

**Planning Commission  
MINUTES - Workshop Meeting**

**February 12, 2014  
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

**Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m., on Wednesday, February 12, 2014, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. Also present were commission members M. Brubaker, D. Miller, and R. Thomas. The following staff members were present: S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator; A. Rohrbaugh, Planner; and D. Calhoun, Secretary.**

**Approval of Minutes: January 29, 2014 – Regular Meeting.**

**MOTION:** (Brubaker/Thomas) Move to approve.  
**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Wright questioned data on page 3. He asked whether the figure for approved site plans in the amount of almost 32,000 square feet is correct. Mr. Rohrbaugh confirmed that 32,000 square feet is correct.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (PRESENT, NOT VOTING – Miller)

The order of the agenda was re-arranged because initially staff was not available and the applicant for West City Elementary School was not present.

**Board of Zoning Appeals Agenda – February Hearing**

The Planning Commission saw a preliminary plan for the applicant’s request to waive the requirement for landscaping in front of the fence. The commission did not object as long as some type of screening is added. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) case is just the next step in the process. Staff noted that the stone wall around Marsh Run will buffer the fence to some extent. Mr. Wright noted that the proposed barbed wire is consistent with other fencing in the area.

The commission had no comments to pass on to the BZA.

**Urban Partners Project Update.**

Staff received the first progress report from Urban Partners on the Economic Analysis and Implementation Plan for Hagerstown’s Sustainable Community Plan project. Mr. Rohrbaugh noted that staff should have the market analysis by the end of this week.

- Real Estate Market Analysis – conducted field work in Hagerstown; conducted background research on retail, housing, office, entertainment, and lodging markets; and analyzed secondary data for same markets. Mr. Miller questioned the scope of the retail research. Mr. Rohrbaugh speculated that it probably relates to retail data from a downtown perspective, including what types of retail uses could successfully be reintroduced into the urban core.

- Physical Analysis of Study Area – examined physical assets and opportunities of the area; analyzed park spaces in the study area for areas that may be underserved; studied the surrounding residential neighborhoods and how people enter the study area; and conducted a brief analysis of the existing zoning code. Looking for linkages between the surrounding neighborhoods and the urban core.
- Stakeholders Interviews – As of February 5, Urban Partners has interviewed the Mayor and City Council members, contacted the County for interviews with County Commissioners, and contacted 38 individual community representatives for interviews. This is about a third of the list.
- Additional Community Engagement – An online housing survey is underway; focus group meetings are planned on particular topics of interest or with particular groups, including Housing, Neighborhoods, Arts/Education/Culture, Downtown Alliance, Chamber/Greater Hagerstown Committee, Large Employers, the Next Generation, and the Planning Commission. To date, 400 responses have been received as a result of an online survey of downtown workers. A public meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, February 27, from 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. at the Washington County Free Library, at which time Urban Partners will present their findings and solicit ideas for catalyst projects for further study.

### **West City Elementary School – Concept Plan for Storm Water Management.**

Staff Report: Applicant proposes to construct an elementary school on the subject property located north of Hager’s Crossing Drive, and west of Buell Court. The property is 16.52 acres. The proposed building is irregular in shape and located in the southern portion of the property. One hundred eighteen parking spaces are proposed.

- Site features: Other than some topographic issues that have impacted the layout of the facility in the southern portion of the site, there are no unique site features that should be given attention in the review process.
- This property fronts three streets and the Board of Education has done an exemplary job locating the building to be part of the streetscape and providing for vehicle and bus access of the side streets and leaving no curb cuts on Hager’s Crossing Drive. As previously discussed, staff recommends the Planning Commission require the Board of Education to pay particular attention to the face of the building oriented to Hager’s Crossing Drive to prevent a monolithic appearance, and also to design the façade with some consideration of a traditional design with its orientation to a collector street. Staff believes that can be accomplished with architectural embellishments such as material recesses to approximate windows, cornice design, and variation in color and texture of masonry units to approximate such architectural features such as pilasters, as well as

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perhaps a pedestrian walkway from Hager's Crossing Drive to the central area of this façade and strategic landscaping.

The applicant is not requesting any waivers at this time. Staff recommended approval with the condition that specific attention be paid to the Hager's Crossing façade to approximate a traditional appearance in relationship to an urban streetscape.

Concerning parking requirements, Mr. Bockmiller stated that the ordinance requires "one [space] per employee; ample student and visitor parking as determined by the Planning Commission." Staff met with David Trostle, Frederick, Seibert & Association, project engineer, and reviewed the number of parking spaces proposed based on the size of the school. The conclusion is that the proposal will meet the perceived volume of parking needed. Mr. Bockmiller handed out a chart for the commission's consideration. If waivers are needed from the parking requirements, Mr. Bockmiller would prefer that the applicant bring the list of requested waivers to the commission for discussion prior to site plan approval.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Mr. Trostle presented the ESD concept plan. The plan proposes bioretention areas throughout the site. The bioretention areas will consist of planting areas and will resemble landscaped beds. When this area was initially proposed to be developed as apartments, the site as an entire development was engineered for storm water. It is the engineer's opinion that the ESD concept plan is adequate for the proposed school building based on the former apartment development.

Plans call for 125 parking spaces. The education specifications were done by Washington County Public Schools and BFM Architects. They determined that 125 spaces will be necessary for a full build out of the site. In reading the ordinance, it did not define what the total number should be. Staff provided information on a range of parking. As an example, Bester Elementary School has 24 classrooms and the site plan provided 100 spaces or 4.16 spaces per classroom. West City proposes 30 classrooms and 127 spaces (including two handicapped spaces near the play fields) which is approximately 4.16 spaces per classroom.

Chad Criswell, representing Washington County Public Schools, said a state representative asked them to add the two handicapped spaces. Mr. Trostle noted that they do not take away from any of the spaces near the building. They are also planning for ten additional spaces in the future if needed, for a total of 137 spaces. Storm water calculations have been based on 137 spaces.

Mr. Trostle noted that this school will have a large number of students who walk to school. One hundred fifty-five kindergarten through fifth graders will live in the development out of a projected capacity of 745 students. The school will have 75 staff members, which leaves 52 spaces for visitors. They feel they are in the appropriate range with regard to total parking spaces. Mr. Trostle noted that for special events, parking would be permitted in the bus loop. Mr. Wright pointed out that there is no sidewalk on the northeast corner, even though the concept plan shows it as existing and not proposed. Staff will need to confirm this. Mr. Brubaker noted

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that if the area of future development develops it should be a requirement for the remainder of the sidewalk to be installed.

Concerning architectural detailing, Mr. Bockmiller stated that there should be some type of material variation and variation in the cornice to give some presence to the Hager's Crossing street frontage. The façade should look like something more than an afterthought. Mr. Wright was not sure about whether architectural review was under the commission's purview and if it is, how will the commission know what is appropriate since none of the members have an architectural background. Mr. Criswell stated that the school board is not interested in constructing a monolithic wall either. They are still trying determine the final cost for the project. The general theme recommended by staff is something they are interested in also. Mr. Trostle added that they have tried to keep the façade in mind throughout the design process.

Mr. Bockmiller suggested that the commission could approve the ESD plans with direction to come back with more information on the parking calculations before site plan review. Site design and materials are part of site plan review. In general, these things can be addressed. Mr. Criswell stated there will be variations in brick and there will be some breaks. Mr. Trostle added that there will be street trees along Hager's Crossing Drive.

**MOTION:** (Miller/Thomas) I move to approve the storm water management plan.  
**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Brubaker commented that he liked having the back access to the parking lot and the fact that the school board kept the location of the school building close to the front of the site as requested by the commission. With the building at the front of the site, it allows for recreation areas to the rear of the site. Mr. Brubaker asked if it will be word of mouth as to the location of the drop off area or if there will be signs. Mr. Trostle indicated they might need to think about that.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

Mr. Trostle will provide additional information on the parking requirements at the February 26 meeting and will have the architect attend the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> to answer questions about the architectural treatment along Hager's Crossing Drive.

**Other Business.**

Mr. Wright asked staff to make a presentation at the next meeting about the architectural review process.

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**Adjourn.**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn at 5:13 p.m.

2/26/2014

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Approved



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Debra C. Calhoun - Secretary