

MANAGER'S REPORT

City Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

TO: Mayor Walter Ash Jr. and Honorable Members of Belfast City Council

FROM: Joseph J. Slocum, City Manager

DATE: Friday, October 15, 2010

Agenda items:

10-B Presentation on potential Grant opportunities to assist Multifamily housing in the City get into compliance with existing codes.

City Economic Development Director, Thomas Kittredge will be meeting earlier in day on the 19th with many owners of multifamily housing units in Belfast along with a couple of consultants to brief them on Grant opportunities to update these units and bring them into code compliance. Mr. Kittredge and these consultants will come to the meeting and update the City Council on these possibilities.

10-C Request from Belfast Rotary Club to reserve the dates of August 19th, 20th, and 21st 2011 for the Belfast Harbor Fest on Steamboat Landing and Belfast Common.

In 2010 the Belfast Rotary Club took over what was formally called the Boat Building challenge and created an overall Harbor Festival for the City. The event was a success. Fine details are not available on future planning but the Rotary Club has asked to reserve the dates of August 19th, 20th, and 21st, for the 2011 Belfast Harbor Fest. I would recommend that the council approve a motion reserving August 19th, 20th, and 21st, for the Belfast Harbor Fest to be held at Steamboat Landing and Belfast Common. I believe a representative from the Belfast Rotary will be present at the meeting.

10-D Update on the proposed Elderly Housing Project on Swan Lake Avenue

Tom Pendleton will come to the meeting to update you. The developers recently received strong financial support from Maine State Housing. City staff is prepared to help draft a Community Development Block Grant but there is a possibility that the Proposed Project may either not need those resources or that they may not be able to demonstrate sufficient financial need to qualify for the grant. Unfortunately the Developers may not know the full cost of their proposed project until they first complete the permitting process and only then will they be able to know whether or not their project may qualify for these grant funds. By that time the grant application deadlines may have passed.

10-E Update from Waterfall Arts on their project to locate artistic sculptures at publicly owned access points to the water.

At the last meeting there was some discussion about Range ways and Rights-of-way to the water. I mentioned the effort that Waterfall Arts and the Parks and Recreation Committee has made to meet

with two neighborhoods to discuss the idea of locating artistic enhancements to these access points near their homes. They received many positive reactions to their proposed design. The Council indicated its interest in seeing this design and for an update on Waterfall Arts progress. Representatives from Waterfall Arts will be at the meeting to update you and to show you their recommended design. They believe that they have secured strong neighborhood support for one of these locations (Allyn Street) and they are looking to install such a sculpture as soon as you say OK. I spoke to the Parks and Recreation Commission and they have recommended this design for that location.

10-F Request from Belfast Maskers to set up their outdoor stage on Steamboat Landing on June 1st 2011 and leave it there through August 15th 2011.

The Masker's hope to have the stage constructed at a time when nothing else is going on and hence would not interfere with other events at the Park. They are also open to having other non-profit groups use this stage, which would have to be coordinated directly with the Maskers, and cleared through the proper city channels.

The Maskers' hope that by having an early installation it would allow for more flexibility all around.

Here is a list of annual activities in this area of the City:

June 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th:-The Trek Across Maine

June 16th 17th, 18th, and 19th The State Wide Shriner's Convention

July (first week) start of outdoor Belfast Masker's Production

July 9th and 10th Belfast Arts in the Parks

July 15th to July 17th: The Belfast Celtic Festival

August 15th 2011 the Belfast Summer Street Party

August 19th, 20th, and 21st: The Belfast Harbor Fest

September 11th: The Wienerfest

10-G Consideration of a City policy on the use of metal detectors and associated digging on City property.

In your packets there is a memo dated October 4th from City Parks and Recreation Director Jim Bell. Jim notes that different Municipalities have a broad range of regulations on this issue. Some offer complete access while others have rules that totally prohibit this activity. Jim has suggested a possible policy with specified regulations that we can use for Belfast. Jim's proposal is fairly comprehensive. Nevertheless I think we could try a simpler policy initially. I suggest we require anyone who wishes to use a metal detector and dig on City property to register with the City Parks and Recreation Director by leaving a copy of their driver's license or other identification with him. If there is a problem then the Director

knows how to get in touch with them. The only standard would be to return the property to its original condition (leave no trace).

This activity can happen by both people familiar with the area but also by people from all over the world. It will be a challenge to keep them posted as to what is permissible and not permissible. It seems impractical to post regulations on all City property. In the three years I have worked with the City I have received no complaints and only one person has stepped forward and asked to conduct this activity. If in the future this becomes a more complicated matter then we can design a more complicated regulation at that point and time.

10-H Discussion and possible action on a request from the Belfast Parks and Recreation Commission to purchase the existing City Park concession building and fixtures from the former operator/owner.

A couple of years ago the City entered into a concession agreement whereby the operator agreed to purchase a concession building under the condition that he would turn over title to the building after five years of occupancy at Belfast City Park. The five-year occupancy became impossible upon the City's recent termination of its lease with that concessionaire.

The City still needs to have a concession facility at City Park. It provides basic amenities to patrons of the Park, acts as the City's eyes and ears and also helps to maintain our restrooms at the park.

After some consideration, the City Parks and Recreation Director and the Parks and Recreation Commission have expressed an interest in buying out the former operator's interest in both the concession building and its equipment. Negotiations have been conducted with the assistance of counsel and the proposal is for the City to buy the remaining 3/5th of the existing value of the both the building and its equipment. This is based upon the City's position that it already owns 2/5th of the building. The total value needed is not to exceed \$6,000.00. This purchase is recommended by the Director of Parks and Recreation as well as the Commission itself. In the future, if the City owned the facility and a problem arose with the tenant then we can change quickly to another vender if need be.

The source of funding for this purchase would come from the Parks and Recreation capital projects account in amount not to exceed \$6,000.00.

10-I Discussion and possible action on a request from the Parks and Recreational Commission to put out to bid the operation of a City owned concession facility at Belfast City Park.

Assuming the Council authorizes the purchase of the concession building, we need to make arrangements to hire a new vender. We have had some people express an interest in running such an enterprise at City Park. We would like to put this matter out to bid. If this is acceptable to the Council we would put the matter out to bid forthwith for a multi year agreement.

10-J Discussion on possible award of a bid to purchase a new City loader for the Belfast Public Works Department.

At the last Council meeting the City accepted the seven bids that were submitted. During the interim, City Public Works Director Bob Richards has had the opportunity to use some of this equipment and test it to see its relative quality and sufficiency for City use.

Attached to your packet is a Memo from City Public Works Director Bob Richards making his recommendation to award the bid to Nortrax for a John Deere Loader in the amount of \$104,000. The money will come from two accounts: \$26,000 from budget line 410-535 and the remaining \$78,000 from the Public Works Capital Reserve Account for Equipment.

10-K Consideration and possible action on asking the State Department of Transportation to reduce the speed on Northport Avenue to 25 mph from the jug handle to Downtown Belfast.

At the last council meeting there was some discussion about the desire to reduce the speed limit on Northport Avenue and the process by which we ask the State of Maine to consider reducing those speeds.

We first need to have a motion of the Council supporting that change. A letter would follow from the Police Chief to the Department of Transportation for their review. The Department of Transportation goes through a fairly extensive process on these requests, which can take up to a full year. They check accident records, conduct field surveys on speeds and also do personal inspections of the road.

In order to start this process we need a motion from the Council supporting the request to ask the Department of Transportation to reduce the speed on Northport Avenue from the jug handle to Downtown to a consistent 25 mph.

10-L Discussion on needed Board appointments to the Board of Assessment and Review.

The Assessor's office anticipates that a few property owners will challenge their assessed valuation. When challenges to assessments are made they must be made to a Board of Assessment and Review.

This Board has not been constituted for many years but it does appear that there may be some work for them to do in the next several months.

I am attaching to this Manager's Report a list of individuals who have most recently served on this Board. Apparently all the terms have expired with the exception of one alternate. The City Assessor recommends that we recreate the board from a fresh slate. He has contacted these people and they are all willing to continue to serve. There are supposed to be three members and 2 associate or alternate members.

We could draw names from a hat to see who is a full member and who is an alternate and then draw names to see who gets a one year term, two year term, and three year term.

10-M Discussion and possible action to authorize the City Manager to hire an outside consultant to help the City implement the land use changes in the Comprehensive Plan.

One of the major efforts of the City Council in 2009 was to review the multi year efforts and recommendations of the Belfast Comprehensive Planning Committee on proposed land use changes.

We had every intention of starting 2010 with actually implementing these proposed changes adopted by the City Council. The planned process to implement these land use changes was to take one area at a time, work with the Planning Board to create actual draft language, have the Planning Board do some initial public hearings and then bring it forward for public comment before the Council and eventual Council vote. Given the many proposed changes we always expected this process to take 2 to 3 years.

At the start of 2010 we had no idea that we were going to do an updated Master Plan for the Waterfront and Downtown area or hire consultants to help us do a design review on the Coastal Walkway project. Each of those efforts is a highly significant activity and will require a substantial amount of time and energy from the Planning Department. We are spending over \$180,000 on consultants and it's imperative that we use those consultants as effectively as we can. It will be the Planning Office that spearheads and oversees that entire process over the course of the next seven to nine months. At the same time we have moved to litigation on the Stinson project and we expect that will also consume a lot of the City Planning Departments time.

There simply is not enough time to do everything we want to do or need to do. If we can do what we need to do with existing in-house resources and in-house personnel then we will. However, if we can't then we should go out and hire some outside help.

I ask that you authorize me to go out and hire a professional to help us move this arduous task to completion.

10-N Request for Executive Session to discuss litigation and economic development pursuant to 1 MRSA Sec 405 (6) C and (6) E.

10-O Discussion and possible action on litigation and economic development.

That's it for this meeting. Have a safe and enjoyable weekend