



City of Hagerstown, Maryland Status & Information Report No. 24 for 2009

June 19, 2009

To Mayor Bruchey and Members of the City Council:

UPCOMING MEETINGS

❖❖ JUNE 2009 ❖❖						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 8pm Mayor & Council Oath of Office/Council Chamber	2 4pm Work Session	3	4 8 am Market In The Square 5 pm City Center Jazz Nights @ USMH Plaza	5	6 10 am Railroad Heritage Days @ Railroad Museum/City Park
7 1 pm Railroad Heritage Days @ Railroad Museum/City Park	8	9 4pm Work Session	10	11 5pm City Center Jazz Nights @ USMH Plaza	12	13 7 am Summer Yard Sale @ Fairgrounds Park Stables
14	15	16 4pm Work Session	17	18 8 am Market In The Square 5pm City Center Jazz Nights @ USMH Plaza	19	20 7 th Annual MIHI Fishin' Frenzy @ Pangborn Park
21	22	23 6pm Executive Session 7 pm Regular Session	24	25 5pm City Center Jazz Nights @ USMH Plaza	26	27 8pm Miss MD Pageant @ MD Theatre
28 MML Conference in Ocean City	29 MML Conference in Ocean City	30 MML Conference in Ocean City				

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

1. **CITY CENTER JAZZ.** This Thursday City Center Jazz Night featured Marcus Johnson in University Plaza from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Approximately 170 people attended the event. It was the best weather and a great crowd. Next week, will feature Scott Ambush and Friends.
2. **MIHI FISHIN' FRENZY.** This Saturday, June 20, is MIHI Fishin' Frenzy from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Pangborn Park. Fishing is free for kids 12 and under, seniors 65 and over and all disabled individuals. There will also be clowns, pony rides, barrel carts and hay wagon rides for free from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
3. **FIREWORKS AT FAIRGROUNDS PARK.** The advertising and all the details for the Fireworks at Fairgrounds Park were handled this week. Food vendor acceptance packets went out this week as well.
4. **TAKE FLIGHT GALA.** Details for the street closure and for the butterflies being donated back to the City were handled this week.
5. **AUGUSTOBERFEST.** The Main Committee with Augustoberfest met this week. Details of the event are being

finalized. Craft and dessert vendors were selected.

6. **MISS MARYLAND.** The events of Miss Maryland start Sunday, June 21, 2009 with opening ceremonies at the Valley Mall at 2 p.m. and a Pool Party at 5 p.m. The Mayor's luncheon will be held on Friday, June 26, 2009 at noon at Bulls and Bears. The preliminary nights for the pageant are: Wednesday, June 24th and Thursday, June 25th beginning at 8 p.m. The teen competition is Friday, June 26th at 8 p.m., and the finals are Saturday, June 27th at 8 p.m.
7. **HAGERSTOWN GOVERNMENT TELEVISION.** Airing on Hagerstown Government Television: City Center Jazz Nights with host Karen Giffin, Director of Community Affairs; Carl Disque & Ty Fleetwood of the City Center Jazz Nights Committee.
8. **HAGERSTOWNMD.ORG WEB SITE:**
 - Information about the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) is available online at www.hagerstownmd.org
 - The 2009 City Center Jazz Nights schedule is available at www.hagerstownmd.org/citycenterjazznights.html

ENGINEERING & CODE ADMINISTRATION

1. **Edgewood Drive Project** Rodney received word that the low bidder for the project is rejected. SHA is moving forward with clearing the Affirmative Action plan for the second bidder (Pessoa) and issuing the award letter and sending the contract documents to the contractor for execution. It appears that we could have a notice to proceed in the next two months barring any unforeseen issues arising.
2. **City of Baltimore Staff Visit to Code Administration** The City of Baltimore contacted our Code Administration Division this week through their Mayoral Fellowship Program. Baltimore is currently reviewing and surveying their customers. Based upon input from their customers who "raved about the customer service in Hagerstown", staff from the City of Baltimore visited our office this week to better understand how we meet the needs of our customers.
3. **Future Improvements to the Rental Licensing Program and Codes** The Code Administration Division is continuing its self-assessment and seeking input from customers and community stakeholders. Staff would like to make a presentation to Mayor and Council on August 18th. At this juncture, staff is preparing recommendations on the following:
 - A. Amend the Rental Licensing Ordinance to make the exterior inspections biennial (instead of annual) for properties with no violations in a current license year. This change will appropriately recognize the owners who do an outstanding job in maintaining their properties and allow staff to be allocated to address more pressing issues causing diminution to our neighborhoods.
 - B. Amend the Plumbing Ordinance to grant a home owner the ability to obtain a permit to perform limited plumbing in their owner-occupied residence in accordance with State Law. Currently, this is one area in which the City is more restrictive than the State.
 - C. Amend the Commercial Vacant Structure Ordinance to reflect the impact of the current economic crisis. Staff has administratively made a change in the application of the fee until such time that the Mayor and Council may review this program. The administrative change is to waive the fee if a store front is in compliance with applicable code provisions and the owner is attempting to market the property. This change, like item #A above, appropriately recognizes owners who do an outstanding job maintaining their properties.
 - D. Amend the Rental Licensing Ordinance to make the inspection requirement for rooming housing to be triennial. The nature of a rooming house is such that owners have a difficult time coordinating the inspections at tenant turnover. This amendment will maintain the integrity of the program and make the scheduling easier on the owners.
4. **Bicycle Master Plan** Staff attended a webcast regarding the preparation of a "Bicycle Master Plan", which we

are working on with the Board of Traffic & Parking to encourage bicycle use in Hagerstown. We expect to have a plan to present to the Mayor & Council in a few months.

5. **Urban Greening Grant** We are applying for a \$35,000 matching funds "Urban Greening Initiative Grant" with assistance from the Planning Department. This will be presented to the Mayor & Council for their consideration in early July.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1. **Open House** – HFD conducted a Community Open House at 33 Avalon Avenue on Sunday evening. This is a duplex that suffered fire damage earlier in the week.

For over 20 years we've been conducting open houses at properties that were damaged by fire. Our firefighters go throughout the neighborhood and leave flyers telling residents that the house that was damaged by fire will be open for public viewing on a certain day. We then do work inside the house to mark heat levels, fire travel patterns, smoke detector locations, etc. On the day of the open house the firefighters that actually fought the fire are there to give tours and answer questions. We also hand out education material and offer to install smoke alarms.

During this open house, 65 residents attended and we installed smoke alarms in 15 neighborhood homes. This is, and has been, a powerful teaching tool for us over the years.

PARKS DEPARTMENT

1. **City Park** – Due to age, we replaced the shingled roof on the South Pavilion at City Park. The new roof is now metal and matches the new restrooms.
2. **Fairgrounds Park** – Due to vandalism (again), we are replacing window glass in the Entrance Building and Gatehouse and will cover with metal screen for protection. Another bike rack has been installed near the North Pavilion. Also, we are presently working with the contractor who installed the soccer irrigation to iron out a few issues.
3. **Special Events** – Prep for special events include setting up stages, tents, tables, chairs and extra trash receptacles; we also take care of the cleanup afterwards. On Friday, June 19, Fairgrounds Park is the site for Relay for Life, an all night event which will conclude on Saturday morning. At Pangborn Park, the annual MIHI Fishin' Frenzy will be held June 20, 8am – 2pm.
4. **Grounds Maintenance** – Increased usage of our parks has also increased our general grounds maintenance – cleaning and stocking restrooms and picking up debris.
5. **Hagerstown Greens at Hamilton Run** – Twenty tons of topdressing has been received keeping the golf maintenance crews busy applying to the greens and overseeding fairways. The recent rainfall resulted in increased mowing of the rough areas.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

1. **Zoning Certificates Issued For New Businesses:**
 - 123 East Baltimore Street - K & E Wholesalers - retail sales of new and used clothing.
2. **Board of Zoning Appeals:** The BZA heard the following cases on Wednesday, June 17:
 - 293 North Prospect Street - Serena L. Bell James - granted a fence variance to reduce the front yard setback on North Prospect Street from 25 feet to 0 feet and from 25 feet to 0 feet along West North Avenue; and a variance for a fence over 3 feet in height within 25 feet of an intersection to 0 feet.
 - 37 North Mulberry Street - Chika Ofong, t/a Union Tires & Automotive Services - denied a special exception for a used tire sales and installation business.
 - 214 North Mulberry Street - Nicholas Lee Mowel - granted variances to allow a fence along Jefferson Street; and to allow a six-foot fence within 25 feet of an intersection.
 - 442 North Potomac Street - Elizabeth Hardinge, t/a Maidstone Interior Design Services - granted a variance to reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces from 15 to zero spaces, with the condition that the use be conducted in accordance with the testimony provided during the hearing on the application.

- 10-15-1025 West Washington Street - Hope Bridge Church of the Nazarene - granted a special exception for a religious organization.
3. **Planning Commission:** The Planning Commission will consider the following matters on Wednesday, June 24:
 - Lots 16-25, Fridinger Avenue - Peachtree Suites, LLC - Final Plat.
 - Antietam Academy - 40 West Oak Ridge Drive, Site Plan.
 - Hagerstown Armory Reuse/Way Station - Parking Calculation Approval.
 - Phase 2, Comprehensive Rezoning - Final Recommendation to Mayor and City Council.
 - Text Amendment for Nonconforming Uses in "R" Districts.
 - Tree Canopy Cover Goal.
 - GIS Strategic Plan.
 4. **Historic District Commission:** The HDC will review the following cases on Thursday, June 18:
 - 213 South Prospect Street - A. V. Rauth & Sons, Inc. - Retaining Wall
 - 1014 Hamilton Boulevard - Greg and Heidi Maciulla - Fence
 - 1042 The Terrace - Andrew Eshleman - Replace Front Door
 - 5 Maple Avenue - John Flynn - Replace Rear Window
 - 818 Forest Drive - Jennifer Smircina - Replace Roof
 - Workshop: 65-67 West Franklin Street - Nadar Daneshzadeh
 5. **HEPMPO Meeting:** The Technical Advisory Committee of the Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Area met on June 17th in Martinsburg. We received a report on the status of the update to the Long Range Transportation Plan for the MPO region. The consultants hosted community stakeholder meetings in late May. The public offered the following comments on Washington County: there needs to be better transit connections between the towns and across state lines; there is a desire to see more Rails-to-Trails conversions; and there are congestion concerns at railroad crossings and anticipated as a result of magnet schools. Plan update info can be found at www.hepmo.org. Staff will attend a meeting with the consultants next week to discuss development hot spot areas in our County and provide whatever data is requested for their base line conditions analysis and travel demand model activities.
 6. **County's Water Resource Element Project:** The County received six responses to their RFP for their Water Resources Element planning project. The City is participating in this project so that we can gain the stormwater data that is required for our Comprehensive Plan and be fully compliant with the State's WRE law (H.B. 1141). Staff from the City and the County will get together on June 22nd to review the proposals.
 7. **Excise Tax Hearing:** The County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on June 23rd at 9:30 a.m. on the amendment to the excise tax ordinance that will revise the Revitalization Area exemption language to reflect our zoning ordinance changes on the C3 zoning district. We have renamed that district the Downtown Mixed-Use District and expanded the boundaries somewhat.
 8. **Denver Conference:** The Planning Director attended the Congress for New Urbanism conference in Denver last week. Particularly interesting sessions included one on lessons learned after developing a New Urbanist project in Denver (Highland Gardens Village) and one on "complete streets." Complete Streets is a national movement to make all streets safe, comfortable, and convenient for travel via car, foot, bike, and transit and that advocates for routine accommodation of all modes in transportation projects. For example, in Boulder, CO, they add sidewalks and/or bike paths when they are missing during all road re-surfacing projects. To learn more, go to www.completestreets.org.
 9. **Doub Annexation - Tax Abatement History Question:** Staff have prepared an analysis on the status of annexations since 2000 and the issue of property tax abatements as a condition of annexation. Annexations before the Annexation Policy in 2002 routinely received some type of tax abatement until the property developed or requested services. A number of large scale annexations since 2002 have also received some form of tax abatement, including the properties between Collegiate Acres and the city boundaries, Lowe's Distribution Center, Haven Road, Hamilton on Dual Highway, and Hump Road. In the era since 2002, when annexations had imminent developments planned, the annexation petitions tended not to have a requested tax abatement, such as Hillside Manor, Collegiate Acres, Potomac Manor, Light Business Park, Scarlett Hills, Snook, Stone House Square, Broadfording, and Shaool on Eastern Boulevard.

10. **Doub Annexation - Tax Value Question:** We contacted the State Tax Assessor and the 112 acre Doub Farm is currently assessed at \$35,000, which would generate \$276 in annual City tax revenue if it were currently within the city. The Tax Assessor said that if we annexed it in with the proposed zoning, they would increase the assessment on the property, even though it would not be able to develop for five years. They were unable to give an estimate of how much the assessment would increase. We do not presently have any vacant C4 or POM zoned land for comparison purposes. For the sake of this analysis we looked at two vacant C2 zoned tracts in the city. The vacant Startzman land on Wesel Boulevard which has poor access is assessed at \$586,500, which is about \$14,670/acre. The vacant Harrison land on Edgewood Drive which has excellent access and utilities in close proximity is assessed at \$2.5 million, which is about \$80,359/acre. The Doub Farm is probably closer in characteristics at present with the Startzman tract, so, if we used \$14,670/acre as an estimate for the increase in assessment when annexed, the tax assessment on the vacant land would rise to \$1.6 million, which would translate to \$12,947 in annual City tax revenue.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

1. **RAILROAD MUSEUM AT CITY PARK.** Time was devoted this week by staff to preparations for next months' Thomas Train Event. Time was also put in toward the design of changing exhibits in the museum particularly the possibility of rotating pieces on display as well as the creation of a photo exhibition of historical photos of the Locomotive 202 in service. Staff also put effort into grounds maintenance and facility clean-up.
2. **HAGER HOUSE PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**
 - Tours: This week the steady pace of visitation continues at our historic sites with the Hager House hosting two groups of almost 100 continuing education students from Montgomery County. Inquiries continue daily about our tours and special events.
 - Hager House Programs and Events: Staff was quite busy creating and submitting press releases this week particularly for the upcoming Historical Entertainment LLC. film crew visit to the Hager House grounds on July 2nd. Additional work was done this week to complete the donation notes and information scanning project as well as work began on press releases for upcoming July and August events. Staff also put in time on facility and grounds maintenance and the setting up of a children's area in the Hager Museum. Research into future programs and events continues.
3. **FAIRGROUNDS PARK.** American Cancer Society "Relay for Life" overnight fundraising event. The event starts Friday evening June 19th at 7:00 p.m. and runs through Saturday morning June 20th.

UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

WATER DIVISION

Plant Flows - System Demand (MGD)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Willson</u>	<u>Breichner</u>	<u>Total</u>
06/11/09	11.16		11.16
06/12/09	10.86		10.86
06/13/09	11.11		11.11
06/14/09	10.83		10.83
06/15/09	11.56		11.56
06/16/09	10.99		10.99
06/17/09	10.67		10.67
Average			11.03

Water Production at RC Willson

- Willson continues to operate well; water temperature is currently 78 degrees.
- We did experience a complete loss of our SCADA system (supervisory control and data acquisition) on 6/18 due to a faulty uninterrupted power supply. A new "ups" will be ordered immediately.
- The instrumentation crew is renovating the MCC (motor control center) at Pump Station #6.
- The maintenance and instrumentation crews are installing a new pump/motor at Pump Station #3.

Water Production at Breichner

- The Edgemont Reservoir is currently at -7.2', the bypass and hydrant are shut. The Breichner Plant was not operated last week.

Water Distribution

- Crews are continuing to perform customer service related duties throughout the system which includes meter settings, meter reading and meter exchanges. The Jonathan St. main replacement is going well and the Water Dept. has installed water main past the intersection of North and Jonathan St. We also have crews working on the street overlay projects in Rockwillow Park and the West End Reservoir.

Engineering

Reviews:	City	County
Site Plan	1	1
Final Plat	2	
Building Permits	16	

- Staff attended a needs assessment interview by the City GIS consultant.
- Staff met with the Long Meadow Shopping Center's management company and consultant on completing water service approval for the pharmacy site plan.

West End Tank - Phase II

- Final plan approval and permits from the City and MDE have been received for the West End Tanks – Phase 2 project. The project will be advertised on June 30, 2009 with the pre-bid conference scheduled for July 13. Bids will be due on August 5, 2009.

WASTEWATER DIVISION

Wastewater Treatment Plant at Frederick Street

Date	Flow (mgd)	Rainfall (inches)
Wednesday, June 10, 2009	8.24	0.16
Thursday, June 11, 2009	8.68	0.63
Friday, June 12, 2009	8.66	0.00
Saturday, June 13, 2009	7.90	0.00
Sunday, June 14, 2009	7.51	0.00
Monday, June 15, 2009	7.42	0.00
Tuesday, June 16, 2009	7.22	0.00
Weekly Average/Total	7.95	0.79
Monthly Average/Total	7.91	3.83
Yearly Average/Total	6.68	15.25

- The Wastewater Treatment Plant continues to operate efficiently; all parameters are within MDE compliance specifications. Plant flow's are slowly returning to near normal levels following last week's rain events. Maintenance crews continue working on corrective and preventative maintenance work orders including items such as; waterproofing a portion of old final clarifier # 2, which will become part of the new expanded wet well, assisted with annual overhead hoist inspection (there were no deficiencies), repaired sprocket on existing bar screen and placed channel back in service, and installed new sensor in Lower Explosive Limit (LEL) 2L panel.

Wastewater Collection

Activity	Districts	Linear Feet of Main	Feet of Lateral	# of Lateral Inspections
Flushing	5, 19, 21	9,375		
CCTV	5, 19, 21	1,507	699	41

Customer Service Calls & Maintenance Repairs

- 20201 Mahogany Circle – Grinder Pump replaced
- Replaced Air Relief Valve (ARV) on Robinwood Drive for Robins Glen’s pump station.
- 908 Fairview Road – replace 8” broken main
- 950 Guilford Avenue – Replaced lateral connection – roots
- Blockage investigated at 1112 Moller Avenue and 412 Jonathan Street, both problems were private property issues and owners were notified to contact a plumber.

Collection System Rehab

- Met with Washington County Purchasing Department to establish Salem Avenue bid dates. The project will be advertised on July 7, 2009. The pre-bid meeting will be held on July 22, 2009 and the bids will be opened on September 9, 2009. Estimated cost is \$1,000,000
- The Citywide Collection System Rehabilitation plans and specifications have been delivered to MDE for their review. This project is funded by ARRA, Bay Restoration Grant and Water Quality low interest loan. We will be able to advertise as soon as MDE approves the plans. Estimated Cost is \$3,050,000

Administration

- Monthly progress meetings were held for the following projects during the past week; ENR-UV Disinfection (WWTP), Headworks (WWTP) and Jonathan Street (CS). All projects are pretty much on schedule and within estimated budgets.
- Staff attended a needs assessment interview by our GIS consultant.
- Staff met with the Hospital’s consultant regarding MDE comments for re-approval of the State construction permit for off site wastewater infrastructure.
- Staff continues to work with the owner of a dwelling on East Wilson Boulevard which has a failed septic system.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce J. Zimmerman
City Administrator