

**CITY OF MONTPELIER
CAPITAL CITY OF VERMONT**

City Manager's Weekly Report – 3/05/10

UPCOMING MEETINGS ...

- ❖ **Planning Commission Meeting:** Monday, March 8th, at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers.
- ❖ **City Employee CPR Training:** Tuesday, March 9th, at 9:00 A.M. in the Memorial Room.
- ❖ **ADA Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, March 9th, at 1:30 P.M. in the City Manager's Conference Room.
- ❖ **Design Review Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, March 10th, at 5:30 P.M. in the City Council Chambers.
- ❖ **Regular City Council Meeting:** Wednesday, March 10th, at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers.

ENCLOSURES ...

- ✓ Letter from Sullivan, Powers & Company
- ✓ Montpelier Parks Commission: January 19th, 2010 Meeting Minutes

STATUS REPORTS ...

River Ice Assessment:

What ice? It's nice to have this issue behind us. Assuming we don't have another major temperature drop of course.

Farmers Market:

The Farmers Market had two minor requests with regard to the lease. One was that the Lease begin on May 1 instead of June (since that's the beginning of their season and when rent is due). That makes sense, we had set the lease dates to be concurrent with our lease on the lot but ought to be able to work that out. The other was simply that we meet with them before May 1 each year to look at the condition of the lot before they occupy it. Again, that makes sense. I suggest that you approve the lease but authorize me to work out these minor amendments without having to come back to the Council.

Railroad:

In your February 19th packet, I included a copy of a letter from VTrans summarily cancelling the city's lease for property in the rail right of way near M & M beverage. This letter was received with no prior communication from VTrans. Upon closer review of this specific lease cancellation, it appears that this action has the following impacts:

Private Sector:

- Montpelier Beverage Center (formerly M&M): access to rear of bldg for shipping (We don't yet know if they have any knowledge of the implications)
- Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired: access to a public highway and parking (We don't yet know if they have any knowledge of the implication)
- Access to the Aubuchon loading dock will be cut off. (We don't yet know if they have any knowledge of the implication)

Public Interests:

- Municipal parking lot will be landlocked
- Impact to BGS parking: two rows of perpendicular parking adjacent to tracks through state parking lot Taylor St to bridge

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In addition, we now understand that other private landowners received similar lease termination letters and that discussions are underway for potentially reclaiming all rail right of way through the corridor for rail use. In that scenario we could add the following impacts:

Private Sector:

- Citizens Bank (to include Sarduccis if drive through must be relocated to public way)
- Tree Works on Granite Shed Lane: Loss of storage and parking area

Public Interests:

- Stone Cutters Way investments; public & private including pedestrian access with uncertain potential of FHWA reimbursement (reimbursement may not be necessary given time frame of use and enjoyment of the federal investment)
- Montpelier – Berlin Regional Transportation path: loss of an investment in 12 years of planning and numerous hours of staff time in addition to thousands of dollars in engineering consulting; FHWA reimbursement requirement unresolved)
- Emergency Services: potential impact to response time with uncertainty about the number of crossings obstructed simultaneously and duration

The Regional Planning Commission held a meeting of all area communities on Thursday to discuss the possible impacts on bike path projects throughout Central Vermont. It was clear at that meeting that private landowners in other communities had also received cancellation notices. That same day the Mayor, Bev Hill, Tom McArdle and I met with Ernie Pomerleau, representatives from Citizen's Bank and Mr. Pomerleau's attorney and engineers.

Its clear that everyone supports increased rail use and the ability to provide services to those industries in Barre Town. But it's also clear that people are seeking solutions which don't hurt one set of businesses to benefit another group.

Reappraisal:

Reappraisal numbers as of Friday Feb 23 are as follows; 2,616 residential properties measured, 1,683 have had interior inspections; entry rate of 64.3% 48 commercial properties have been measured, 26 have had interior inspections.

Parcel count (taxable) in last years Grand List was 2,928, leaving 264 parcels to go. 94 of these are categorized as "miscellaneous", most of which are vacant land. This means there are about 170 developed properties to go, most of which are commercial.

The reappraisal committee is meeting on Tuesday night, March 9th at 5:30 to review progress and next steps as the project moves into its final months.

New Police Officer (from Chief Facos):

I am pleased to announce that Jacqueline Adams has accepted the vacant patrol officer position with the department. Ms. Adams will be attending the part-time academy on March 15 and she will then work with our Field Training Officers. She will attend the 90th full-time basic academy in August and graduate in December (approx. 19 weeks including the post basic).

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ICMA Northeast Regional Summit:

The ICMA Northeast Regional Summit will be held on March 25 and 26 in Baltimore, Maryland. This is a two day training session and business meeting for ICMA members in the Northeast region (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, MD, DE, DC). You may recall that you approved my candidacy for ICMA Northeast Regional Vice President. The first round of interviews for the position will be held at this meeting.

City Hall Rental Policy/Events Policy:

Just so you know that these items have not been forgotten, I met with Lost Nation Theater today to begin blending the auditorium ordinance, rental policy and the LNT use agreement. I also dug out the events policy file to begin work on that.

Upcoming Meetings:

March 10

Election of Officers
Rules of Procedure
Ethics Policy
Operations Overview (open meetings, public records, etc.)
Berlin Pond (with Attorney Giuliani)
Discussion of Vendor Ordinance
Process for Auditor Selection
Railroad Update
Set date for Goals Meeting

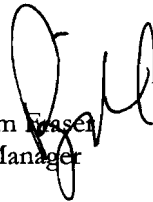
March 24

Vendor Ordinance First Reading

April 14

58 Barre Street (report from committee)
Vendor Ordinance Second Reading
Auditorium Rental
Events Policy

William Fraser
City Manager



CPA

Sullivan, Powers & Co.
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

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A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

March 1, 2010

Fred Duplessis, CPA
Richard J. Brigham, CPA
Chad A. Hewitt, CPA
Wendy C. Gilwee, CPA
VT Lic. #92-000180

William J. Fraser
City Manager
City of Montpelier
39 Main Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Dear Bill:

Now that the audit for 2009 is complete and has been presented to the City Council, we are informing you that we will not perform the audit for 2010.

This decision is driven partly from concerns discussed with the City during the RFP process in 2008. As you are aware, we were not going to present a proposal at that time due to our inability to be active citizens in our own community if we perform the audit. However, after being urged by the City due to the lack of interest by other CPA firms, in spite of your advertisements and direct solicitation to VLCT's complete list of CPA firms, we relented and did present a proposal.

The deciding factor for us, however, was the frustration and anxiety endured by our firm, families and friends resulting from inaccurate and, in some cases, absolutely false and malicious statements made about us related to the Scott's Construction overpayment. Because we were in the midst of the 2009 audit, we could not publicly respond. Our friends and families live and work here in Montpelier. They teach and coach and participate and support community businesses and activities and attend our schools. As owners, we understand that when you work in a public environment, you run the risk of public criticism. However, we will never expose ourselves to this again in the community where our business is located.

We are now in different economic times than we were in 2008. There are now a number of CPA firms, who previously did not do municipal work, who will respond to an RFP. We will do everything we can to assist the City in its transition to a new firm.

Respectfully,

Sullivan, Powers & Company
SULLIVAN, POWERS & CO.
Certified Public Accountants

Montpelier Parks Commission Minutes
January 19, 2010
Montpelier Police Station, Community Room
7:00 PM

Commissioners present: Ethan Parke, Cara Robeck, Aaron Brondyke

Staff present: Geoff Beyer

Public present: Carrie Stahler of Onion River Sports

Ethan Parke called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

Winter Bike Race

Carrie Stahler of Onion River Sports (ORS) presented information on a proposed winter bike race in the park, to be called "The Frozen Onion." The bike race would take two hours for the event and cleanup. Trails and the road would be signed in such a way as to warn pedestrians and other park users. ORS would be responsible for cleanup afterwards. The course would be a loop between the tower and Seven Fireplaces. The race would be held only if conditions permitted, meaning that there must be snow on the trails and frozen ground underneath, no mud. ORS would help educate racers and others about the rules and limits of biking in Montpelier Parks.

Ms. Stahler said ORS would like to hold the event on a Saturday in February or March. She mentioned February 6th, February 27th, or March 6th as possibilities. She said that after talking with Geoff, 11 AM sounded like the best time.

Aaron voiced concern about inappropriate riding on Park trails in summer and therefore advocated that the race course be limited to roads where summer biking is allowed—not on trails where summer biking is prohibited. Other commissioners thought the race as described was acceptable, provided that the ground was frozen in a short stretch along a trail. Ms. Stahler agreed that ORS would work with Geoff on course selection and posting signs warning park users about the race.

Filming in the Park

Geoff described a request by a group of college students from Connecticut to make a film in the park for a college project. The film would be a revolutionary war drama with actors, fake guns, and possible gun related sounds. Geoff asked that the filming be limited to an area north of the old shelter. He also asked that the film crew erect signage that would notify the public of the filming and warn about possible noise. Geoff also asked that the film crew notify the Police Department of their plans. Commissioners agreed that this activity was acceptable, with conditions as stated.

Minutes

The commission reviewed and approved the minutes of the December 15th meeting.

Updates

Outhouse work: Geoff reported that a group of high school students and Taylor Noyes were working on designing a post and beam outhouse for the park.

Sign work: Geoff reported that he has been working on sign maintenance and new signage.

Ice on Fire: Geoff reported on this community event to be held at the North Branch Nature Center on January 31st.

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps: Geoff reported that this group has been helping with winter work in the parks.

FY 2011 budget: Geoff reported that the last hearing on the city budget would be held January 20th. After that the city council will finalize the budget for presentation to the voters in March.

Snowmobiling: Geoff reported there had been some complaints about snowmobiles going too fast in North Branch Park. Geoff will ask VAST to put up more signage along the trail.

McAvoy addition to Hubbard Park: Geoff said the city closed on the McAvoy addition on December 31st.

Footbridge by the swimming pool: Geoff said he responded to an RFP to replace the decking and railings on this bridge.

Other Business

Firewood: Ethan asked whether the Parks could make firewood available for low-income families. Geoff said it was possible but it would mean a loss of revenue for the parks.

Culverts and ditching: Aaron requested more work on culverts and drainage in the North Branch Park to minimize sediments going into the river. Geoff described some of the work that has been done and reported looking into more ways that sediment runoff could be reduced.

Clay slide: The commission discussed blocking off a trail in North Branch Park near a clay slide and directing people toward a new trail. Geoff said he would see that it got done.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Next meeting: Feb 16th, 7 PM