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**MURRAY CITY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL  
COUNCIL INITIATIVE WORKSHOP**

A Murray City Council Initiative Workshop was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2013 in the Murray City Center, Conference Room #107, 5025 South State Street, Murray, Utah.

**Members in Attendance:**

|                |                       |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Brett Hales    | Council Chairman      |
| Dave Nicponski | Council Vice Chairman |
| Jared Shaver   | Council Member        |
| Darren V. Stam | Council Member        |
| Jim Brass      | Council Member        |

**Others in Attendance:**

|                  |                              |                   |                         |
|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Dan Snarr        | Mayor                        | Jan Wells         | Mayors Office           |
| Frank Nakamura   | City Attorney                | Janet M. Lopez    | Council Staff           |
| Jennifer Kennedy | City Recorder                | Briant Farnsworth | Attorney                |
| Justin Zollinger | Finance Director             | Doug Hill         | Public Service Director |
| Jennifer Brass   | Citizen                      | Ted Eyre          | Citizen                 |
| Tim Tingey       | Admin & Development Services | Kellie Challburg  | Council Office          |
| Zach Fountain    | Legislative                  | Diane Turner      | Citizen                 |
| Elaine Judd      | Arts Board/Citizen           | Mary Ann Kirk     | Cultural Arts           |

Mr. Hales called the Council Initiative Workshop to order at 5:02 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance.

**Minutes:**

There were no minutes for approval.

**Business Item 2.1**

**Murray Center Performing Arts Center Discussion- Dave Nicponski, sponsor, Mayor Snarr, Tim Tingey and Doug Hill**

Mr. Hill stated that he came prepared to give a historical perspective of the arts. Some are very familiar with it, and others may not be. Mr. Tingey can follow Mr. Hill and talk about the downtown planning and then the Mayor can follow and discuss the recent meeting with Taylorsville City.

The arts and performing arts are an important part of the City, and have been incorporated into the City for 40 years. In the last 20 years, there have been surveys and master plans conducted by Murray's residents asking them how important it is to them to have arts and places for the arts to perform.

Probably about 10 years ago or longer, the City set some funding aside to study a performing Arts center in Murray Park. A consultant was hired and a site plan was done, as well as architectural renderings of what the Center would look like, should the City decide to build in Murray Park.

Recently, because of the emphasis on the downtown area, the City started to work with the Portland group, Gerding Edlin and GBD to master plan the downtown area. One of the components of that downtown planning process was to take a performing arts center out of Murray Park and put it downtown. That created the rebirth of a performing arts center in the downtown area.

Then about three years ago, at the same time that this downtown planning was going on, Salt Lake County started the Countywide Cultural Facilities Master Plan. As part of that master plan, they studied all of the arts organizations as well as all of the arts facilities in Salt Lake County, and made some recommendations. One of the recommendations made was that besides having these grand theatres in downtown Salt Lake, there should be some regional performing arts centers located throughout the County. They recommended that there be three of them throughout the County. One of the locations was the area that Murray, Taylorsville, Cottonwood Heights, and Holladay City reside. Between these four cities, there should be a regional performing arts center.

As part of that master plan study, they created an application process whereby Cities or arts organizations could apply to the County and request matching funds or some other proposal to build these Arts facilities. Murray City, with the City Council at the time, about three years ago, passed a resolution that Murray City would like to have a regional performing arts center in the downtown area. Murray specifically designated the corner of 4800 South and State Street to be the location for this Center.

Shortly after the application and resolution was submitted to the County; several new members were elected to the Council and the City went through a Strategic planning process. As part of that Strategic planning process, the elected officials in the Strategic Plan, decided that the City was not interested in funding, owning and operating a performing arts center. There were other higher priorities that the City would rather spend the money on. As you recall, the City shifted gears last year during

budget time and said the City is no longer interested in building, owning and operating a performing arts center. A letter was sent to the County stating that. However, in that letter the City stated that they would be interested in having the County build, own and operate a performing arts center, and would consider working with them to provide the land, perhaps a parking structure to go along with this performing arts center.

Also, during that time, the City provided funds to the Murray School District to enlarge their auditorium and arts facilities at the new Hillcrest Junior High School.

The City has developed a plan to have a performing arts center in downtown Murray but it would be a Regional facility that would be built, owned and operated by the County, and the primary purpose of that center in downtown Murray would be for economic development. They have taken care primarily of the major needs of the local arts groups, like the Murray symphony, the Concert Band, and the Arts Council, etc., by partnering with the Murray School District to provide a place that they can call their home.

The focus on a regional performing arts center downtown now is primarily economic development, not necessarily to benefit the local arts groups. The arts groups may be able to use it from time to time.

The reason that this is on the Agenda is that the Mayor of Taylorsville City would like the County to build the regional arts center in Taylorsville City. They want to build it for the same purposes, to grow economic development in their City. They asked Murray City if they would be willing to drop the thought of having a performing arts center in Murray, and in turn support the building of one in Taylorsville City.

Mr. Tingey wanted to add some detail to what happened with the Gerding Edling group out of Portland when the City went through the process to develop the concepts that the City would like to see in the downtown area. There were a number of different goals that were established in the area. One of the big goals was to create an area that would be vibrant, where people would live, work, and play. It really comes down to the type of investment that you want in the area. That moved the City in the direction of adopting a Murray Center City District where there is density, commercial uses, potential entertainment uses and seeking investments. The City acquired some of the property on the corner of 4800 South and State Street.

The City did that for two purposes: One was to eliminate some of the blight that was happening in the area. The City was getting complaints and there was an opportunity to acquire the property and eliminate some of the eyesores. Secondly, the City felt it was important to invest in that area, and potentially have some public facilities. In fact, in the design guidelines, as part of the concept plans for that area, it identifies a performing arts center in that block of the downtown area. The City recognizes that they are concept plans but that investment is a reason that the City purchased property in this area. From an Economic Development perspective the interest in the downtown is to generate investment and create a scenario where there is a catalyst that helps establish additional Economic Development properties.

The performing arts center, in his opinion, is a catalyst for the downtown. If there is an

investment from the County to own, operate, and build a facility with the City's partnership, that will develop more than one public facility. It will create investment that will induce future investment into that area. That is a lot of the process that was discussed in creating the Murray City Center District. A catalyst is needed in the area. The hotel is being started and will be great, but a destination point, such as a performing arts center would be invaluable in that area. It would stimulate growth and create a new environment which would prompt a lot more investment from the private side of things.

Mayor Snarr said he has had three meetings with the Mayor of Taylorsville. He reiterated what he has been saying all along. The City has invested in the site, and the original reason for investing in the site was to look at the opportunity of partnering with the County. Like Mr. Hill indicated, the priority for the most important thing was a new City Hall, and other priorities that may take precedent. He said the City is willing to move forward what was originally proposed. At the end of the day, if the County comes back and needs more of an investment from whatever City is going to get this, the City that has more money to go towards it may get it. If the other City is willing to put a few more million dollars into it, even with the potential for a parking structure, then it may not be reasonable to fight the County. He would love to see the project, but he understands that other Cities have the same challenges. Taylorsville has a lot of vacant storefronts, and is also looking for an economic catalyst for bringing that area back to life.

The Mayor said that he values the arts and goes to the concerts, and wants to do what he can to find a home and have this vision become a reality. Technically, Taylorsville is in a different County arts region and he pointed that out to the Mayor. It would be foolish to have two Performing Arts Centers that close together, they would both be under-utilized. The County hasn't given any funds yet. The Mayor said that the plan is to go ahead with what is proposed and have the County do the evaluation. If Taylorsville came in and said they have the room for parking and willing to do a lot more, then he would support them.

Mr. Shaver clarified that the Mayor was saying that if the County was interested in building, that is great, but not with Murray money. Mayor Snarr said he believes it isn't fair to preclude someone else, that is willing to put in a lot more money from making their vision a reality. He believes that at the end of the day you want to say that you are an honest person and if the City can't afford it, and you can, then we shouldn't fight them for it. He believes that Taylorsville would open the doors so Murray Arts could use the facility also, and Murray would do the same. Mayor Snarr and Ms. Wells made trips to see all of the Mayors in surrounding cities and asked for their input. Mayor Seghini had a minor request, and believes it has already been addressed.

Mr. Nicponski wanted to disclose a conflict of interest because he works for Taylorsville as a Legislative Lobbyist.

Mr. Nicponski said he sees the Hilton Hotel as the anchor, and thinks it would be an interesting debate to see which spurs more economic development; a hotel, or a performing arts center. He has looked at the area around the Capitol Theater, Symphony Hall, and Rose Wagner, and there are huge hotels in the area. He thinks it is hard to make a distinction, and believes people attend the event and then go home.

Mr. Nicponski asked the question of how valuable the property is. Does the City want to make it 100% tax generating or scale that back and allow a non-profit to eat into some of that revenue profit that could be enjoyed, he asked. Parking does need to be considered also, it isn't just the building. He drove over by the amphitheater today and noticed all the parking spots that it requires. He said that Murray has a thriving arts community and respects that, and respects the time put into the organization. The City has good facilities and the amphitheater is a fantastic site. The works that the Arts program does with the students in the schools is outstanding.

The Council met on April 16<sup>th</sup> and talked about not giving money to the School, but then the decision was made to give money to them. He thinks that \$200,000 given was a step in the right direction, and voted for that in the budget process.

Mr. Shaver asked if MaryAnn Kirk and Elaine Judd would be available for comments, since they both represent the Arts.

Ms. Kirk said she disagrees with the catalyst discussion. She was in a production last weekend at Abravanel Hall and took her family to an adjacent restaurant. She said that in the summertime, she gets 15,000 to 20,000 people in that amphitheater, and they are always asking for suggestions to go and eat. That is just three months out of the year. Year round, you would get all these different groups coming from all over the place. Every production, Murray has people coming from Utah County, Tooele, Wyoming all to a destination point. She believes that is a huge economic boom and has figures to back that up. Obviously, this is community theater, not professional, but sometimes it has a larger return on investment. She understands that some of the needs are being met with Hillcrest and appreciates that. She spent a lot of time writing grants for that to help with the funding. The Arts Program would use this facility sometimes, but sees the regional element as a remarkable opportunity to spur that downtown area. Obviously, the County has to have the funding also. She thinks a lot of time and money has been spent so far on this project, and those efforts need to be respected.

Ms. Judd added that a performing arts center is a double whammy for the City. It not only gives the City a place for their people, but the schools have so many arts events, it is still hard to get the facility. She thinks the benefits as far as redevelopment in the downtown is a superb way to use money. She would hate to see the City withdraw when there has already been so much done, and the City has an ideal place. She doesn't want to fight with Taylorsville, but doesn't want to withdraw. There are people in the City that have put significant money towards this development, and that should be considered.

Mr. Shaver commented that he enjoys the Council and the fact that they each bring their own expertise in specific areas. When there are issues with the Power Department, he enjoys the fact that he can go to Mr. Brass for his expertise. This is an area that he knows about with his experience of opening two theaters. He and his wife opened a theater in Atlanta, and soon two restaurants opened next to it. People are traveling from a distance and with an adjacent restaurant, it becomes a complete experience.

Mr. Shaver asked Mr. Hill when the decision was made not to proceed with the County, if there was a deadline. Mr. Brass said that it was a matching money requirement.

Mr. Hill said there was a deadline for submitting the application. The first application stated that Murray would build, own and operate the center, and asked the County for matching funds. After the Strategic planning process, the City wrote a letter stating that the City would like the County to build, own, and operate the Center. Murray wasn't interested in putting any money into it, but would consider donating land, and/or building a parking garage.

Mr. Brass commented that it wasn't a fair statement to say that Murray wasn't interested in putting money in it, at the time the City didn't have the money. The City still has to pay the employees and provide health insurance. That wasn't a viable choice at the time. That is why the Junior High option became so appealing; it solved an immediate problem for less than \$31 million dollars.

Mr. Shaver also commented that the dynamics have shifted. There was a strong regional theater that was centered in West Valley City. That theater is now moving to Sandy City. Sandy had proposed having one of the Regional theaters, but had money issues as well, and worked with the Community. He understands why Taylorsville would really want this regional center, because they are losing that draw from that particular regional theater. Mayor Snarr confirmed that the Hale Theater was not moving until 2016. Mr. Shaver said that is correct. Mr. Shaver just met with the owners of the Hale Center Theater. Mr. Shaver said that the Mayor had it correct when he said it is County versus City. If the County builds the facility, they have the right to say where it is located. If the County is willing to make a land issue as part of that, then it should still be an issue for the City.

Murray has something to offer. Mr. Shaver isn't aware of what Taylorsville has to offer, and would be expensive if they have to purchase the land. A secondary benefit is with the advent of the transportation, Murray is centrally located and people can get to the City very quickly from any direction. Trax, Frontrunner, and I-15 running right through the City are all transportation benefits to Murray. The arts are a huge draw and can revitalize an area, and that has been seen over and over again. An example is Disney purchasing three theaters in what was termed the red light district in New York, revamped them and is running their shows there. It totally changed the entire area and lightened up a section of Broadway. In the City of New York, more people have attended Broadway theaters than all of the sports venues combined during the years of Phantom of Opera, etc.

Mr. Stam said the goal is to develop downtown and if a developer came in and had a plan that did or did not include a facility, he would be happy. Until somebody comes in, he doesn't want to give away the City's diamond in the rough that gives the City an opportunity. That area should be inviting to somebody. He doesn't want to pull out, and have the County come back and want to come to Murray. Mayor Snarr clarified that the City is not pulling out, but rather laying the cards on the table.

Mr. Shaver asked if this was a proposal. Mr. Nicponski wanted to clarify what he meant. He believes that the hotel will bring the restaurants and doesn't know if you would get double the bang for your buck if there is a performing arts center. He wanted to assert the idea of a 100% tax generating property, and Mr. Stam capsulized that well. If someone came in and wanted that property, then that might be good. Mr. Stam made a comment about the Hilton being an inexpensive, longer-term stay hotel; it will not typically be an overnight stay. It will mainly service the hospital, instead of sending people downtown. There will be necessary places to eat. The performing arts center would bring a

whole different type of people.

Mr. Shaver asked Mr. Brass about his conversation with the hospital and asked if the hospital wanted the high-end hotels. Mr. Brass said their market was not high-end, but more of the Home-To-Suites for clientele coming from Wyoming and Idaho. They also didn't want high-end restaurants; the Mimi's restaurant was exactly what they were looking for.

Mr. Brass said the land downtown was originally bought for a parking structure to control the destiny, and to clean up a little. He believes the biggest goal for downtown is to draw people back to downtown. There needs to be something that isn't dark at 5:00. Regardless of restaurants and hotels, there needs to be a reason to go downtown. Murray has Deseret Star, and the alternative option of the Junior High for the arts. He reminded others that it would be a regional center, and all the other cities would have access to it also. He believes that the City needs to leave its options open for downtown. If somebody else comes in with a different vision, that might work also.

Mr. Shaver understands that the City owns one of the largest pieces of land in the City, and it is non-tax generating. Mr. Nicponski said it is just a discussion and an update.

Mr. Shaver said one of the wonderful things about the RDA is that an agreement between the developer and the City is that they have that vision and will help it come to pass. That is the whole purpose of why the downtown district was created. Any draw would be a draw, such as a movie theater.

Mr. Brass also said that the Hospital said the doctors prefer to stay downtown Salt Lake, because it is perceived that there is more to do. That perception needs to be changed. They might as well stay here, and if they choose to go downtown, it is just a Trax ride. Doctors come to the wonderful facility in Murray for training, but perceive that the action is in downtown Salt Lake.

Mr. Stam said that is one of the reasons that Murray has two hotels coming is for the families of hospital patients. Currently, they are being sent downtown.

Mr. Hales thanked everyone for their comments. The City is obviously not withdrawing at this point.

Mr. Hales adjourned the meeting at 5:40.

Office Administrator  
Kellie Challburg