

**CITY OF MONTPELIER  
CAPITAL CITY OF VERMONT**

**City Manager's Weekly Report – 10/13/2017**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS...**

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|----------------------|---|
| Monday, October 16   | Design Review Committee Meeting, 5:30 P.M. in the City Council Chambers       |
| Monday, October 16   | Development Review Board Meeting, 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers      |
| Monday, October 16   | Recreation Board Meeting, 5:30 P.M. at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center  |
| Tuesday, October 17  | Montpelier Energy Advisory Committee Meeting, 7:00 P.M. in the Memorial Room  |
| Tuesday, October 17  | Parks Commission Meeting, 5:00 P.M. in the Police Dept. Community Room        |
| Thursday, October 19 | Parking Subcommittee Meeting, 4:00 P.M. in the City Manager's Conference Room |
| Thursday, October 19 | Housing Task Force Meeting, 5:15 P.M. in the City Manager's Conference Room   |

**FOR YOUR CALENDARS...**

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|-----------------------|--|
| Monday, October 23    | Planning Commission Public Hearing on Master Plan adoption, 5:30 P.M. in the City Council Chambers |
| Wednesday, October 25 | City Council Meeting, 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers                                       |

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT...**

**One Taylor Street**

We received a draft purchase and sale agreement from Mowatt Trust which is being reviewed now. We hope to be able to sign the agreement by next week. All other aspects of the project remain on schedule.

## **Master Plan & Zoning**

The Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on the Master Plan on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The October 25<sup>th</sup> Council meeting will be for zoning only. Zoning will also be on the November 1 agenda but ideally for final clean up only. The December 13 and 20 meetings will have public hearings for both the master plan and zoning.

## **Health Insurance Comparison**

We have had a lot of discussion about whether switching to the state exchanges would save the city money. And consequently whether dropping below 100 employees was an important strategy. This has played at least some role in consideration of regional public safety services. With considerable help from Finance Director Todd Provencher, here is our current analysis:

The city's 2017 claims experience is trending favorably and we are not anticipating a significant increase in rates for 2018 (2017 increase was 3.5%). Rates for the Vermont Health Exchange plans have changed very dramatically (26% on the platinum plan). We do not yet know the impact of withheld subsidies just announced by the President.

Police and dispatch employee health insurance currently costs \$354,000. If they transfer to CVPSA, we would expect them to have a similar or better plan – given the union contract commitments - at a similar or possibly higher cost (depending on experience in their new pool). This cost would be added to the ballot item for CVPSA.

Assuming a transfer occurs, the City would have the choice of keeping the existing plan or joining the State Exchange but Fire and DPW collective bargaining units would have to agree to the change in coverage. We reviewed the cost of the current plan for the remaining employees and compared it to the cost of the VHC Platinum Plan and the VCH Gold Plan, the two most comparable plans. In past years, the savings potential has been considerable but claims on the exchanges are starting to show up in the renewal rates.

At this time, we will not save money on health insurance by joining the exchange. Under the Platinum option, we could save ~\$76,000 but that savings requires shifting more cost to the employees. The increase in the employee deductibles would approximate \$87,000 negating the savings and this plan is not compatible with HRA funding. It is very unlikely the remaining unions would accept the new cost.

Under the Gold Plan, our premium would increase ~\$21,000 over the current plan and would require eliminating our existing HRA funding structure in favor of using a health savings account instead. The benefit to this structure is employees would be allowed to keep the unused funds in the HSA. Advocates of HSA's believe employees become better consumers when managing their own money. Alternatively, it may discourage some employees from obtaining routine care in hopes of keeping the money and thus leading to more costly claims in the future.

Based on a comparison of our current plans and the exchange, there is no present financial advantage (and a slight disadvantage) to switching over in the event that we dropped below 100 employees. There is also no indication that CVPSA would be able to obtain insurance at any lower cost than its member cities.

### **Recreation Center**

The Recreation Center on Barre Street is temporarily closed while the granite steps are repaired. A handrail will also be installed to improve safety. Some programs are being moved to alternate locations during the closure.



### **Soccer Jerseys**

We continue to work with Montpelier officials to arrange a public event with both cities when the jerseys arrive. We still have no word when we will receive the jerseys.

### **TIF**

White & Burke and City officials are meeting with press next week to talk about what TIF is and why Montpelier is interested.

### **Berlin Pond**

No update.

### **Parking/Transportation Alternatives**

The Subcommittee (Councilors Bate and Watson) is meeting on Oct. 19 and will report to the Council as early as Nov. 1.

## **Collective Bargaining**

DPW contract is signed. Final memorandum of agreement with Police is complete. I will forward to you once the union has approved it.

## **Econo Lodge**

As you probably know, Dubois took down the old Brown Derby Restaurant and hotel this week. [Click here to see a video of the demolition!](#) Public reaction has been very positive. Some Montpelier residents shared their memories of the Brown Derby on the City's Facebook page, which are fun to read if you haven't seen them.

## **CIP, Projects**

A kick-off meeting for Energy Audits of 6 City buildings was held Wednesday morning with the contractor, Cx Associates, City staff and members of the Montpelier Energy Advisory Committee (MEAC). Initial building inspections followed Wednesday and Thursday. Coordination and scheduling of additional testing is underway.

## **Agenda Scheduling**

I've shuffled a few items around over the next few meetings to try to balance out the length. Please check below in case you were tracking the date of any specific items. Note that the December meetings will have zoning, master plan and budget.

## **WEEKLY REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS ...**

### **Public Works**

#### Towne Hill Road project:

DPW will be paving the sidewalk extension early next week between Grandview Terrace & Greenock Ave. They will also overlay the existing sidewalk between the Grandview Terrace/Towne Hill Road intersection if time allows next week. Restoration work will then take place consisting of spreading top soil lawns that were disturbed and road shoulders work also as time and weather permits. This will complete the Towne Hill Road project.

#### Harrison Avenue:

The contractor will be finishing the sewer piping today and installing the remaining two Sewer Manholes on Monday and Tuesday of next week. DPW crews will be installing the remaining sewer service connections at the beginning of next week and the street division will also be starting the roadway reconstruction work during the middle of next week, which is anticipated to take approximately 5 days. Base paving is tentatively scheduled for the end of the week of October 23rd.

### Northfield Street:

The contractor will be working at the intersection of Derby Drive on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. One way alternating traffic will be maintained, with a possible detour through the Brown Derby Lot. The final water service connections near the Derby Drive intersection will also take place next week. Curb, sidewalk and roadway reconstruction will also be taking place throughout the work zone. Base pavement is tentatively scheduled for the first week in November.

### City Clerk

The Board of Civil Authority completed its review of the current voter checklist which has resulted in a whopping 1,100 challenges to registered voters who are (most likely) no longer residents. This represents a massive clean-up of the list, even surpassing the 800+ challenge letters sent out at this time last election cycle.

### Montpelier Senior Activity Center

#### Art History: American Artists and the Civil War -Thursday, October 19, 1:30-3pm | Free

Art historian Debby Tait examines American Artists and the Civil War. Artists expressed anxiety at the gathering storm of war (Martin Johnson Heade, Eastman Johnson). They served as reporters for the war (Winslow Homer), and the photographers gave the public an “eye witness” view (Brady, O’Sullivan). Above all, they interpreted the issues and war’s aftermath (Johnson, Homer).

### Parks & Trees

#### Enchanted Forest - Saturday, October 14, 4-8pm | Hubbard Park | Tickets for sale

The “Enchanted Forest” is Montpelier’s night time community celebration of Autumn. Located in historic Hubbard Park, hay wagon rides bring groups of people deep into the park where they are led by guides through candle-lit paths to stages of storytelling, music, fire, and enchantment. Advance tickets are available at the City Clerk’s office for \$4 children/\$8 adults/\$20 families. Day-of tickets are available at the New Shelter in the park for \$5 children/\$10 adults/\$25 families. Advance tickets are highly recommended, as they guarantee admission at a specific time. Walk-ins may encounter long wait times. Stop by the Montpelier Senior Activity Center on Thursday, October 12 from 1:30-3:30pm and help us carve pumpkins!

### Recreation

#### Ski and Skate Sale - Saturday, October 21, 9am-2pm | MHS Gym

If you are looking to buy or sell equipment, you must consider this sale. Tons of winter gear, including skis, snowboards, skates, and accessories for sale! Vendors sell new items, plus affordable consignment items too! Bring items to sell on Friday, October 20 from 9am-7pm. No broken or outdated equipment. The Montpelier Recreation Department reserves the right to refuse any equipment. Pick-up for items not sold will be from 4:30-6pm after the sale. We are also seeking donations of cross-country equipment for Hubbard Park. Please bring your donations with you on the 20th.

Annual Halloween Party - Sat., October 28, 1-2:30pm | MHS Cafeteria | Free

Enjoy an afternoon of fun, games, and refreshments. Watch for special news releases from the Rec Department and sponsors. Special surprise guest from 2-2:30pm! This event is being co-sponsored through the combined efforts of Montpelier Rec. Department, Police Dept., Fire Dept. and the VFW.

Youth Basketball

Our Youth Basketball Program is for grades K– 6 and is \$35 per child or \$70 per family. All registrations are due by October 31. Please register early so we can best plan and order for the correct amount of teams.

**TOPICS FOR UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS...**

<b>Oct. 25</b>	Zoning	<b>Nov. 1</b>	Zoning CVPSA resolution Wayfinding signs Quality of Life Goal Parking/Team Bridges Tree Board appointment Manager Check-in
<b>Nov. 8</b>	Parklet Ordinance, 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Dog Ordinance, 2 <sup>nd</sup> reading CVPSA Plan Five year budget Local Options Tax Aging in Place	<b>Nov. 15</b>	Parklet Ordinance, 2 <sup>nd</sup> reading Apartment Rental Fee/Inspection E911 Compliance Crosswalk Safety Asset Management Accessibility/ADA Budget Preview
<b>Dec. 13 &amp; Dec. 20</b>	Charter changes Master Plan PH Zoning PH Budget: -WRRF proposal -Facilities update -District Heat update -Citizen Survey -CIP		



William Fraser  
 City Manager