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TO: City Council
FROM: Sam Anselm, Interim City Manager
DATE: 10/31/2014
RE: Weekly Report

Good afternoon everyone, and Happy Halloween! Please read below for this week's happenings, but before you do, I wanted to say thank you again for the opportunity to interview for the city manager position last Saturday. I enjoyed our conversation and hope you found it worthwhile as well. Also, thank you for allowing me to take the day off on Monday so we could visit family back in St. Louis.

Key Meetings

- On Tuesday I had a meeting with several supervisors to discuss the new employee evaluation forms. We also discussed the potential new pay plan that we continue to work on and my vision for moving forward in that effort. Several items were discussed, but it was beneficial to sit down with them and have these conversations.
- On Wednesday I arranged for a conference call with representatives from Moore and Tuscaloosa to discuss the proposed next round of CDBG disaster funding. All three cities expressed similar frustrations with elements of this competition and the difficulties that tornado-affected communities have in using CDBG funding for disaster recovery. Officials from HUD and The Rockefeller Foundation have scheduled a "summit" to be held in Washington, D.C. on November 17-18 to meet with D.C. officials and representatives to discuss the competition.
- Also on Wednesday we had our bi-weekly staff meeting with representatives from Wallace-Bajjali. Their co-development partners for the project at 20th and Connecticut attended as well. Per the email I sent to you earlier this week, they plan to have a neighborhood meeting on Monday, November 3rd (during our council meeting), to present the updated plans to the neighbors for their feedback. Assuming all goes well, they are scheduled to be on the agenda for November 10th to present the rezoning request to the planning and zoning commission.

They also plan to give an update on the seniors project at JRC on Tuesday, November 11th. As a result of both of these projects, we have asked that they provide members of council an update at our regular meeting on November 17th.

- Yesterday, City Attorney Edwards, Director Haase and I had a meeting with our financial advisors to discuss our investments. They have recommended that we consider ways that we can begin to invest some of the cash we have on hand to yield a better return. Director Haase will be working with the advisors to develop a recommendation for your consideration. That information will be forthcoming, most likely at your meeting on November 17th as well.

- This morning I had a conference call with officials from the state of Florida, who are working on a disaster response workshop and had questions about our volunteer response post-tornado that they could incorporate into their event.

Miscellaneous

- I received communication earlier this week from Clifford Wert, who is involved with Connect2Culture, about making a presentation to the city council on December 1st to, “explore the potential of the Memorial Hall site being a community cultural arts center.” Clifford and I are scheduled to meet on November 13th, but soon thereafter they would like to start meeting with members of council individually to discuss their ideas.
- Here’s an update from our public works director that I wanted to pass along:
 - Milling work on Broadway is complete and paving has begun—they have at least 2 days of paving to do if weather holds. Milling on 4th began on 10/30.
 - Bids for the sanitary sewer work paid by part of the State DED \$14M will be opened next Tuesday.
 - Empire is drafting a MOU for the verbal agreement on the cost to relocate their transmission line on Zora.
 - Met with Newton County Commissioners – good discussion and agreement on how to proceed with the first 2015-2014 CIST project, the replacement of the Jackson Street Bridge over Shoal Creek. We will draft a MOU for both City Council and the Newton Co Commission to take action on.
 - Qualification statements have been received for engineering services for the Joplin Creek East Stormwater project (area around Joe Becker) – a selection should be made by the end of this week with a goal to have contract to CC in December
- And here’s an update from our D.C. lobbyist, Samantha Cook:
 - The 2014 mid-term election appears likely to follow the traditional path of every two term President since the 1880's – the President's party suffers losses in Congress.
 - The House of Representatives is expected to see a 6-8 seat increase of the Republican majority.
 - The Senate majority status is too close to call at this point. The decision is likely to be made in the results from the following states: Arkansas, Louisiana, Colorado, Kansas, Georgia and Iowa. Regardless of the outcome, the Senate Majority for either party will likely be very slim.
 - The impending "lame duck" session for Congress will begin on November 12th. It is expected to wrap up around December 12th. During the lame duck there is not much legislation that will be passed and signed into law. The main priority for both parties and both chambers will be to resolve the appropriations process for fiscal year 2015. Currently, the government is operating under a CR (continuing resolution) that expires on December 11, 2014. It is widely believed that the appropriations process will be resolved and there will be no threat of a "government shutdown" due to a failure to reach an agreement.
 - During the November session we will also see leadership elections in both chambers and the House will begin to make Committee assignments for new Members and returning Members of Congress. Beyond these actions there will also be new Member orientation from Nov 12-20.
 - When the Congress returns from the Thanksgiving holidays, it is expected that a CR or an omnibus appropriations bill will have been negotiated and will be presented to both bodies for a vote. It is expected to pass.

- Congress will adjourn at or around December 11 and not return until January 6th for the beginning of the new Congress.
- Finally, AtCM Kelly has been engaging the local arts community about two projects – a possible sculpture park at Landreth Park, and an art project to paint city-owned traffic control boxes in/around Downtown, to help expand on our thriving local arts scene. We are still in the early stages of discussion on both projects, but it would be my intent and desire that we make these resources available for use, but not be saddled with the expenses related to them. I will provide more information as it becomes available.

Please enjoy your weekend, and let me know if you have any questions about any of these items, or about the agenda for Monday night's council meeting. Otherwise I will touch base with you on Monday prior to the meeting to answer any questions you may have as you read your packet.