

Mayor D. S. Gysberts called this 98<sup>th</sup> Special Session and Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:02 p.m., Tuesday, August 2, 2016, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers K. B. Aleshire, M. E. Brubaker, L. C. Metzner, D. F. Munson, and P. M. Nigh; City Administrator Valerie Means, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

98<sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL SESSION – August 2, 2016

On a motion duly made by Councilmember D. F. Munson and seconded by Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in Special Session at 4:02 p.m.

**Approval of an Ordinance: Deed and Easement Agreement with Ellsworth Properties, LLC for Mural of Unusual Size – Hagerstown Cultural Trail**

**Action:** Councilmember D. F. Munson made a motion to approve an ordinance authorizing the execution of a Deed and Easement Agreement to permit the City of Hagerstown to create and maintain a mural in connection with the Hagerstown Cultural Trail at 67 West Baltimore Street. Councilmember L. C. Metzner seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilmember Munson thanked John Barr for his interest in the project and his willingness to assist the City with it.

Motion carried, 4-1 with Councilmember P. M. Nigh voting No.

**Approval of a Street Closure – Locust Street Project**

**Action:** On a motion duly made by Councilmember K. B. Aleshire and seconded by Councilmember P. M. Nigh, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to approve a street closure for the Neighborhoods 1<sup>st</sup> Locust Street Project from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on August 13, 2016 with a rain date of August 14, 2016. The event site includes Locust Street between Antietam Street and Locust Point (Baltimore Street will remain open).

**Approval of a Street Closure: T.E.A.M. Community Day**

**Action:** On a motion duly made by Councilmember M. E. Brubaker and seconded by Councilmember D. F. Munson, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote of all members present to approve of a street closure for the T.E.A.M. Community Day event from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on July 23, 2016. The event site includes Locust Street between

E. Franklin Street and North Avenue and North Avenue between Locust Street and North Prospect Street.

Discussion: Jonathan Kerns, Community Development Manager, and Sarah Nelson, Planning and Outreach Coordinator, reported the project will be a gathering of volunteers for a street clean-up and beautification project. This project is a partnership with the Bester Community of Hope and Lowe's.

The Special Session was closed at 4:15 p.m.

#### WORK SESSION – August 2, 2016

##### Engine Room Art Gallery Presentation

Emily Jones, Engine Room Gallery Coordinator, and Amanda Whitmore, Downtown Coordinator, provided a review of the Engine Room Art Space's first year. The space opened on June 25, 2015 and in its first year of operation, the gallery has offered a range of exhibits and community programs. Highlights of the last year include the following:

1. June – Summer Solstice – juried group exhibit
2. August – Thumbelina – film showing
3. December: Pocket Market – artist market
4. February: our Shadows – interactive community program
5. March: BISFA Senior Salon – group exhibit

The Engine Room Art Space changes exhibits at the beginning of each month, and additional public events occur between and during monthly exhibits. The gallery is open Thursday through Sunday, with varying hours. The residents of the Artist Loft apartments above the Engine Room have an agreement to volunteer five hours each week to support the Engine Room Art Space (staffing, cleaning, etc.) for representation of their art and others in the development and programming of the space.

Programming at the Engine Room is largely influenced by feedback the coordinator collects from local artists, visitors, volunteers, and the community. A total of 2,265 visitors have attended events or stopped by. Without any paid advertisement, the Engine Room Art Space has gained 465 total followers on social media and 70 subscriptions to the email updates. Future exhibits include a temporary mural in September, an altered book art competition, more films, sculpture installation and the Pocket Market.

Mayor Gysberts stated he, staff, and other members of the community visited the Baltimore Design School and the Baltimore Institute of Art earlier today. The amenities available to artists in Hagerstown were discussed during the visit.

Councilmember Aleshire is interested in hearing from Ms. Jones and the other artists what they like best about living downtown. Ms. Jones will prepare a response for Councilmember Aleshire.

2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Event Series Update: main Street Hagerstown & Downtown Movement

Amanda Whitmore, Downtown Coordinator, and Rori Daughtridge, Main Street Promotions Works Group and a co-founder of the Downtown Movement, were present to discuss 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Events.

The Second Saturday series will begin in August with a partnership with the Washington County Free Library's Comic Con on August 13, 2016. Vendors will be located on or near the square and will include Antietam Dairy, Kona Ice, a photo booth, and a face painter. The band, the Plate Scrapers, will also play superhero-themed song covers during a portion of the event.

Dates and theme ideas for upcoming Second Saturday events include the following:

1. September 10, 2016 – Slide Fest/End of Summer Theme
2. October 8, 2016 – Fall Fest
3. Future theme ideas include:
  - a. November 12: Veterans/Patriotic
  - b. December 10: Holidays
  - c. January 14: New Year, New You
  - d. February 11: Frozen in February
  - e. March 11: St. Patrick's Day
  - f. April 8: April Showers
  - g. May 13: Mother's Day
  - h. June 10: School's Out

The City of Hagerstown applied and received a \$ 10,000.00 Main Street Improvement Program grant through Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development. The funding will be used to operate and promote Second Saturday events in order to foster a positive atmosphere which supports the businesses and residents in the downtown.

A small-scale test event was held on October 10, 2015 and was a large success. Over 150 people participated; patronizing local businesses for a "Speakeasy Stroll" which culminated in a '20s style Prohibition Party at a local event hall with vinyl-spinning DJs using hand-cranked Victrolas. Additional themes presented during the Fall 2015 test-run included November "For the Love of Fall," December "Holiday Party," January "Health and Wellness, and February "Frozen February." These pilot events were very successful and drew many visitors to the downtown.

Ms. Daughtridge pointed out combining 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday events with other events will draw even more people downtown.

Mayor Gysberts thanked Ms. Daughtridge for taking the lead on the Downtown Movement project. The City is not able to take on those types of roles and he appreciates her willingness to step in.

Councilmember Aleshire hopes the group can maintain flexibility from government red tape and obstacles to continue the improvements.

Councilmember Munson thanked Ms. Daughtridge as well. Ms. Daughtridge stated the Downtown Movement is a group effort and she hopes the members stay energized as a group.

Mayor Gysberts noted one of the most successful events organized by the Downtown Movement is the pop-up shops. Locating businesses in storefronts for a few days showed landlords what they could do with the retail space.

#### Catalyst Project #7 – City Farmers’ Market Update and Discussion

Jill Frick, Director of Community and Economic Development, Kathleen Maher, Director of Planning and Code Administration, and Lauren Metz, Community Events Coordinator, were present to update the Mayor and City Council on actions taken to date in support of Catalyst Project #7 Expanded Operations of the City Farmers’ Market.

The goal of Catalyst Project #7 is to expand the hours of operations of the Farmers’ Market, increase the number of vendors at the market, and rebrand the market to capture a portion of the estimated \$ 13 million of unmet demand for specialty foods in the retail market and provide groceries and locally grown produce for City Center residents and restaurants.

In December 2015, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for private operation of the Farmer’s Market. The RFP included a general statement that the City was open to creative solutions and models. A pre-proposal site visit and tour of the Farmers’ Market was conducted, and representatives from four prospective operators attended. One proposal was received. That proposal did not meet the requirements of the RFP.

The City has taken a number of additional actions since issuing the RFP including seeking input from the prospective operators who attended the pre-proposal visit, meeting with the individual that submitted a proposal, and meeting with other individuals/companies that may have an interest in serving as a market operator.

There are currently six regional farmers’ markets in Washington County, with additional markets being considered or under development in the region. Additionally, a number of farms and orchards in Washington County conduct sales operations in farmers market like settings. There are a number of commercial and baked goods sales operations in the County as well.

Staff seek a discussion with the Mayor and City Council for options and alternatives for continuing to move forward. Options and alternatives include, but may not be limited to, one or a combination of the following:

1. Maintain City operations of the Farmers' Market with existing hours
2. Maintain City operations with modified hours on Saturday and/or modified hours throughout the week
3. Reissue the RFP and/or seek proposals for private operation on a rolling basis
4. Seek opportunities to reposition the real estate for other food/grocery retail options
5. Collaborate regionally for stronger collective farmers; market offerings

Councilmember Brubaker asked why three people decided not to submit a response to the RFP. Ms. Frick indicated one said it would be challenging to move into the operation without a subsidy of some kind. An RFP for this type of operation with a firm deadline is challenging as well. She suggested reviewing any proposals submitted as they are received and not place a deadline on the RFP.

Councilmember Aleshire stated another challenge is the diversity of the products that are sold at the City Farmers' Market. He feels as though the City is in the process of failure by attrition with the Market. He does not think the location is advantageous in highlighting all that is being done to revitalize Hagerstown.

Councilmember Metzner agreed, and he does not think customers will seek out the City's market when there are so many other choices. The City Farmers' Market is a reflection of the oldest surviving farmers' market in Maryland. There are many people who go to the market for the breakfast foods.

Councilmember Aleshire stated the City has to look for ways to bring product back to the venue. There has to be a strong partnership between the City and the existing vendors to make the market successful.

Councilmember Brubaker suggested readvertising the RFP. Some aesthetic additions could help create the feel of a "market".

Councilmember Munson stated a survey showing the responses to the RFP would be helpful. He suggested a time from of 6 to 12 months for additional review and discussion.

Councilmember Nigh stated more farmers are needed at the market.

Mayor Gysberts stated this is not just an issue in Hagerstown. Farmers' markets are struggling across the State. The facility is very underutilized. In summary, Mayor Gysberts stated the consensus is to reissue the RFP and discuss the possibility of two separate operations at the market.

Ms. Maher indicated many people visit farmers' markets because they are within walking distance of their homes. There is a need to reach out to these residents as well as others.

Councilmember Aleshire left the meeting at this time.

Ms. Metz noted the newly hired market assistant will be contacting potential vendors in the near future.

Councilmember Metzner stated the City Center Plan indicated there is a segment of Hagerstown's population that needs/wants access to grocery type merchandise within walking distance. He wonders why many of these residents don't go to the market.

Councilmember Nigh stated the market needs to have a bakery as a vendor.

Discussion of the market will continue.

Action Report: Update on Implementation of the Community's City Center Plan

Jill Frick, Director of Community and Economic Development, and Kathleen Maher, Director of Planning and Code Administration, provided an Action Report on the community's progress in implementation of the Community's City Center Plan. This Action Report reflects 2016 year-to-date progress.

Work has been progressing on most of the catalyst projects identified in the Community's City Center Plan:

1. Office Development and Recruitment (Catalyst #1): The City and Bowman Development are in the exploratory phase on the Class A Office Building project. On July 15, 2016, the City applied for a \$ 750,000 grant from the Maryland Strategic Demolition Fund program to assist with pre-development activities for this project. In addition, the City and Antietam Cable are working in public-private partnership to create a 1 Gigabit Downtown which will support business retention, expansion and attraction. This initiative is supportive of several of the Catalyst Projects.
2. Expansion of Attendance/Programming at Maryland Theatre (Catalyst #2): The Theatre's State bond award of \$ 175,000 was matched with local Hotel Tax funding. In July, the Theatre worked on Stage Safety upgrades. In August, work will resume on dressing room remodeling and will commence on the Fire Curtain replacement. The Theatre Board has contracted with Grimm & Parker Architects and this summer they are working on the programming phase of the planned expansion. The City of Hagerstown and Washington County Board of Commissioners each contributed \$ 500,000 towards the architectural services of the expansion.
3. Expansion of USMH (Catalyst #3): USMH is continuing work on development of three new programs: Hospitality Management, Nurse

- Practitioners, and Physician's Assistant. The B. S. in Hospitality Management and Tourism through UMES is scheduled to begin at USMH with the Fall 2017 semester. An interior demolition permit was issued on July 20, 2016 to begin the renovation process at the BB&T Building for the future Hospitality management space.
4. Student Housing (Catalyst #3): The first Student Housing project at Patterson Hall is fully leased with eight USMH students. On July 15, 2016, the City applied for a \$ 200,000 Community Legacy grant to assist with development of a second Student Housing project.
  5. Hagerstown Cultural Trail (Catalyst #5):
    - a. Trail: Construction of the trail began in April and will conclude by the fall. Pavers and boulders are being installed on the Housing Authority property. Underground conduit system was 70% complete in early July for lights and cameras. Light poles are being installed.
    - b. Public Art: Base painting for Mural of Unusual Size should begin the first week of September. The City is developing contract for selected muralist. Engaged architect to design shade structures. Finalizing logo on granite insets. Obtained Maryland State Arts Council grant to assist with entry plaza art. Art Selection Committee has held meetings to discuss artistic screens, playscape status, photo-mural, and Hidden Hagerstown history boxes.
  6. Expanded Downtown Events Programming (Catalyst #6): The five work groups of Main Street Hagerstown are planning new events and projects.
    - a. Events: The Second Saturday program will resume on August 13, 2016 in conjunction with the Library's Comic-Con event. The 2016 Downtown Summer Slide Festival will be on the West Baltimore Street hill down to Walnut Street on September 10, 2016 in conjunction with Porch Fest and second Saturday. A Pop Up Shops event is being planned for November in conjunction with the Holiday Tree Lighting.
    - b. Main Street Projects: Main Street work groups are also working on web site design, a Main Street Hagerstown brochure, more window scrims for vacant storefronts, and ways to beautify and clean up city blocks. The Main Street Business Relations work group held four focus groups of downtown business owners to gather and synthesize information to improve and enhance the downtown business environment.
    - c. Façade Grant Program: On July 15, 2016, the City applied for a \$ 25,000 Community Legacy grant to replenish the Façade Grant Program for Commercial and Mixed-use Buildings in the Main Street area.
  7. Private Management of the Farmers' Market (Catalyst #7): Staff will work with the Mayor and City Council to assess, consider alternatives, and consider the opportunity to re-post the RFP and a path forward to implement this catalyst project.

8. Protection of Neighborhoods and Support for Home-ownership (Catalyst #8):
  - a. Vacant Structures Program: City staff updated Mayor and City Council on first year of program on June 14, 2016. 1,034 vacant structures had been identified and 474 had active licenses in the program and 173 were pending. 387 were identified structures were inactive either because were sold, had active building permit, registered in the Rental Licensing program, or were semi-occupied. Proposed code amendments to enhance the program will be further discussed on August 16, 2016. Inspections of licensed vacant structures are ongoing to ensure protection of the neighborhoods and first responders from exterior blight and unsafe interior conditions.
  - b. Home-Ownership Program: One of the two proposals submitted under the Competitive Negotiated Sales process for acquisition of 278 S. Prospect Street for home-ownership was selected and is currently under contract with settlement expected in September. Architectural work is underway for creation of two condo units for home-ownership at 261 S. Prospect Street. Renovations at 64 E. Franklin Street are substantially complete and the property will be positioned for sale for home-ownership.
  - c. Down Payment Assistance Program: On July 15, 2016, the City applied for a \$ 125,000 Community Legacy grant to replenish the Down Payment Assistance program.

Mayor Gysberts thanked staff for their work on the overall plan. This plan is not being kept on a shelf.

#### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS**

*Valerie Means, City Administrator* had no additional comments.

#### **MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS**

*Councilmember D. F. Munson* had no additional comments.

*Councilmember M. E. Brubaker* had no additional comments.

*Councilmember L. C. Metzner* had no additional comments.

*Councilmember P. M. Nigh* stated cameras on the streets are important for fighting crime.

*Mayor D. S. Gysberts* thanked the Joint Veterans Council for holding the Korean War Memorial event on July 27, 2016. He thanked all veterans for their service.



98<sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL SESSION AND WORK SESSION  
2016

AUGUST 2,

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and City Council, on a motion duly made, seconded, and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

National Night Out was held at Fairgrounds Park at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Original signed by D. K. Spickler*

Donna K. Spickler  
City Clerk

Approved: September 27, 2016