



City of Mount Rainier

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CITY MANAGER REPORT

January 13, 2009

Meetings/Significant Events November 2008 through January 13, 2009

The City Manager is still participating in the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) Employee Health Benefits Study Committee which has been meeting monthly with a perspective provider to establish a Health Benefit Pool for Maryland Municipalities. During the second week in January 2009, the provider will present to the participant group a Maryland Municipal Health Purchasing Cooperative. LGIT will present a committee report to its Board of Trustees on January 26, 2009.

The City held a press conference at City Hall concerning the indictment of a property owner and resident on January 7, 2009 for littering. This measure has been taken after a decade of consultations with the property owner and resident, the issuance of numerous notices of violations and municipal infractions, as well as extensions granted at the request of the owner and resident which allowed additional time to abate code violations. This action is being pursued after several years of unsuccessful attempts to get the District Court of Prince George's County to enforce the fines assessed by the city against the property owner and resident. This action is also to send a message to others within the city boundaries to be cognizant that the city has a zero tolerance policy for littering and property code violators.

Management staff met with board members of the Eastern Star in December 2008 to discuss the possibilities of installing a gated wrought iron fence on their property as a preventive measure for the persons responsible for public nuisances including open drinking of alcoholic beverages and public urination behind city hall and the Eastern Star Building. The members were receptive to the idea but had questions about whether the fence would obstruct egress and parking accessibility. The meeting also discussed the need for police surveillance and police security during the opening and closing of their special activities.

The police chief and city manager also met with Metro Transit Captain Ron Pavlik concerning the need for additional policing services at the bus terminal and bus shelters on Rhode Island Avenue. Since that meeting there has been a significant presence of Metro Transit Police in this area. Additional details can be found in the Police Chief's report.

Communications/Website/MRTV/E-Government Solutions.

Assistant City Manager Michael Jackson has spearheaded the project concerning website development with a consultant team. The new site has seen a drastic improvement and is user friendly. This is a work in progress and during FY 2010 or before, the site will be upgraded to include the ability to complete application forms on line. Currently, forms can be downloaded but they must be submitted either in person or as an email attachment. During FY 2010, it is anticipated that once permit applications have been approved, persons will have the ability to pay through the use of credit card on line. It is also anticipated that citizens will be able to submit requests on line for some city services, e.g., bulk trash pick up, as well as code enforcement complaints which will be automatically directed to the appropriate city personnel.

I must take time in this report to officially thank and send kudos to Sandra Joseph who initially volunteered to get the city going on this journey. Ms. Joseph single-handedly designed and developed the first website, and maintained it for the city. While she worked on many other projects for the city including editing the *Message* and chairing the Tree Commission, her efforts helped to launch the city to where it is today. **ONCE AGAIN, THANK YOU SANDRA JOSEPH FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND DEDICATION TO THE CITY OF MOUNT RAINIER.**

Mount Rainier Television has made a significant equipment purchase which will enable the department to have 24 hour automatic programming capability. The director will no longer have to manually setup programs to be aired in specific time slots.

In efforts to go “green”, the city is in the beginning stages of providing E-Government solutions. This means that most of the information formally provided through paper hard copies will now be available through electronic format unless otherwise requested. During council meetings, hard copies will be available to the Mayor and Council and city staff. A limited number of hard copies of the agenda will be available, with one (1) copy of the legislative items for review by those in attendance. All departmental reports and legislation will be posted on the website and can be emailed by request to the department manager. Hard copy requests of other items can be made by request to the Municipal Clerk, Janis Lomax.

FY 2010 Budget Submissions/Presentation

The City Manager and Treasurer significantly reduced the budget calendar for FY 2010 in attempts to streamline the budget process. The Mayor and Council streamlined the process further by requesting that there be one presentation for the entire city government by the city manager. Chief Scott and the city manager met to discuss his priorities last week and the public works director and the manager will meet within the next few days. Once the budget calendar

has been approved, directions will be distributed to all departments and community groups. For the upcoming fiscal year you will see some significant modifications in terms of the way the city conducts business.

Emergency Preparedness

Instructions have been issued to department directors to review and make recommendations concerning the city's Emergency Preparedness Plan. This includes the purchase of air mattresses, non-perishable food items, wipes, and water for a minimum of three days for city staff at all city owned property. MRPD and PW have been instructed to contact the Bunker Hill Fire Department for a Fire Prevention Checklist and Risk Assessment for all City owned buildings, commercial businesses, multi-family and residential property. As a government, we need to provide the tools for homeowners, business owners, and property owners to know what they need to implement to improve fire safety conditions of their property especially for those structures built prior to 1950. Code Enforcement Officers must have the capability of knowing what to look for when inspecting commercial and multi-family facilities in terms of fire safety.

The city manager has also asked for a review of the inventory of the equipment and supplies stored at the Bunker Hill Fire Station, and an assessment of what items are no longer useful that need to be discarded.

City Annual Awards and Volunteer Recognition

The City held its annual employee awards program on December 22, 2008. This was the first time during the program that all of the city volunteers were recognized for their support and contribution to the City. MRTV has a power point presentation and tape of the program which has aired during the past several weeks. All City volunteers who were not in attendance at the awards program may contact City Hall for their certificate.

Upcoming Projects

Requests for Proposals have been advertised in the Washington Post for pavement of the parking lot on the old Bass Property, and the repairs required for the four city bridges.

A request for proposal has also been submitted to the Washington Post for the market and feasibility studies on Route 1. A copy of the RFP will be submitted to Green Door Advisors is the firm that is providing this service for the project along Route 1 in the District. A presentation of what has been conducted so far on this project will be held at the January 13, 2008 council meeting.

Employee Identification Badges

The software has finally arrived for upgrading employee identification badges. Within the next three weeks this project should be complete all city staff will be required to wear the new badges.

ArtSpace Apartments Inspection

During the month of November management staff met with property managers and residents of the ArtSpace Apartments concerning complaints about structural deficiencies. Management ensured the residents that the city would conduct an inspection of the premises which was scheduled during the month of December 2008.

There was miscommunication about the date and time of the inspection, which resulted in the city along with its engineer consultants conducting an exterior inspection. This inspection did allow the engineers to determine the cause of the problem with the leakages which has been reported to both on-site managers and Dean Crowell in Minnesota. It was determined that the problem is the result of the use of non compatible materials (steel and aluminum) as siding on the building and the contracting and expanding of these metals during the heat of the day and the cool night time hours which has caused leaking particularly around the windows. The recommendation is that all windows need to be sealed annually as a preventive measure. An email correspondence from Dean Crowell on January 8, 2009 stated that he was catching up on his emails and would respond on January 9, 2009. To date, follow-up correspondence has not been received.

Mount Rainier Police Department Communications Tower

First Baptist Church of Mount Rainier has informed management that the roof leaking from the communications tower on the church continues to be a problem despite two efforts to have the problem repaired by a contractor hired by the City. The Church is requesting that the tower be removed. The Chief is looking into other possibilities which would include permission from the church to have the tower built on the ground and raised by concrete to its current height. This will be costly in addition to the existing repairs to the church facility. The communications tower must be installed at the highest point in the city which is in the current location.

Generator Room and Basement of the Mount Rainier Police Station

Many of you will recall that the police station never obtained a Use and Occupancy Permit due to deficiencies with the installation of the generator and concealed combustible space in the basement of the facility. City engineer consultants conducted an inspection, and the city manager is currently awaiting a report on their recommendations and findings which will be submitted to Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources for approval. This item will have a financial impact on the police department budget for FY 2010.

3409 Rhode Island Avenue Community Center Project

The city manager is waiting for final approval of the revised contract with MCI Development for the submission of revised design schemes for the Community Center Project at 3409 Rhode Island Avenue. City attorney reviewed and revised the development team's initial draft, which has been resubmitted to them for review.

The community legacy quarterly report was submitted regarding the current activity of this project.

Mount Rainier Day 2009

Janis Lomax is working on the festivities for 2009. Those interested in participating in the program should contact Ms. Lomax on 301-985-6585.

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End of Report