

MANAGER'S REPORT
City Council Meeting @ 7 p.m.
Tuesday, March 16, 2010

TO: Mayor Walter Ash Jr. and Honorable Members of Belfast City Council
FROM: Joseph J. Slocum, City Manager
DATE: Friday, March 12, 2010

Agenda items:

10.B Update from the Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce.

Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Janet Dutson will come in and make a Power Point presentation to the council to update the city on chamber activities, plans and goals.

10.D Further discussion with Belfast Rotary and Harbor Fest Committee regarding the possibility of having a private business underwrite a portion of the cost for the event in exchange for permission to host a private party that will serve alcoholic beverages on city property in Steamboat Landing Park.

The Belfast Rotary Club and a group of spirited citizens will sponsor a Harbor Festival this summer, which will revive the Boat Building Challenge organized by the Chamber of Commerce a couple of years ago. This will take place on the weekend of August 20, 2010. The Boat Building Challenge requires the rental of a very large, very expensive tent. It is not uncommon for such a tent to cost in the \$4,000 to \$5,000 range to rent for just one weekend. The Boat Building Challenge needs this tent because of the use of power tools and other items, which must be kept out of the rain in the event of inclement weather. They also require a substantial amount of elbowroom with which to construct these boats in a single day.

The Rotary Club has received a proposal from a local business to help support the cost of such a tent if that local business can run a private event at this location and be allowed to charge a fee and serve alcoholic beverages. We really don't have any type of comparable activity to compare this to on City property. Most things, which occur around events, are tied to the specific events themselves. This is an independent event, and we do have the prohibition on serving alcoholic beverages in City ordinances at City parks.

10.E Arts in the Park request for enhanced use of City facilities for the annual Arts in the Park event.

The Friends of Belfast Parks, who organize the Arts in the Park event, have requested permission to close off a section of Front Street from Federal Street on the south side to almost Main Street. I have not heard from the Harbormaster or the Police Chief, but I am concerned about closing a street off from Friday morning, July 9 at 9 a.m. until Sunday afternoon at 5 p.m. on July 11th. For people who have boats that use the Heritage Park wharf, this may be difficult for them and it may also interfere with local traffic in the general harbor area. I am also aware that we have another business down in this location, which generally opposes any closing off of streets because he feels it interferes with his business.

10.F More CMP Tree trimming coming to Belfast in 2010

CMP will be doing additional tree trimming in the City this year on different streets than last year. The list of streets is identified below. The cutting is required of CMP by the Public Utilities Commission and is intended to cut back and reduce the number of power outages arising from trees hitting power lines.

CMP will trim a "minimum" of 8' on the sides of lines, a "minimum" of 15' above the lines and also cut trees that are directly underneath the lines. They do not stop and talk to every household before they cut along these streets.

The **ONLY WAY** for homeowners to have contact with the cutters in advance of cutting is for the owner to contact CMP by one of the 2 following ways:

1. Register online by going to: www.cmpco.com/UsageAndSafety/TreeCare/default.html

OR

2. Mailing a letter to:
CMP Vegetation Notice
83 Edison Drive
Augusta, Maine 04336

It can take three weeks for your e-mail or your letter to get on the CMP property owner contact list. Now being on the list does not guarantee contact but it does mean they will make a good faith effort to contact property owners. If they come to see you because you are on their contact list and you are not home they will leave a mailer on your doorknob to help with a follow up.

When the cutting crews are in your area you may certainly speak with them. Each crew has a designated foreman and you should ask to speak with that foreman as not all of the crewmembers speak English.

Aside from the list of streets that are attached here, there will be a Map inside City Hall outside of the Council Chambers identifying all streets where the cutting will take place. City Hall also has printed forms to help you get on the CMP "Contact List".

All of this information will be on the City Web site and on the Cable Access Channel 7. The City Tree Warden is working with CMP to minimize the impact but there will indeed be impact. If you or your neighbors are concerned about the impact on the trees on your property or street you need to working together to get yourselves on this contact list. There are no letters going out on this so we need to spread the word so as few as possible are surprised.

Belfast - 2010 CMP Maintenance Circuits / Locations-Tree Pruning

Circuit 803D4

Circuit 803D4 cont.

- Miller St Ext. Vernon Line
- Park Street
- Peach Street
- Pearl Street
- Pierce Street
- Poors Mills Road
- Primrose Street
- Pendleton Lane
- River Avenue
- Spring Street
- School Street
- Underwood Road
- Union Street
- Vine Street

10.G Request of the Farmer’s Market.

As near as I can determine, this is similar to the setup to Farmer’s Market followed last year. The one exception is a request to have the police department help clear cars and keep traffic from being blocked. The City cannot afford to dedicate police activity for this type of response. We will do traffic management as best as we can from one end of the city to the other, but we should not be focusing dedicated effort for the Farmer’s Market.

I’ve asked the Farmer’s Market to provide us with a list of vendors so that we can assure ourselves that we are not having restaurant operations run out of the Farmer’s Market.

10.H Proposed amendments to the City Code of Ordinances (zoning) regarding the proposal to allow rural affordable housing developments consistent with the adopted future land use proposals in the comprehensive plan.

Attached in your packets you will see documentation from City Planner Wayne Marshall. Essentially, Habitat for Humanity has asked that we allow them to create more than one residential facility on a particular piece of property in order to provide more homes for people who need them. Wayne Marshall will be at the meeting should you have any questions on this proposed amendment.

10.I Request to authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,300 from the Planning Department Capital Reserves account to replace a computer in the code enforcement office.

You will see attached a memo from Wayne Marshall, Director of Planning for the City, requesting the use of reserve funds to replace a defunct computer. This is exactly why we keep these reserves because we know this equipment will crash at the most inconvenient times. I support this request.

10.J Discussion and action of a letter of interest submitted to the Maine Arts Commission in pursuit of a grant in the amount of \$50,000 under the Creative Community Economic Development program.

On Monday, March 8th, I spent most of the day with Janet Dutson from the Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce and Elaine Bielenberg from Waterfall Arts putting together a letter of interest to the Maine Arts Commission in pursuit of a grant that will foster our local economy, strengthen the role of the arts in the Belfast region and enhance our quality of life.

The Maine Arts Commission is giving out two grants a year in the amount of \$50,000 each to local communities that have local vibrant nonprofit entities which are poised for growth and are engaged in economic and community planning and working to improve its collaborative efforts to manage and implement the growth of the local art economy. Under the terms of this new program, there was a requirement that a letter of interest be submitted no later than March 8th. I have attached the letter of interest that we sent to them.

If the City is successful in securing such a grant, the grant actually requires that we retain a part-time, neutral coordinator to facilitate the communication between the various artists, art organizations, municipality and the broader community.

If we are selected to move to the next step, we will put together a formal application for this fund before the deadline in October of 2010. I think Belfast is uniquely situated to qualify for this grant and I'm hopeful that we will secure one, either this year or in the coming years. I believe there are at least 25 other communities in Maine who have sent the required letters of interest to pursue these grants. The outcome of the grant will revive and solidify a long-term strategic plan to foster the regional art economy. We would centralize communication, create a volunteer bank, which would include offering technical assistance, and support for grant writing and administration, and give access to commonly needed resources.

10.K Request from AmVets to conduct a Civil War Reenactment at City Park, which will include a chicken barbeque and the sale of sealed tickets.

Sealed tickets are a game of chance, and I believe there are monetary prizes. This is a fundraising event to support community, veterans and various local groups such as Waldo CAP, Waldo County YMCA, the medical needs of local children and deserving veterans. Jim Bell has advised me that the Parks & Recreation Commission has unanimously endorsed this request.

10.L Executive session, in accordance with Title 1 M.R.S.A. section 405, subsection 6c to discuss a real estate matter.

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That's about it for now. Enjoy the great weather and have a safe and warm weekend. Oh and a **Happy St. Patrick's Day** to all.