



*City of Mount Rainier*  
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**CITY MANAGER REPORT**  
**MAY 6, 2014**

**Assistant City Manager Position**

The position advertisement for this position will close on May 15, 2014. To date there have been 27 resumes received, some of which are very qualified in both the managerial and economic development arenas.

**Grants Management**

The City received the grant agreement requesting signatures from the Department of Housing and Community Development for the construction of the bio-retention cell on Buchanan Street. Once the signed documents are returned from the State a RFP will be issued for the construction of the cell.

An announcement was received today on the new round of upcoming funding from Community Legacy and the Smart Growth Investment and Demolition Fund. All sustainable communities must attend mandatory training during the month of May 2014.

**Residential vacant property**

For at least two decades the City has experienced blighted conditions as the result of vacant and un-maintained properties in the 3400 block of Eastern Avenue, and in the 4300 block of 30<sup>th</sup> Street. These residential properties were the subject of tax sale last year or will be up for tax sale next week due to non-payment of property taxes. You may recall that the city manager requested a review of the status of these properties by contacting the Chief of Staff for the County Executive. Today, I received a phone message from the County Treasurer asking what the City wanted to do with these properties. The response was 1) the removal of blight by demolishing the properties with redevelopment of single family residences. The Treasurer indicated that she would contact the County budget director to determine whether the County would be willing to forgive the past due tax amount with the associated penalties and interest at the city manager's request. It was mentioned to the Treasurer that the County nor the City is receiving revenue for these properties. The one caveat is that because the properties are located within an incorporated municipality, the City would have to initiate a foreclosure process against the property owner, which according to the Treasurer is not a very complicated or costly process other than the attorney fees and court costs. If the City and County can reach an agreement regarding this matter, there are various options that could occur including getting potential

developers to pay the City a nominal fee for its costs to initiate foreclosure, in conjunction with demolition of the properties and rebuilding of single family homes. It may also be a possibility to develop additional net-zero homes.

The city manager has also discussed with a potential grantor the possibility of funding for this project.

### **Meetings/Training**

The City Manager met with several economic developers in Prince George's County last month to ascertain the challenges they face with revitalization, recruiting and retaining businesses, as well as the staffing and salaries. The meeting and subsequent information was invaluable, including the fact that some of the jurisdictions have or will contribute several million dollars towards development.

Staff received some limited website training in addition to the briefing from the former Assistant City Manager.

Comcast recently merged with Time Warner industries which will have an impact on the municipal franchise agreements. Most recently a package was sent to the original member municipalities requesting a sign-off on accepting the merger. The municipal attorney representative indicating that the information contained in the mailing was incomplete. Letters were drafted by the municipal attorney for the Franchise Renewal Agreements for each municipality which are to be mailed overnight and electronically submitted prior to a May 10, 2014 deadline. The city submitted both the overnight and electronic letter on May 5 and May 6, 2014.

Captain Stoots and the city manager met with Renee Battle-Brooks of the State's Attorney's office as a follow-up to the meeting with State's Attorney Alsobrooks and her staff. The meeting focused on the training needs of the police department in terms of filing the correct charges, the need for coordinating court calendars with the schedules of the MRPD officers, and receiving subpoenas in a timely manner.

The city manager also met with the Artworks Studio school students about how they could help with trash around city hall plaza. The school project involves getting students engaged in their community with trash removal and preserving the environment.

The city manager also met with American Fidelity Insurance at the recommendation of Maryland Municipal League to ascertain current needs and trends concerning long-term disability insurance, flex pay accounts, and life insurance benefits, as well as the bench marks of the legal requirements for compliances with the Affordable Care Act rules and regulations by the year 2015. A follow-up meeting will occur with the Finance Director and city manager on May 20, 2014.

### **Property Tax Liens**

The city received on April 4, 2014, a check in the amount of \$20,958.56 for payment of tax liens that were certified to the Office of Finance, Treasury Division in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. These liens were placed against property for code violations, failure to remit vacant property registration fees, etc.

The staff are working diligently to keep up with the issuance of building permits, noise permits, outdoor events, and demolition permits, formally handled by the assistant city manager as well as the other numerous tasks associated with this position. Needless to say this is a daunting task in addition to the normal work load.

### **Local Government Insurance Trust**

The city's public liability and property insurance provider has submitted the renewal documents for Fiscal year 2015. The city manager completed the annual compliance survey which should save the city approximately \$3,500 dollars in premium payments.

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***End of Report***