

CITY OF MONTPELIER
CAPITAL CITY OF VERMONT

City Manager's Weekly Report – 12/04/09

UPCOMING MEETINGS ...

- **Financial Review Committee with Auditor Tom Salmon:** Monday, December 7th at 5:15 PM in the City Council Chambers.
- **Development Review Board Meeting:** Monday, December 7th, at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers.
- **“Reach Program” Meeting:** Tuesday, December 8th, at 1:00 P.M. in the Memorial Room.
- **“enVision Montpelier” Steering Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, December 8th, at 5:30 P.M. in the Memorial Room.
- **Design Review Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, December 8th, at 5:30 P.M. in the City Council Chambers.
- **Regular City Council Meeting:** Wednesday, December 9th, at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers.
- **“Food Systems” Council Meeting:** Planning Director Gwen Hallsmith has reserved the City Council Chambers/Memorial Room on Thursday, December 10th, beginning at 2:30 P.M.
- **All-day Council Budget Workshop:** *Saturday*, December 12th, beginning at 9:00 A.M. in the City Council Chambers.

FOR YOUR CALENDARS ...

- ❖ **Welcome Legislators Reception:** Thursday, January 28th, **2010**, from 5:00 to 7:00 P.M. at the Capitol Plaza.

ENCLOSURES ...

“Year in Review” Memo from Suzanne Eikenberry, MONTPELIER ALIVE Executive Director
List of streets that “mailers” will go out to next for the reappraisal process
Kellogg-Hubbard Library’s budget request letter

Items that could not be scanned for the City’s web page: *First Night Booklet*
Montpelier Art Walk Booklet for December 4th

STATUS REPORTS ...

Employee Health Insurance:

We continue to move forward with transitioning three of the employee units to the new work plan although we do not have final sign offs from the two impacted unions. DPW has told us to go ahead even though a contract amendment is not signed. We still have not heard from the Police. Both contracts, however, contain the same provision which says “The City retains the right to change carriers and revise plans for life, health, dental and pension benefits so long as the overall net employee benefits do not decrease”. While we prefer to have this all move cooperatively, I am considering making the change under this contract clause.

Reappraisal:

The reappraisal committee has prepared a letter to go to the local papers. The letter is also posted on the city’s website and a copy is enclosed.

CITY MANAGER'S WEEKLY REPORT

December 4, 2009

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Financial Review – State Auditor:

Auditor Salmon's committee has selected an auditing firm, Cota CPA from Williston. We expect them to begin work within the week. The committee is meeting with the Mayor, Attorney Stitzel and me (and any of you who wish to attend) on Monday, December 21st to discuss the matter.

Budget:

We are putting the final budget details together and will get the books out to you next week – before Wednesday night. The general fund will be completed. The water and sewer funds are nearly complete but with the DPW Director away this week will not be finalized until the week of the 14th. They will be ready to go when you review the DPW budget on the 16th. Because we are still working with number adjustments I can't get too specific but I can tell you that the proposed budget will meet or exceed the "zero increase" target, maintains services in core areas and does not appear to require layoffs. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the health insurance cost reduction..

Farmers' Market:


As per your request, I met with the Farmers' Market board and discussed a potential lease arrangement. I have included a summary in an attached memo. This item will be on Wednesday's agenda to see if you wish to proceed as outline

Carr Lot:

A lot is happening on the Carr Lot. We are going to postpone the scheduled update until we have more information for you. What we know now is that the property falls within the draft boundaries of the new FEMA mapping as a floodway. This is more restrictive than the flood plain. The new maps have not been adopted yet. Because of this possible designation and because the contamination levels are higher than was contemplated in 2003, the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) is requiring the city to revisit its Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Therefore we no longer have FTA clearance to move forward until this additional issues are addressed. We will update you in January on all of this including what steps and costs are going to be required.

Upcoming Meetings:

December 9	Farmers Market Jacobs Water Issue Budget – Overview, Administration, Justice Center, Misc. Accounts
December 12 (Saturday)	Budget Work Session (9:00 AM to 3:00 PM) – Fire, Police, Parks, Cemetery, Planning & Development
December 16	Budget – Public Works (Streets, Water/Sewer, Capital Plan, Equipment), City Hall & 58 Barre Street, Senior Center
January 6	Budget (if needed for wrap-up)
January 13	Receive Report from State Auditor and Committee Budget – First Public Hearing Carr Lot
Thursday, January 21	Budget – Second Public Hearing


William Frisler, City Manager

Montpelier



Formerly Montpelier
Downtown Community
Association

MEMO

To: City Council
From: Suzanne Eikenberry, Montpelier Alive Executive Director
Date: December 2, 2009
RE: Year in Review

BOARD MEMBERS

Shawn Bryan, President
Community Member

Linn Syz, Past President
*Vermont River
Conservancy*

Rob Hitzig, Vice-President
The Lazy Pear Gallery

James Bressor, Secretary
Norwich University

Peter Ricker, Treasurer
*Denis, Ricker &
Brown Insurance*

Jon Anderson
*Burak, Anderson &
Melloni*

Pinky Clark
Thinkin' Pink

Gregg Gossens
*Gossens Bachman
Architects*

Greg Guyette
Kiosko, Inc.

John Mayfield
Julio's Cantina

Colleen Paull
*Vermont Trading
Company*

Brooke Pearson
Montpelier High School

Suzanne Eikenberry
Executive Director
39 Main Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
director@mdca.org
(802) 223-9604
www.MontpelierAlive.org

This year has been a landmark one for Montpelier Downtown Community Association. We undertook a process of increasing our community profile by changing our name to Montpelier Alive this summer. In a survey of Montpelier residents, we found that they were well acquainted with our work, but did not attribute it to our organization. The new name and improved website seem to be enhancing our name recognition, which we believe will pay off in improved fundraising ability and community participation.

While the economy has been suffering both nationally and in the state, we believe that the efforts to keep downtown Montpelier vibrant are paying off. Downtown has remained economically vibrant, even during the current economic recession. Sales tax data shows that while the state as a whole saw a 7.2% decline in retail sales tax during the last fiscal year, Montpelier actually had a 1.7% increase. Likewise, downtown Montpelier's vacancy rates for residential, first floor retail/restaurant, and office space is fairly low.

Here is a quick snapshot of some of our 2009 accomplishments:

- The addition of 8 recycling bins next to our sidewalk trash receptacles. We have purchased four more through a grant which will be installed in the spring.
- Creation of a historic walking tour, "Did You Know...Montpelier" which we hope to re-install in the spring.
- Continuation of SculptCycle for a second year. The Montpelier Alive board is committed to purchasing one SculptCycle from this year's works to add as permanent public art downtown.
- Creation of the "Meet Me in Montpelier" buy-local ad campaign. Montpelier Alive also coordinates cooperative advertising for Moonlight Madness, holidays, sidewalk sales, and other events.
- Organized about 150 volunteers for Green Up Day.
- Produced the Brown Bag concert series, USAF Liberty Big Band concert, Art Walks, and other community events.
- Redesigned Capital City Cash in a new format which fits into wallets better. Every year, we sell about \$14,000 worth of Capital City Cash, which keeps shopping dollars close to home.
- Helped the Green Mountain Film Fest secure a third venue for the growing festival.
- By working with the State Visitor's Center, producing a tourist brochure, contacting local media, writing regular email updates, and producing a weekly radio spot on Fridays, Montpelier Alive actively promoted Montpelier as a vibrant entertainment dining, and shopping district.

Supporting the unique spirit of Montpelier since 1999.

Of course we have a busy schedule of holiday activities coming up. I have attached our most recent newsletter to this memo which includes a full schedule. I have also enclosed this Friday's Art Walk program.

Looking forward to 2010, we plan on continuing our signature projects such as flowers barrels and Brown Bag Concerts, as well as starting new projects. Right now, we are exploring the possibility of bringing Fools Fest back to Montpelier. Events raise the profile of the City, bring the community together, and bring new business to town. When we asked First Night sponsors a few years ago why they sponsored, we heard that it was good for the quality of life of employees, that it helped sell houses in Montpelier, and added to the overall vibrancy of town.

Finally, I want to thank you all for the City's support in co-producing First Night and Independence Day with Montpelier Alive. Both events provide great alcohol-free community celebrations. Our partnership with the City on these events makes them possible. We have updated a few key elements of this year's festival including the program book and the parade. Performances will begin at 4pm instead of 3pm this year. We have added a number of activities that start earlier in the afternoon for people who want to get an earlier start on the festivities. We have a great line-up of activities to enjoy.

I hope you can join us at our Appreciation Party on December 10th at 5:30pm at The Lazy Pear Gallery. Thank you for your support.

7th Mailer to residential properties – Mailed 11/30/2009

Bingham St
Brown St
Cedar St
Cross St
Downing
East State St
Easy St
Essex Way
Ewing St
Fuller St
Glen Gannon Way
Glinney Place
Graham Terrace
Harrison Ave
Hillside Ave
Home Farm Way
Hubbard St
Inglenook Dr
Jay St
Kildrummy Way
Liberty St
Lincoln Ave
Loomis St
Marvin St
Merrill Terrace
Miles Court
Montpelier Jct. Rd
Msgr. Crosby Ave
Munger Dr
North Franklin St
Overlook Dr
Park Ave
Peck Place
School St
Shamrock Lane
St. Paul St
State St
Stretch's Way
Valley View Rd
Whittier St
Wilder St
Windham Dr
Witt Place

KELLOGG-HUBBARD LIBRARY

135 Main Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602-2992
Phone/Fax 802.223.3338
www.kellogghubbard.org

December 1, 2009

Montpelier City Council
Montpelier City Hall
39 Main Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Dear Members of the City Council,

The Kellogg-Hubbard Library requests that on Town Meeting Day in March 2009 voters be asked to support the Library in the amount of \$293,975, which is the same amount approved by voters at last year's Town Meeting.

The Library seeks a total of \$405,600 in taxpayer support from the six communities in our service area, which is also the same amount as last year.

Funding request, 2010 Town Meeting:

<u>Community</u>	<u>2010</u>
Berlin	\$12,557
Calais	\$24,489
E. Montpelier	\$32,296
Middlesex	\$25,543
Montpelier	\$293,975
Worcester	\$16,739
Total	\$405,600

Montpelier

Patrons: 7,641, including nearly 1,500 children--an increase of 6.5% over last year.

Materials: (print and audio books, magazines, etc.) borrowed in 2008 represents approximately 60% of all borrowing from the library.

These figures do not include use by Montpelier residents for the following:

- **Use of the Kellogg-Hubbard by Montpelier's children and teens as a safe place to gather after school. Hundreds of children each week walk to the library to meet their parents, to work on school assignments, to participate in library activities, and to find recreational reading. There has been an important increase in the use of the library by our teenage population thanks to a number of new library initiatives aimed at teens.**

- **Availability of computers with high-speed internet access for those Montpelier residents who cannot afford this access:** Computers are now crucial to those seeking employment or applying for benefits. Use of library computers for resume writing and job searching has increased in the current economic turndown. (There were 42,767 computer sign-ups in 2008 alone)
 - **Educational opportunities:** The library provides a venue for a wide variety of free educational programs for people of all ages. While people come from all over central Vermont to attend these programs, the majority are Montpelier residents for whom the library's location is particularly convenient. Attendance at adult or children's educational programs. (16,506 adults and children attended library-sponsored events in 2008, which is an increase of 30% over the previous year.)
 - **Use of the library's meeting rooms for community meetings.** (In 2008, there were 1,310 meeting room reservations, which is an increase of 16% over the previous year.)
- (Please note that 2009 data will be available mid-January 2010)

Montpelier voters have been generous to the Kellogg-Hubbard Library; residents value the services and programs offered by the library. This support has allowed us to offer the following exceptional library services and programs to Montpelier taxpayers:

- **Over 77,000** fiction and non-fiction books, large prints, periodicals, magazines, daily newspapers, DVDs, CDs, VHSs, and books on tape and CD.
- Books from anywhere in Vermont and beyond through the interlibrary loan system.
- Free Wi-fi.
- Story time for families three times per week.
- Home delivery and delivery to local daycare centers.
- Free access to on-line databases and audio book downloads: Our website provides access to the library from the comfort of your own home - to see if a book is available, to locate full-text periodical articles on any subject, to download audio books to your computer or MP3 player, or to research genealogy with Heritage Quest Online.
- In 2008, the library added the Kellogg-Hubbard "Annex" at the Adamant Co-op. It provides a selection of print and audio books for local residents. Books may also be picked up and dropped off there.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Pudvah
Executive Director

December 4, 2009

To fellow Montpelier citizens,

Two years ago, in 2007 following the rejection of an attempted city-wide "reappraisal" of city property, the Montpelier Reappraisal Committee was appointed by the City Council to oversee the process of soliciting and reviewing proposals, hiring a qualified contractor and the implementation of inspection and assessment of each piece of property within the City of Montpelier. Since that time, the committee has participated in the selection of both a new Assessor and a Property Reappraisal company for the city. The reappraisal process has been underway since the spring of 2009. As the project nears completion, the committee would like to provide our fellow city residents some information on the current status of the effort now at the end of 2009, and what to expect from here in 2010.

As of mid-November over 2,000 individual residential properties have been visited, externally photographed, and measured. This represents approximately 80% of the residential properties in the City. New England Municipal Consultants, Inc., (NEMC) the company hired to do the assessment, is on track to complete the remaining 500 pieces of residential property by early in the calendar year 2010. After the turn of the new year, the company will also turn its attention to the inspection of the city's commercial and industrial property.

The inspection and reappraisal process calls for an inspection of both the exterior and the interior of each residence to assure that records in the City Assessor's Office will accurately reflect each piece of property going forward. As of mid-November, NEMC has inspected the interiors of 56 percent of the properties visited, or approximately 1,120 of the 2,000 homes visited thus far. In January, letters will be sent to the property owners whose interiors HAVE NOT been inspected urging them to call NEMC staff through the Assessor's office to schedule an appointment for an inspection. The inspection is each property owner's opportunity to assure that their property is fairly assessed in comparison all of the other properties in the City.

In the interests of accuracy, fairness, and equity for all, it is the goal of the Montpelier Reappraisal Committee to have every single piece of property within the city inspected and valued by the same set of inspectors (NEMC). We urge all property owners to fully participate in this process so that the best possible results can be achieved.

If you have questions about the inspection or reappraisal process, please contact the Montpelier Assessor's Office at 223-9504. You may also feel free to contact any one of us as well. Thank you for your patience with and participation in this process,

Sincerely

Karl Johnson
Vicki Lane
Jack Lindley

Nick Marro
Timothy O'Meara