

CITY OF MONTPELIER

City Manager’s Weekly Report – 5/17/2019

UPCOMING MEETINGS			
Mon., May 20	Cemetery Commission	12:00 PM	Green Mount. Cemetery
	Recreation Advisory Board	5:30 PM	Barre Street Gym/Rec.
	Design Review Committee	5:30 PM	Council Chambers
Tues., May 21	Social & Economic Justice Advisory Committee	5:30 PM	Council Chambers
	Parks Commission	6:00 PM	Montpelier PD
	Energy Advisory Committee	7:00 PM	Memorial Room
Weds., May 22	City Council	6:30 PM	Council Chambers

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

1 Taylor Street/Recreation Path

Construction on this project remains on schedule.

Public Parking Garage

A status hearing was held with the Environmental Court this week, and some filing schedules have been set. I will keep the Council updated on the Act 250 and DRB appeals. To date, \$36,131.14 has been spent on appeals - \$27,717.33 on the Site Plan/Subdivision appeal by 16 appellants and \$8,413.81 on the Act 250 jurisdictional appeal filed by Alan Goldman. We have not yet paid any expenses for the Act 250 appeal filed by Les Blomberg, Dan Costin and Jeff Parker. Several bills for appeal related work have not come in yet.

Perhaps more importantly, the City has spent \$416,352.40 to date on development of the garage project. This is an expected amount for a project of this size at this stage. However, as with all projects like this, these costs were planned to be repaid to the city’s general fund from the project bond proceeds. If, for some reason, the project does not move forward and the bond is not issued, we will need to fund this amount somehow, probably through taxes.

Finally, projected increased costs due to delay in starting between now and next year are 2-4%. 3% would be approximately \$270,000.

Goats/Poison Ivy

As you will recall from last year, we plan to use goats for a second spring and summer to reduce the spread of poison ivy on the shared use path near the High School. This is a multi-year project, which also involves planting other species to overtake and replace the poison ivy. We expect the goats to return to the recreation path in the very near future. But we learned a difficult lesson last year – too many people wanted to pet the goats and too many dogs wanted to sniff/nip/scare the goats. We need to let them do their thing and an audience tends to cause them to lose interest in feeding. In addition, dogs pose a predatory threat (in their eyes!), so be advised to walk dogs by quickly without stopping, and all dogs must be under complete at all times when the goats are present. This year we will have better fencing to protect the goats from too much love! We are also planning an educational session for the public to let them meet the goats and learn more about why we use these animals – instead of toxic chemicals – to control the poison ivy. So we’ll keep everyone posted on when that is scheduled to take place.

Pocket Park Update

You have probably noticed that the popular pocket park on Main Street, across the street from City Hall and the Fire Station, is being removed. While we are saddened to see it go, we're hopeful that all is not lost. At the moment, we're trying to help the owner move the pergola (roof structure) to the patio outside the Senior Center on Barre Street, pending permit approval and some other issues. That would create a seated area for residents and Senior Center members to enjoy on nice-weather days. It's also possible a new parklet could be created in parking spaces in front of the Main Street spot. Stay tuned on that!

The pocket park was not owned by the City. The park space had been leased at no cost from the landowner to help. Unfortunately, the lease asking price rose drastically this year, too high for either the park owner's or the City's budget to cover. We hope residents will enjoy the pergola in its new home on Barre Street!

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.

WEEKLY REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS

Police Department

Officer Sam Lambert completed training all MPD and many BCPD officers with the use of less-lethal impact munitions (bean bag projectiles fired from modified 12 gauge shotguns).

On Thursday, the MPD once again put forward a maximum effort with personnel for the safety and traffic management needs for the Governor's Corp Cup.

On Wednesday, Detective Sergeant Wade Cochran, MPD was a recipient of the Outstanding Collaboration Investigation award from United States Attorney Kristina Nolan, District of Vermont. This recognition was based on SGT Cochran's involvement in the arson-drug murder investigation in Northfield, VT back in 2015 while assigned to the Vermont Drug Task Force. SGT Cochran was one of 25 distinguished investigators (DEA, FBI, ATF, Dept. of State—Diplomatic Security Service agents, Milton PD, VSP, Burlington PD, and Montpelier PD) who were honored in a ceremony at the federal building in Burlington, VT this past Wednesday.

Link to official press release from the US Attorney's Office:

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-vt/pr/us-attorney-s-office-recognizes-exceptional-law-enforcement-work-its-annual-law>

Public Works

DPW Street & Water/Sewer Divisions:

This week the Water/Sewer Division concentrated on street, sidewalk & property restoration of the many repair projects that took place over the winter including a sewer project on Berlin Street, and water main repairs on Prospect, Bingham and Main Streets. They also completed several water meter repairs and conducted an investigation of the Deerfield/Greenfield sewer and storm systems consisting of smoke testing in preparation for paving this summer. The smoke testing on the sewer mains did not reveal any cross connection to the storm network in that neighborhood.

The street division also concentrated on restorations, patching potholes and completed preparations for Corporate Cup patching possible trip / fall hazards along the race route & deploying the various traffic control devices, etc. Flower barrels were also distributed around the downtown.

Next week, the street division will be reconstructing the paved surface area behind the grandstands at the Elm Street recreation field and extending the storm drain system to address a chronic drainage problem. This work is under a strict May completion deadline to accommodate the Mountaineers schedule necessitating a higher priority. Street sweeping is on-going to remove debris from the shoulders including bike lanes. Some areas will be posted for short term no-parking so the sweeper can clean to the curb lines. The water / sewer division will be cleaning sewer systems with the vactor truck and using the video camera to inspect the sanitary sewer in the Deerfield/Greenfield area. Both divisions will also be attending to the many work orders in the queue which are commonly numerous this time of year.

One Taylor & Shared Use Path Project: The drywall has been placed on the fourth floor and painting will begin next week. Insulation and drywall installation will continue on the second and third floors. Subbase for the shared use path and access road will continue to be constructed next week also.

Shared Use Path Project (Granite St – Gallison Hill Road):

Multiple consecutive work sites persist throughout the length of the project with the various crews the contractor now has working. Storm drainage is now almost complete on Barre Street. Work on retaining wall #6 located easterly of Old Country Club Road is expected to begin next week. Final details are being resolved for retaining wall #1 which extends from just easterly of the Granite intersection to the Trackside property. An unanticipated telecommunication conduit is in conflict with this wall which will necessitate a contract change order.

The contractor announced plans to construct the new drainage system on Granite Street beginning on Monday morning. The work consists of installing a new manhole in the center of the street between Barre Street and the railroad tracks and then installing new culverts left and right of the manhole to collect railroad track ditch water. This work will result in one-way traffic conditions managed by traffic control flaggers. Potential traffic delays are anticipated.

Traffic advisory notice continues: Multiple & concurrent work zones will be active on Barre Street & Gallison Hill Road over the next several weeks. Motorists are being advised to expect construction delays and to seek alternate routes if possible or allow additional time if passing through the work zone.

Cummings Street Bridge Project: Traffic was switched on Wednesday to the temporary bridge and the signals are active with camera detectors. The Elm Street side is set to dwell on green until a vehicle is detected on the east side. The temporary water main is now in service so the demolition of the old bridge could begin. The demolition is being accomplished with an excavator mounted hydraulic hammer.

WRRF: Preparations continue for the project startup. The Act 250 land use permit application was submitted today.

Community Justice Center

The Community Justice Center is offering a restorative justice training for young people ages 14 -22 on May 23 & 24, from 4 – 8 pm each day. Teens and young adults who want to know more about restorative justice and learn to utilize restorative practices are invited and encouraged to attend. This training is free, and while there is no obligation to do so, it will prepare those who are interested to serve on a restorative justice panel. Anyone interested can contact Judy Gibson at 223-9606 or jgibson@montpelier-vt.org for more information or to sign up to attend.

Community Services

Montpelier Touch A Truck

Open to all | Sunday, May 19, rain or shine | 11:00 am - 2:30 pm | Montpelier High School Track | Child -\$3, Adult-\$4, Family-\$10

It's time for our 11th annual Touch a Truck event, where kids can touch, honk, and climb on trucks and specialty vehicles of all types. Along with your entry fee you will receive one free entry to the Montpelier Pool Concessions, and other entertainment will be available. Special Guest Pirate Man Dan - The pirate with the land moving ship Dan will be in attendance!

Peace & Justice Center's Racial Justice Returns with a film screening of "The Way Home: Women Talk about Race in America"

Tuesday, May 21, 7:00 – 9:00 pm, suggested Donation of \$5 - \$15, Montpelier Senior Activity Center

This film follows sixty-four women of various cultures and background, over eight months, as they share their experience of racism in America. A short facilitated discussion will follow the film. This film screening is part of the Peace and Justice Center's Racial Justice Series.

Remembering our Veterans' FEAST Luncheon | Friday, May 24 | 12:00—1:00 pm | Suggested donation of \$10

The 3rd annual Remembering Our Veterans luncheon will be Friday, May 24th. This well attended event falls on the Friday before Memorial Day and honors veterans and their guests with a ceremony remembering family and friends who served in the military. Guests are treated to a delicious BBQ chicken dinner with strawberry shortcake for dessert which is served by volunteers from local company CadCut. The ceremony includes an Honor Guard and Chaplain Invocation, video presentation, poetry, and music. As with all FEAST luncheons, this event is open to the public. However, seating is limited and reservations are required by Tuesday, May 21st. The program starts promptly at 11:30, seating begins at 11:00 AM.

Financial Foundations Class Begins on 5/21

Starting on Tuesday, May 21 from 6:00 7:00 pm at the Montpelier High School, Room 104; come learn financial foundations with a qualified financial advisor – this will not be a sales presentation. The series runs for 6 weeks beginning this coming Tuesday. To register, stop by the office at 58 Barre Street.

Sunshine, Smiles Azaleas, Trillium and Weeping Cherry

On Thursday, May 16, a group of cyclists from MSAC traveled up to bike along the lake. From trip organizer, Nancy Schulz, "The weather gods smiled broadly upon us! Nine bicyclists enjoyed sunshine, gorgeous flowering azaleas, carpets of delicate white trillium, lakeside cycling, mountain views, and al fresco dining at the Skinny Pancake." (Photos courtesy of MSAC member, Ellen Marshall)

Parks Welcomes NCCC Crew

The NCCC crew (9 Americorps members) who arrived last week have been helping Parks staff and the Treeboard with tree planting (about 400 trees were planted this past week!) throughout the City. They have also been helping park staff pull over invasive plants (current count is over 700 removed!) from along the bike path and in the North Branch River Park.

Middle School Students get involved with Parks

Eli Rosenberg's 7 and 8th grade classes have taken turns helping park staff and a couple of the NCCC team members plant over 175 locust trees on the North Branch River Park's Invasive trail in a grand experiment to see if locust, which is strategically not on the dining palate of our local beavers, can overshadow and reduce the footprint of the invasive Japanese knotweed plant that is destabilizing the river bank in the park. The 7th and 8th graders were also a great help in trampling the spring surge of the young knotweed shoots, slowing their start and reducing knotweed vigor, which will be a big help in allowing the locust a head start in leafing out and attempting to get to a height to out compete the knotweed.

UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS (TENTATIVE)

May 22	ADA Report DPW Ch. 2 Ordinance Amendments, 2 nd PH ATCM Ch. 3 Ordinance Amendments, 1 st PH ATCM Five Home Farm Way CM Validation Resolution CM Energy Report MEAC/Finance Zoning fixes – P&CD	June 12	Ch. 3 Ordinance Amendments, 2 nd PH ATCM Ch. 4 Ordinance Amendments, 1 st PH ATCM Ch. 1 Ordinance Fines, 1 st PH, ATCM MTIC Budget Winter Operations Debrief DPW Berlin St. Speed Limit, 1 st Public Hearing DPW Strategic Outcomes work plan CM
June 26	Ch. 4 Ordinance Amendments, 2 nd PH ATCM Ch. 5 Ordinance Amendments, 1 st PH ATCM Berlin St. Speed Limit, 2 nd Public Hearing FEAST Contract MSAC	July 10	Ch. 5 Ordinance Amendments, 2 nd PH ATCM Ch. 7 Ordinance Amendments, 1 st PH ATCM
Aug. 14	Ch. 7 Ordinance Amendments, 2 nd PH ATCM Ch. 8 Ordinance Amendments, 1 st PH ATCM	Aug. 28	Ch. 8 Ordinance Amendments, 2 nd PH ATCM Ch. 9 Ordinance Amendments, 1 st PH ATCM



William Fraser
City Manager