

**Planning Commission  
MINUTES – Regular Meeting**

**April 29, 2015  
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

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Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, April 29, 2015, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. Also present were commission members M. Brubaker, R. Campbell, D. Miller, J. Stone, R. Thomas, and J. Wheeler. The following staff members were present: K. Maher, Planning Director; S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator; A. Rohrbaugh, Planner; and D. Calhoun, Secretary.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Roll Call.**

All commission members were present.

For the record, Mr. Wright announced that at the last meeting he made a correction to the January 28, 2015, minutes to add Mr. Stone’s name to the list of attendees, when, in fact, Mr. Stone was listed as being present. The original minutes were correct.

Mr. Wright asked for a motion to amend the agenda to include a waiver request for a fence that is part of an Eagle Scout project at St. Mary’s Catholic Church on the corner of West Washington Street and North Walnut Street.

**MOTION:** (Brubaker/Wheeler) So moved.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**Approval of Minutes:**

March 11, 2015:

**MOTION:** (Brubaker/Campbell) I’ll make a motion to approve.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Wright noted that the minutes indicate that a three-foot tall green plastic construction fence was going to be installed. The fence as installed is an orange plastic construction fence. Jim Bender, Assistant City Engineer, stated that they probably used what was available on short notice to secure the site. If the fence must be changed to a green construction fence, the Department of Parks and Engineering will comply with the approved site plan. According to Mr. Bockmiller, the construction fence is estimated to be in place for a year until funds can be raised for a permanent fence to be installed next year.

Ornamental fencing would be installed across the front with privacy fencing along the sides. Mr. Wright did not necessarily want the City to spend money on a temporary green fence that probably would not be used again.

Mr. Thomas commented that a three-foot tall orange fence would be more visible than a three-foot tall green fence. Commission members agreed that they had no issues with the color of the temporary fence.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (ABSTAIN - Wright)

### **St. Mary's Fence – Cole Trippett – 15 North Walnut Street.**

Staff Report: Mr. Cole Trippett is an Eagle Scout candidate, and his project is to erect a small statue to the Virgin Mary on the property owned by St. Mary's Catholic Church, which is being used as a parking lot. The purpose of the fence would be to secure the statue. Mr. Trippett has applied for a fence permit. Given the fence's proximity to the intersection, the height limitation is three feet. In the CC-MU there is no setback for fences but for fences along street rights-of-way there is a requirement for a landscaped buffer. This would require that the fence be set ten feet back with landscaping in front of it. Mr. Trippett is also dealing with a limited area—there is an existing landscaped island in the parking lot. Mr. Trippett is requesting a waiver for the buffer area from ten feet to zero feet. The fenced area will be a 6.5 x 6.5-foot area.

Applicant/Planning Commission Discussion: Mr. Trippett explained that they plan to dig out and grind up an existing stump. His troop will be making a time capsule for the site. A concrete base will be poured on which the Virgin Mary statue will rest. The statue will be dedicated to a nun who has helped St. Mary's School and will be five feet tall with a three-foot base for a total of eight feet tall. A 29-inch ornamental metal fence will be installed around the statue. The ordinance allows fencing up to 36 inches tall. Mulch will be placed and flowers will be planted at the base of the statue. Mr. Wright recommended that Mr. Trippett dig down below the frost line for the base otherwise the statue will tilt. The fence complies with zoning.

**MOTION:** (Stone/Campbell) I make a motion that we approve the landscaped buffer requirement waiver as requested.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (ABSTAIN - Thomas)

**Informational Presentation: Stormwater Management Retrofits – City Engineer.**

Jim Bender, Assistant City Engineer, made the presentation. The state of Maryland requires Environmental Site Design (ESD) which results in small-scale practices close to the disturbance to treat smaller runoff rather than large ponds. The post development site should mimic the site predevelopment.

Mr. Bender noted challenges in securing funding for Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) and other projects. Under direction from the Mayor and Council, the Department of Parks and Engineering has been tasked with seeking out as much grant funding for funding assistance to help extend and augment General Fund money. Upcoming projects that will be before the Planning Commission for review are grant-funded projects.

The Park Circle project is through the Green Streets, Green Town, Green Design—which integrates ESD practices into CIP projects that are going to be done anyway. This work will include a project that will narrow a section of Memorial Boulevard near the park and incorporate a stormwater management facility. Also, along South Walnut Street on City Park lands the City plans to build a small stormwater runoff facility to treat runoff before it goes into the run, just north of Key Street. Out of the \$170,000 grant \$105,000 will be directed towards this project. The remainder is for street trees. The City’s match is \$80,000 for the street overlay.

A sand filter is proposed along Key Street. While designing the sand filter, Engineering staff also wanted to look into converting Park Circle into a roundabout. Tim Young, Department of Parks and Engineering, discussed the proposed conversion to a roundabout. Three islands would be added since each road that feeds into the circle needs its own entrance.

Mr. Stone was opposed to the roundabout and wanted to keep the concept of the circle and not add the expanded blue area shown on the exhibit. Now it is very easy for more than one car at a time. He was opposed to limiting traffic around the circle to one lane. Other commission members disagreed. Mr. Young stated that there is not enough traffic volume in the circle to warrant two lanes.

**City Park at South Walnut Street – Waiver to Design Standards.**

Staff Report: (Staff memo is in the meeting file.) The City is planning to construct a water quality project in City Park, adjacent to South Walnut Street. The project involves approximately 0.30 acres of minor grading and installation of some pipe and plantings. The City would like permission to use the minor site plan application form in lieu of the 16-page standard site plan

application. This is very similar to a request reviewed at the last Planning Commission meeting for the Venice Inn driveway site plan. There is no fee issue since the City of Hagerstown is the applicant and the plan would otherwise be processed as a standard site plan with Plan Review Committee and Planning Commission review. The only difference is the use of the smaller checklist of required items found on the Minor Site Plan application checklist. Staff recommended approval.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: None.

**MOTION:** (Stone/Campbell) I make a motion that we grant a waiver of the full site plan requirements.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

Because this project is on public land, Mr. Wright suggested that the City turn this into an educational opportunity. He suggested passive education or a demonstration area for developers explaining what the facility is and how it works. Concerning the traffic circle itself, Mr. Wright felt that more advanced signage is necessary at the southern end to warn motorists about pedestrians crossing the road near the circle.

Mr. Bender told the commission that the design of the circle was done by a traffic consultant. The consultant was able to demonstrate via animation how different types of vehicles will maneuver around the circle. Construction is slated to begin at the end of May. The Mayor and City Council are scheduled to review and approve the project at the end of May with the beginning of construction shortly after that.

## **2014 Annual Report to Maryland Department of Planning.**

Mr. Rohrbaugh presented the 2014 report of the Planning Commission’s activities and other City projects, including economic development and infrastructure changes. (Report is in the meeting file.)

Commission members had the following comments and questions:

Page 1, under Section I.A., fifth line down, should be “. . .in the County that *are* growing and *exclude* areas that are not, . . .”

Page 1, under Section III.A.1., instead of “The City processed 3 requests . . .” it should read “The City *processed and approved* 3 requests . . .”

Page 3, Mr. Wright questioned the statement that the Midtown Motel was demolished in 2014. Mr. Rohrbaugh will confirm that.

Page 8, number 5, first line. This is the only instance where “SCP” is used. “SCP” should be spelled out.

Page 11, section VIII, Smart Growth Goals. In the first line, delete “also” (should read “SB276/HB295 requires jurisdictions . . .”).

Mr. Rohrbaugh stated that a number is missing in the table on the last page for forest conservation plans reviewed by the Planning Commission. He will make sure this number is filled in before it is sent to the state.

Mr. Wright commended Mr. Bockmiller for all his work raising awareness about Hagerstown’s Civil War history and the new *Hagerstories* television “series.” These initiatives are a real plus to the community. Ms. Maher announced that Mr. Bockmiller just received the Henry Kyd Douglas Award from the Hagerstown Civil War Roundtable and was recognized earlier this month.

Aside from the corrections, commission members had no comments on the report and commended Mr. Rohrbaugh on his thorough report.

**MOTION:** (Miller/Wheeler) So moved (to approve the *Planning Commission Annual Report for Calendar Year 2014*, with the changes suggested by the commission.).

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

### **Election of Officers.**

**MOTION:** (Miller/Wheeler) So moved (to retain the existing leadership of Douglas Wright, chair; and James Stone, vice chair).

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (ABSTAIN - Wright)

### **Announcements.**

- Staff recently received notification that the City of Hagerstown is receiving an award from the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites based on changes to the Land

Management Code that were put in place to protect cemeteries via the development review process.

- On May 16 Memorial Park will be dedicated and will include a ribbon cutting ceremony and the unveiling of the Circle of Achievement's 12 initial honorees. Confirmed attendees include Jacob Wheaton's lone remaining grandson who is traveling from New Jersey. William O. Wilson's family will be attending and will bring his Medal of Honor for display. Of the twelve honorees, staff has not been able to locate relatives of Mary Titcomb and Thomas Kennedy. Otherwise, descendants and relatives of all honorees will be in attendance.

**Adjourn.** It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (7:55 p.m.)

6/10/2015

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun - Secretary