

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE— April 17, 2020

Prepared for Mayor and Councilors. Please contact Steve Powers, City Manager, for additional information.

At Your Service

Public Works assisted the Union Gospel Mission by painting the sidewalk with markings at six-foot intervals. People are using the markings and practicing social distancing. It is very helpful within the facility as well because it keeps guests aware of the guidance.

Correction

The \$58.9M received at the closing of the utility bond sale was in addition to the \$1.2M good-faith deposit made on the date of the sale. Total bond proceeds of \$60.1M.

Council Follow-Up

Concerns have come in through the city council email address regarding loud cars. An effective City response to these types of complaints is almost impossible. A police officer must witness or hear the noise. And if the officer happens to be on the scene, how does an officer evaluate a car exhaust as a nuisance compared to a lawn mower? (or, as I work from home, my neighbor's power washer).

Community Development/Code Compliance handles unpermitted noise from construction and events. Concerns may be [reported here](#) or call or 503-588-6421.

Point-in-time nuisances such as fireworks or loud cars can be reported to the Police non-emergency number at 503-588-6123. This may be frustrating to a resident, as this type of complaint is a very low priority and the caller may be told that. Reporting could, though, help establish a pattern if there is one area or street where the noise is frequently reoccurring. If the location or address of the loud car is known, the neighbor-to-neighbor mediation program might be appropriate.

Regarding fireworks, some fireworks are legal in Oregon and can be purchased from licensed retailers in Salem during certain times of the year. Residents who set off illegal fireworks or set off legal fireworks at times and in ways that are inconsiderate to neighbors create an enforcement challenge for the City. Existing call volume to the City's police and fire departments require prioritizing and responding to complaints of life safety or property damage. We do not have the resources to enforce a prohibition on fireworks. Each year, the City pleads for residents to use fireworks safely and responsibly and remember to "Keep it Legal and Keep it Safe."

Planning and Development

March 2020 had the highest number of single-family dwelling/duplex permits (46) issued in any March since 2006 and was 10 permits higher than the March average for the past 15 years. From July 2019 through March 2020, the number of all permits issued was higher than for the same time period of any year since 2011/2012. There has been a slight dip in new permits so far in April.

The City's Enterprise Zone is up for renewal. The renewal needs to occur before the end of June to continue the economic development program. Staff will be contacting taxing districts and will bring an informational report to City Council in May, followed by a renewal resolution in June. There will be a remote public meeting for the taxing districts on May 12 to address any questions or comments they may have; the feedback will be included in the information report to council. Please contact Kristin Retherford at any time if you have questions regarding the Enterprise Zone program.

Since the beginning of COVID-19, the Small Business Development Center, SEDCOR, and the Mid-Valley Venture Catalyst (VC) have all reported an increase in interest from individuals wanting to start businesses. The VC has launched free ZOOM webinars for entrepreneurs in the region and interest remains very strong, with 20-30 individuals attending each session. VC is part of the Oregon Entrepreneur Network (OEN). VC is funded, in part, through a three-year grant from the Murdock foundation. We are currently in year two of the grant. The City's contract with SEDCOR for FY 19-20 has \$5,000 to support VC, including outreach, events, and possible partnerships. The City funds will be used as match for the Murdock Foundation grant. VC funding:

- Marion County, \$25,000 (pending, awaiting approval)
- MEDP, \$10,000
- SEDCOR, \$5,000
- SBDC, \$10,000 (in-kind, including office space)
- Pacific Power, \$5,000
- City of Salem, \$5,000 through SEDCOR

For the SEDCOR contract for FY 2020-21, staff are envisioning a similar level of support for the VC program. We expect interest in entrepreneurship will continue to increase through the region's economic recovery phase.

Policy Agenda

The Our Salem webinar went well. More than 120 people participated at mid-morning on a Tuesday. Staff were able to answer most of the questions that people asked in real time. People seemed to have really enjoyed the virtual format, so we are thinking we will add this new format to future/ongoing outreach efforts. The webinar provided four scenarios for growth. Staff reviewed how the scenarios were developed and how the scenarios compare to

each other. A recording of the webinar is at the Our Salem project website. The website will be updated with new information on the scenarios and additional opportunities to provide feedback. Our Salem is a multi-year project to update the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan.

The Climate Action Plan process is taking shape. A request for proposals is being prepared. There will be a public engagement plan, including opportunities for virtual and interactive participation. The Climate Action Plan will include trends, targets, and strategies in seven categories:

- building and energy
- land use and urban form
- transportation
- consumption and materials management
- natural systems
- public health and safety
- equity, education, and outreach

The climate action plan will include mitigation (reduce greenhouse gas emissions) and adaption (prepare for current and future impacts of climate change). Plan development will be guided by a project team and climate action advisory committee. The committee would include councilors; city boards and commissions; county, regional, and state agencies; utilities and business; and community groups. The plan would be completed by December 2021.

Projects

Through the work of Mark Buchholz, the Willamette Valley Communications Center (9-1-1) is one of five public safety answering points nationally to be offered a cyber-security audit by the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Institute. The audit will provide critical analysis of where improvements to WVCC technology systems are needed to guard against ransom ware and viruses.

City projects are continuing during the pandemic. For the library seismic upgrade project, staff are planning a virtual groundbreaking in early May. The April 27 council meeting will have a public hearing on a construction method for the water aquifer storage and recovery system at Woodmansee Park. For the ozone treatment project at Geren Island, a virtual groundbreaking and thank you is being planned. The Riverfront Park bathroom project will be kicking off soon. Street, pedestrian safety, and mobility projects will be underway next month.

Upcoming Issues

Staff are preparing recommendations for assistance to non-profit organizations and businesses, and housing aid. Most of the funding will be \$775,837 in additional federal CDBG funds we have yet to receive. Staff are reviewing other sources of funding available this year that could

be added to the CDBG funding. Staff will have an update for council at the April 27 meeting with council action on May 11 and later this summer.

Governor Brown's emergency order relaxing public meeting and budget laws allows:

- 1) Completely virtual meetings, with no requirement for a physical place for the public to attend,
- 2) Clarifies that written or email testimony is acceptable for public comment or testimony at meetings and hearings,
- 3) Provides that the number of governing body members for determining a quorum does not include members who are absent due to COVID illness.

For budget committee meetings and local government budgets:

- 1) Budget committee meetings can be virtual with no requirement for in-person testimony or questions. Email and written testimony must be allowed.
- 2) Internet posting is acceptable for required budget notices,
- 3) Allows continued spending under current budget even if certain statutory requirements are not met.

Thanks for reading,
Steve