

52nd SPECIAL SESSION, WORK SESSION AND EXECUTIVE SESSION – October 21, 2014

Executive Session – October 21, 2014

On a motion duly made by Councilmember D. F. Munson and seconded by Councilmember L. C. Metzner, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote of all members present to meet in closed session to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice, #7 (Section 10-508(a)), 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 10-508(a)), and to conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations, #9 (Section 10-508(a)) at 3:05 p.m. in Room 407, 4th Floor, City Hall, Hagerstown, Maryland. The following people were in attendance: Mayor D. S. Gysberts, Councilmember K. B. Aleshire, Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, Councilmember L. C. Metzner, Councilmember D. F. Munson, Councilmember P. M. Nigh, City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, City Attorney Mark Boyer, John Salvatore, Attorney, Karen Paulson, Director of Human Resources, John Lestitian, Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development, Scott Nicewarner, Director of IT and Support Services, Jonathan Kerns, Community Development Manager, Michelle Hepburn, Director of Finance, and Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk. The meeting was held to discuss the use of City funds, a legal services contract, the AFSCMI 1540 Collective Bargaining Agreement, and the recruitment of a City Administrator. No formal action was taken at the meeting. On a motion duly made, seconded and passed, the executive session was adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

52nd Special Session and Work Session – October 21, 2014

Mayor D. S. Gysberts called this Work Session to order at 4:36 p.m., Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 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 Bruce Zimmerman, City Attorney Mark Boyer, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

52nd Special Session – October 21, 2014

On a motion duly made by Councilmember D. F. Munson and seconded by Councilmember L. C. Metzner, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in Special Session at 4:30 p.m.

Introduction of an Ordinance: Amending the City Code, Chapter 79, Curfew for Juveniles

Action: On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember P. M. Nigh, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to introduce an ordinance to amend the City Code,

Chapter 79, Curfew for Juveniles, to revise the definition of a juvenile to include persons under 17 years of age, to revise the hours during which the curfew is in effect, and to establish a graduated civil penalty for parents.

Introduction of an Ordinance: Authorizing the Transfer of 19-23 W. Antietam Street

Action: On a motion duly made by Councilmember D. F. Munson and seconded by Councilmember L. C. Metzner, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to introduce an Ordinance authorizing the transfer of property located at 19, 21, and 23 West Antietam Street in Hagerstown in accordance with all terms and conditions outlined in the Purchase Agreement.

The Special Session was closed at 4:42 p.m.

Work Session – October 21, 2014

Community Garden Task Force Report/Proposal

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, stated recent public health evaluations show community gardens as a promising approach to promote healthy behaviors. This is particularly important in establishing healthy behaviors among children given the rise of childhood obesity, and the very high obesity rate of the community in general. In June, the Mayor and Council appointed a Task Force to study the issue in a comprehensive manner and report their finding back to the Mayor and Council.

The Task Force has completed the review and was present to make the final report. Mr. Tissue stated this Task Force has been very diligent, with 11 meetings to discuss the issues related to the garden including governance, rules, fees, etc. Each member had good insight and input into the process and they have actively sought additional community involvement and financial donations. It is impossible to guarantee if the Gardens will sustain themselves. However, he feels that after having worked through the many issues with the Task Force, they have given the City a model that is as likely to succeed as anything.

The following members of the Task Force were present: Colin Ploscaru, Chairperson, Terri Donaway, Margareth Napoleon (not present), Kathleen O'Connell, Shelby Higgins and Julie Grim. Also present were members of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) from the Washington County Technical High School.

Mr. Ploscaru reported questions for the Task Force to study included goals/benefit to the community, location(s) of garden, operations and management, assess best practices in other communities, cost to rent plot, License Agreement with plot holders, financial implications for the City, resources and time required from City staff, donations of produce back to the community, ways to develop gardening education programs,

prevention of theft/vandalism, and insurance issues.

The Task Force discussed governance and developed a simple governance model for the Gardens. Two groups of Plot holders/Members will share tasks and work together to grow healthy food and form a community of members interested in helping each other and providing tangible benefits to the community. One group, the “Operating Committee” will function to insure the Gardens’ success and to provide leadership during the implementation phase of the Garden. Members of the original Task Force will staff the Operating Committee until the first membership election of officers in the fall of 2015. The Operating Committee will ensure that all Plot holders/Members follow the Garden rules. A second group, the Plot Coordinators, will be chosen by other plot holders as “area” (4-5 plots) coordinators to know the area members, hear their suggestions/concerns and help ensure that area members have direct input in the Gardens’ operation. The Coordinators will also help insure that the Garden is run in a clean and safe manner.

Six potential sites were identified as locations for the pilot garden. Two sites were selected and soil testing was completed. Based on these results, the Committee recommends location of the Garden at 513 South Potomac Street, a vacant City-owned lot.

Mr. Tissue indicated there would be 20 plots, with each member paying an annual fee to participate. Some plots will 12’x 16’ and others would be 8’x 16’. The City would be responsible for preparing the plots each spring. Some mowing would be required as well.

The Washington County Career Technology High School and Future Farmers of America agreed on a collaborative project to provide students with opportunities to utilize the Hagerstown Community Garden for “hands-on” learning and as a site for student projects. Master Gardeners with the University of MD Extension Service could do a one-time consultation and be available for specific questions.

Based on the final site plan, staff has estimated the full cost to implement the community garden at 413 S. Potomac Street at \$ 48,300, which includes all the amenities. The bare-bones start-up cost is estimated at \$ 23,300. This will provide for temporary perimeter fence, beds, water service and compost bins.

Funding for the Phase I initial startup is to be provided from the following sources: \$ 8,000 in Parks Division Operating Funds, \$ 3,000 in CIP #859, \$ 5,000 in developer-paid Excise Tax funds and \$ 7,300 in donations. Research indicated a number of grant opportunities for both capital improvements and future programs.

Based on the research conducted, the Committee is confident that a working model for a Community Gardens Pilot in the City of Hagerstown, based on the recommendations of the committee is not only possible, but will likely succeed and prove to be sustainable not only as a solitary location, but hopefully will engender community wide interest in

developing additional locations throughout the city.

Councilmember Munson asked if plots are sufficiently placed so each member has access to their plot. Mr. Plourasc stated ADA accessibility regulations were followed in designing the layout.

Councilmember Brubaker noted there was a strong fundraising effort for the Dog Park. The City is facing a real budget issue and encouraged the Task Force to seek partnerships and funding opportunities.

Mr. Plourasc stated a \$ 25,000 grant is anticipated to be awarded to the City for fencing around the park. Each Task Force member will be approaching local businesses for materials or monetary donations.

Councilmember Aleshire asked why there is a common herb and flower area and who would be taking care of it.

Mr. Plooursac stated other gardens use flowers to attract pollen transferring bees and animals. A Plot coordinator would be responsible for making sure the common area was taken care of.

Councilmember Aleshire noted the fence is proposed to be a 6 foot fence. He has found that a 4 foot fence is sufficient around a garden. Mr. Tissue stated this could be reviewed.

Councilmember Munson asked if other communities indicated there were problems with vandalism. Mr. Plousacr stated they typically did not.

Each plot holder would be required to vacate the plot for the winter by November 1 of each year. Gardners will be responsible for clearing their own lots. Ground cover around the plots will be stone dust, which will be relatively easy to maintain.

Mayor Gysberts thanked the members of the Task Force for their dedication to researching the information for a Community Garden in Hagerstown. Approval of moving forward with the plan will be included on the agenda for October 28, 2014.

Check Presentation for George Washington Statue – From the Christian Ardinger Chapter of the Maryland Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Paul Banister, John Turner, Mike Flohr, and Jim Ballard, all members of Christian Ardinger Chapter of the Maryland Society, Sons of the American Revolution, presented a check for \$ 5,000 from the Chapter to the City of Hagerstown toward the George Washington Statue that is to be placed in downtown Hagerstown.

Preliminary Agenda Review

Consent Agenda

A. Department of Community and Economic Development:

1. Purchase of 3 Vehicles for DCED/Planning and Code for Neighborhood Services Inspectors – Hertrich Fleet Services (Milford, DE) \$ 63,306.00
2. Purchase of 2 Vehicles for DCED/Planning and Code – Hertrich Fleet Services (Milford, DE) \$ 42,956.00
3. Contract: Rehabilitation Contract for Interior Portion of 60 W. Washington Street for Business Resources Center – GRC General Contractor, Inc. (Zullinger, PA) \$ 48,841.00
4. Contract: CDBG Consolidated Plan PY 2015-2019, Action Plan PY 2015 and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing – Urban Design Ventures, LLC (Homestead, PA) \$ 33,250.00

B. Department of Utilities:

1. Water: Fire Hydrants – HD Supply Waterworks, LTD (Martinsburg, WV) \$ 24,217.09
2. Wastewater: Discharge Assemblies – Fluid Solutions, Inc. (Westminster, MD) \$ 12,000.00

C. Technology and Support Services:

1. ESRI GIS Maintenance Agreement Renewal – ESRI (Redlands, CA) \$ 35,000.00

Councilmember Brubaker asked why the vehicles for the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) are trucks, rather than cars. John Lestitian, Director of DCED, indicated the trucks will be used by inspectors, who travel in all kinds of weather and may need to pick up trash from areas.

Councilmember Aleshire asked why two vehicles, with relatively low mileage, are being replaced. Mr. Lestitian stated the replacements have been deferred several times and the condition of the vehicles is deteriorating.

Approval of Residential Lease Agreement for the Upstairs Apartment at the Hager House Museum

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, stated for some time staff has discussed renting the upstairs of the museum building behind the Hager House. Decades ago, this small apartment was rented but was used as an office until 2010 when the full-time staff position was eliminated. Staff suggest renting the space as an apartment again to provide round-the-clock presence at the site.

Emily Conrad, a part-time employee in the Recreation Division has expressed interest in this apartment. A lease was presented for the Mayor and City Council's review for the period from December 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. The proposal is for \$ 200/month rent

for this small 560 square foot apartment plus an additional \$ 100/month to cover her share of the utilities. It is not financially feasible to sub-meter this apartment from the master electric and water meter, so staff recommend the flat fee be charged.

Councilmember Nigh asked for a history of what rent was previously paid and how the utilities were paid for.

It was the general consensus to include approval for all items listed on the preliminary agenda on the October 28, 2014 agenda, unless otherwise noted.

This completed the preliminary agenda review.

Hagerstown Housing Authority – McCleary Hill Phase I

Mayor Gysberts welcomed Ted Shankle and David Kump, from the Hagerstown Housing Authority (HHA), to the meeting for further discussion of the McCleary Hill project.

Mr. Shankle clarified that the HHA does not offer transitional housing. They rent to people for at least one year. Most tenants stay there until they find employment that will allow them to move up or move out. There are no one bedroom apartments currently at Noland Village. Plans for the McCleary Hill project include 50 one bedroom units. The current PILOT paid to the City of Hagerstown for Noland Village is \$ 37,156.00 annually. The new development will generate \$ 269,000 in City and County taxes.

Mayor Gysberts clarified that the HHA is seeking a letter of support from the City of Hagerstown for the financing plan for the project. Mr. Shankle indicated that is correct. All applications are rated on a point system and this support from the local municipality significantly raises the points.

Councilmember Brubaker asked if the business plan supports the project.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if transitional housing is used for people in drug rehabilitation programs. Mr. Shankle indicated the HHA does not lease for less than one year. He does not recall any residents being referred to the HHA through rehab programs.

Mr. Kump indicated residents are screened during the intake review conducted by the HHA for drug and criminal activity. If there is such activity, potential residents would most likely not qualify for housing through the HHA.

A majority of the Council supported submitting a letter of support to the State Department of Housing and Community Development for the McCleary Hill project.

Impact of Emerald Ash Borer

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, was present to discuss the impact of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The EAB is an invasive insect that kills ash trees. The EAB entered America from Southeast Asia in 2002 and has killed over 100,000,000 ash trees. The EAB cannot be eradicated nor contained, but it can be managed.

Staff from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) completed a study of the City of Hagerstown and found that the EAB is present in the City limits as well as state wide.

Tyler Wakefield, DNR, was present to provide additional information.

At this time, this presentation is for information as a plan is developed to respond to the EAB. Funding will need to be allocated for the removal or treatment of trees.

The DNR Sampled approximately 30% of the 2,241 street trees in the City and fortunately they found only 45 of the street trees are designated as ash, green ash, or white ash. That is a minimal impact to the street trees which is good news compared to communities in the mid west where millions of street trees are impacted by EAB. Eric Deike manages the street tree program and will monitor these trees for removal whenever the ash borer impact is realized for these street trees.

When Fairground Park was developed in the 1990's, ash trees were a popular choice for planting in islands and along the soccer field. According to the DNR, over 90 trees need to be replaced. The good news here is that the trees average only 8.5" in diameter since they are less than 10 years old, and the City has a significant amount of tree planting funds in the contract that the Mayor and Council awarded in September. Therefore, staff plans to install approximately 156 new trees in Fairgrounds Park as part of the current tree contract. As the Emerald Ash Borer damages the ash trees in Fairgrounds Park, staff will remove them. Staff sees that it is important to raise public awareness of this issue in the park as people will naturally want to know why trees are being removed.

There is bad news for the City Park. The DNR has mapped every ash tree in the park and there are 236 mature ash trees. This comprises over 20% of the canopy and they are the most common tree in City Park. Many of the ash trees are over 100' tall, and the average size is 20" in diameter. The DNR has indicated that approximately 90% of those trees are savable (defined by having less than 30% canopy loss).

The decision that will have to be made is whether or not to try to treat some of the trees around the bandshell and playground areas by injecting pesticides into the tree, or remove and log the trees before they completely die. The estimated cost to treat a tree is \$ 300/per tree. The DNR is recommending that the City start the pesticide application in this fiscal year, so funds would have to be found to apply the pesticide into these trees. The pesticide needs to be placed in the tree every two years.

Again, a public information campaign will be needed that states the tree is being treated for the Emerald Ash Borer, or that it is scheduled to be removed because of the Emerald Ash Borer infestation.

Mr. Wakefield reported, most likely, street trees will be lost within six years. Ash trees make up approximately 2% of the total street tree composition in Hagerstown.

Mr. Tissue asked if there is any State funding available to help treat the trees. Mr. Wakefield stated he knows of one small grant that may be available through the State.

Councilmember Brubaker asked when it would be appropriate to determine the action to be taken. Mr. Wakefield indicated the best time to make these decisions would be in the Spring. He can assist the City with developing a plan for treatment and removal of the trees.

Consultant Selection for CDBG 5-Year Consolidated Plan

Jonathan Kerns, Community Development Manager, and Sarah Nelson, Planning and Outreach Coordinator, were present to discuss a contract to hire a consulting firm to aid in the development of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Five-Year Consolidated Plan which will encompass FY 2016-2020, and the FY2016 Annual Action Plan as well as an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.

The City of Hagerstown is an entitlement Recipient of Federal funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The statues for grant programs set forth three basic goals to:

1. Develop viable urban communities, by providing decent housing;
2. Provide suitable living environment;
3. To expand economic opportunities principally for low and moderate income individuals and families.

In order to meet these goals, HUD requires Entitlement Recipients to prepare a Consolidated Plan, a five year strategy, supported by annual action plans to develop a unified vision and approach to community development actions.

The Consolidated Plan consists of a five-year strategic plan and annual action plans. With assistance from the City, the Consultant will complete the planning and preparation of the City's five-year plan. The Consultant must complete the plan on or before Monday, March 2, 2015, in order to allow time for public hearings and the 30-day public comment period, adoption by the City Council and for submission to HUD by mid-May 2015.

Consultants will also work with Staff to develop the City's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice to satisfy the requirements the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. This Act requires that any community receiving CDBG funds affirmatively further fair housing. As a result, the City is charged with

conducting its CDBG program in compliance with the Federal Fair Housing Act. The responsibility of compliance extends to nonprofit organizations and other entities which receive federal funds through the City.

A Request for Proposals was issued in September, 2014. Staff have reviewed and ranked all proposals based on the experience of the firm, project approach and timeline. The highest ranked proposal was also the low bidder for the project: Urban Design Ventures, LLC, based in Homestead, Pennsylvania with a proposal of \$ 33,250.

The FY15 budget was constructed based on conservative estimates of the CDBG Program Income and related Administrative Cap. Staff anticipated the cost of consulting to be between \$ 25,000 to \$ 40,000. Initially \$ 7,500 was budgeted for the Consolidated Plan as a placeholder to ensure compliance with the regulatory cap, with the potential to utilize other funding sources to make up the difference. The current FY15 program income levels are considerably higher making sufficient CDBG administrative funds available for this project.

Councilmember Brubaker reiterated these are federal requirements. He would like to see a less bureaucratic format. Mr. Kerns stated staff wants the consultant to review the existing plans and provide a meaningful plan for the CDBG funding.

Mayor Gysberts asked for a definition of fair housing. Mr. Kerns is not certain the federal government has a concrete definition. Mayor Gysberts stated he believes the definition of poverty should not be tied to minimum wage but rather to the likelihood that someone working full time would be able to afford housing.

Councilmember Aleshire asked who the consultants would be engaging in the community.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to include approval of the contract with Urban Design Ventures, LLC on the October 28, 2014 agenda.

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

Jill Frick, Economic Development Manager, and Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, were present to provide an Action Report on the community's progress in implementation of the Community's City Center Plan.

Work has been progressing on several of the catalyst projects identified in the Community's City Center Plan. The trail project and neighborhood protection program in particular have moved forward significantly since the last update. In addition, staff expects to hear within the next few weeks whether the Community Legacy application for two of the catalyst projects is successful.

The Action Report included the following information about how the community is moving forward:

1. Catalyst Project #1 – Office Development and Recruitment
Goals: To position downtown to compete for new office development using portions of Central Parking Lot to build 154,000 sf across three buildings.
Actions completed: Developed concept renderings, received concept support from M & T Bank, and Urban Partners developed a draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify potential developers for the Mayor and City Council's review.

2. Catalyst Project #2 – Maryland Theatre Expansion Project
Goals: Expand and improve the facility, and grow from 150 to 225 performance days per year, increasing the audience by 60,000 annually.

Actions: The Mayor and City Council approved \$ 100,000 in matching funds for new seating, fundraising underway for new seating, HVAC replacement project should be finished in November, and back-of-house facility improvements are underway.

3. Catalyst Project #3 – USMH Expansion Support
Goals: Support USMH growth from 500 to 750 students through the addition of new program offerings, and capture student housing opportunities with three upper-floor renovation projects. The three upper-floor renovation projects are planned to be implemented separately, in sequence to each other and throughout the 10 year plan.

Action: Received concept support from USMH, submitted Community Legacy Grant Application requesting funding, review of sites which may meet the model criteria, solicitation form the private sector to be initiated in November, and reserved \$ 250,000 from the City's First-Third Grant Program.

4. Catalyst Project #5 – Linking City Park/The Washington County Museum Fine Arts and A&E District with Trail and New Housing
Goals: Construct multi-use trail linking City Park/WCMFA with the Arts & Entertainment District, and add 31 new townhomes along trail and rehab buildings to create 85 loft apartments (in 10 years).

Actions: Developed a project timeline with planned completion by August, 2015, received concept support from property owners, selected Mahan Rykiel Associates as the trail designer, walking tour and public meeting held on October 1, 2014, layout finalized for trail alignment, and presentation of design recommendations to Mayor and City council is scheduled for November 18, 2014.

5. Catalyst Project #6 – Expanded Downtown Arts/Events Programming
Goals: Leverage resources to produce more frequent events and build upon atmosphere created by popular downtown events.

Actions: Successful Pop-Up Shop event in August with another scheduled in November, launched Fall edition of the Sounds of the Square program, Main Street Hagerstown awaiting designation decision/announcement, scheduled 2015 Fall Fest at City Park to coincide with the opening of the Trail, and revamped Wind Down Downtown Hagerstown events to larger events with added features.

6. Catalyst Project #7 – Expanded Operations of the City Farmers Market
Goals: Expand operations from 7 to 35 hours per week. Implement private management approach. Make necessary capital improvements. Re-brand. Recruit additional tenants.

Actions: Vendors briefed on the Community’s City Center Plan, scheduled public input session, initial adjustments being made to the space and vendor locations to allow for new vendors, and draft Request for Proposals for private management approach is under development.

7. Catalyst Project #8 – Expanded and Targeted Home Ownership Support
Goals: Market home ownership incentives and support Neighborhood 1st programs. Establish annual rental licensing inspections, and continue excessive nuisance enforcement programs.

Actions: Adopted amendments to require annual exterior inspections of rental properties, adopted amendments to Vacant Structures Program, authorized the addition of five full-time Code Administration staff for the vacant structures program to help improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods, and analysis underway of conditions and acquisition opportunities within three target neighborhoods.

Councilmember Munson asked if there will be a guarantee that the townhomes along the trail will not be rental units. Ms. Maher indicated the Mayor and City Council could make that a requirement for the area. He stated it is very important that the trail is safe and is perceived to be safe.

Action Reports will be provided at least bi-monthly.

Update of 60 West Washington Street: Working Name “eCollider”

Sarah Nelson, Community Development Coordinator, and Andrew Sargent, Downtown Manager, were present to provide an update on the status of the Business Resource Center at 60 W. Washington Street and to seek approval for the contract to complete construction of the interior space.

After gathering input from community partners and working with an architect, the interior layout of the business resource center has taken shape. There will be a larger office, two smaller offices, a modern conference room, a storage/IT room and a large

collaborative space.

The space will feature cutting-edge technology, including access to high-speed internet, a printer/copier/scanner, a mobile Wi-Fi connected, big-screen presentation cart that can be used anywhere in the facility and a conference room with tele-conferencing capabilities.

Membership to the resource center will be affordable to downtown businesses. There are two offices that will be used to incubate businesses or organizations in place. A membership level to include one of these offices will be a minimum of \$ 200 per month but include access to the printer/copier/scanner and a mailbox. Other membership levels will include varying degrees of access to the facility and its features, bottoming out with a \$ 10.00 monthly fee for limited use of the printer/copier/scanner and internet. Staff will be working on the rules and regulations and final detail on membership and shall give additional updates as implementation approaches.

Programming will draw from the community partner of the center, including SCORE, SBDC Maryland, the Chamber of Commerce and Frostburg/USMH. Organizations such as the Downtown Alliance and the Downtown Movement will be able to hold meetings in the collaborative area. Some of the ideas for specific programming include SBDC Maryland offering their *Ready, Set, Go* business seminar and SCORE offering their *How to Really Start Your Own Business* series of instructional forum. The programming will constantly adjust to meet the specific requirements of the members.

Construction has remained under budget thus far and staff are hoping to gain both USDA and Mayor and City Council approval to repurpose remaining funds to employ a part-time, contractual resource center coordinator to assist with the facility. This coordinator, together with interns from the Frostburg business school, existing staff and volunteers, will coordinate and manage the programming of the facility.

The project was bid in September of 2014 and the low bidder is GRC General Contractor, Inc. Staff envision the interior renovations to start in November with completion in January, 2015.

Councilmember Munson clarified that existing business owners would be able utilize the facility, as well as new business owners. Mr. Sargent indicated that is correct.

It was the general consensus to include approval of the contract to GRC General Contractor, Inc. on the October 28, 2014 agenda.

Hagerstown Police Department – Report on Crime Trends and Statistics

Chief Mark Holtzman provided an update on crime trends in the City of Hagerstown. He reported that the overall crime rate is lower in Hagerstown than it is in Cumberland, Salisbury and Cambridge. The violent crime rate in Hagerstown is lower in Hagerstown than it is in Frederick.

In 2014, there were 5 homicides. In 2013, there were 101 robberies and 375 breaking and entering reports.

Chief Holtzman stated the court system does not typically issue strong sentences to juveniles involved in crimes. Many are released without any significant punishment. The consequences of these actions has been discussed with the Court Commissioners.

Chief Holtzman believes a burglary is a danger to the community. Attempts are being made to have stiffer penalties issued at the Court Commissioner level.

The use of firearms during crimes is an issue that affects the entire community. The Hagerstown Police Department uses the Governor's Crime Initiative, Safe Streets model, to address the effects of the use of firearms. Meetings are held bi-weekly to discuss the issues with other local jurisdictions.

Councilmember Brubaker stated the facts show that crime is lower in Hagerstown than in Frederick, yet the media reports imply Hagerstown has extensive crime. He noted Hagerstown is as safer or safer than some cities people regularly visit.

Mayor Gysberts stated he asked Chief Holtzman to discuss the statistics at this work session so citizens know the facts.

Chief Holtzman stated there is a fear of crime in Hagerstown. He believes the fear can be alleviated by working with the neighborhoods to address the issues they face.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, thanked the Mayor and Council for working through a lengthy agenda.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember L. C. Metzner attended the grand opening at the Hagerstown Sports and Ice Complex on October 18, 2014. He attended a tour of the West Wing at the White House on October 19, 2014.

Councilmember P. M. Nigh stated there are citizens who are concerned about problems at 1163 Hamilton Boulevard. She asked if raising chickens is permitted in the City limits. She asked where people could get help if they aren't able to participate in the Community Garden. The Utility Relief Benefit concert will be held on Wednesday, October 29, 2014.

Councilmember D. F. Munson stated the opening at the ice rink was very interesting. This is a good facility.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire stated the answers to questions during the discussion of the McCleary Hill project today are not the same as the answers in a recent email. During the course of one week, this has progressed from an informational presentation to a request for support of the financing plan. This is similar to the method used by POAA for the Washington Gardens project. He regrets supporting that plan.

He expressed his concern that residents near the concrete plant on Burhans Boulevard were not provided an opportunity to ask questions about the proposed operation during the State of Maryland permitting process.

He asked if citizens will have an opportunity to ask questions about the McCleary Hill project. Mayor Gysberts wondered if hearings are being planned by the Hagerstown Housing Authority and the State of Maryland since this is not a City project.

Councilmember Brubaker stated the Housing Authority should be made to adhere to the information they are providing to the City.

Councilmember M. E. Brubaker attended the grand opening at the ice rink. There are good plans for the future programs there. The State Highway Administration held its annual public meeting in Hagerstown recently. Paving of Franklin Street and Washington Street was discussed. He hopes the projects could include sidewalk replacements as well. If north bound Interstate 81 is widened to four lanes prior to the Interstate 70 interchange without tapering back to two lanes, it will create a dangerous traffic pattern.

Mayor D. S. Gysberts reminded everyone that the Alsatia Mummer's Parade will be held on October 25, 2014, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

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 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

Approved: December 16, 2014