

EXECUTIVE SESSION AND WORK SESSION – December 7, 2021

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On a motion duly made, seconded, and passed, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in closed session to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto; (#3) (Section 3-305(b)), to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State (#4) (Section 3-305(b)), and to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice (#7) (Section 3-305(b)), on Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. in Room 407, 4th floor, City Hall, Hagerstown, Maryland.

The following people were in attendance: Mayor E. Keller, Councilmember K. B. Aleshire, Councilmember R. E. Bruchey, II, Councilmember T. Burnett, Councilmember T. Martinez, Councilmember S. McIntire, City Administrator Scott Nicewarner, City Attorney Jason Morton, Ann Rotz, Attorney, Fire Chief Steven Lohr, Michelle Hepburn, Chief Financial Officer, Kathleen Maher, Director of Planning and Code Administration, Nancy Hausrath, Director of Utilities, Jill Thompson, Director of Community and Economic Development, Paul Fulk, Neighborhood Services Manager, and Wes Decker, Communications Manager. Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk, was not present.

The meeting was held to discuss property acquisition for City operations, one business proposal, and to obtain legal advice regarding an existing agreement. The Executive Session agenda included discussion of two business proposals. One of the proposals was removed from the agenda prior to the meeting and will be discussed at a later date. No formal action was taken at the meeting. On a motion duly made, seconded, and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

WORK SESSION – December 7, 2021

Mayor E. Keller called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:45 p.m., Tuesday, December 7, 2021 in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Participating with the Mayor were Councilmembers K. B. Aleshire, R. E. Bruchey, II, T. Burnett, T. Martinez, and S. McIntire, and City Administrator Scott A. Nicewarner. City Clerk D. K. Spickler was not present.

Donut Drop Event Update

Jessica Green, Executive Director of The Maryland Theatre, and Melissa Fountain, Maryland Theatre Event Manager, were present to remind people that that the annual Donut Drop will be held in the square on December 31, 2021 beginning at 5:00 p.m. Donuts were provided to everyone in attendance.

Chris Siemerling, Economic Development Specialist, was present to provide an update on the Invest Hagerstown Program, and to request guidance for managing the balance of funding through the remainder of FY22.

To date, \$ 645,672.00 in grant funding has been either disbursed or committed for redevelopment, resulting in roughly \$ 8,600,000 worth of investment with the help of Invest Hagerstown grant funding. Staff anticipate up to 69 jobs created within the next 2 years. These numbers include 1/3 of the estimated economic impact as a result of the Holly Building's customized incentive plan over a three-year period.

Mr. Siemerling reported the committed and estimated demand for the program is \$ 912,000.00. Additional applications for City Center, City Wide, and Rental Rehabilitation grant requests are anticipated. There is \$ 173,228 remaining in the program, primarily in the Homeownership Program. He asked if the Mayor and City Council wished to expend the remaining amount on a first come, first served basis, regardless of the category.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he would support a review of the remaining amount in March. He is concerned one application could deplete the total amount quickly.

Mr. Siemerling stated he would recommend allowing the remaining funding to be used within the Rental Rehabilitation, Façade, and City Wide grant categories, which have limits on the amount that can be requested. There have only been three grant applications for the Homeownership Program during the last year.

Councilmember Aleshire requested a review of the guidelines to remove the one year use required and before any commitment for moving the funding from the current categories is made.

Jill Thompson, Director of Community and Economic Development, noted the current requirement for the homeownership grant program is for properties built prior to 1960. She asked if the Mayor and City Council would also wish to consider a recommendation related to the age of the property. The general consensus was to review this requirement for increased inventory for grant requests.

Staff will provide this update at a future Work Session.

Recreation Year in Review

Amy Riley, Recreation Promotion and Services Coordinator, provided a review of the City's Recreation activities during the past year. She noted Parks and Recreation employees Emily Conrad and Kay Osmer were also in attendance. When staff began planning for 2021, they were unsure what the world would look like in the months to come. But, with careful planning and execution, they were able to offer an outstanding year of programs and events in the parks facilities.

A video was shown as a Year in Review for Recreation. The year kicked off with the Hub City 100 Miler Program. Programming grew virtually in 2021. Outdoor programs continued in the parks as well. Attendance at Potterfield Pool was more than 22,000 during the season.

The 100th Anniversary of City Park Lake was held in August. With assistance from a grant, a new Visitor's Center is being created at the Jonathan Hager House Museum. Staff has nearly completed a comprehensive inventory of artifacts.

The re-grand opening of the Train Hub was held during the summer. Improvements have been made to enhance visitors' experience. Staff has applied for a grant to begin the process of restoring Engine 202.

Staff is looking forward to an even greater year in 2022.

Each Mayor and City Council member received a 2021 City Park ornament.

Program Open Space (POS) Annual Program

Eric Deike, Director of Public Works, was present to review recommendations for the Program Open Space (POS) funds for FY2023 and beyond. The deadline for submission of the list to Washington County is January 4, 2022. He commended Parks and Recreation Staff for their efforts to keep activities happening at the City's parks.

Proposed projects for FY 2023 include Fairgrounds Park play equipment, play equipment and amenities at City Park, and replacement of the roof on the stable at Fairgrounds Park. The estimated cost for these projects is \$ 275,000.00. The total request for POS funds will be \$ 247,500.00. The required City match is \$ 27,500.00.

It was the general consensus to submit the City of Hagerstown's request to Washington County as presented. Formal approval of the POS application will be scheduled for a Special Session on December 14, 2021.

Hamilton Run Stream Restoration Adjacent to Northern Avenue

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, was present to discuss the Hamilton Run stream restoration adjacent to Northern Avenue.

The City's NPDES MS4 stormwater permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) requires the City to treat or remove 20% of all the unmanaged impervious area in the city (396 acres); therefore, staff are looking for innovative, cost-effective ways to meet these State water-quality requirements. Stream restorations provide significant benefit and restoring Hamilton Run between the CSX railroad and The Terrace adjacent to Northern Avenue would treat the runoff from the equivalent of 42.3 acres of impervious land. This project is therefore, a significant part of the Stormwater Protection Program's "Restoration Plan" that staff will endeavor to implement over the next few years to meet the permit requirements.

In September, the City executed a master agreement with the Washington County Soil Conservation District (WCSCD) to partner with to implement conservation practices and complete stream restoration projects. This project is the first such opportunity.

This project would restore over 1,800 lineal feet of stream, re-establish some forest buffer, reduce sediment loading, and install bioretention areas to clean stormwater. This portion of the project is estimated at \$ 1,200,000 including a new pedestrian bridge into Mills Park from the Northern Avenue parking lot. In partnership with WCSCD, they would apply for a \$ 450,000 Section 319 grant to contribute to the project. The City would need to fund the \$ 750,000 as a match in the FY23 and FY24 Capital budgets.

In addition, staff are recommending the culverts under the driveway at the American Legion be replaced. While this is on private property, the Legion has asked the City to address this with this project. These small hydraulically inadequate culverts cause Hamilton Run to overflow its banks and flood Northern Avenue during hard rains. The cost to design and replace the culvert is estimated by WCSCD at \$ 300,000.

Finally, there is a request from the residents east of The Terrace to replace the failing wall on their property. It is unknown who built this wall but it appears to be part of the Northern Avenue box culvert construction. The cost to replace this wall with a box culvert or imbricated wall is unknown at this time but could be part of this overall stormwater project.

Councilmember Aleshire pointed out the sewer manhole cover in that area needs to be adjusted. This is an awesome area that many people don't know about.

The Mayor and City Council agreed to move forward with the partnership with the WCSCD and to include replacement of the culverts at the American Legion property and replacement of the deteriorating wall on The Terrace.

Staff will direct WCSCD to submit the grant and, if successful, will return to Council next summer for approval of the Agreements for the grant and construction.

Downtown Stadium Parking Study

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, was present to follow-up the discussion in July and to provide the results of the analysis staff completed related to sizing the new parking deck.

The main findings of the study include the following:

1. At least 1,875 public parking spaces currently exist within one-half mile of the stadium site (Market Lot was not included in these counts).
2. At least 1,200 of these public spaces are currently available on weekday or weekend evenings.
3. Using 80% stadium occupancy as the target to size the deck, 1,520 spaces are required plus spaces needed to meet future non-stadium development concurrently with events at the stadium

4. Based on this, staff conclude the parking deck should provide 250 to 400 spaces. The estimated cost is \$ 9 million dollars, plus land acquisition costs.
5. In the event that a full capacity event with 5,000 or more people is to be held at the stadium, the stadium owner or event organizer may need to prepare a parking and shuttling plan using remote parking areas.

Mr. Tissue's opinion is that with the post-pandemic parking world still undefined, autonomous cars on the horizon, the potential availability of parking in private lots and the fact that the City wants people to have to walk past bars and restaurants to and from the stadium; the City should not over-build this deck.

Regarding the site selection, there are three possible locations suggested in the packet materials. The sites are:

1. Antietam Street at the site of the Hager5 parking lot
2. Across the street from the Hager5 parking lot on the south side of Antietam Street
3. Central Parking Lot

The capacity at the existing University District Deck is 440 and the A & E Deck is 185.

Mr. Tissue was told by a local supplier that the lead time on concrete deck components is around eight months which means construction will take at least 12 months. If the deck is to be ready for occupancy in mid-2023 when the stadium will potentially open, the City needs to get started on land acquisitions (depending on the site selected) and design immediately and concurrently. The City has two local architects on retainer and Mr. Tissue would like to solicit proposals from them to eliminate the need for a time-consuming RFP process.

Councilmember Bruchey stated the City has discussed a third parking deck since at least 1997. Regardless of a stadium project, he believes a deck is needed in the Antietam Street area.

Councilmember Aleshire thinks Site 1 (Hager5 parking lot) is the logical site.

Mayor Keller stated she would like to see people visit downtown before or after a game instead of parking close by and then leaving immediately after the game or event.

Councilmember Aleshire pointed out there is already a daytime deficiency in that area which is why that parking lot garners higher rates than anywhere else in downtown. He asked if a 400 space deck would fit within any of the three potential sites. He does not think a larger deck should be built. If that lot is used, the potential of selling spaces to the previous owner needs to be discussed.

It was the general consensus to move forward with a third parking deck and that the Hager5 parking lot is the location of choice. Mr. Tissue will begin purchase negotiations with the current owners and provide an update to the Mayor and City Council at a future meeting.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Scott A. Nicewarner, City Administrator, thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for a beautiful City Park during the holidays. Spreading out the silhouettes through the park make it a nice experience. The synchronized light show with the trees on the lake is the best around.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember R. E. Bruchey, II is looking forward to taking his grandson to City Park to see the lights this year.

Councilmember S. McIntire had no additional comments.

Councilmember T. Burnett had no additional comments.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire will be stopping by City Park soon. There was a good turnout for the field house discussion. It was interesting to see different organization reps here from Frederick, Franklin County, and West Virginia.

Councilmember T. Martinez had no additional comments.

Mayor E. Keller stated it was awesome to see so much interest in the sports plex project. She recommended walking through the lighted tunnel at City Park as well as viewing the light show. She congratulated the Girls on the Run for their first successful Gingerbread 5K. At the end of a previous meeting she urged people to seek help if they are struggling and got emotional. She thanked the people who reached out to her to make sure she was ok.

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 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk
(From the video)

Approved: January 25, 2022