

WORK SESSION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING - OCTOBER 9, 2012

WORK SESSION – October 9, 2012

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:12 p.m., Tuesday, October 9, 2012, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers W. M. Breichner, M. E. Brubaker, F. W. Easton, A. C. Haywood, L. C. Metzner; Washington County Commissioners: Terry Baker, President, John Barr, Vice-President, Ruth Ann Callahan, William McKinley, Jeffrey Cline, Greg Murray, County Administrator, Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

Arts and Entertainment Study Presentation

Anirban Basu, The Sage Policy Group, presented the results of the recently completed A & E Study to the Mayor and City Council and the Washington County Commissioners. Mary Anne Burke and Jim Pierini, Washington County Arts Council, were also present.

The Arts, Education, and Entertainment Task Force, led by James Miller, discussed this feasibility study during the March 15, 2011 Work Session. The Mayor and City Council endorsed the study at that time. Funding for the study was provided by the local arts organizations. There was no cost to the City for the study.

Mr. Pierini thanked the group for allowing this presentation to be held. He stated the major arts organizations and foundations came together to provide funding for this study. There will be a public presentation later today at the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts.

Mr. Basu reported the objectives of the study included:

1. Conduct in-depth research of the Washington County arts and education community
2. Provide recommendations designed to promote the arts, entertainment and education and encourage economic development

Data was collected from the community's demographic and economic information. A study was completed of art consumers' tastes and characteristics. A SWOT analysis was completed and focus groups were formed involving key community stakeholders in the business, government, arts, entertainment and/or education sectors.

There are numerous arts, entertainment and education institutions in the community, including the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, Maryland Theatre, Maryland Symphony Orchestra, University System of Maryland at Hagerstown, Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and many other small art galleries and museums near downtown Hagerstown. He found that many people do not realize what is available in Hagerstown. Few communities are able to boast of this strength in the arts.

There is a disproportionate range of young people living in Hagerstown. Hagerstown household income is lower than the Washington County average. Everyone in the community matters, irrespective of their income. From a business perspective, people with discretionary income spend more on arts and entertainment.

The findings of a 2008 survey conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts, found that nearly 50% of adults art participants possessed a college degree or higher. Nearly 70% of art participating adults reported annual income greater than \$ 50,000. Cohorts of the population 35 and older accounted for a large share of attendees at classical music, opera, jazz, and ballet performances. By contrast, Latin music, festivals and musicals are more frequently attended by younger cohorts. People who patronize the arts tend to be more educated than the community average.

The focus group findings include:

1. Hagerstown should be the core of Washington County's arts, education, and entertainment cluster: Downtown Hagerstown has critical mass of arts, education, and entertainment infrastructure. There is a high volume of foot traffic thanks to the working population, USMH and Barbara Ingram School for the Arts.
2. The arts, education, and entertainment cluster needs better coordination to fulfill its potential. The community should form a consistent vision regarding the appropriate direction of its own future.
3. Successful development of artistic and cultural assets requires rejuvenating the local retail environment. The City lacks nocturnal entertainment as well as retail variety. Parking is an issue for some and not for others.
4. Arts and entertainment district would benefit from improved marketing and branding. The City's assets should be marketed under more uniform themes.
5. Target visitors with higher income. Not trying to be snobbish, but upper income population will be critical. The City should oversee the creation of housing opportunities for higher income individuals and families downtown.
6. Alter the City's image. Many agree that the downtown Hagerstown is associated with negative images. This is mainly due to visibly distressed areas, concentration of low-income households and informal business establishments. City residents have intensely negative attitudes towards their own communities.
7. Active involvement of government is critical. Local governments (both City and County) should strive toward an environment more conducive to the formation of arts and entertainment cluster – implies streetscaping and public-private partnerships with upscale developers.

There is a need for coordination. Most successful arts efforts are led by a single, prominent arts council responsible for coordination. Government or quasi-government agencies typically involved in the arts include the local visitor's bureau, the tourism department, public schools and the economic development department.

Since 1996, the City of Hagerstown has invested \$ 18 million in developing the city center. It is estimated that the City's investment has leveraged more than \$ 65 million in additional private and public investment, including the \$ 23 million construction of the new Free Library and the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts. A new stadium project is being developed and reviewed. This \$ 30 million investment is slated to be located in the core of downtown Hagerstown. The new stadium will have 4,000-4,500 seats with maximum accommodation capacity of approximately 6,000 spectators. It is estimated that the new facility will attract 224,000 visitors per year. Combined with the number of visitors to the new Free Library and other events in town, downtown Hagerstown will enjoy nearly a million visitors per year once the new stadium is in place.

Recommendations of the study include:

1. Focus art promotion efforts in downtown Hagerstown
2. De-concentrate poverty in downtown Hagerstown. Investors and key stakeholders agree that the lack of spending power in downtown Hagerstown is a deterrent to investment in the arts and entertainment in Hagerstown. Downtown incomes must be raised as a prerequisite for the formation of a full-fledged arts, education and entertainment cluster in Washington County. To create a vibrant art community, the community needs to create an atmosphere that attracts residents/art patrons with higher income and educational attainment. This results in more demand for art.
3. Create a Community Arts Commission/Downtown Partnership. This group would coordinate through joint marketing efforts and website development/management, coordinate schedules and advocate for the cluster.
4. Create an Arts Incubator. Arts incubators are important in assisting and attracting artists. The presence of artists leads to business formation, greater demand for real estate and a greater sense of vibrancy in the community. The Washington County Arts Council should provide technical and educational services for resident artists. Dedicated space is required for resident artists to interact, including with the general public. Potential sites are: 59 W. Washington Street, 13-17 S. Potomac Street and the Massey Building
5. Intensive and Coordinated Marketing of the County's Cultural Assets by creating a cultural website that provides information regarding events, dates/complete calendar, times, ticket availability, and other relevant information.

Councilmember Haywood stated it makes sense to focus on downtown. She wondered how to deal with the fact that a lot of people want to park close to a retail establishment, like a big box store, and not have to walk any distance.

Mr. Basu stated Wal-Mart has its place, but it is not meant to inspire people. The recommendations presented are about market segmentation. The idea is to attract the people who are interested in different things in multiple locations. Downtown should be a place for inspiration.

Councilmember Breichner stated the economy is causing struggles for some of the arts, such as the MSO. People are trying to get by and are depressed.

Ms. Basu agreed, but said people are looking for something that distracts them from the mundane.

Councilmember Brubaker asked if Mr. Basu had reviewed some of the incentive programs offered by the City. Mr. Basu has and indicated they are good programs, evidence the community is trying to promote itself.

Councilmember Brubaker asked how to connect with people in metropolitan areas. The people who attended the MML Fall Conference were surprised that Hagerstown had so much to offer. Mr. Basu indicated social media helps and so does branding.

Commissioner Callahan compared the Arts, Education, and Entertainment Task

Force to the Economic Development Commission. There needs to be an accountability factor for the group. Mr. Basu stated the group would schedule and coordinate events to ensure there is no overlapping, to avoid the opportunity to create economies of scale.

Councilmember Easton stated at some point, the City has to stop attracting lower income residents who are seeking public assistance. He asked if Mr. Basu had any suggestion as to how to do this. Mr. Basu stated what creates problems is not poverty, it is the concentration of poverty, living apart from other classes. There has to be a mixing of residents, both with higher income and lower income.

Councilmember Haywood would like to hear from the participants in the study how to make the recommendations happen. Mr. Pierini stated the next step will be to get the task force together and determine next steps on behalf of the arts organizations. This effort will be a joint effort with elected officials and citizens participating.

Councilmember Haywood pointed out Frederick has a focused effort with art institutions to promote their amenities.

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

*Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator*, had no additional comments.

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

*Councilmember M. E. Brubaker* stated the City is having a public information meeting, which was announced some time ago. A group is complaining that they've had no opportunity to discuss the project. A meeting was held (as reported in the Herald Mail) with this group, but Councilmember Brubaker was not invited. Mayor Bruchey mentioned he was not invited also. There has been a lot of information provided to the public about the proposed Multi-Use Stadium and Events Center (MUSEC).

*Councilmember L. C. Metzner* thanked everyone for their efforts with the MML Fall Conference. He is looking forward to hosting the Wesel, Germany Sister City visitors.

*Councilmember A. C. Haywood* thanked the Commissioners for attending this joint meeting.

*Councilmember F. W. Easton* thanked the Commissioners for working with the City. He believes the relationship between the two groups has improved drastically over the last two years. The United Way Day of Caring is being held on Wednesday, October 10, 2012.

*Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II* also thanked the Commissioners and agrees the relationship is very good now. He is thankful these two groups get along well. The City of Hagerstown hosted the welcome reception during the MML Fall Conference. He thanked City staff for making the event a success. Many participants visited downtown and the museum while in Hagerstown for the conference. Members of the Sister City delegation will begin arriving in Hagerstown on October 11, 2012.

Commissioner Baker thanked the Mayor and City Council for meeting with the

Commissioners. He thanked Councilmember Easton for serving the community well.

Commissioner Cline stated he is a former MML municipal representative and he heard good comments about the fall conference in Hagerstown from his contacts.

Commissioner Callaham looks forward to a continued good working relationship with the City.

Commissioner McKinley views the Mayor and City Council as allies who can communicate effectively with each other.

Commissioner Barr appreciates the groups working together. These two groups are unique, as they work well together, unlike other elected officials in other Maryland locations.

There being no further business to come before this portion of the meeting, on a motion duly made, seconded and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING – Multi-Use Sports & Event Center Project (MUSEC)

On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed to hold a special public information meeting regarding the Multi-Use Sports & Event Center (MUSEC) project. Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. on Tuesday, October 9, 2012, at the Hager Hall Hotel and Convention Center, 901 Dual Highway, Hagerstown, Maryland. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers W. M. Breichner, M. E. Brubaker, F. W. Easton, A. C. Haywood, L. C. Metzner; City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

There were approximately 100 people in attendance.

A new video was shown that focuses on the location and funding, the two primary issues raised by those with concerns over the project, and “Why Downtown”.

George Ortiz, HKS, provided information about the current design for stadiums. He showed the audience ways that lighting has been changed to ensure less light in the neighborhoods surrounding a stadium. The beam of light is more precisely directly to the field.

Comments

Julie Rivett, 141 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, lives across the street from the proposed site. She stated she has attended many meetings but has not heard anything specific about the proposal. This is why she organized the meeting on Sunday evening (October 7, 2012) to talk with the candidates in the City election. During the meeting, those in attendance looked at other visionary ideas, i. e. historic museum. She is concerned a dog park task force was created to research a dog park in Hagerstown but no task force was created to research a stadium. She stated this is not a good location. Noise and light pollution will create problems.

Douglas Zaruba, 145 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, is an artist with a studio in Frederick, Maryland. He would like to see revitalization in Hagerstown. He believes the information presented about the MUSEC does not have much substance. He wondered how the average attendance reported for current games (up to 1,000) will increase the number of people downtown to 750,000. He is concerned about the results of environmental studies. There have been no details released for a lease with the Suns. He is concerned that money will have to be borrowed to fund the project. He stated the City is currently struggling to meet its financial obligations.

Jill Estavillo, Economic Development Manager and Project Manager, stated the anticipated increase in people visiting downtown includes those who will visit the library and the stadium. Attendance for baseball games is anticipated to increase. This number was determined with the assistance of the Ripken Group.

Mr. Zimmerman stated the City follows sound financial principals, with budgets that are balanced. Over the last three years, the Mayor and City Council have approved budgets using these financial principals. The property tax rate is 12.5 ¢ lower than it was in 2009. The General Fund budget is \$ 4 million less than in 2009. The Mayor and City Council have stressed to staff that the City has to be financially conservative and must manage resources carefully.

Mayor Bruchey stated the reason details of a lease have not been presented is because a lease has not been finalized. Negotiations are continuing. A study was completed by the Ripken Group to assist in determining if the project is feasible in the proposed location. Environmental studies are taking place. The City is doing its due diligence in reviewing all the information and projections. This has not been a hasty process.

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, stated Phase I of the Environmental Study included a review of the history of the uses on the property. Phase II focuses on the composition of the soil at the site. Probes have been drilled.

Brenna Ranieli, 12926 The Terrace, Hagerstown, Maryland, grew up in Hagerstown, left the area, and has now returned. Sports teams have been a social activity. Having a hometown team is special and all of Washington County can be proud of this fact. She stated the MUSEC is worth it. It is not just a stadium, but a multi-use facility that can be used for many events and activities. Many Orioles fans who attend games at Fed-Ex Oriole Park stay in Baltimore after the game, visiting shops and restaurants. The MUSEC can help revitalize this community and be a facet that people find attractive. It will bring new life to the community and to downtown.

Karla Green, Boonsboro, Maryland, has a business in Hagerstown. The MUSEC will bring life and business back to Hagerstown. She does not want her children to have to drive to Winchester or Frederick to attend a baseball game. She wants to spend her money where she lives and support businesses here.

Ed Lough, 20 W. Washington Street, Hagerstown, Maryland, is a Northwestern Mutual representative. His office has been downtown for 21 years. He understands that change is difficult. The Hagerstown Suns will leave if the fight continues over the stadium. Money will be lost if this happens. He urged the City to finally do something to

revitalize downtown.

Dan Spedden, 41 Mealy Parkway, Hagerstown, Maryland, lives in the City and is a member of the Tourism Board. He understands the importance of tourism. The Hagerstown Suns is the number 1 attraction for Hagerstown. Hagerstown would not be the first town to build a downtown ballpark. He has visited other locations and has seen that noise is not a problem. He believes some of the comments made at previous meetings concerning no police presence downtown were intended to scare people into thinking downtown is too dangerous for any event. There is police presence downtown, including a police substation on W. Washington Street. He wondered why someone would say the stadium in Harrisburg is no longer there. The stadium is there and is thriving. People need to know the facts about the project, not the scare tactics. He supports the project and the City deserves it.

Ed Glenn, Hagerstown, Maryland, was born and raised in Hagerstown. He lives where the stadium is now. He stated he does not have company because of the noise and parking issues. The people on Summit Avenue matter, whether they rent or own their residences. He is concerned about the senior citizens that live in the area. He enjoys Suns games and has supported the team. He believes moving the stadium to the center of Hagerstown is not a good idea. He suggested renovating Municipal Stadium.

George Anikis, 8105 Sharpsburg Pike, Fairplay, Maryland, stated, in his opinion, a sports team should not receive public tax dollars. The threat of the Suns to leave because there isn't investment in the current stadium is well known. New stadiums don't generate what is expected. He stated there is no traffic plan for downtown. If attendance continues to fall at games, he wonders what the cost of tickets will be. History should not be ignored.

Fred Elberts, Hagerstown, Maryland, is concerned about the proposed location. The area is cramped and parking will be a problem. He stated a Marc train line will bring a lot of visitors to downtown.

Chick Meehan, 17641 College Road, Hagerstown, Maryland, stated a new stadium has been discussed for many years. Now that a location has been chosen, people want to be negative about it. The citizens don't know the facts like the Mayor and City Council do. The Mayor and Council have reviewed the facts and have made decisions based on those facts. That is why they were elected. He stated if people think this is a good investment for the future of Hagerstown, they should vote for it.

Jonathan Burrs, 950 Lanvale Street, Hagerstown, Maryland, is a City Council candidate. He believes everyone shares the same opinion – they care about Hagerstown and they want what is best for the City and they want economic revitalization for downtown. He stated the attendance numbers are not correct because they include season ticket holders. He stated the Ripken stadium has wrong financial information. The economics are simple – new ballpark stadiums are not catalysts for economic development. This opinion is based on 20 years of research. He stated there needs to be a real plan and the Suns should be included in the plan.

Don Day, 1846 Meridan Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland, stated everyone wants revitalization in the community. Revitalization must occur in downtown. He

congratulated the City and the County for working together on this project and for doing their jobs. The decisions have to be made based on the information that is available. He is impressed with the staff members working on this project. He stated no substantial alternative has been offered from those opposing the location.

Phil Miller, 105 Buttercup Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland, moved back to Hagerstown. He stated the City is on life support and in critical condition. The City and the County have stepped up to the plate to try to help. He is concerned that Hagerstown has been referred to as the poster child for economic decline. He is proud of Hagerstown and glad he decided to move back here. Hagerstown has a great past and now is the time to honor its future. Hagerstown can then be referred to as the poster child for economic success.

Lynda Evans, 306 S. Potomac Street, Hagerstown, Maryland, is Vice President of the Hagerstown Tea Party. As a City homeowner and taxpayer, there are other issues in Hagerstown as well as the MUSEC. After seeing the video, she thought there would be private investors lined up to offer funding for the MUSEC. The study did not mention anything negative. The City should be trying to find investors. She wondered when the Suns' needs changed from money to a new stadium. She has heard the Nationals would accept Municipal Stadium being upgraded. She has been disappointed in the process. When citizens finally have the chance to speak, they are limited to three minutes.

Zach Spedden, 41 Mealey Parkway, Hagerstown, Maryland, expressed his concern that people are inventing fear of a conspiracy theory. There has been plenty of opportunity to contact the Mayor and City Council. He wants Hagerstown to progress. He is upset that people are trying to help business in Hagerstown and citizens aren't helping.

Richard Hays, 8907 Lums Avenue, Boonsboro, Maryland, is concerned that taxpayers will be funding the MUSEC. He previously mentioned not feeling safe downtown. He stated he would not park downtown to walk to a stadium in the dark. He stated he did not see any police officers as he traveled through Hagerstown today. There is a lot of criminal activity. Perception often becomes reality in the minds of people. The MUSEC has to have financial sustainability. He has not seen information that addresses this.

Kristie Lawson, 17436 Cindy Lane, Hagerstown, Maryland, introduced Josh, Jason and Cole from the Maugansville Little League. They love baseball and they wanted to attend this meeting to support the stadium and baseball. Having a hometown team is important to them.

Garry Laing, 13917 Eden Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland, is in favor of the MUSEC. He believes this facility will help Hagerstown. The increase in pedestrian traffic will help existing and new businesses. Businesses would offer new employment.

Wes Mixter is a big baseball fan and he is in favor of the new stadium. He thinks Municipal Stadium has served its purpose. Just because something is old it may not be historic. When events are held at the MUSEC, restaurants will be full.

Jill Colbert, 13529 Pulaski Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland, is from a small town where people got stuck in a rut and did not want to make improvements to the town. When people fight improvements, other people move out and she is starting to see that

happening in Hagerstown. One thing is true in Hagerstown, people want Hagerstown to flourish. She has hosted 16 Suns players. Even though she is a baseball fan, the MUSEC is not about baseball. It is about doing something for downtown. It will be something investors look for and want to be involved with. The lights and noise will not be an issue. She wants there to be something in Hagerstown that her son wants to stay for.

Tom Riford, Executive Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, 16 Public Square, Hagerstown, Maryland, stated there is police presence downtown. The CVB Board of Directors voted unanimously to support this downtown project. Visitors have to be attracted to Washington County. There has been a loss of foot traffic downtown since the library closed for renovation. The decay of downtown is real. The A & E Study showed businesses need a critical mass and foot traffic. Forty years ago, Hagerstown had more shops and there were more large employers in the county. Things have changed and downtown revitalization should be first on everyone's list. His counter-parts say a downtown stadium attracts traffic downtown. Funding this project is not mortgaging the children's future, it is benefiting the community.

Regina Swope, 5 Dartmouth Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland, has attended Mayor and Council meetings and one County Commissioners meeting. There has been ample time for people to express their opinions about the MUSEC. People say there is nothing to do in Hagerstown but this is not true. She is a Suns season ticket holder. She attends the Community Concert series and attended the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and many other events. A healthy community has a variety of events. The MUSEC is not a stadium for the Suns, it is a multi-use facility. It can be used year round. It is time to move forward with the project.

Barbara Hovermill, 16286 Spielman Road, Williamsport, Maryland, stated there has not been a public hearing about the MUSEC. This is a public meeting, not a hearing. She wondered why Municipal Stadium is not used for other activities. If so many people want a new stadium, why haven't they come forward to offer funding. She has heard there was a cemetery at the proposed site. She read a statement saying that the cost is \$ 50 million and the Mayor and City Council don't hear what citizens are saying. They should do the right thing and save the neighborhood. This is a historic site.

Ms. Estavillo pointed out the handout includes the funding plan, which is a \$ 37 million project, not \$ 50 million. The project costs include the facility, parking garage, plaza, acquisition of property and design.

Mr. Tissue stated page 11 shows the improvements made at Municipal Stadium over the last 30 years. The only thing older than 30 years is the bleachers on the left field side.

Chris Kelly, 1425 Glenwood Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, is a City Council candidate. He doesn't understand why an engineer could not fix the problems at Municipal Stadium. The MUSEC will take away something from the neighborhood where Municipal Stadium is located. People move there because of the stadium and there is extra room for expansion. He wondered if the field size can be increased to meet the standards of the Nationals.

Mr. Tissue stated expansion of the seating area may be possibility. He doesn't know if the field size would change.

David Hanlin, 18710 Fountain Terrace, Hagerstown, Maryland, is a member of the Revitalization Committee. He is convinced the stadium project should be built as proposed. There is little demand for space in buildings downtown. Because there is no demand, values are declining. It should be the other way around. Building in the center of the city should be more valuable. He hopes baseball will turn this around. Pedestrian traffic will attract restaurants, perception of safety will improve and young people will want to live near the facility. When the process starts, the increased property values will help pay the debt. He has noticed some interest in downtown properties.

Gary Dare graduated from North Hagerstown High School. He has never been a big baseball fan but he does like Hagerstown. The MUSEC is a step in revitalizing Hagerstown, just like the new library. The stadium project is a huge step that must be taken for the survival of Hagerstown.

Tony Dahbura, 13056 Gordon Circle, Hagerstown, Maryland, is one of the co-owners of the Suns. Initially the owners were talking to the City and County about an extreme make over of Municipal Stadium. There was vague agreement but not a lot of excitement. He can understand why. Several months later a vision was developed by the City and community members to revitalize the core of downtown. As owners, they joined in. The owners and the Nationals like this plan. They want a sound environment for the players to develop. The Suns owners are extremely community oriented and they want to keep the team in Hagerstown.

Matt Ranieli, 12926 The Terrace, Hagerstown, Maryland, stated something has to be done to keep youth in the City. One key component is education. His age group is not represented in Hagerstown. The stadium will bring in tourism and will help keep people in Hagerstown. A stadium will be one step toward making a statement for Hagerstown.

This concluded the comment time.

Councilmember Metzner thanked all those who spoke during the meeting.

Councilmember Brubaker thanked people for expressing their opinions. He thinks this Council has tried to keep an open mind about the project, despite what people have said. There have many opportunities for public comments at meetings. The total project cost is estimated at \$ 37 million. He believes this project will bring redevelopment downtown. This will help turn around the outlook for downtown.

Councilmember Haywood also thanked everyone who spoke. She responded to the question of what comes first – the lease or the stadium. There are many pieces that have to be determined before any work begins – the lease and an environmental survey to name two. These things are being worked on. The amount of time and effort staff and volunteers have committed to the review of the project is tremendous. She asked what citizens want, if not this project. Her goal is to get people out of their cars and walking through Hagerstown. This stadium will make that happen. Downtown must and should be an example of a sustainable project.

Mayor Bruchey mentioned that Jeff Eisman, Dan Taylor and Jim Arnold, from the Ripken Design group, were also present at the meeting.

The meeting was concluded at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler  
City Clerk

Approved: November 20, 2012