

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL - JANUARY 28, 2003

REGULAR MEETING

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At a regular meeting of Council held this evening at 7:30 p.m., there were present: Mayor Joseph Gus Fitzgerald; City Manager Roger Baker; Assistant City Manager Kurt Hodgen; City Attorney Thomas H. Miller, Jr., Vice-Mayor Larry M. Rogers; Council Member Carolyn W. Frank, Dorn W. Peterson, Hugh J. Lantz; City Clerk Yvonne Bonnie Ryan, CMC/MMCA,

and Chief of Police Donald Harper.

Council Member Lantz gave the invocation and Mayor Fitzgerald led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Member Peterson offered a motion to approve the consent agenda, including approval of the minutes and the second reading approval of several Supplemental Appropriations for the Police Department, School Board, and Public Works Department. The recorded roll call vote was taken as follows:

Vote: Yes    Council Member Lantz  
                  Vice-Mayor Rogers  
                  Council Member Peterson  
                  Council Member Frank  
                  Mayor Fitzgerald

Absent    None

Eddie Bumbaugh, representing Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance, presented an overview of a revitalization program for downtown. He said that the group was created in March/April of 2002 to evaluate a proposal to create a pedestrian mall downtown. A 26 member advisory committee was formed which included property owners, organizational representatives, and City officials. Mr. Bumbaugh read the following mission statement developed by the group: Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance will work in

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partnership with the community to develop a comprehensive vision and master plan to revitalize downtown Harrisonburg into a prosperous and vibrant City center. The group developed five objectives including strengthening the downtown district's existing economic base, preserving the City historic and cultural heritage, enhancing the physical appearance, promoting downtown generally, and building cooperation and consensus while improving the quality of life of the citizens. He said eight public meetings were held during 2002 to gather information on past local revitalizations efforts and to listen to suggestions and ideas from other communities. He said that the group recommends not forming a pedestrian mall. However, the group asked for the City's cooperation in working with Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance and other groups wishing to sponsor events that may require increased pedestrian use of the square or other streets on a case-by-case basis. City Council adopted a goal August 3, 2002, To revitalize downtown Harrisonburg as the focus of the community. He said, Now is the time to seize the moment and keep the momentum going. Build on past efforts that were not sustained with the hope of creating a future that is sustained.

Steve Knickrehm, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance Committee Member, said revitalization is part of a national trend and Harrisonburg is not on its own. The group is trying to capitalize on expectations of citizens for a vibrant community center and expectations of tourists. He reviewed the many strengths and assets the downtown area has including the courthouse, Massanutten Regional Library, Joshua Wilton House, Harrisonburg Municipal Building, Dave's Downtown Taverna, Harrison Plaza, Virginia Quilt Museum, WHSV-TV 3, Artful Dodger, The Market Place, Court Square Theater and Calhouns. He also said that several projects are underway adding to the downtown environment including the Hardesty-Higgins House, a future park site partnered between the HRHA and Friends of Blacks Run Greenway and the Keezell Building. Rehabilitating buildings often creates more jobs than building new facilities. Facade improvements are likely to increase sales. Locally owned businesses return 60 cents of each retail sales dollar to the community. Revitalization efforts preserve our history and generate additional tourism dollars. Downtown investment pays off for residents, business people, visitors, elected officials and City leaders. The committee wants the City to join the Virginia Main Street program, which would make Harrisonburg eligible for technical assistance, training and other benefits. He reviewed the four points and eight principles that comprise the Main Street approach.

Gary Stiteler, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance Committee Member, said the committee was requesting that City Council adopt a resolution supporting The Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance application to join the Virginia Main Street Program, \$80,000 per year in annual operating funds, and office space. He reviewed a map of the downtown renaissance district, organizational structure, executive director responsibilities, and projected 2003-04 budget. He said that the committee was requesting \$80,000 in financial assistance from the City toward the projected \$100,000 budget. He reviewed the tasks of the design, promotion, and economic development committees. He also reiterated now is the time to seize the moment and keep the efforts moving forward.

The following discussion by Council Members relative to Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance presentation included how other localities support its designated community projects, community goals, local business investments, funding, housing, and protecting the City's existing investments already in the downtown area. Following further discussion and comments, Council agreed to table this issue until the February 11<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

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City Manager Baker presented for Council's consideration a request by the March of Dimes, Piedmont-Shenandoah Valley Division's. He explained that the group is sponsoring a WalkAmerica event on Saturday, April 26, 2003. The event is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at approximately 1:00 p.m. The walk route will travel through downtown Harrisonburg and the surrounding area. The group has obtained the necessary insurance. Council Member Frank offered a motion to approve this request. The motion was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

City Manager Baker presented for Council's consideration a request by Freewill Baptist Church to receive City water. Ray Nicely, Director of Planning with Valley Engineering, and representing Freewill Baptist Church explained that the church has an opportunity to purchase a parcel of land situated in Rockingham County, but connecting with the City's corporate line at Vine Street. The church is requesting that water and sewer be extended to this parcel under the moratorium condition.

Council Member Peterson commented that the Harrisonburg's Major Street Plan shows future plans for Woods Street (paper street) connecting at the intersection with the corner of Vine Street. He requested that the church keep that corner vacant for future use if water and sewer service is granted. Following further discussion and comments, Vice-Mayor Rogers offered a motion to approve this request for a first reading. The recorded roll call vote was taken as follows:

Vote: Yes     Council Member Lantz  
                    Vice-Mayor Rogers  
                    Council Member Peterson  
                    Council Member Frank  
                    Mayor Fitzgerald

Absent   None

City Manager Baker presented for Council's consideration a request to sell two lots on Garber's Church Road. He explained that when the City purchased land from David Walsh two lots were created from the sale. Selling these lots will allow the City to place the land back on the tax rolls. Council directed the City Manager to place the lots on the market. The direction also included discussing the issue with the Golf Course Advisory Committee.

City Manager Baker presented for Council's consideration approving a resolution for the Fire Department for a lease purchase agreement for a new fire truck. The fire truck should be delivered around the

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first of February. The City has already made a down payment of \$90,857.75 on the truck and plans to finance the remaining \$272,571.75 with a three-year lease purchase arrangement. Council Member Peterson offered a motion to approve this resolution. The recorded roll call vote was taken as follows:

Vote: Yes    Council Member Lantz  
Vice-Mayor Rogers  
Council Member Peterson  
Council Member Frank  
Mayor Fitzgerald

Absent    None

Mayor Fitzgerald presented four resolutions naming the City Manager as the Designated Agent for the City of Harrisonburg. This action is necessary to apply for four grants from the Department of Justice. These grants are to be used to purchase training and equipment for use during incidents involving acts of terrorism. Council Member Peterson offered a motion to approve these resolutions. The recorded roll call vote was taken as follows:

Vote: Yes    Council Member Lantz  
Vice-Mayor Rogers  
Council Member Peterson  
Council Member Frank  
Mayor Fitzgerald

Absent    None

City Manager Baker explained that the 2000 census has established Harrisonburg, Dayton, Bridgewater and the surrounding Rockingham County area as a Metropolitan area. This designation requires the formation of a transportation planning organization for the area. The area is eligible for MPO status because it has more than 50,000 people. Mr. Baker pointed out that if the MPO Board was not established, the localities designated, as the metropolitan area will not be eligible to receive Federal funding on any road

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projects. Three members will represent Rockingham County, three members for Harrisonburg, and one each for the towns of Dayton and Bridgewater. Council Members expressed some concern regarding the composition of the MPO Board, but agreed to appoint members to the board. Following further discussion and comments, Vice-Mayor Rogers offered a motion that Mayor Joseph Gus Fitzgerald, Council Members Hugh Lantz and Dorn Peterson be appointed as Harrisonburg's representatives on the MPO Board. The motion was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

Bucky Berry, a resident of 877 North Main Street, complained about his deteriorating sidewalks.

David Purdro, 3713 Dry Run Road in Luray, Virginia said an article appeared in the Northern Virginia Daily sports sections discussing the possibility of an Appalachian Minor League Baseball Team relocating or expanding into the Shenandoah Valley. He asked whether the City of Harrisonburg had given thought into refurbishing the stadium located in the City in order to attract such a team.

Mayor Fitzgerald commented that it is an interesting topic and perhaps it should be an item for discussion at a future Council meeting. He suggested that a conversation should be initiated outside a Council meeting.

Council Member Lantz commented that improvements needed to be done at the stadium regardless of who played at the stadium. Steps are crumbling and the overall stadium is dangerous.

Glenn Loucks, a resident of 915 North Main Street, said that he represented a group preparing an alternate proposal for consideration regarding the nuisance ordinance. He insisted that landlords were not receiving notification of tenant violations because reports are not being written by the Police Department regarding the majority of noise complaints. Following further discussion and comments, Mr. Loucks was reminded that this issue was referred to a Citizens Committee chaired by Council Member Peterson for further discussion. Council Member Peterson said if the landlords were ready to present an alternate proposal, he would call a committee meeting. However, if they had specific questions regarding the mechanisms of the proposed ordinance perhaps they should meet with him and the City Attorney before calling a committee meeting.

Jordan Roller, majority owner of the village of Forest Hills, expressed concern that if drinking laws could not be enforced perhaps new legislation was needed. People who are breaking the law should be responsible for paying the cost.

Mayor Fitzgerald commented that it would be easier for Council Members to consider and prepare for unknown topics being discussed at the end of the meeting if they were made aware these topics would be

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coming up. He requested that individuals/groups make requests to be placed on the agenda.

Council Member Peterson offered a motion that James Ted Byrd, 238 Campbell Street, be appointed to a second term on the Industrial Development Authority to expire on April 24, 2007. The motion was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

Council Member Peterson offered a motion that Roland M. L. Santos, 701 Ohio Avenue, be appointed to a second term on the Industrial Development Authority to expire on April 24, 2007. The motion was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

Council Member Peterson offered a motion that Edward J. Baldwin, Jr., 66 Middletown Street, be appointed to a fourth term on the Blue Ridge Disability Services Board to expire on February 1, 2006. The motion was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

At 9:30 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted the meeting was adjourned.

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR