

Weekly Report February 3, 2023

Date	Committee	Time	Location	Links
2/6	Design Review Committee	5:30 PM	City Council Chambers and Zoom Link	Agenda and Zoom Link
2/6	Development Review Board Meeting	7:00 PM	City Council Chambers and Zoom Link	Agenda and Zoom Link
2/7	Parks Commission	6:00 PM	City Manger's Conference Room and Zoom	Agenda and Zoom Link
2/7	Montpelier Housing Committee	6:00 PM	Memorial Room and Zoom	Agenda and Zoom Link
2/7	Transportation and Infrastructure	7:00	Zoom	Agenda and Zoom Link
2/8	Regular City Council	6:30 PM	City Council Chambers and Zoom	Agenda and Zoom Link

Improve Public Health and Safety

COVID-19 Updates:

Surveillance Report: The State is using the COVID-19 Surveillance Report as their key public facing COVID data document. Here is the most recent [Weekly COVID-19 Surveillance Report for February 2, 2023](#)

- New COVID-19 cases, last 7 days: 80.29 per 100k
 - Weekly case count: 501
- New hospital admissions of patients with COVID-19, last 7 days: 7.69 per 100K
 - 48 total new admissions with COVID-19
- Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by patients with COVID-19 (7-day average): 3.24% (decrease from previous week)

For this seven-day reporting period, the rate of new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 Vermonters is below 200.

The [CDC's COVID-19 County-level report also has Washington County Vermont](#) as a 'low' community spread level area.

COVID-19 Reminders:

- It is now recommended that all children, ages 6 months through 5 years, get the COVID-19 Vaccination. Find vaccination clinics [here](#), or call your preferred pharmacy.
- **Keep up to date with CDC Recommendations!** You can find the CDC's updates regarding COVID-19 on their website [here](#). They have released an updated chart regarding their quarantine and isolation guidelines [here](#)

Cold Weather Emergency:

- Our emergency team met yesterday – first internally then with the homelessness task force. Barre's Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth also attended the Task Force meeting.
- The two cities are in close contact with each other and with Good Samaritan for planning and response.
- Good Sam estimate that they will have 13-15 extra beds available between their facilities and the Hilltop Inn.
- The Christ Church shelter has several regular residents in hotel rooms due to COVID. They will have up to 10 additional beds available.
- Outreach workers and Good Sam feel that this is enough to meet the needs of unhoused people of whom they are aware.
- Barre is prepared to open a large shelter if a more widespread emergency occurs (power outages, etc.) They opened the Auditorium at Christmas time but no one showed up so they are going to hold on this until there is a real need. The Aud is already booked for an event this weekend so the large regional shelter, if opened, will be at Barre City Elementary School.
- People in Montpelier who for some reason can't get into Christ Church can go to the Police station for temporary warming and will be transported by our Police or Fire Department to an overnight shelter.
- Another Way and the Library will be open on Friday and Saturday for day time warming. People, of course, can come into City Hall on Friday if needed. The Transit Center is open until 9 or 10 (when the shelter opens)
- We are working in conjunction with Barre to create a flyer with all the available resources and contact numbers for distribution electronically, via news media, and in person. We'll be physically posting the information on the doors at City Hall, the Library and the Transit Center so that people coming to any of those locations can see it
- The most effective way to reach the most vulnerable population is through our outreach workers. This population isn't necessarily reading FPF, FB, or following other news media.
- We have a backup plan to open the Memorial Room for a temporary location if the Police Department overflows but, based on past experience and our team in the field, we don't think this will be necessary.
- Both our Police and Fire Departments are bringing in additional personnel to handle anything that comes up.

Again, we're in regular communication with the regional team (Barre, Good Sam, Another Way, Red Cross, etc.) and are actively prepared for the response needed.

Provide Responsible and Engaged Government

Budget:

The City Council approved the budget on January 25th, 2023. The property tax portion will be on the March 7th ballot.

All budget materials are available on the City's website. Departmental budget presentation videos have been posted for public review.

City tax rate is up 7.6%, School residential tax rate is up 1.4%, there is no change to the water and sewer benefit charges. The Combined residential tax rate is up 3.9%. well below the national 6.5% inflation rate as of December. The overall residential tax rate has a two-year average increase of 1.65% compared to a two year inflation average of 6.75%.

Capital Fire Mutual Aid System **New**

As we prepare to move forward with the regional radio system, the City Council will be asked to approve a Memorandum of Understanding along with all the other participating municipalities. This MOU reaffirms membership in CFMAS and affirms the financial commitments and responsibilities for members over a 10 year period..

City Manager's Annual Review **reminder:**

Reminder that the Council needs to conduct the Manager's annual review in February. Please return your completed evaluation forms to Council President McCullough.

Pending Legal

- *Appeal of Zoning Permit:* Per his Environmental Division decision and Judgment Order, Judge Walsh has approved of the permit application to demolish a shed and relocate a historic carriage barn on property on Liberty Street. The key finding is that the preservation and relocation of the carriage barn provides a clear and substantial benefit to the community since it preserves historic structures, which is consistent with goals and policies in the City's municipal plan.
The appellant has 30 days to appeal this decision which upheld the conclusion of the DRB.

Create More Housing

Country Club Road Project **update:**

Two more public forums will be held on February 2nd (at City Hall) and February 9th (online). Information about this project can be found at <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1296/Country-Club-Road-Site-Property-Developm>

Improve Community Prosperity

****The Community Services Department weekly newsletter can be found at the end of this report, beginning after strategic plan items. ****

Historic Preservation awarded Grant: On January 19, 2023, the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, awarded Montpelier a \$7,200 Certified Local Government grant for an Historic Resources Scoping Study. Led by the Historic Preservation Commission, the intent is to hire a historic preservation consultant to identify the extent of documentation of Montpelier's historic resources. The Study will guide the Montpelier Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in its future work updating Montpelier's listings on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, and give the Planning Commission and City Council a broader perspective on the City's historic resources beyond those buildings documented within Montpelier's currently-documented Historic District. The Department anticipates receiving the draft Grant Agreement from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation in the coming weeks, and will provide City Council with more details on the project and grant at that time

Build and Maintain Sustainable Infrastructure

****The Department of Public Works weekly newsletter can be found at the end of this report, beginning after strategic plan items. ****

Confluence Park:

The project team will be presenting the current design and updated cost estimates to the City Council next week. They will be seeking direction from the Council about how to proceed.

Employment and Personnel Announcements

Municipal Job Openings

Visit the City website for more information: <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/Jobs.aspx>

FT Police Department- Officers: The Montpelier Police Department has two police officer vacancies, if you have ever considered a career in law enforcement, now may be your time.

To apply: <https://www.policeapp.com/Entry-Level-City-of-Montpelier-VT-Police-OfficerJobs/2921/>

FT Water/Sewer Truck Driver Level 1: The person filling this position will work with a water and sewer crew performing skilled work in the construction, maintenance and repair of water distribution, raw water distribution, wastewater collection and wastewater transmission systems.

APPLY NOW! Root To Fork Coordinator: This position serves under the Montpelier Parks & Trees Department through the VHCB AmeriCorps Program. Starting March 1st, 2023, become a part of combatting food insecurity in Central Vermont through supporting the FEAST initiative of the City of Montpelier. You will work under staff supervision to support three areas of the FEAST initiative: FEAST Meals Program, FEAST Farm Program, and FEAST Farm Stand Program. More information about this position can be found on either VHCB's website (www.vhcb.org) or the City of Montpelier Parks & Trees Department's website (www.montpelier-vt.org/parks).

Reminders

ORCA MEDIA

ORCA Media supports the City of Montpelier by live streaming videos to local TV and on YouTube. Recently, Comcast changed the government channel to 1085.

- Click here to see City Council Meetings: <https://www.orcamedia.net/series/montpelier-city-council>
- Click here for Live Stream: <https://www.orcamedia.net/series/live-stream-events>

Thank you,



William Fraser, City Manager

Council Meeting Agenda Schedule and Strategic Planning Items on following pages

Upcoming Agenda Items (*TENTATIVE*)

2/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Manager's Review • Confluence Park • Historic Preservation • Capital Fire MOU 	2/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PH on Bond articles • ADA update • Potential Ordinance re: building violations and zoning permits?
3/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Meeting Election 	3/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elect Officers - Ethics Policy - Rules of Procedure - Code of Conduct - Group Norms - Committee Assignments • Orientation
3/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Club Road Update • Review Strategic Plan • CIT Update • Homelessness Plan 	4/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Club Road Decisions • Road Maintenance update • Fireworks? • Heaton Woods Loan
4/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casella/Leachate? • Outside Agencies Policy 	5/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water & Sewer Budgets • Water & Sewer Rates
5/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Schedule 	6/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Heat Budget • District Heat Rates

? = Date is tentative, may shift to a different date

CURRENT PENDING STRATEGIC PLAN ITEMS

Topics from the FY22-23 City Council Strategic Plan for Future Council Agendas:

Month	Tentative Topic(s)
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- City Master Plan (Summer 2023)
- Homelessness Plan (March)
- Barriers to Housing (in City Plan)

Note: items in the recently approved plan update have not yet been scheduled

Community Services Department Report Week in Review: January 30th – February 3rd

- Senior Activity Center Office Hours:
 - Monday – Thursday | 8:30am – 3pm
 - Friday | Office Closed
- Recreation Department Office Hours:
 - Monday – Friday | 8:30am – 4pm
- Parks & Trees inquiries can be fielded at either office.

For all things from Community Services, go to: www.montpelier-vt.org/cs

Montpelier Senior Activity Center (MSAC) News

Download our February Newsletter: <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/304/Newsletter>

- **Regular Congregate Meals Have Returned!** Thank you to all our patrons who came to support us this past Thursday. We will be hosting another meal on February 16th. All meal information can be found on our website and Facebook page (see below). MSAC will host bi-monthly congregate meals on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at noon in our Community Room.

- **We ask that all meal participants RSVP with us beforehand.** If you'd like to share a meal with us, or be a volunteer helping, please reach out to FEAST Manager Eli Mutino at 802-262-6288 or email: emutino@montpelier-vt.org. For more information about upcoming meals, visit our website or social media pages:
<https://www.montpelier-vt.org/FEAST>
<https://www.facebook.com/FEASTSeniorMeals/>

- **Voluntine's Day Celebration for Current and New MSAC Volunteers: Wednesday, February 15th at 1pm in the Memorial Room at City Hall** Without our treasured volunteers, where would we be?! We wouldn't be able to run all the amazing classes you rely on, or deliver any of the meals folks need, or cook all the food in the kitchen. Without our volunteers, we'd be sunk. So, if you are a volunteer with us, or wanting to be one, we warmly invite you to join us for a special Valentine thank you event. Please come and join us! Contact our office for more information: 802-223-2518.

- **Thank You To OLLI For Their Spring 2023 Comeback!** The Osher Lecture series kicked off its Spring 2023 season with an exploration of Irish music tradition with music teachers Hilari Farrington and Benedict Koehler. Please come by next Wednesday for Author M.T. Anderson examination of the Russian Avant Garde genre. You must register for all OLLI events in advance by going to the OLLI website: learn.uvm.edu/olli/centralvt. You can also register over the



phone by calling **802-656-5817**. *Programs are canceled when Montpelier schools close due to weather. Fees are \$8/program or \$40/70 for singles/couples for all 11 programs.*

- **Snowmen in Downtown Montpelier | January 19th - February 8th:** The wonderful picture book “Snowmen at Night” will be displayed in store windows from January 19 to February 8 for all to read and enjoy. Free maps for this StoryWalk® are available at Bear Pond Books and the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Many thanks to the downtown merchants for displaying the pages in their windows. The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT, a member of MSAC, and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library.
- **Dumbbell Sale at MSAC:** MSAC is hosting a fundraising sale on its gently used dumbbells from the Activity Room. We’re asking \$25/pair or best offer. Visit our front office at 58 Barre Street for more information and to see the dumbbells. Cash, check, or credit card are accepted.
- **Drag Bingo @ MSAC: February 24th from 6-8pm in the MSAC Community Room** Montpelier Pride & Rainbow Umbrella Group of Central Vermont are co-producing a Drag Bingo night featuring Drag Queen DJ Emoji Nightmare at MSAC. Dress up in your favorite drag, or just come as you are, and enjoy a night of fun & games with friends. The event starts at 6pm, and MSAC humbly asks for a donation of \$10 to join, although there is no entry fee.
- **Share Your Story of “Lost and Found” with Mosaic VT:** Mosaic VT is looking for storytellers just like you who wish to share their journey of disappearance and reappearance, finding forgotten objects, losing people, or finding themselves. They are looking for 8 storytellers to share their 'Lost & Found' journeys. If chosen, you will attend 2 session workshops with Sue Schmidt from 'The Moth!' Live event is April 29th, 2023, from 6 - 7:30 pm. This event is accessible and will have ASL interpreters available. Everyone is invited and encouraged to submit a story. People of all ages, genders, races, and experiences are welcome.
 - If interested, please submit your written or audio-recorded story to: mary@mosaic-vt.org by February 28th, 2023. Read more about the contest details here: <https://bit.ly/StorytellingFeb2023>
- **Seeking Some Fun?** Join our wide variety of drop-in groups, most open to all ages. Hankering for music? Poetry? Drumming? Dancing? Community service? Games? Coffee & Conversation? Book discussions? Meals? Drag Bingo? We've got it all!

Drop In Groups

\$5 suggested donation appreciated for drop-in groups to help keep our space beautiful.

Coffee & Conversations | Mondays | 9:30-10:30 am | on-going | MSAC Community Room
Artists Group In-Person at MSAC | Mondays 10am-12 pm | MSAC Art Room
Beginner-Friendly English Country Dance | 4 Mondays (Starts 2/27) 7-9 pm | MSAC Community Room
Tuesday Walks | Tuesdays | 9:30 am | on-going | meetup locations vary week to week
Readers' Choice | Tuesdays | 12:45 - 1:45 pm | MSAC Activity Room
Italian Group | Tuesdays | 1:15 - 2:30 pm | MSAC Resource Room
Scrabble | Tuesdays & Fridays 1-3pm | MSAC Art Room
Trash Tramps Outdoors | Tuesdays | 2:00 pm | meets at 1:50 pm inside MSAC
Winter Poetry Group | every other Wednesday | 10:30 am-12 pm | MSAC Resource Room
Crafters Group In-Person at MSAC | Wednesdays | 12-2:30 pm | MSAC Art Room
Bridge | Thursdays | 12:30-3:15 pm
Community Jam with Experienced Musicians | Biweekly 1st & 3rd Thursdays | 6:15-8pm | MSAC Community Room
Ukulele Players | Biweekly 2nd & 4th Thursdays | 3:30-5pm | MSAC Community Room
Long Life Qi Gong | Fridays | 11:45 am - 12:15 pm | MSAC Activity Room
The Rhythm Method | Fridays | 2:30 - 3:30 pm | MSAC Activity Room
Mah Jongg | Fridays 1:00-3:30 pm

Montpelier Recreation News

- **Parent Child Valentine's Dance at Capitol Plaza | Friday, February 10th at 6:30pm**
 - The Montpelier Recreation Department presents the 25th annual Parent Child Valentine's Dance. Join us on Friday, February 10th at the Capitol Plaza for a fun night of festivities. DJ Jim Severance will be rocking the tunes once again. The dance starts at 6:30 pm, and tickets can be purchased in advance or at the door.
 - Advance tickets are \$20 per couple and \$5 per additional guest. Door tickets are \$25 per couple and \$5 per additional guest. Tickets can be purchased right at the Rec Center office (55 Barre St.) or online at: www.montpelier-vt.org/rec. Our office hours Monday to Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.
 - A big thank you to Capitol Plaza Tapestry Collection by Hilton. They have once again donated their venue as in years past.
- **Valentine's Day Ice Skating Party at the State House Lawn - February 14 | 4-7pm | State House Lawn, Montpelier**
 - Celebrate Valentine's Day - outside on the State House Lawn Skating Rink! Hot cocoa, music, food vendors, and skating games. The Rec Department is supplying limited skates to borrow on-site, all are welcome to join! Note: the Event is weather permitting - think cold! Use your skating ticket to get 10% discounts from downtown businesses too, including: Bailey Road, Three Penny Taproom (food only), Splash, Vermont History Museum store, and Zutano. Skaters can also get discounted skate rentals - rent one get one free rental, as well as 20% off Darn Tough Snow socks -- at Onion River Outdoors. Sponsored by Dunkin, Heney Realtors, and Fidium Fiber Internet. The Rec Department is supplying skates to borrow on-site, all are welcome to join! For more information, visit Montpelier Alive's website: <https://montpelieralive.com/calendar>.

- **Program Registration** – You can deliver registration forms either:

- In person at the Recreation Center
- By mailing forms and payment to 58 Barre Street, or
- Using [our online registration platform](#)

Extra registration forms and a locked drop box are in the side vestibule of 58 Barre Street (the Senior Activity Center) for after-hours use.

- **2022-23 Pickleball Open Gym**

- The Montpelier Recreation Center offers two indoor courts. There is a 12-player maximum per session. Open gym is for adults (18+). Please bring your own paddles. The Recreation Department will supply balls to play on open gym days. All levels are welcomed. See below for days and times.
- Find us on [playerlineup.com](#). Search: “Montpelier Rec Center PB”
- Open Gym Schedule (based on skill level)
 - **Beginner:** Mondays → 1:30 – 3:00 pm | Wednesdays → 9 – 10:30 am
 - **Beginner/Intermediate:** Thursdays → 1:30 – 3 pm
 - **Intermediate:** Mondays → 9 – 10:30 am | Wednesdays → 1:30 – 3 pm | Thursdays → 1:30 – 3 pm
 - **Intermediate/Advanced:** Fridays → 9 – 10:30 am
 - **Advanced:** Tuesdays → 9 – 11 am
- Open Gym Fees:
 - **Walk-Ins:** Montpelier Residents: \$4; Non-Montpelier Residents: \$6
 - **Punch Cards (22 visits):** Montpelier Residents: \$45; Non-Montpelier Residents: \$60

- **2023 Winter/Spring Noontime Basketball**

- **Are you ready to shoot some hoops?** Register now for 2023 Winter/Spring Noontime Basketball in the Recreation Department gym at 55 Barre Street. Basketball is held on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 11:45am – 1:15pm starting January 1st, 2023, and continuing through until April 30th, 2023.
- The walk-in fee is \$4 for residents and \$6 for non-residents. Register at the Recreation office. Season passes are also available. They are \$90 for residents and \$130 for non-residents.

- **2023 Open Gym at the Recreation Center**

- Join us at the Rec Gym this fall and winter for open gym hours! Hours are posted on our website at <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/915/Rec-Center>. The Recreation Department gym is located at 55 Barre Street
- **Open Gym:**
 - K-8 Resident \$1.50 / Non Resident \$3
 - 9-12 Resident \$2 / Non Resident \$4
 - Adult Resident \$3 / Non Resident \$6
 - Family Resident \$6 / Non Resident \$12

- **Capital Kids Afterschool Program (Winter Semester)**
 - The Capital Kids Afterschool Program is now beginning to register for the Winter semester starting on Monday, November 28th, 2022 through March 24th, 2023. Learn more: <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1186/After-School-Childcare>
- **Tae Kwon Do – Winter 2023**
 - Instructor Matthew Girouard welcomes beginners to join his Tae Kwon Do classes. This is a class for people who want to learn the art of Tae Kwon Do and is an instructional class. Tae Kwon Do will be offered twice a week for ten weeks.
 - There are two classes available: 2526-A is for students aged 6-8 years old, and 2526-B is for students 9 years and older. Both classes meet on Mondays and Thursdays. 2526-A meets from 5-6 pm while 2526-B meets from 6-7 pm. Class size ranges from 10-20 students.

Montpelier Parks

- **Montpelier PLACE River Film Festival Panel Discussion: Wednesday, February 8th at 7pm**
This event is part two of the River Film Festival and will be a celebration of the Winooski watershed and our place within it. This discussion about the health of our local rivers features panelists who bring different perspectives about our waterways. The panelists will be addressing the questions and concerns submitted by over 100 community members during our January film festival: What are the greatest threats facing the watershed? What are the successes of watershed conservation? What's the scoop on pollution, storm water, E. coli, and aquatic biodiversity in the Winooski? How are we protecting our rivers, and what can we do to help? Join us to learn about these topics and many others.
 - **The Panel:**
Michele Braun – Friends of the Winooski River
Ben Block – Aquatic Ecologist; Montpelier Conservation Commission
Kerry Wood – Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation
Moderator: Kassia Randzio – Vermont River Conservancy
 - *Note: This panel discussion, originally scheduled to follow January 19th's film festival, was postponed due to severe weather. If you missed January's film festival portion of this event, you can watch most of the films on North Branch Nature Center's website:*
<https://northbranchnaturecenter.org/event/upstream-downstream-panel/>
- **Ice on Fire Returns to Country Club Road Site | Sunday, February 5th at 2PM:** Join us for Ice on Fire, Central Vermont's premier winter festival! Come one, come all to this whimsical festival, which celebrates the warmth of our Montpelier community even in the frigid depths of winter. It is a fun afternoon of dance, theater, music, storytelling, and poetry performed by local artists and community members. There will also be winter games, kids' activities, and more. Don't miss it. Save the date!
 - We'll be back for 2023 on Sunday, February 5th starting at 2pm and finishing around dusk with our bonfire. More details about Ice on Fire will be coming soon. Stay tuned to the Montpelier Parks' social media pages and Front Porch Forum for the latest updates on this and all Montpelier Parks' events coming in 2023. Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/MontpelierParks/