

City Manager year-end report for 2011 – “A Great Team Effort”

The 2011 year was very challenging and rewarding in many aspects. The year began with historical snow events from December 2010 through February 2011 that shut down the entire Metropolitan region. The Federal, District, Prince George’s County, and municipal governments all closed due to hazardous conditions. Metro rail and bus service were not in service for a few days. The one exception to these closures was the City of Mount Rainier which remained open during the entire time in efforts to clear the streets, respond to emergencies, citizen questions, complaints, and concerns. The public works department did a yeoman job working around the clock to stay on top of snow accumulation, working with contract companies to literally move hundreds of pounds of snow and ice. We were very fortunate that the city had power during the storms unlike our neighboring Montgomery County. There were no fatalities, just people who were suffering from cabin fever and very anxious to get out of the house. The department of public safety also worked around the clock to ensure that no vehicles obstructed snow emergency routes in addition to their normal public safety duties.

Through the efforts of the management team (administration, police, and public works,) the city was awarded approximately \$1.25 million in grant funds from the federal, state, and county governments as well as Local Government Insurance Trust.

Projects that have been completed as a result of this funding include the city’s Green Home Initiative where 15 homeowners received Energy Star appliances, windows, doors, and/or furnaces in addition to a home energy audit that recommended additional energy saving measures that families could implement to reduce their carbon footprint and energy usage; the installation of solar panels on the municipal building; 21 new lights installed at Kaywood Garden Apartments; curbs, gutters and sidewalks replaced on 29th Street; 30 new city trees planted; pervious pavers installed on the Perry Street parking lot and 35th Street alley; and a Maryland Energy Audit conducted on all city buildings.

The projects that are on-going include repairs to the city’s four bridges and the re-pavement to the Perry Street parking lot, and the Façade Improvement Program for the city’s commercial business districts.

The city increased its assets with the purchase of the former Blue Bird Cab lot on Perry Street, which will increase parking availability in the downtown. It will be used as a **"Kiss and Ride"** lot for bus operators and bus passengers for compliance with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant funding requirements. Councilmember Brent Bolin referred the contractor used for the project, Assistant City Manager Michael Jackson oversees the contractual obligations including the bid advertisement, and timely completion of the project, and the city manager secured the funding of \$101,574 from the FTA including the application submission, justification, and reporting requirements. What a great team effort!

The city received a Silver Level Plant Award in recognition of the great work it does in planting trees every year to preserve the city's tree stock.

Injured Worker's Insurance Fund (IWIF) which is the employee's Maryland injury protection insurance congratulated the city for the great job it is doing in terms of injury claims as well as for 25 years of partnership ensuring employee safety.

In March 2011 the city manager and city treasurer submitted a balanced budget to the mayor and council providing a 5 year Capital Improvement Plan for vehicle and equipment needs for the departments of public safety and public works. The budget submission for Fiscal Year 2013 will also include infrastructure needs the city's buildings and streets. Many of the city streets are in need of repair, some more critical than others. The public works department has identified those streets that are the most need of immediate repair. The council has elected to pursue state funding for the majority of the infrastructure needs.

One of the most crucial benchmarks for determining success in any organization is its ability to maintain its fiscal fiduciary responsibility, its fiscal integrity, self-sufficiency, and productivity within a fiscal year. The Fiscal Year 2011 Audit for the period ending June 30, 2011 found no management or material weaknesses, and no misappropriation of funds; the city met its deadline for reporting financial statements and submission of the Uniform Financial Report to the State of Maryland for the 3rd consecutive year. Management was once again aggressive in terms of revenue collection, and was conservative and very cautious in terms of spending. As a result, the fiscal year ended with more revenues than expenditures. This helped the city maintain a healthy reserve balance.

In a climate of recession and economic downturn, and for a full service municipality with only \$4.5 million in operating funds, this is no small feat.

Electronic recycling events were held throughout the year (some in partnership with the Town of Brentwood) encouraging residents to participate from both municipalities, providing a safe and healthy way to discard electronic equipment and devices. The city has also partnered with the Town of Brentwood to assist with their snow removal capability.

The city has submitted new grant applications to the State of Maryland for a Bicycle Share Program similar to the one implemented in Baltimore City and the District of Columbia. Applications have also been submitted for MainStreet and Sustainability Designations. The management team also worked diligently on the draft of the city's Environmental Sustainability Plans and Assessment which highlight the efforts of the council, the city's workforce, and volunteer community in preserving our waterways, improving energy efficiency and creating an overall cleaner environment. The Environmental Protection Board is working to ensure that the City receives Maryland Certification for its sustainability programs. What a great team effort!

The city administrative staff collaborated with the Mount Rainier Business Association (MRBA) on many projects including the Welcome Package for new and existing businesses. There was much success with the new branding campaign and advertisements as well as membership outreach. The Better Block Project held in April of this year, spruced up the business district and is a model that will be replicated again this year and will be an on-going effort. A new staff person has been hired by the association specifically to target more participation among association members and to work with city staff to accomplish MainStreet objectives. One of the goals of the city and MRBA is to increase our efforts to fellowship with other cities and associations. What a great team effort!

City staff also developed a brand new Welcome Package for city residents which summarizes city services and city regulations.

On behalf of the management team, I want to express our sincere appreciation for the opportunity to continue to provide quality services to you, our residents. May you experience a healthy, safe, and happy Holiday Season, and a prosperous New Year!

