

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this 74th Special Session and Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:02 p.m., Tuesday, June 4, 2019 in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers K. B. Aleshire, A. Heffernan, E. Keller, L. C. Metzner, and S. McIntire, City Administrator Scott A. Nicewarner, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

Work Session – June 4, 2019

Stakeholder Discussion of Maryland Stadium Authority Site Selection Analysis

Mayor Bruchey stated this meeting is a stakeholder discussion about the results of the Maryland Stadium Authority Site Selection Analysis and a new baseball stadium.

Delegate Paul Corderman, Greg Snook, President of CHIEF, Jim Kercheval, President of Greater Hagerstown Committee, Paul Frey, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and Dan Spedden, Executive Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, were also present.

Councilmember Keller thinks it is important to get this group together to discuss the potential sites, ideas, and level of interest.

Mr. Spedden stated there is an area downtown that has very little economic impact, like a donut hole. A stadium in this location would close that hole forever. It would create a new generation of people who want to live downtown. A multi-use facility could create an exciting vibe in Hagerstown. Increasing tourism can help reduce infrastructure costs. There would be an increase in employment opportunities. There are three major tourism projects in Maryland- a Great Wolf Lodge, an Equestrian Center, and the relocation of the National Park Service headquarters to Williamsport. All three projects are taking place in rural counties. The multi-use facility would attract customers, which would create more business. His vision is that this facility would spur economic development. He complimented the people who have already invested in downtown.

Mr. Kercheval stated doing another tourism project on the heels of the ones mentioned by Mr. Spedden would provide excitement in the community. He believes a vibrant core is something they all want to support. The statistics show that new development such as a multi-use event center attracts other business. Data from Greensboro, South Carolina, indicates the increase in the assessable base was significant. The residential component increased by about 13%. A multi-use center could create opportunity investment. He anticipates there would be a large amount of outside income invested in downtown.

Mr. Frey stated in 1918, the Chamber of Commerce's focus was to promote the private sector to increase the assessable base. They soon realized that the community should be included in the focus. Some of the community activities have been assisting the Alsatia Club, hosting professional clubs, back to school events, the United Way, etc. In 2019, the perfect match for the public and private sector to work together is a multi-use event center. Everyone could work together to create jobs and attract diverse

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economic development. This project would help drive the community for the next 20 years. This issue is not about who's right but what is right. There is the power in this community to work together. Some examples of working together is the Barbara Ingram School for the Arts and the Maryland Theatre expansion. He is excited that the Chamber and the private sector can be part of the solution to revitalize Hagerstown.

Mr. Snook stated this area needs a multi-purpose facility that can host more events than ballgames. A facility like that would help attract more conventions, which is one reason he is interested in it.

Mr. Spedden stated since 1987, a new minor league baseball stadium has opened somewhere in the country. The investment has worked and none have failed. He is willing to coordinate conversations with other municipalities so the Mayor and City Council and City staff can discuss experiences, results, and suggestions.

Councilmember Keller stated she feels the City is already moving toward a thriving downtown with the \$ 60 million investment that is occurring. The projects are attracting other businesses and investments. This is a different environment than in 2012. To locate a multi-use facility on Baltimore Street doesn't make sense to her. The site would require the purchase of several buildings. She wondered if the owners are even interested in selling.

Mr. Frey asked if Councilmember Keller is concerned about this project in particular or any project in that area.

Councilmember Keller stated she thinks the project is a great idea but she isn't sure the Baltimore Street site is the best location. She wants to make sure it happens this time. She thinks the Hagerstown Suns ownership needs to be included in conversation, as well as the County Commissioners, and the property owners.

Mr. Frey understands moving to Phase II of the study would not require selecting a site.

Mayor Bruchey received an email from Randall Simpson, WLR, stating he is willing to work with the City on this facility project. He is willing to discuss relocating the car wash on Baltimore Street. He thinks Phase II should be completed before talking with anyone about acquisition of property.

Councilmember Keller pointed out the Cultural Trail was funded in part through bond financing. Removing it may cause repayment of grants.

Mr. Spedden indicated stadiums are the shining jewels in other cities. There would be visitor parking at the A & E Deck and a walking path to the stadium through the Cultural Trail. Everyone would be talking about it. He thinks architects could be creative with a smaller site plan. In Fort Wayne, Indiana, the deck is part of a walking trail, which is considered a public park.

Councilmember McIntire pointed out all three top sites are in the opportunity zone. She wonders if business and development would increase if another location is chosen.

Mr. Kercheval noted things are happening. This project could attract national attention. Incorporating the Trail into the stadium gives Hagerstown an edge to pull people in. A critical mass is needed to move forward. In a Brookings Institute study, one of the steps to revitalizing a city is to focus on a target area, where resources are already being used. This group will support a stadium at another location and help how they can, but their advice is to focus projects in the same area. Some members of the Greater Hagerstown Committee see this as a boost to escalate their investment. Finding out how future investors view this potential project could be helpful.

Councilmember Metzner has a different perspective. He agrees with the Baltimore Street location. He supported this location seven years ago. At that time, there was no private investment. He understands the studies have to be completed in order to receive the funding. A stadium near the interstate would most likely be a much better stadium for the Hagerstown Suns, but he believes the better location is downtown. Senator Serafini had stated funding should be 1/3 State, 1/3 City/County, and 1/3 private investment. The 1/3 private investment needs to be secured.

Mayor Bruchey pointed out the owner of the Suns committed to \$ 6 million toward the project over a number of years. This would have been private investment.

Councilmember Metzner stated that investment also involved naming rights for the owner.

Mayor Bruchey stated he was talking about the proposed lease at that time. Phase II would show the possibilities for funding.

Councilmember Metzner commended Delegate Corderman for securing State funding for Phase II. He supports moving forward with the next study. The City cannot be the only investor. He expressed his support but also his concern that private investment would be too low.

Mr. Spedden pointed out each town funds a stadium in the best way that suits their circumstances. Before a lease is approved, it is difficult to talk about private investment. The key is a 30 year lease tied to the facility, no matter who the owner is. Local business can support the project by purchasing luxury seating, purchasing ads, and entertaining their guests at the stadium. He believes Hagerstown could get \$ 300,000 to \$ 500,000 for naming rights. The naming rights should be sold to a national company with a local presence. A portion of this revenue could be used to go toward the debt service on the \$ 53 million project. He has developed a funding model that does not include tax revenue. He wants the General Fund for both the City and the County to benefit from the project and not be tied down with debt service.

Mr. Kercheval stated it will take hard work to get the 1/3 State funding. In 2012, one of the reasons it was secured is that the multi-use facility was designated as a downtown project. An ask of the State needs to be made in the summer, then it is reviewed. Previously the feedback was positive but the comments weren't finished. Maryland is one of the few states that still gives money for sports. The Chair of the Appropriations Committee is Delegate Maggie McIntosh.

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Councilmember Aleshire stated the Mayor and City Councilmembers that were elected in 2012 were provided with information regarding the Multi-Use Sports and Event Complex (MUSEC). At that point, he stated he was not opposed to the sports component. Since that time, millions of dollars have been expended toward revitalizing downtown Hagerstown. Nothing has been invested in the properties near the current stadium. He was able to digest the communications, dialogs, facts, and figures that had been discussed. In that proposal, the Hagerstown Suns appeared to have significant control over the events that could take place. They also had ownership of most of the suites and parking spaces. He was concerned these things did not favor the City of Hagerstown, as the debt holder. Statements had been made at that time that acquisition of key properties was certain. Documentation indicated this was not the case. As a Councilmember, it is his duty to review all the information and reports in order to make informed decisions. The Phase 2 Environmental Report indicated the Baltimore Street area showed contamination levels in some tests.

The recent MSA study indicates the cost for acquisition of property at the Baltimore Street site would be \$ 6 to \$ 7 million for a 6 acre site. For less than \$ 1 million, there would be 20 acres for the property adjacent to the current stadium. The environmental restraints for property that was previously a railroad yard could be significant.

He is not sure the County Commissioners would be willing to sell the County office building on Baltimore Street that was recently renovated.

He noted the Urban Partners Report – The City Center Plan, does not include a stadium but it does include a Class A complex and a convention center. He thinks a Class A Office Space on the former Washington County Hospital Site with a view into the bowl of a stadium is visionary. If the Baltimore Street site is chosen just to save the Dagmar building, then it should just be said that's not possible. There are other problems with hotels along the Dual Highway. A stadium near the current stadium could provide increased patronage at those hotels.

Councilmember Aleshire estimates there are about 20 acres in the downtown. Four of those would be available for parking. MS4 Stormwater mandates will require the City to pay fees based on impervious areas. He wondered if there would be a way to add points for Stormwater Management actions. There would be the opportunity to use Stormwater Management Fees and Federal tax credits to address the flooding issues at the current stadium site.

There are dual lane roads and two way streets to access this site. The Baltimore Street site has multiple one-way and limited streets.

He has spoken with the owner of the Stadium Tavern. A stadium could be situated in a way that directs attention to the tavern. There is numerous subsidized housing in the Bester residential area. Home ownership is low in this area. This area could benefit from the economic development from a new facility. No other amenities in the area would have to be disturbed. He is also concerned about the impact to the tax exempt bonds that were utilized for the Cultural Trail.

The Hagerstown Light Department would be impacted. There has been some discussion about consolidated City services in a central location. It is possible the former paper recycling plant could be used for this consolidation. This would also tie into the efforts the City has made with the removal of the MELP plant.

Consultants and others have stated the best location is near an interstate. He believes a better site is at the current location. This would provide amenities, redevelopment opportunities, and sustainability to an area that needs attention.

Delegate Corderman thanked everyone for the discussion. There is support for a facility and arguments can be made for any one of the sites. The first question that has to be answered is what the Mayor and City Council's vision is. Do they want people to attend an event then drive away to go to a hotel? Do they want to spur investment downtown by having people walk to the stadium and stay to visit the restaurants and explore the downtown? Does the Mayor and City Council want to see what the possibilities are for a project of this magnitude? He reminded everyone that the entire Washington County Delegation was against the downtown location for USMH. Now, he doesn't think anyone would argue that USMH isn't in the right location. There seems to be a majority consensus to look into a project, but not at the top location. There is no pressure to rush into the next phase in the MSA study. The funding from the State won't be available until July. He offered his assistance. He appreciates their due diligence in discussing this project again.

Councilmember Keller stated she does not think a new stadium at the current stadium site is a terrible idea. She talked with officials in Fort Wayne, Indiana who indicated they experienced growth from their downtown to the stadium. She wondered if a facility should be located on Baltimore Street where things are already happening or in a location that could benefit from this type of facility. She wondered if growth would occur between the downtown and the current stadium site.

Mayor Bruchey indicated there is nothing happening currently on Baltimore Street. There are non-profit organizations and government facilities that are tax exempt. The Cultural Trail was constructed even though there wasn't anything happening.

Councilmember McIntire asked if Councilmember Aleshire's suggested site could be added to the mix for the Phase 2 study. Mayor Bruchey noted doing so may double the cost.

Mr. Spedden noted Phase 2 includes specific engineering. In Frederick, the urban experience is what draws people in. There is not one thing in particular. Building a ballpark downtown may be difficult but it is the right thing to do. As a citizen and taxpayer, he supports the downtown site.

Councilmember Heffernan thinks the best thing in downtown right now is the educational component. There is a constant influx of people downtown. Everything builds from this increase in foot traffic. The downtown facility could and should be part of this. He sees it as being an enabler for BISFA to have performances outside at night. Some ideas are the Maryland Symphony Orchestra under the stars, Shakespeare under the

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Stars in a downtown event center. He doesn't see baseball as being the biggest draw. A multi-use facility will get traffic downtown. The educational organizations could hold graduation there. If the Blues Fest is revived, it could be held there.

Councilmember McIntire agreed and a partnership with a baseball team will add to the attraction.

Mr. Spedden stated MiLB is family entertainment, not to be confused with a sports event. Many events could be held in a stadium facility.

Mayor Bruchey stated MiLB would be the anchor tenant, paying the most to be there. Hagerstown Community College could hold games there as well as softball tournaments. It would be exciting to host the South Atlantic League All Star game there. He can image an extra 1,000 people downtown seven nights in a row. Imagine what that would do for restaurants and other businesses. A 30 year lease with MiLB would be a huge accomplishment.

Mr. Kercheval thanked the Mayor and City Council for holding this discussion.

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On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember S. McIntire, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in Special Session at 5:38 p.m.

Approval of Improvements to Wheaton Park

Action: On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember S. McIntire, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to approve of \$ 32,940 in Community Development Block Grant Funds for improvements at Wheaton Park as follows:

1. Purchase of four "True Bounce" basketball poles, Backboards, trims
2. Sports court coating of main basketball court
3. Mural in mid court circle and 3-point areas

Staff is also authorized to complete these improvements to support the Ruthann Monroe Summer Basketball league and enhance the aesthetics of the park.

Discussion: Councilmember McIntire thanked Ebonie Williams for her efforts in getting these improvements made.

Mr. Nicewarner mentioned what Ms. Williams and her staff are doing for kids with this endeavor is impressive. They are not only improving the court, they are mentoring kids and making the athletes into better people.

Approval of Purchase of New Portable Radio Package for Hagerstown Police Department

Action: On a motion duly made by Councilmember A. Heffernan and seconded by Councilmember L. C. Metzner, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to approve a purchase of a new portable radio package for the Hagerstown Police Department. The radio package will be used to replace HPD's aging radio system and will be purchased from Tactical Public Safety, LLC, via Washington County Wireless Communications. The total cost of the purchase would be \$ 420,037.65. Tactical Public Safety, LLC was awarded Washington County's competitively bid Contract #INTG-18-005. Funding will be from a 2019 Bond Issue.

Approval of Purchase of 2019 Police Uniforms

Action: On a motion duly made by Councilmember S. McIntire and seconded by Councilmember A. Heffernan, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to approve of the purchase of police uniforms. These uniforms will be purchased from Howard Uniforms, Baltimore, Maryland for a total of \$ 44,137.88. Howard Uniform won the competitively bid City of Baltimore Department of Transportation Contract #B50004675. Funding will be from HPD's Uniform account.

Approval of a Ratification of an Emergency Procurement: Emergency Demolition of 57-61 E. Antietam Street Garage

Action: On a motion duly made by Councilmember K. B. Aleshire and seconded by Councilmember S. McIntire, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to move for the ratification of an emergency procurement for the demolition of 57-61 E. Antietam Street garage. The garage is in a state of progressive structural collapse and was deemed to be unstable by a professional engineer. Staff ordered the demolition of the structure to eliminate the threat to public safety. Allegany Wrecking and Salvage of Hagerstown, Maryland completed the demolition work. The cost of the demolition work performed by Allegany Wrecking and Salvage was \$ 16,000.00. The work performed at this property will be paid from the Property Abatement Account.

The Special Session was closed at 5:40 p.m.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

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Scott A. Nicewarner, City Administrator, reminded everyone that Imagine Hagerstown begins on June 7, 2019. This new event includes entertainment each Friday and Saturday in June. The next yard sale at the Fairgrounds stables is June 8, 2019.

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Councilmember S. McIntire attended the Thunder in the Square event last week. She was able to choose a winner as the Mayor's Choice of best vehicle.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner had no additional comments.

Councilmember A. Heffernan hopes everyone keeps in mind the recent violence in Virginia Beach and to be mindful of safety. He was happy to see Mr. Nicewarner is working with Police Chief Kifer to make sure City employees are safe.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire had no additional comments.

Councilmember E. Keller had no additional comments.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II urged everyone to get out and enjoy the beginning of Imagine Hagerstown.

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 5:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

Approved: July 30, 2019