



City of Mount Rainier

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CITY MANAGER REPORT JANUARY 4, 2011

Meetings/Training

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) through its Neighborhood Revitalization program sponsored a workshop on sustainability using the City of Hyattsville Community Legacy Plan as a guide. House Bill 475 created The Sustainable Communities Act of 2010. This bill strengthens reinvestment and revitalization in Maryland's older communities by enhancing an existing rehabilitation tax credit and extending the life of the credit through 2014. The legislation also combines two geographically-based revitalization designations, (i.e., Community Legacy (CL) areas, and Designated Neighborhoods (DN)) into a single "Sustainable Communities" designation which will be made by the Smart Growth Subcabinet (SGSC) after a recommendation from DHCD.

Current CL Areas (of which Mount Rainier is a part) will automatically be considered a Sustainable Community for 2-3 years after June 1, 2010. CL plans will now have to be updated every 5 years.

The Public Works Director and Assistant Director attended a management skills training for government managers. The training focused on the managers evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of their subordinate staff, developing a philosophy of leadership and maximizing employee expectations. The director is currently working on ways to improve the performance of staff based on what was gained from Part I of this skills training. Both managers are looking forward to attending Part II of the training.

Code enforcement officers are scheduled to take an annual certification program training in March 2011 sponsored by the Code Enforcement Zoning Officials Association (CEZOA). One officer received his certification last year.

Mayor, council and staff met with Senator Victor Ramirez concerning funding needs of the city particularly as it relates to the construction of the new library/civic center. City Manager Wallace received confirmation today that the \$150,000 Bond Bill can be used for planning and architectural design drawings. This is a reimbursable grant so the city will have to expend funds prior to seeking reimbursement. As an alternative to County and State funding, city treasurer

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Manjani is looking into infrastructure financing through the state Community Development Administration. This is the program that was used to finance the construction of the current city hall and police station. The draw back to this financing is that the city will be locked in for 10 years to repay this loan and early payback is not allowed under this program. In the interim, the city will look for other federal, county and state funding.

Grants

The city has received formal announcements of reprogrammed funds to complete the bridge repairs and improving the lighting in Kaywood Garden Apartments.

The city has also received notification of reprogrammed funds for the façade improvement program initially requested through Gateway CDC. Preliminary information has been sent to the county concerning the businesses that will benefit from this program. Those businesses are Glut Food Cooperative, Francis Carryout, Island Style Ice Cream, Nisey's Boutique, Potomac Fish House, Mount Rainier Post Office, Colors by Tangie and Quest for Fresh. The remaining businesses that were included have since closed, relocated. We are anticipating utilizing funds for some of the properties that are in disrepair/vacant that will have to remove the iron gates that are no longer permitted within the Mixed Used Town Center. From all indications it appears that the county will conduct an environmental assessment of each property as the next step after the grant award has been signed off by each party.

The CDBG street, curb, and gutter replacements have been completed on 30th, 31st, and 32nd Streets.

Federal Transit Administration and Purchase of the Blue Bird Cab Lot

After three weeks and numerous emails submitting forms and the required signatures, it appears from today's communication that we are finally ready to draw down the funds to purchase the former Blue Bird Cab Lot. A user name and password is scheduled to be sent to the city manager tomorrow so that the funds can be electronically submitted to the city's bank account. The seller and attorneys are on stand-by for anticipated settlement/closing dates of January 7, January 11, or January 12, 2011.

Green Home Initiative Program

The city is winding down this program after getting 56 appliances installed at 15 locations. We are hopeful that the window and door installations will still be approved due to the closing of the grant on December 31, 2010. Lowe's bill bring estimates of the window and door installations which will be submitted for preliminary approval January 5, 2011. This portion of the project took longer than expected because of the various materials of the windows and doors at each residence. If they were all made of vinyl the installs could take place much quicker because these are in stock. The replacements of wood or metal have to be special ordered as well as those windows and doors that are not standard size.

Other problems occurred during the course of the project due to unforeseen circumstances with dangerous carbon emissions of stoves and water heaters that had not been previously anticipated. In some instances these replacements also required special order and took longer than anticipated.

ADAH Chapter 25 of the Order of the Easter Star

The former owners of the Star-Potts Hall have requested a two month lease extension which has been granted. The city attorney drafted a short lease extension agreement which has been forwarded to them for signatures.

RFP Proposal and Land Distribution Agreement

The city has approved the Land Distribution Agreement (LDA) which will go out with the RFP within a few days. The City Manager is meeting with the consultant on Friday to go over the distribution list of developers (more than 112) that the documents will be distributed to in addition to posting on the city's media outlets and the Washington Post. All of the documents have been reviewed by the city's attorney and consultant and approved by the mayor and council.

Mount Rainier Business Association/City Partnership

The city and MRBA have worked diligently to get welcome packages and letters to business property owners for almost a year. After many months of hard work, we are ready to do a mass mailing tomorrow to business property owners encouraging them to send potential tenants to the city to ensure that they have everything they need in order to be a successful business within the City Mount Rainier. This is particularly important when it comes to façade improvement (the need to meet with the city MUTC committee) and ensuring that the proposed business is a permitted used within the MUTC zone.