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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2018 COUNCIL WORK SESSION
NO. 18-14

The Council Work Session of the Town of Sykesville was held on Monday, September 10, 2018. Mayor Shaw called the Work Session to order at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Meeting Room at the Town House. Mayor Shaw led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

PRESENT: Mayor Ian Shaw, Council President Julia Betz, and Council Members Anna Carter, Alan Grasley, Leo Keenan, Chris True, and Stacy Link.

STAFF: Aretha Adams, Town Manager
Evelyn Sweet, Town Treasurer
Kerry Chaney, Town Clerk
Derek Shreves, Public Works Director
Jana Antrobus, Executive Assistant
Mark Onheiser, Special Projects Coordinator

DISCUSSION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

Aretha Adams, Town Manager, presented a draft of the strategic plan. She explained that the presentation is a proposed vision and a starting point to further the Town's projects and developments over the coming years. Additionally, she explained that the vision and mission statement developed by the Mayor and Council at their previous retreat was used to develop five focus areas – Quality of Life, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Well-Managed Town, and Customer Service. Ms. Adams stated that the proposed focus areas would help specify the Town's focus so that staff can have a strategic and tangible path forward to fulfilling Council's vision.

Ms. Adams presented a tagline for the Town, "One Cool Town, Many Cool Options" which she believes encompasses the direction of the strategic plan. While the Town is the Coolest Small Town in America, Ms. Adams said that she believed it was important to provide several different "cool" options throughout the Town to keep residents and visitors excited about utilizing the amenities and businesses within our community. She went on to present five separate areas of the community that she said could be considered cool options for visitors and residents:

Main Street encompasses all five of the focus areas. It has been, is, and will continue to be the life blood of the town. Ms. Adams explained that part of the strategic plan is to continue to support and partner with the Downtown Sykesville Connection (DSC) and Main Street, to work on the redevelopment through the Streetscape project, to increase the community connection with both vehicles and pedestrian access, and to better manage special events.

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Warfield at Historic Sykesville encompasses four of the five focus areas. It will be a compliment to Main Street and will help diversify the Town's tax base. A large aspect of the Warfield development will be the community connection to downtown Main Street.

Millard Cooper Park and the Gate House Area is poised to be the bridge between Warfield and Main Street. It encompasses three of the five focus areas. Ms. Adams recommended establishing this as the Town's flagship park. Options that would increase the value and use of this park include expanding the playground area to include up-to-date multi-age equipment, expanding parking at or near the Girls Shelter, adding additional pavilions, and adding a splash pad. The playground expansion and splash pad can be partially funded through grants. The long-term benefit of improving Millard Cooper Park will be invaluable by attracting residents and other visitors into the community to enjoy unique amenities, leading to those visitors potentially exploring the commercial areas of Town as well. Council Member True suggested moving the Public Works Department to Millard Cooper Park to free up the current public works building on Sandosky road as an effort to increase the amount of commercial property available near Main Street. Ms. Adams mentioned that she did not believe putting something with such an industrial use in a park would be the best use of that park site.

Ms. Adams also presented ideas for the other recreational spaces in Town. These encompass three of the five focus areas. Burkett Park is underutilized, and there are plans to expand the playground with grant money. This will also allow the open space to be maximized. The Apple Butter Building in South Branch Park is another underutilized recreational space. Howard County is willing to work with the Town to renovate the building. Ms. Adams proposes finding grant opportunities and working with Howard County for the required matching funds. Howard County is also requiring water and sewer hookup in the building. Mayor Shaw mentioned that in the past Carroll County has appeared aggregable to having the building connected to its water and sewer lines. The Council also discussed building use limitations and the need to get clarity from Howard County once the building is renovated.

Ms. Adams went on to propose the development of a new Municipal Center Complex by renovating existing buildings and adding connections to others. This would include renovating the 714 Sandosky Road building into Town offices for both the administrative staff and the Police Department; subsequently, converting the existing Police Department into a Community Center with downtown office and storage space for the DSC; and lastly, creating a natural connection between the new Municipal Building and the existing Public Works property. Currently, all bays in the vacant Sandosky building, except for one, are being used as storage by the Downtown Sykesville Connection. Ms. Adams mentioned that in an effort to provide more commercial space directly on Main Street, while generating funds to offset the cost of the Municipal Center Complex project, the Town House building can be sold after making it a zero lot line property. By selling only the building, the Town would be able to retain the existing lot as public parking for the entire Main Street area. Ms. Adams mentioned the recent construction of a new Town Hall/Police Department in Manchester, and said that the Town Manager had extended an offer to provide Council with a tour of the facility. Ms. Adams informed the Council that staff does not have an estimate for the cost of renovating the 714 Sandosky building, but that one engineering firm has provided a quote to review the building and provide plans for a municipal building for approximately \$50,000.

There were concerns from the Council regarding the development of a new municipal building on the Sandosky site. Council Member True explained that he thinks the downtown

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goal should be to maximize commercial space and activity. There were also concerns about the amount of parking and the potential of not gaining any additional spaces depending on the type of business that could potentially occupy the Town House. Ms. Adams explained that all Town staff parking, including the police vehicles could be located behind the building at 714 Sandosky road, leaving all current parking spaces in the 714 Sandosky road lot and all spaces currently used by Town staff available for public use; there should be a net gain of spaces regardless of what type of business moves in to the Town House. There was also concern with the proposal to convert the Police Station into a Community Center. Councilmember True inquired about the cost and timeframe of the last investment into making that building a Police Department. Ms. Adams informed the Council that the renovations were completed in 2006 at a total cost of \$389,780. Council Member Keenan reminded Council that the building's funding was a part of a bond that was taken out for multiple projects. The Council agreed that they did not want to move forward exploring the use of the 714 Sandosky Road building as a Town Hall at this point. However, they asked for additional information regarding why the Town offices should be out of the Town House. Mayor Shaw asked for the Council and the staff to go on a tour of the new Manchester Town Hall before making any decisions.

Ms. Adams also presented Town processes, reports, and other items that need updating to allow efficient delivery of services and execution of operations. The budget reporting will be enhanced so it is more understandable by everyone, the Town Master Plan was last updated in 2011 with a revision in 2014 and will need to be updated soon, a sidewalk maintenance policy needs to be put into place along with other ordinance reviews and replacements, staffing levels should be reviewed along with a compensation study, and a Town rebranding should occur. All of these will allow the Town staff to provide services at a higher level both internally and externally.

Ms. Adams provided that the proposed next steps include having staff develop action items and strategies, drafting a preliminary strategic plan document to be brought back to the Council for discussion and public comment, and after modifications, the Council will adopt the final strategic plan.

MOTION: Mayor Shaw motioned and Council Member Grasley seconded to take a five minute recess at 6:55 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Respectfully submitted
Town Clerk Kerry Chaney**