

**CITY OF MONTPELIER  
CAPITAL CITY OF VERMONT**

**City Manager's Weekly Report – 1/11/2019**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS...**

<b>Monday, January 14</b>	Planning Commission, 5:30 PM, Memorial Room
<b>Monday, January 14</b>	Recreation Board, 5:30 PM, 55 Barre St. Recreation Center
<b>Tuesday, January 15</b>	Social & Economic Justice Advisory Committee, 5:30 PM, Council Chambers
<b>Tuesday, January 15</b>	Parks Commission, 6 PM, Montpelier Senior Activity Center, 58 Barre Street
<b>Tuesday, January 15</b>	Energy Advisory Committee, 7 PM, Memorial Room
<b>Thursday, January 17</b>	Housing Task Force, 5:15 PM, Council Chambers
<b>Thursday, January 17</b>	Conservation Commission, 7 PM, Memorial Room

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

**1 Taylor Street/Recreation Path**

You may notice as you drive by that construction of the Downstreet/Housing Vermont housing portion of the 1 Taylor Street project is underway. The abutments for the pedestrian bridge are being poured next week. The Transit Center portion of the site is covered to allow for work during inclement weather. Timeframe for 1 Taylor Street project:

- Weather tight building – March 22, 2019
- Substantial Completion – Aug. 15, 2019
- Project Completion – Aug. 22, 2019

**Budget**

I have updated the worksheet based on your revised choices. I will have a new presentation for the public hearing which reflects these new numbers. I asked the school district for their tax information so that I can show the whole picture. I've also asked MDC for a financial report.

**Public Parking Garage**

Our team continues to focus on meeting the conditions of the DRB approval and prepare for our Act 250 (abbreviated version for a designated downtown) hearing on Jan. 16. As you know, the DRB site plan and subdivision permits were appealed by a group of residents. Our attorneys have reached out to their attorney to learn more about the reason for the appeal and whether the issues being appealed are the same as those in this group's petition or raise additional concerns. As noted, the appeal could add costs to both the hotel and garage projects. Any delays may also jeopardize other projects such as Confluence Park, the North Branch East property plans, bike lanes and other initiatives made possible through use of garage parking.

**Use of Area on the East Side of the North Branch**

I convened an advisory group last night to assist me in making a recommendation to you in February. I'll pull them together again later this month. Our current thinking is to make sure that we do not preclude a building opportunity, a park opportunity or any possible combination while undergoing a downtown planning effort to look at all properties and needs comprehensively rather than focusing on this one small parcel.

We also collectively understood that many of the options on the table were linked to the parking garage project and we will watch the appeal process closely.

### **Legal – unchanged**

The City's petition to enter the proceedings concerning GMP's re-construction of the Marshfield Dam has been approved. We are now a party to the matter, for the purpose of monitoring the information in case there is anything relevant to the city.

### **Legal – unchanged**

In the appeal by Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) of the City's WWTF discharge permit, the matter has now been fully briefed by all parties, including motions for summary judgment, responses thereto and reply filings. In its submissions to the Court, the City supported the legal briefs filed by the State of Vermont, Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and also filed a separate reply memo addressing the issue of whether the discharge permit authorized an increase in phosphorous, as CLF has claimed. A hearing before the Environmental Court was held on July 30<sup>th</sup> to present oral arguments on the motions. We are now awaiting rulings on the motions and summary judgement.

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

### **Assessor**

On December 26, 2018, we received the results of the Annual Equalization Study conducted by the Property Valuation and Review Division of the Vermont Department of Taxes. The Study shows that Montpelier's CLA (Common Level of Appraisal) declined from 92.31 last year to 89.67%. This indicates that the average assessment in Montpelier is at 89.67% of current market value and is indicative of the rising market. The new COD (Coefficient of Dispersion) is 9.75%. The coefficient of dispersion is a measure of how fairly distributed the property tax is within the City. A COD of 10% or less is considered an indication that property assessments are reasonably equitable. A CLA below 80% or a COD over 20% necessitates a reappraisal per Vermont law.

### **Public Works**

Shared Use Path Project Granite St – Gallison Hill Road:

The water main relocation work on Barre Street has been postponed until spring. There is no compelling reason to advance this potentially risky work during extreme winter conditions so all agreed the relocation can wait for the time being. Work next week will consist of: earth & stone lined slope construction, ditching and culvert installations on Old Country Club Road and the railroad bed through to the Rte 2 railroad crossing.

The environmental remediation contractor has nearly completed the work so the shared use path contractor will probably demolish the old Coniff home on Old Country Club Road. The site has been approved by VTrans as a temporary staging area so the contractor will begin relocating construction materials to the site as soon as it's ready for us.

DPW Winter Operations:

The street division had a very busy week with another weather event receiving about 8" of snow over the last 48 hours. A two-night winter parking ban was implemented to allow for safe & efficient snow plowing operations. With the additional snow accumulation, our streets are becoming narrowed by snow banks and parking lanes have limited access to the sidewalk. Therefore, a snow bank removal plan is currently scheduled for Monday night (early morning of the 15th) which will continue into Tuesday night if necessary depending on progress. Daytime snow bank removal operations will also begin next week along the neighborhood streets from the core downtown and extending outward. Due to the snow bank narrowed streets, the police department ordered that a temporary no parking restriction be put in place until the banks can be removed on a portion of Barre St,

School St, & on Stonecutters Way. Additional streets may be restricted as necessary to ensure emergency vehicles can pass through and for the convenience and safety of motorists.

### **Community Services**

Building Immunity for Winter with Barb Alpert

Tuesday, January 15, 1:00 –2:00 pm (FREE, at 58 Barre Street)

We will talk about four pillars of health and immunity, and Barb will share some recipe suggestions and some herbs that can help you to stay healthy throughout your winter. To reserve lunch at noon, call 262-6288, but you can show up without a reservation!

Project Independence Tables at FEAST Together

Friday, January 18, 11am – 1pm (FREE, at 58 Barre Street)

Learn about Project Independence and how it differs from a Senior Center. Shelly Ehrman, RN, Outreach and Caregiver Support Specialist with Project Independence, our local Adult Day Program and a division of Gifford Health Care, will be available to answer questions and discuss the differences between Project Independence and traditional Senior Activity Programs. She will also be passing out some free gifts and literature about PI. Anyone who knows someone who is socially isolated and dealing with challenges that interfere in getting out to a traditional Senior Center may be interested! Come before lunch or chat with Shelly while you're here for FEAST Together! To reserve lunch at noon, call 262-6288, but you can show up without a reservation!

Urgent Volunteer Need: Drivers for FEAST At Home (home delivered meals), 1-2 hours per week or become a substitute!

- Every weekday, FEAST delivers a total of 30-50 meals to housebound seniors in our area through FEAST at Home.
- Drivers pick up prepackaged meals at the Senior Activity Center around 10:30am on an assigned weekday. From there, they deliver these meals to six or seven homes along their assigned routes. At each home, the driver brings the meal to the front door and gives it directly to the person. Drivers then conduct a brief health and wellness assessment check in with each individual, collect the tray from the previous meal, and go to the next home.
- While this may seem a little routine, our drivers and seniors have formed strong, life-long friendships from serving in this position! If you're looking for a way to give back and get to know your neighbors better, try this role!
- Routes typically take between one and two hours any weekday Monday-Friday. Drivers are welcome to create their own schedules. Subs are also needed and invited!

Contact Jessica Sanderson, FEAST Program Manager, for more information, at 262-6288, or [feast@montpelier-vt.org](mailto:feast@montpelier-vt.org).

Skiing in Montpelier Parks

Winter trail conditions this year are some of the best trail conditions in years!!! There is now plenty of snow to groom trails in both Hubbard Park and the North Branch River, including a trail connecting the two, making almost ten miles of groomed trails available. We have also gotten permission to groom winter only trails from a few new landowners and hope to be able to open skiing opportunities on those additional parcels of land soon.

Improvements Made to Hubbard Park's Old Shelter Facilities

A new composting toilet, modeled after the successful systems we have used elsewhere in Hubbard Park, has been recently completed at the old shelter. Not only will it be a nice upgrade from the current older style outhouse that has been there, but its new location is handicapped accessible, in the non-snowy seasons.

Land Behind Statehouse Under Review

Park and Trees Staff have recently been working with the Treeboard, state officials and a recently assigned State Forester to look at the land from behind the statehouse that connects up to the tower. The three topics of

interest are...

1. The amount of ash trees that are present
2. The age and condition of the Red Pine stand there (most planted around 1920).  
These two topics are seen as important in providing a unique and beautiful green backdrop to the statehouse. The state forester has been assigned to develop a plan to help protect the green backdrop over time.
3. The third issue involves the same state forester working with the Parks and Trees staff to develop a plan that both protects statehouse's green backdrop while also allowing and protecting our historic views from the tower. Expect an update on that plan.

**Community Services Department Joins Community Conversation about Afterschool Childcare**

It was recently brought to the attention of the Community Services Department that a conversation regarding the need for more afterschool childcare is taking place. The Community Services Department has joined this conversation and is in the process of meeting with both the school as well as other community organizations to see where and how the Department could help fill this need.

**UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS (TENTATIVE)...**

<p><b>Jan 24 (Thurs)</b></p>	<p>Budget public hearing <b>CM</b> Warning Public hearing <b>CM</b> Charter Public hearing <b>CM</b> Approve warning <b>CM</b> Audit Report – <b>Finance</b> State’s Attorney presentation Main/Barre Corridor Study <b>DPW</b> Zoning Fixes – <b>P &amp; D</b> Committee appts: <b>ATCM</b> -Social &amp; Economic Justice Advisory Committee -Investment Committee -Tree Board -Solid Waste Management Committee</p>	<p><b>Feb 13</b></p>	<p>Restructure revolving loan funds <b>P&amp;D</b> Zoning Fixes PH - <b>P &amp; D</b> Voluntary rental inspection program <b>P&amp;D</b> Tax Stabilization <b>CM</b> Community Indicators - <b>CM</b> North Branch East plan <b>CM</b> Scooters <b>ATCM</b> Social Equity Committee Charge – <b>CM</b> City Manager Review <b>CM</b></p>
<p><b>Feb 27</b></p>	<p>Main/Barre Implementation Plan <b>DPW</b> Charter Change <b>PH - CM</b></p>	<p><b>Mar 13</b></p>	<p>Organizational Meeting Livable Wage/Min wage ordinances <b>CM</b> Personnel Plan Open Meeting/Public Records Complete Ordinance review –?? <b>ATCM</b></p>



William Fraser  
City Manager