

EXECUTIVE SESSION – January 15, 2019

On a motion duly made by Councilmember A. Heffernan and seconded by Councilmember E. Keller, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote of all members present at the time of the vote to meet in closed session to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction, #1 (Section 3-305(b)), and to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto; #3 (Section 3-305(b)), on Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 2:41 p.m. in Room 407, 4th floor, City Hall, Hagerstown, Maryland. Councilmember Aleshire was not present for the vote.

The following people were in attendance: Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II, Councilmember K. B. Aleshire, Councilmember A. Heffernan, Councilmember E. Keller, Councilmember S. McIntire, Councilmember L. C. Metzner, City Administrator Valerie Means, Michelle Hepburn, Director of Finance, Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, and Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk.

The meeting was held to discuss various personnel matters and acquisition of property. No formal action was taken at the meeting. On a motion duly made, seconded, and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

WORK SESSION – January 15, 2019

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:08 p.m., Tuesday, January 15, 2019 in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers A. Heffernan, K. B. Aleshire, E. Keller, S. McIntire, and L. C. Metzner, City Administrator Valerie Means, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

License Agreement for Temporary installation of Public Art

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, was present to discuss a license agreement for temporary installation of Public Art at Maryland Avenue/Downsville Road.

Councilmember McIntire contacted artist Scott LoBaido about possibly doing a temporary art display in the community. Contingent upon the money for the project being raised privately, the artist has selected the public right of way of Maryland Avenue near Downsville Road (adjacent St. Andrews Methodist church) as the location he wishes to display the art from March 22 – 24, 2019. Staff developed a license agreement that, if approved by the City Council, allows the artists to set up the temporary art as indicated in the agreement.

The art is meant to be viewed from dusk till dawn. This installation is illuminated by batteries and “fake” candles so no electricity is needed. The artist asked if the City could provide security and staff indicated to him that the City would not be able to provide 24 hour security. The artist is raising funds for this project through a GoFundMe fundraising effort.

Councilmember McIntire thanked Scott Hawkens who brought this national tour to her attention. The artwork is to raise awareness of the 22 veteran suicides every day.

It was the general consensus to schedule approval of the license agreement on January 29, 2019.

Main Street Hagerstown Program Update

Amanda Whitmore, Downtown Coordinator, Sean Griffith, Clean, Safe and Green Chair, and Aaron Peteranecz, Design Chair, were present to provide an update on the Main Street Hagerstown program. The City of Hagerstown was designated a Main Street community in October 2014 and the City Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) has been managing the program since the designation. Main Street Programs aim to revitalize their downtowns and commercial districts through preservation-based economic development and community revitalization.

Approximately 20 volunteers actively participate on work groups. The five Work Groups are: Organization, Promotion, Business Relations, Clean, Safe and Green, and Design. Currently, there are over 120 volunteers on Main Street Hagerstown’s volunteer roster and over 3,000 followers (and growing) on Facebook. In 2018, these volunteers contributed 669 hours to improving the downtown. Since the last update to the Mayor and City Council on June 5, 2018, the following has been accomplished:

1. Planned and executed two successful events: Chalk Art Festival (Inaugural Event) and Christkindl Markt (Second Year)
2. Redesigned and printed new holiday banners for the street poles
3. Conducted business focus groups with downtown business owners
4. Created a #MyDowntownHagerstown pass, available during major downtown events
5. Created and distributed marketing materials for the Open for Business campaign
6. Coordinated efforts with property owners and artists so vacant spaces could be utilized by artists during the Taste of the Arts event
7. Continued assisting city staff with adding flowers to East Franklin flower pots and doing litter pickups
8. Enhanced the City Center Tree Lighting by adding Santa’s Workshop

The goals for the Main Street Hagerstown program are to :

1. Increase awareness and community engagement with the Main Street Hagerstown program and downtown events
2. Encourage beautification of downtown

3. Increase retention and attraction of downtown businesses

Councilmember Heffernan asked if there are enough volunteers. Ms. Whitmore indicated there are bursts of interest from volunteers at different times of the year.

Councilmember Keller asked how the elected officials could help raise interest. Ms. Whitmore suggested sharing Main Street events on Facebook and other social media. Councilmember Keller mentioned the local Ravens Roost club would like to do something with the empty storefronts.

Main Street Hagerstown Adopt a Block Pilot Program

Amanda Whitmore, Downtown Coordinator, and Sean Griffith, Clean, Safe and Green Work Group Chair, were present to provide information about Main Street Hagerstown's proposal to pilot an Adopt a Block program. Main Street Hagerstown's Clean, Safe, and Green work group would like to pilot an Adopt a Block program for the designated Main Street area. Several communities throughout the country have launched this program.

The Adopt a Block program will help to keep downtown Hagerstown consistently beautiful by encouraging and enabling community members and businesses to control and prevent litter in the downtown, block by block.

The proposed program outline is as follows:

1. The four core blocks in the Main Street Area would be available for adoption
2. individual, businesses/employees, or organizations can volunteer as block captains to lead in their block's beautification
3. Main Street will provide a startup kit to include trash bags, gloves, and two litter grabbers
4. A block captain will commit to a one-year commitment to keeping the block free of litter, debris and weeds on an ongoing basis. Recommended at least monthly.
5. Block captains will also gather the people needed to help maintain the block and communicate with businesses and residents on the block in an effort to secure their involvement.
6. Main Street Hagerstown will create informational door hangers and/or flyers for the block captains to share with their neighbors what they are doing to improve their block and how others can help
7. Main Street Hagerstown will purchase signs identifying a block has been adopted

Expenses for the program will be covered for from the DCED Operation Budget - Main Street Hagerstown program line item.

Councilmember Metzner suggested looking at streets rather than blocks.

Councilmember Keller stated it would be interesting to get Neighborhoods 1st groups involved and do something similar that would spread throughout the City.

The Mayor and City Council support this initiative.

Discussion of Benches in Public Square

Jill Thompson, Director of Community and Economic Development, and Chief Paul Kifer were present to provide background information for the discussion of the benches in Public Square.

A total of four benches were installed in Public Square in September 2017 – two in the Northeast Quadrant and two in the Southwest Quadrant.

The recommendation to install benches in Public Square was presented to the Mayor and City Council at the April 11, 2017 Work Session by Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) staff and the Main Street Hagerstown program volunteers from the Clean, Safe and Green work group. Different bench designs were reviewed and considered. The goal of adding benches to Public Square was to provide an amenity for downtown patrons and visitors. Main Street members recommend keeping the benches in the square.

Chief Kifer pointed out the benches in the northeast quadrant are closer to the street than the businesses; however, in the southeast quadrant, one of the benches lines up with the front door of a business, making the employees uncomfortable. If the benches in the southeast quadrant were moved to face each other and match the northeast quadrant, it would solve the issue. Police officers try to keep people from laying on the benches. They also ask people to use the benches properly.

Mayor Bruchey noted there is a significant police presence downtown and the complaints are being addressed.

The See Something, Send Something app to report problems to the Hagerstown Police Department will be more heavily promoted.

Councilmember Keller stated looking at architecture as a way to deter people from being there is a backward approach. As fellow humans and leaders, the City officials should be looking at why they are there and see if they can help them find a solution.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Valerie Means, City Administrator, had no additional comments.

Councilmember S. McIntire reminded everyone the 100 Miler kicks off on Friday, January 18, 2019. She and Councilmember Keller will be participating.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner has met with representatives of WDVM television station. There are two monopolies in Hagerstown – the cable franchise and the local TV station. It would be nice to see both groups sit at the table and resolve the issue of WDVM not being carried on the cable channel. He understands negotiations are not taking place locally. Contacting the City of Hagerstown will not help.

Councilmember A. Heffernan had no additional comments.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire had no additional comments.

Councilmember E. Keller asked if Imagine Hagerstown is the name for the new event in June. Ms. Thompson indicated the last direction was Imagine Hagerstown: A Month of Arts and Music. Ms. Means stated there has been no change from the discussion last week.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II had no additional comments.

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 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

Approved: February 26, 2019