



CITY OF SACO, MAINE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Michaud and City Council
FROM: Kevin L. Sutherland, City Administrator
DATE: October 11, 2016
RE: **Better Communication**

Better Communication

Over the last several months, I've been providing an update on several items on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. It's become clear that this information should also be made public. Going forward, a memo of the information shared with council will also be made available on the City Administrator's webpage.

Unit 91

The initial deadline for bids was September 30th, we've extended this to November 30th as we are working with the other stakeholders to get an engineering study done on the optimal approach to replacing the heating plant. With this information, developers interested in the property can make a more informed decision.

Pepperrell Square

This summer, as a part of the larger traffic concern in our community and a goal of Council's ("In cooperation with Biddeford and Maine DOT review completed traffic studies and develop a traffic improvement work plan."), we had a traffic study done at the failed intersection of Main and Pepperrell. 60% of the traffic that uses that intersection is simply cutting through from Beach Street. In consultation with the traffic engineering firm, it was suggested we have a temporary closure of the entire square and turn the light to left only on the Main Street northbound lane. This would be no different if we had to close the square to major underground utility work. During this test, the Beach Street light would have been extended to allow for that extra traffic to make the left hand turn onto Main Street.

Two weeks ago, I presented to the Traffic Safety Committee a proposal to create a pop up plaza as a way to attract people to the space when testing the traffic patterns and traffic light reconfiguration rather than just shutting it down all together. I had suggested something this fall – especially with the urgency of attaining Council goals. The first step in the process was to discuss at traffic safety. The next would have been to bring to the planning board. Traffic safety tabled it due to community push back and it will remain that way until I've had a chance to meet with members of the community.

After the Traffic Safety Committee tabled this item, I sent a letter to property owners in the area around Pepperrell Square inviting them to a meeting on the 13th is to further discuss ideas that businesses, property

owners, and residents may have. More information about this is on [Administration's website](#). At this point - if we try a temporary closure, it's going to be in spring and with everyone knowing about it well in advance and lots of programming planned to get the pedestrian traffic we want to see to keep businesses in the black.

I hope that helps clarify what I was proposing. If you'd like to share ideas or continue to get correspondence on this, there's a [quick survey](#) to get on the email distribution.

There has been quite a bit of social media flurry about this issue. I am hopeful this level of awareness translates into a real opportunity to engage the community and brainstorm additional ideas and things we as government can do to help increase vibrancy in our downtown.

Other traffic related projects that will be coming to Council in the months ahead...

I am working with the railroad to get the gates up when the train is at the station and not moving, which should help with some of the traffic flow in this area.

An Agreement with the state was signed last week to move forward with improvements to US Route 1 signalized intersection from Ross Rd. to Lincoln/Water Street. This will bring these lights into the 21st century and enhance performance of moving traffic.

We will be sitting down with the MTA and the MDOT next week to look an enhancement of the route 95 interchange to improve traffic on route 112, industrial park rd, and ultimately route 1. After that meeting we will begin sharing that information to a greater extent with planning board, council, and the public

Hannaford

Hannaford has submitted a building permit to revamp their Saco store to the tune of 3.5 million dollars

Riverview Apartments

These apartments, located on Water Street are in the process of converting to Condominiums. A building permit has been submitted - this is estimated to be around a million dollars in upgrades to the facility.

MS4

Scrutiny at the state and federal level regarding Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permitting and regulation has created ever growing implications for local municipalities. One of the biggest strains on our staff resources have been enforcement of illicit discharge into our storm water drains. Saco, being one of the larger communities in the state has been involved in creating a regional group of municipalities. This effort is being spearheaded by the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District and I am a member of the design team for the Clean Water Collaborative. Our goal is to work together to bring federal resources to help offset the cost implications to these every growing mandates.

Absentee voting

Voting starts next week. Half of the auditorium/council chambers will be set up accommodate I surprising large demand for absentee ballots. Please encourage your constituents to vote early, it is expected to be a very hectic election year.

ACOE meeting next Tuesday

Tuesday October 11th at noon, staff, several elected officials and members of coastal and shoreline will be attending a meeting with our federal representatives' staff and employees of the Army Corp of Engineers in Portland to discuss the status of the Camp Ellis jetty spur. If you're interested in attending, please let me know. We will also have a community update meeting sometime the week after. More details to follow on that piece.

Downtown Discount Impact Fee District

Councilor Roche had requested this as a part of the Workshop for next week. I've been working with staff and a few property owners to come up with a plan for a week or so now. Unfortunately it is not ready for workshop on Tuesday. We will bring this item as a workshop discussion item before the next council meeting or for the first of November. It is something I believe could really help propel a renaissance of business downtown.

Police Chief hiring process

This process has been moving along well. I've received more than 120 responses from staff and the community to the survey Administration hosted. I'll share a separate email with some of the feedback, but a big take away is the public perception as the biggest concern is the drug epidemic (82.4% of respondents chose this as one of the top 3 most pressing issues).

We are finalizing the community overview and the job description and will have the position posted by end of day Friday.

Special Projects Manager

The position was posted two weeks ago and we've received several impressive resumes in response to this (10 or so!). I am going to wait another week before I start calling people in for interviews.

Shared Emergency Response Bus

Attached is a letter from John Duross on an agreement that was reached several years ago to have a shared emergency response bus with Old Orchard Beach and Biddeford.



CITY OF SACO

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Approximately two years ago, the Biddeford Fire Department entered into discussions with the Shuttle Bus Company and York County Community Action regarding the donation of a used bus to the fire departments in exchange for fire safety, CPR, and Basic First Aid. It was agreed that the bus would be a shared resource also available to the Saco and Old Orchard Beach Fire Departments.

At that time, the City of Biddeford had just recently been involved in two major fires where large numbers of people were displaced and the need for temporary sheltering was evident. In one of those incidents, the request for a school bus could not be filled and occupants were walked to Biddeford City Hall which had to be opened after hours to accommodate the temporary sheltering needs.

With approval of City Administrator Michaud, Saco Fire Department entered into the agreement that required us to contribute 1/3 of all operational and maintenance costs. The agreement further included the owner of the bus is the City of Biddeford and that the Shuttle Bus Company would make all necessary repairs and modifications including painting to prepare the bus for its new assignment. This agreement is similar to an existing agreement for the Hazardous Material trailer and Biddeford's agreement to pay 1/2 of fuel/operational costs on Marine 5.

Within the last week, Shuttle Bus was able to finish the agreed upon work and the bus has been released to the Biddeford Fire Department and the OOB FD is working to prepare the interior of the bus with a generator, R/V type toilet, and necessary shelving and compartments for storage of rehabilitation supplies.

It is hoped that the bus will be ready for response sometime early in November and the primary uses will be:

- Temporary sheltering for displaced occupants at a structure fire or similar type incident,
- Enclosed area for rehabilitation to include warming or cooling as necessary of firefighters operating at a scene and,
- Could be used as an intermediate Mobile Command Post in the event that the York County EMA Mobile Command Post was not available or was delayed in responding.

It is planned that the graphics and lettering will represent all three communities. The exact details on housing and who is going to operate are still being discussed.

Firefighter Rehabilitation Supplies that are currently stored in plastic totes on the Biddeford Fire Departments Heavy Rescue Truck will be moved to the bus freeing up space on that vehicle for fire department equipment.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions,
Chief Duross