



# CITY OF SACO, MAINE

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Michaud and Saco City Council  
FROM: Kevin L. Sutherland, City Administrator  
DATE: December 29, 2016  
RE: **Council Updates**

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### **Asset Management and Capital Improvement Plan**

Next Wednesday January 4<sup>th</sup> at 3:30pm the Capital Planning Committee will be meeting to learn about and discuss the Asset Management Plan. This document will help the Committee and ultimately Council understand the level of funding needed to carry out city services in sustainable way. We'll review our current asset inventory, upcoming capital needs, and at the second meeting of the group, set out to prioritize the needs for 2018 and beyond. The agenda can be found [here](#). This meeting will take place in the City Hall Auditorium.

### **2016 Audited Financials**

Hot off the press. Today we received the June 2016 Audited Financials or Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) from the City's auditors. [Here is a link](#) to the location of those documents and hard copies will be on your chair at the Council meeting next week. We expect the auditing company RKO to present their findings to Council on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Unit 91**

The team designated to review submissions consisting of the Economic Development Director, Finance Director, Code Officer, Planning Director, and two representatives from Island Terrace Owners Association (ITOA), Lani Campbell and Larry Lopes met on Thursday, December 29 to review the four responses that were received.

We are awaiting a final version of the Heating and Cooling Engineering Study and should have that the week of Jan. 2, 2017. Following receipt and acceptance of that report we will be meeting with one of the proposers who has offered to purchase 40% of the space for market value subject to a resolution of the easement issues that remain outstanding with Saco Island West, LLC. We will hopefully be meeting with that group next week as well. Further updates as developments unfold.

### **Marketing RFQP**

We have had several inquiries and questions relating to this; to insure that we get the most comprehensive proposals possible we have extended the deadline but are still on track to resolve this by the end of January.

## **Council Goals**

Last January, Council set goals for the year. After further review of the Council Rules and Order of Business, goal setting is typically done for a two-year time frame (in line with the election cycle). A rookie mistake but one that gives us a chance to review what was set as a goal, what has been achieved in the last 12 months, and to consider modifications for calendar year 2017. Below is a review from my perspective in our attempts to achieve these goals. I hope to spend some time during your Council Comments and Discussion time to brainstorm any changes you'd like to consider for 2017.

### **Advocate a successful bond approval for the replacement of Young School by November.**

A question for bond to replace Young school and update Fairfield school was approved in early September and rescinded by Council at the next meeting. In between those two Council meetings, the Maine Department of Education released the new application cycle for major school construction projects. The hope is that the City of Saco will be high on the list in order to receive state aid for the replacement of the school.

### **Actively participate in re-energizing the Saco Main Street organization by having at least one councilor at each community event hosted by Saco Main Street**

We had Council representation at each and every one of our downtown events this year. There has been a lot of energy, buzz, and greater community involvement than ever before. I give a lot of credit to Council for supporting this organization financially, the revived Saco Main Street Board of Directors for their vision and dedication, City Departments for stepping up when called on, and the Executive Director for constantly pushing for the best possible outcome. His positivity and dare I say obsession with Saco was much needed to see such change in just one year of events.

### **Adopt a zero dollar increase on the mill rate for the school and city portion of the tax bill**

While the mill rate increased by 20 cents, the home owner with a primary residence in Saco would have seen a reduction in their taxes because of the state increase on the Homestead Exemption (see [3-28-16 budget presentation](#)). Only after an increase of 47 cents on the mill rate would the homeowner have seen an increase on their taxes.

### **Review the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance for discrepancies, assimilate the Bridge 2025 document, and make recommendations for changes to the document for the next calendar year**

2016 marked the five year (mid-point) for our Comprehensive Plan. With all the growth happening in the region, efforts by the previous Council to jump start change with the Bridge 2025 initiative, pressure on Council for Contract Zone requests, it made sense for the community to take a look at its Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinances. This fall, Council approved the creation of a Comprehensive Plan Update Committee to review our current plan, research best practices of today, engage the public in concepts for Saco, and bring forward a revised Plan and Zoning update. The group has been meeting for a few months now and the effort will likely continue through at least the first half of 2017 before a recommendation is brought forward.

### **In cooperation with Biddeford and Maine DOT review completed traffic studies and develop a traffic improvement work plan.**

Several studies have already been completed in the recent past, including a [Mill District Study](#), a [Route 112 Corridor Update Study](#), and most recently a Pepperrell Square Transportation Feasibility Study. A request to the MTA and

MDOT to consider a bi-way connection for 112 to 95 via a westerly 195 spur was submitted this fall (more info can be found on the [City Administration website](#) for these two items) and the City of Saco has recently partnered with Biddeford to conduct a traffic study impact of a theoretical Route 95 on/off ramp at or near South Street in Biddeford. The two councils and planning boards will be meeting at the end of next month (January 31st) to discuss these traffic studies, transportation, and land use between the two cities. There will be much more in the coming month.

**Charge an ad-hoc committee of elected officials and staff from the school district and the city to explore back office service consolidation which includes a recommendation by November (before the 2018 budget cycle begins)**

This item was explored with a committee of the School Board in August/September but it did not gain any traction. Finance staff from the school and the city is meeting monthly and has created a budget calendar that aligns more fluidly than it did last year.

**Charge the energy committee to develop a baseline of energy usage for city facilities in order to determine additional areas of improvement, explore/assess new green technology investment ideas for council to approve in a bond issue**

Utilizing database management, the city is now tracking its energy usage more closely.

**Actively seek an AARP grant that would assist in the development of a plan to make Saco an Age-Friendly Community**

The City of Saco received a grant from AARP and used those monies to conduct a community survey to gather information and needs within the Community. An ad-hoc group was also created (Age Friendly Steering Committee) and they held their first meeting in December. Jean Saunders and Don Sharland should be applauded for their efforts to make this possible.

**Explore and approve two new sources of revenue for the City**

During the budget process, City Staff proposed two additional revenue streams. One, to make the transfer station an enterprise fund and have users pay fees to dump and a second to rent beach equipment to offset the cost of lifeguards. Both items were voted down by Council. With the retirement of the Downtown TIF District, staff is now exploring a Downtown Development District. This item was discussed in Workshop at the December 19<sup>th</sup> Council meeting and will go in front of the Economic Development Commission next Wednesday.