the High Performance Award recently. Mark was instrumental in securing the donation of a used box truck to the Police Department for the Western MD Regional Crime Laboratory. This truck has allowed Jeff Kercheval's forensic team to be able to perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently by allowing room to carry their equipment and provide room to work in the vehicle as well as transport recovered evidence. Mark's efforts have filled a need for the department at a significant cost savings and allow the police department to serve the community better.
2. **Current Economy Impacts Locally.** It is typical to have 50-70 applications when the City of Hagerstown advertises for employment. However, it is evident that the local employment situation is changing. Currently we have received over 400 applications for one vacancy. Needless to say, this is the largest pool of applicants we have experienced at the City in at least 10 years.

## **PARKS DEPARTMENT**

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1. **Pangborn Park** – To be funded by POS, we are currently in the process of replacing the windows and constructing louvers to cover them.
2. **Park Benches and Picnic Tables** – Also funded by POS, this week, we received (8) park benches and (8) picnic tables, to be installed in various parks and playgrounds.
3. **City Park** - At City Park, we continue to clear out the overgrown area between the concession stand and upper lake.
4. **Snow** – January 14 was the first small snow storm of this winter season. Our crews were kept busy clearing the sidewalks in our parks and playgrounds. We also cleared the parking lots for our user groups – Municipal Stadium, Ice Rink, Fine Arts Museum and Valley Art Gallery.
5. **Spring Prep** – We are prepping our equipment for spring which consists of oil changes, sharpening blades and making minor repairs.

## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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1. **Zoning Certificates Issued For New Businesses:**
  - 1140 Professional Court - Joyfully Living Wellness Services - massage therapy.
  - 1525 Potomac Avenue - Michelle's Cartique Hallmark - retail cards, gifts, books and magazines.
2. **New Development Cases:**
  - 517-521-523-525-529 Jefferson Street - Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church - simplified plat.
3. **Planning Commission:** The Commission discussed the following at its meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup>:
  - Preliminary consultation with the Salvation Army to discuss its plan to enlarge its existing community/worship center on George Street at Wise Street.
  - Preliminary consultation with property owner of townhouses on Berkson Avenue to discuss possible subdivision of townhouses into individual lots.
  - House Bill 1141 Amendments to 2008 Comprehensive Plan - approval of staff's recommended revisions in response to comments received from the County and the State. The commission voted to recommend the proposed changes to the Mayor and Council.
  - Recommended approval of the text amendment to grant the BZA authority to consider variances from lot area under certain circumstances.

- Begin discussions concerning Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Rezoning.
4. **Historic District Commission:** The Commission is scheduled to review the following at its meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup>:
    - 460 North Potomac Street - John Rasoulpour - continued discussion on this sign application until the next meeting to give the applicant an opportunity to redesign his sign to be more compatible with the building.
    - 40 East North Avenue - Bob Jones - replace rear stairs (work has been completed).
    - 36 South Potomac Street - Tracy Carr/TMG Studios - sign.
    - 4 and 6 West Franklin Street - Ronald E. Lytle - sign and grant application.
    - 137 East North Avenue - Robert W. Hershey - alteration to rear garages.
    - 36 South Potomac Street - TMG Studios - sign.
    - 101 West Washington Street - Discovery Station - workshop on signage.
    - 6 Public Square - Alexander House, Inc. - rooftop equipment cabinet.
  5. **Leadership Washington County:** Staff participated in LWC's government day visit at City Hall on January 9<sup>th</sup>.
  6. **Doleman Collection Assessment Project:** The consultants visited the city on January 15<sup>th</sup> to meet with staff and view the collection. This officially kicks off the project. Completion is scheduled for late summer 2009.
  7. **Greater Hagerstown Committee:** The Urban Renewal Forum invited members of the Historic District Commission to their meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup> for a dialogue on the HDC and their review process in the downtown. We distributed the Mayor and City Council memo from the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and the Committee members were appreciative of the info about the HDC. It was suggested that more outreach efforts be made to explain what is expected of developers when undertaking projects in the downtown. We updated them on plans to overhaul the Economic Development web page and to create a series of educational videos for Channel 6 on historic district review issues. The matter of flexibility in the guidelines was discussed at great length with examples provided by HDC members of many cases of compromise and flexibility achieved in the review process for downtown projects. The HDC's 95% approval rating was a surprise to the Committee members. Committee members offered GHC as a mechanism for the HDC to provide a public education outreach forum on the goals of the HDC and on the historic review process.
  8. **HEPMPO Meeting:** The Technical Advisory Committee of the Hagerstown Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization will meet in Martinsburg on January 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 a.m. Items for discussion will include the Strategic Plan and the Long Range Plan for the HEPMPO.
  9. **Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area:** City staff will meet with a couple of other Advisory Committee members to discuss a long range plan for the heritage area on January 16<sup>th</sup> in Frederick. The Advisory Committee will hold their regular meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Washington County Rural Heritage Museum. A full day retreat on sesquicentennial planning (150<sup>th</sup> of the Civil War) is scheduled for January 23<sup>rd</sup> in Downtown Frederick.

## **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

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1. **Tree Meeting:** Multiple departments including Engineering, Public Works, Code Administration, Wastewater and Finance met with a city attorney and the city's insurance carrier to discuss tree issues. The current issue involves the liability of underground damage to sewer lines or other utilities caused by the root system of street trees. Maryland law indicates the city would not be liable for the damage. The consensus was that additional clarifying language needs to be placed in the city's code regarding street trees and underground utilities. This will eventually be brought to the Mayor and Council for review.
2. **Christmas Tree Collections Begin:** Officially, the collection of Christmas trees is the week of January 12 – 16. However, many residents chose to place their trees out early and crews were kept busy collecting those trees. The trees are taken to our staging area at the end of Eldridge Drive where the trees will eventually be shredded.
3. **Winter Weather False Alarm:** A crew was brought in on standby Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> for a forecasted storm of ice and snow. Very little precipitation fell during the day and then some freezing rain in the early evening while temperatures fell to 30°. The crew eventually did spread salt on the street as a precautionary measure.

## **RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

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1. **MARKET**
  - We have a new vendor starting at the Market on January 24th. Aileen Rudy will be selling custom made

center pieces, dried flowers and herbs, wreaths and cemetery pieces, silk flowers and themed silk arrangements.

- Two vendor applications were mailed out this week.

**2. HAGER HOUSE PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:**

- **Tours:** Although the Historic Sites are now closed for the season, staff is still fielding inquiries about possible booking for next season. We look forward to an even more well attended 2009!
- **Autumn Arts Festival:** Staff has begun compiling the list of vendors to invite to the 2009 event in preparation for a mailing to be out by the end of the month. Also, the new applications for food and craft vendors are now available for download on the Hager House website.
- **Hager House Programs and Events:** Staff spent much time this week working on advertising for the upcoming season and preparing items to support the mailing for the upcoming Autumn Arts Festival. Time was also spent investigating supplies to complete a cosmetic touch up project in the Museum building office. Grant and historical research are continuing to be conducted by staff on a weekly basis. Staff also began the budget process for the 2010 fiscal year.
- **Railroad Museum at City Park:** Although this historic site is also in the winter shut-down staff has taken steps to prepare for cosmetic restoration projects to the cabooses on site. We are pleased to announce that the CVB has donated \$1,000 towards this effort and staff is currently in the process of researching and applying for grants and sponsors to provide additional funding to support this and similar restoration/maintenance projects.

**UTILITIES DEPARTMENT**

**ELECTRIC DIVISION**

**1. Problem Areas.** Recent call outs included:

- Fri. 1/9 - 901 Pope Avenue. Lights blinking; checked connections at pole and house, no problems found. Also checked metering, no problem found, informed customer an electrician would have to make internal repairs (charge). Time Out: 17.5-18.3
- Sat. 1/10 - 439 North Mulberry Street. Reconnect service; received \$85 connection fee, service restored. Time Out: 10.8-11.0
- 112 Calvert Terrace (Fire). Disconnected service and removed meter. Time Out: 11.1-11.5
- Sun. 1/11 - 643 North Mulberry Street. Lights blinking; replaced connectors at pole and house, service restored. Time Out: 14.0-14.6
- Mon. 1/12 - 222 South Potomac Street. Total outage; found line fuse blown and transformer leaking, replaced 100 KVA transformer and transformer fuses. Time Out: 1.7-3.5
- 1133 Hamilton Boulevard (1FS). Total outage; found breaker in off position, turned breaker on, service restored (charge). Time Out: 16.8-17.4
- Tue. 1/13 - Street Light Patrol (various locations). Time Out: 17.3-20.0
- Wed. 1/14 - 208 Willard Street - Miss Utility locate; area cleared for Water Department personnel. Time Out: 0.7-1.3
- Various (reconnect for non-payment). Time Out: 17.7-18.1

**2. Distribution.** Recent activity included:

- Added extra lighting in the Reservoir area per Water Department request.
- Tree trimming continues in various residential areas.
- Line maintenance work continues in various locations.

Lamps Replaced	New Fixtures Added	Changeouts	Fixtures Removed
73	0	2	0

3. **Engineering** (Staff worked on the following projects):

- The Staff Engineer is in the process of reviewing the bid results for the substation class voltage regulators. The bid was opened on Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff met with Greg Deike from the Engineering Department to finalize the electrical design for the Cramer's Alley project.
- The Staff Engineer and the Electrical Engineer met with Artery Homes to go over the electrical layout for the Poplar Square subdivision.
- Several new electric service designs, existing electric service relocations, and existing electric service upgrades and have been completed.

**WATER DIVISION**

**Plant Flows – System Demand (MGD)**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Willson</u>	<u>Breichner</u>	<u>Total</u>
1/8/08	10.85		10.85
1/9/08	10.75		10.75
1/10/09	10.81		10.81
1/11/09	10.77		10.77
1/12/09	10.99		10.99
1/13/09	11.04		11.04
1/14/09	11.45		11.45
Average			10.95

**Water Production at RC Willson**

- Willson continues to operate efficiently; water temperature is currently 39 degrees.

**Water Production at Breichner**

- The Edgemont Reservoir is currently at -8.4', the bypass and hydrant are closed. The Breichner Plant was not run last week.

**Water Distribution**

- New radio read meters are being installed in Division 54.
- Main replacement has begun on Tammany Manor Drive. This project will consist of 800 ft. of 8" line and 600 ft. of 6" line.
- Two leaks to report this week:  
 Tuesday, Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:08pm – 13718 Pennsylvania Avenue  
 Wednesday, Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:15am – 208 Willard Street

**Laboratory**

**Water:**

- 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr THM/HAA testing and retesting results have been received. Re-sampled results were much more in line with what is typically expected for the 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. Split sample results from both labs were comparable. All results have been sent to the MDE Water Supply Program.
- Paul Eberhart and Bob Gebbia attended a recertification class for potable water sampling.

**Wastewater:**

- Rick Shank attended a recertification class for potable water sampling. He also attended a WWOA educational seminar.

**Engineering**

- Staff attended a Water & Wastewater Operators Association meeting.
- Staff met with a consultant relative to a main extension for a house of worship on Day Road.
- Staff continues to discuss the private water tank issue with representatives of the hospital and their consultants.

**WASTEWATER DIVISION**

**Wastewater Treatment Plant at Frederick Street**

Date	Flow (mgd)	Rainfall (inches)
Wednesday, January 7, 2009	8.96	0.65
Thursday, January 8, 2009	8.13	0.00
Friday, January 9, 2009	7.48	0.00
Saturday, January 10, 2009	7.25	0.05
Sunday, January 11, 2009	7.15	0.00
Monday, January 12, 2009	7.04	0.00
Tuesday, January 13, 2009	6.88	0.30
Weekly Average/Total	7.56	1.00
Monthly Average/Total	7.03	1.00

Activity	Districts	Linear Feet of Main	Feet of Lateral	# of Lateral Inspections
Closed Circuit TV Inspections	4 & 5	743	232	9
Flushing	4, 5 & 14	8,439		

**Administration**

- Staff attended a Water and Wastewater Operators meeting.
- Staff met with the Hospital's consultant and continues to discuss off site infrastructure alternatives with representatives of the Hospital.

<b>Reviews:</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>County</b>
Building Permits	2	1
Sewer Permits	1	

**QUOTES**

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**QUOTES BY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. FROM BRANYQUOTES.COM**

**Monday.** A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom.

**Tuesday.** An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.

**Wednesday.** Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

**Thursday.** Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

**Friday.** He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.

**Saturday.** I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

**Sunday.** I submit to you that if a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live.

**City of Hagerstown Strategic Plan -  
Focus on the Quality of Life in Hagerstown**

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce J. Zimmerman  
City Administrator