

**CITY OF MONTPELIER
CAPITAL CITY OF VERMONT**

City Manager's Weekly Report – 2/1/2019

UPCOMING MEETINGS...

Monday, Feb. 4	Design Review Committee, 5:30 PM, City Council Chambers
Monday, Feb. 4	Development Review Board, 7 PM, City Council Chambers
Tuesday, Feb. 5	Montpelier Transportation Infrastructure Committee, 6 PM, Memorial Room, City Hall
Thursday, Feb 7	Special City Council Meeting for City Manager Annual Review

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT...

1 Taylor Street/Recreation Path

Construction on this project remains on schedule. The Transit Center work is well underway. Work continued on the abutments for the pedestrian bridge. The full schedule:

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

Public Parking Garage

The Act 250 District Commission issued a recess memo that outlines all remaining questions and information. We have 30 days to respond. Other parties will have 15 days after our response to offer any comments. The Commission will determine then whether another hearing is needed. Once all evidence is closed, the Commission has 15 days to issue a decision. Attorney James Dumont filed a motion for reconsideration of the party status decisions made by the Commission on January 16th.

The DRB Appellant group filed their statement of issues this week. The City was surprised at the scope and nature of the appeal, which raises at least twenty separate issues related to the local approval process. The issues raised on appeal go far beyond the relatively limited and focused items listed in the petition which had been circulating (many of which the City had already addressed or plans to address).

In our estimation, the appeal seems structured to provide for an expensive and extended legal process and, ultimately, to kill the hotel and parking garage projects. Any significant delay places both the hotel and garage projects at great risk due to changing costs. This aggressive litigation approach is not consistent with public statements from appellants indicating that they simply sought certain improvements to the garage, support the hotel project, and recognize its importance to a thriving downtown.

We have extended multiple invitations to meet, informally or through formal mediation, with the appellant group members and hope to better understand their goals and interests very soon.

Water Main Break

Hat's off to the DPW crews for the incredible effort on the Spring/Elm water main leak. Many of them were up for over 24 hours including the snow removal work they had been on before the leak hit. Wonderful dedication.

Use of Area on the East Side of the North Branch

I will present a plan for this property at the February 13 meeting.

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 30th to present oral arguments on the motions. We are now awaiting rulings on the motions and summary judgement.

Strategic Planning

We have scheduled our strategic planning work for April 15, 16 & 17. Details to come.

WEEKLY REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS ...

Fire Department

Crews have been out this week shoveling out and clearing Fire Hydrants from all the recent heavy snow. We still have a lot more to do and will be working on them again next week. If you have one in your neighborhood that has not been shoveled out please call the Fire Department at 229-4913 and we will take care of it.

And, a couple of recent incidents in the city has reminded us of the importance of Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors. Please check and make sure you have working Smoke and CO detectors in your home. If you are not sure, please call the Fire Department at 229-4913, or the Building Inspector at 262-6170 and we will come to your home and check your detectors.

Public Works

Water Leaks: This week, the Water / Sewer division was confronted with one of the most challenging water main failures ever encountered, rivalling ruptured mains that occurred many years ago on Taylor Elm Streets. Thankfully the break occurred at a time when critical staff was just arriving for work, improving response time. Due to the significance of water loss at over 5,000 gpm, it was an all-hands-on-deck emergency. The water treatment facility staff was immediately tasked with preventing damage to the facility as they closed valves to avoid loss of head pressure and allow the storage reservoirs to feed the system taking the pressure off the treatment process until the ruptured pipe could be isolated and shut down.

For a failure of this magnitude, it requires a gradual shut down process to prevent water hammer which can over-stress the rest of the system. Winter conditions had to be overcome with frozen gate valve boxes buried under ice & snow, equipment & tools malfunctioning, and ice covered surfaces making it hazardous just to walk around. The street division was called on to manage the water flow as they located and opened frozen catch basins, spread salt and helped with traffic control. Engineering staff provided plans to help locate valves and develop the leak isolation plan to limit the shut off zone to the immediate area and minimize customer impacts and then stayed to assist with repairs.

The equipment division responded to every equipment need that arose, continuously supporting the project, jump starting dead batteries and retrieving the frozen-up old vactor and getting it back to the shop in the middle

of the night so repairs could be made and made ready for the next day when it would be needed again.

We extend our appreciation to the police department for traffic control assistance and to the fire department for help with pumping out a flooded basement and then operating hydrants to bleed off the air in the mains once the break was repaired.

By the time the repair work was completed, the water division staff had not slept for about 30 hours and then after only a short break, they returned to repair a sewer line which was damaged as a result of the ruptured main. The City Manager's office also pitched in with notifications and social media posting and our new administrative assistant fielded dozens of non-stop phone calls with patience and kindness. All had an important role to play in responding to this water system crisis.

As Director, I extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated, tireless and knowledgeable staff who overcame every challenge encountered persevering through the harshest of conditions and driven by their deep sense of commitment.

One Taylor & Shared Use Path Project: Plans for next week consist of sheathing and setting walls on the third floor of the building. The concrete slab for the lobby of the housing portion of the building will be poured next week.

Shared Use Path Project Granite St – Gallison Hill Road: Next week, slope stabilization work will continue along Old Country Club Road as well as excavation and backfill of the path along the side of Barre Street. They also plan to set pre-cast concrete headwalls on Gallison Hill Road in preparation for the road widening project in the spring (to be coordinated around the peak traffic hours of the school).

DPW Winter Operations: We experienced yet another significant snow event last week, and although we managed to gain some capacity for snow storage along most of our busier streets, snow bank removal efforts extended to date will all have to be repeated to prepare the inevitability of another storm. Once again, narrow streets such as Barre Street, which has no capacity whatsoever for snow storage, are posted for no parking until the snow can be removed. Streets where snow bank removal work has not yet been done this season are overflowing with snow reducing travel to single lanes and severely limiting sight lines at driveways. Sidewalks are becoming pinched as a result and we have concerns about obstructed drainage when melting occurs.

As is common with freeze / thaw cycles and extreme cold, paved surfaces are over stressed with thermal expansion cracks developing, leading to pavement failure and causing the formation of numerous pot holes, particularly on older paved surfaces. It's been almost 4 weeks since conditions were favorable enough to attempt to patch the pot holes which began in earnest yesterday (using torches to melt the ice) and will continue into next week provided the weather prediction is accurate. Day time snow removal operations will be scheduled for next week and we expect to undertake at least another night of snow removal to address snow banks in the downtown area and adjacent streets.

Community Justice

Filmmaker Bess O'Brien's newest documentary, "Coming Home," is now available online at <http://doc.vermont.gov/justice/coming-home/> The movie provides an in-depth look at the work of Circles of Support and Accountability (COSAs) in Vermont. It tells the story of five people navigating the challenges of reentering their communities after incarceration who are fortunate to have a COSA. It features core members, staff and volunteers with a Montpelier Community Justice Center COSA as well as those involved with the Barre, St Johnsbury and Hartford CJs.

UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS (TENTATIVE)...

Feb 7	City Manager Review CM	Feb 13	Restructure revolving loan funds P&D Rec Center Study ACM Tax Stabilization CM North Branch East plan CM Social Equity Committee Charge – CM Zoning Fixes – P & D Audit – Finance Public Message Board - CC
Feb 20	City Manager Review CM	Feb 27	Main/Barre Implementation Plan DPW Charter Change PH - CM Zoning Fixes PH – P&D Scooters ATCM Parklets? - CM
Mar 13	Organizational Meeting Open Meeting/Public Records CM Community Indicators - CM Complete Ordinance review –?? ATCM	Mar 27	Livable Wage/Min wage ordinances CM Personnel Plan CM Voluntary rental inspection program P&D Complete Ordinance review –?? ATCM



William Fraser
City Manager