

Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 4:16 p.m., on Wednesday, January 14, 2015, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. Also present were commission members R. Campbell, D. Miller, and R. Thomas. The following staff members were present: K. Maher, Planning Director; S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator; A. Rohrbaugh, Planner; and D. Calhoun, Secretary.

**Approval of Minutes.**

No minutes were ready for approval.

**800 View Street – Alan and Frances Clingan – Local Conversion District Overlay – Request for Extension.**

Staff Report: (See letters in meeting file.) Mr. Bockmiller explained that Mr. and Mrs. Clingan are asking for an extension of their Local Conversion District Overlay for the View Street Diner. The last extension was approved through the end of 2014. Staff received a request for an extension from the Clingans in November of 2014. They are asking for a further extension. The Planning Commission has the authority to approve extensions. The rezoning process for Local Conversion District Overlays was set up to ensure that businesses were up and running within a year. In this instance staff believes it is counterproductive to make the Clingans go through the rezoning process again. This was the first Local Conversion District Overlay to be approved and was not approved with a long list of conditions. The rezoning is limited to restaurant and retail—a secondary list of uses was not approved.

Mr. Thomas asked if the Clingans were requesting a 12-month extension. Mr. Bockmiller stated that no date was given in the letter. Mr. Clingan explained that he and his wife are attempting to remodel the restaurant without taking out a loan. Upgrades are being made as funds become available. Recently they installed a new commercial kitchen which was a huge expense.

**MOTION:** (Miller/Thomas) I make a motion to extend the deadline to December 31, 2015.  
**DISCUSSION:** None.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**Livable Streets Initiative – Sabra, Wang & Associates.**

Staff Report: (Staff report in meeting file.) Mr. Rohrbaugh told the commission that Planning and Engineering staff members have been working with Sabra, Wang & Associates to develop a Livable (Complete) Streets Policy for the City of Hagerstown. The objective is to not only develop a policy, but to also assist the City in the design and implementation of the policy. Staff

brought the beginning stages of the proposal to the Planning Commission several months ago. Paul Silverman of Sabra, Wang & Associates was present at this meeting to review with the commission their progress to date on the project. Staff requested the commission's feedback on the reports and ultimately a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council on the proposed design guidelines. Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, added that this proposal will be presented to the Board of Traffic and Parking and to the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Commission/Consultant Discussion: Mr. Silverman presented what they consider to be the ideal standards for incorporating multi-modal transportation methods (vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and transit) with existing streets. Sabra, Wang and City Staff would like feedback from commission members on the ideal standards that have been developed and general buy-in on what the City can use for general day-to-day use.

Mr. Silverman made his presentation via a PowerPoint slide show, with references to the Livable Street Design Guidelines, Livable Street Design Guidelines Map Atlas, and Livable Streets Crossing Sections (all are in the meeting file). The presentation included a review of the character zones and street typologies established specifically for Hagerstown; review of maps of land uses and typologized street networks; review of illustrative street cross-sections showing existing conditions and with guidelines applied; and a discussion of the "next steps" toward implementation. Mr. Tissue explained that not every street in Hagerstown would be affected—only the streets indicated by a color on the Street Typology Map, which eliminates approximately 75% of Hagerstown's streets. Mr. Silverman added that the streets that are affected represent the streets that carry most of the traffic or have a higher number of accidents.

For the purposes of the presentation, at least two character zones for each street typology were highlighted showing proposed specifications for each of the following modes: vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. The specifications include what type of service should one expect on that type of street in that character zone (i.e., for transit, how frequently should buses stop, how many stops should there be based on the character zone). The idea is that streets should be designed for all users.

Mr. Tissue noted that the County Commuter does not provide an acceptable level of service in Hagerstown. Mr. Silverman added that transit service should not be viewed from a demographics perspective, rather a land use perspective. Mr. Tissue noted that Washington County will be updating their plan in the near future and will probably incorporate fixed bus stops rather than allowing someone to "hail" a bus along the route. Mr. Silverman contended that bus service should not have to involve much thought—it should just be available.

In the Business and Industrial character zones, Mr. Wright stated that sidewalks should be provided on both sides of these street typologies, rather than on one side only. Other commission members agreed.

Under the street cross sections, 14 streets were analyzed as to what improvements could be made:

Potomac Avenue

*Character Zone:* Suburban Residential

*Street Typology:* Residential Connector

- Changes proposed would also cause traffic to slow down.
- Mr. Wright noted that the numbers shown do not add up. Mr. Tissue stated that the main point is that it would be easy to add a bike lane along Potomac Avenue.

Manor Drive

*Character Zone:* Suburban Residential

*Street Typology:* Neighborhood Street

- Existing conditions include wide on-street parking areas.
- If the parking lanes are reduced in size, a larger buffer could be added.
- Mr. Wright pointed out that when street trees are installed it sometimes cuts available sidewalk in half. Sometimes in an effort to be more tree friendly, the situation becomes less pedestrian friendly. Mr. Rohrbaugh stated that one of the things staff is investigating is wider planting strips that would better accommodate street trees.
- Mr. Tissue noted that some areas of Hagerstown are not conducive to adding more amenities in the right-of-way.
- Mr. Silverman stated that older streets pose more design problems, although there are a few tricks that can be used to retrofit older streets.

Summit Avenue

*Character Zone:* Traditional Residential

*Street Typology:* Urban Neighborhood

- The example provided shows a one-foot reduction in the parking lane width and with the additional space, a bike lane could be added near the curb.
- A recommendation could be to reduce the parking and add a parklet which would add green to the streetscape.

North Burhans Boulevard

*Character Zone:* Industrial

*Street Typology:* Ring Road

- Reduce travel lanes to ten feet, create a bike lane on each side, and add a five-foot sidewalk in front of some of the commercial uses. Mr. Wright stated that sidewalks need to be added on both sides of Burhans Boulevard.

Wesel Boulevard

*Character Zone:* Industrial

*Street Typology:* Business Industrial

- Sidewalks need to be added on both sides of Wesel Boulevard.

Northern Avenue

*Character Zone:* Institutional or Campus

*Street Typology:* Ring Road

- Reduce to two lanes with a turn lane in the middle. Planning Commission members were fully on board with this recommendation.

The next step is formal adoption by the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council. Implementation will include developing a blueprint for Engineering staff that will map out how the recommendations can be phased in. Mr. Tissue said the City is not building any new streets, but City streets are paved every year. Implementation could be accomplished when streets are repaved.

Mr. Bockmiller pointed out missing sidewalk on the missing sidewalk maps—the bridge over the Antietam Creek on the Dual Highway is a major access issue. Mr. Silverman will amend the map to reflect the missing sidewalk in this area. Mr. Wright stated the City needs to continue to work on the bicycle improvements. Many people cannot afford a car and must walk to work or to shop. Sidewalks are very important. Mr. Silverman stated that there would be more of an impact if the City could cite policy.

**MOTION:** (Wright/Campbell and Miller) I would move that we recommend strong support if a few things are improved about sidewalk connectivity.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**Linking Trail Update – City Engineer.**

(City Engineer’s memo and supporting documents are in meeting file.) Mr. Tissue presented the proposed trail project that connects the Downtown district to the City Park district. The idea for this trail is the result of recommendations from the Community’s City Center Plan—Urban Partners project (Catalyst Project #5). The plan recommends that new housing be built along the proposed linking trail. In October 2014 a public meeting—attended by between 40 and 50 people—was conducted in which citizen input was collected.

Very basic (“cartoon level”) ideas of what could happen along the trail have been compiled for discussion purposes. The southern terminus would be the Fine Arts Museum. Phase I is shown in yellow; pink depicts future plans for the trail. Mr. Tissue reported that the Mayor and City

Council would like the triangle at the intersection of Summit Avenue and Park Circle to be improved since it is a gateway to the downtown. Portions of the trail shown in yellow will be built this year. The trail will be constructed of tinted concrete.

Concerning improvement #10 on the plan, Mr. Wright did not think the proposed route would be very popular. Other commission members agreed with Mr. Wright's observation. Near the car wash on West Baltimore Street (#5) negotiations are underway to have this property conveyed to the City. Mr. Tissue indicated that since this is the halfway point along the trail, the City is developing ideas for interesting features to draw people to this point. Ideas so far include a splash pad, seeding, a land form area, a children's area, and a grove/natural area. Benches and rolling ground bunkers would be added to give the area some interest. There would also be areas for sculpture and possibly interactive art. The Arts & Entertainment Committee is developing ideas for art on the trail (sculpture, lighting, sound, water, 3-D art). Mr. Wright projected that this area would be frequented by residents of Potomac Towers which could make others uncomfortable, as currently occurs with residents of the Alexander House hanging out in Public Square.

As far as lighting and security, Mr. Tissue is collaborating with City Light to develop an appropriate lighting plan, which will include security cameras. Land acquisitions will be necessary which will require fee simple conveyances from the Herald-Mail and easements from the Hagerstown Housing Authority and Ellsworth Electric. Mr. Tissue stated that the portion of the trail on the Hagerstown Authority property will go through the Housing Authority Circle, and the City will be rebuilding it since the Housing Authority has indicated that it does not want two sets of sidewalks.

Mr. Tissue is hoping to put bids out by April for the yellow portions of the trail. Art will be installed over time. The Planning Commission indicated that it is strongly in favor of the plans presented, except #10 which the commission feels may not be worthwhile. Mr. Wright cautioned that the City needs to be more sensitive about making statements about the condition of the service station at the Park Circle triangle. That business employs at least two people and brings in City tax dollars.

### **Land Management Code Text Amendments: Artist Live-Work Space.**

(Staff memo in meeting file.) Planning Staff is proposing an amendment to the Land Management Code provisions for Artist Live-Work Space to allow more flexibility in some of the City's industrial districts. Currently the ordinance does not allow any residential activity in industrial districts (I-MU, IR, and IG). However, Artist Live-Work Space is permitted in large, former commercial, industrial, or institutional buildings in the CC-MU, N-MU and the Conversion District. In many of the IR districts there are old industrial buildings that are a challenge to reuse and are either vacant or underutilized.

In order to provide more flexible reuse of old industrial buildings and create more artist live-work space opportunities in the city, staff has compiled a list of ideas for the commission's consideration:

- Allow artist live-work space in large former commercial, industrial, or institutional buildings in the IR and I-MU zoning districts, in addition to the existing provision for the CC-MU, N-MU, and C districts.
- Revise the definition of artist live-work space to remove the reference to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and the restriction to no more than two adults since the City no longer has an APFO for schools. In addition the minimum percentage of floor area to be set aside for the residential use requirement would be removed to provide more flexibility.

Ms. Maher stated that this proposal was inspired by a Baltimore Re-Use document. Redevelopment of unusual buildings that are difficult to reuse is more successful if some type of housing is permitted. Artist live-work housing might be beneficial. Industrial buildings typically have high ceilings and "funky" space. These types of buildings are not attractive for industrial uses today. Owners of buildings such as the Brandt Cabinet Works on Pennsylvania Avenue struggle to find new tenants. Allowing artist-live work space may help owners fill these spaces. Artists could be anything from a sculptor to a dancer or a musician. Mr. Wright asked if the owner of Reisner building would be able to put in apartments now. Ms. Maher stated it could be done through a Conversion District Overlay.

Mr. Campbell asked if the definition could be expanded to include more groups to make it available to more people. Ms. Maher said staff is suggesting artists because it is a use that the City already has, and the industrial districts are more geared toward making things. Mr. Wright felt the commission should proceed with caution or on a building-by-building basis. Mr. Bockmiller pointed out that the industrial districts currently allow for schools and educational facilities.

The Planning Commission was agreeable to adding artist live-work space in the specified district, and also agreed to include the new language in time for the public review meeting on the text amendments at the January 28 meeting.

### **Other Business.**

- Mr. Bockmiller gave the commission a heads up on the pedestrian lighting text amendment. As a result of the discussions, it was recommended that the text be modified to specify security lighting be 0.5 candle power and for other areas 0.2 candle power. The Hagerstown Police Department has agreed to the proposal by the Hagerstown Light Department.
- The commission welcomed new Planning Commission member Rodney Campbell who is filling the unexpired term of Cullen Coleman.

**Planning Commission  
MINUTES - Workshop Meeting**

**January 14, 2015  
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

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**Adjourn.**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (6:15 p.m.).

3/25/2015  
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Approved

  
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Debra C. Calhoun - Secretary