



CITY OF SACO, MAINE

Administration
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Michaud and City Council
FROM: Kevin L. Sutherland, City Administrator
DATE: November 2, 2016
RE: **Updates for Council**

Absentee Voting

The last day to vote by absentee ballot for the Nov 8th General & Referendum Election is this Thursday, November 3rd (tomorrow!). This is a state-wide deadline and the Saco City Clerk's Office will be open until 7:00 p.m. tomorrow to register residents to vote and to conduct absentee voting. By participating in absentee voting, you save time and reduce traffic on election day. We've had a record breaking year with over 4,300 (for comparison, the 2012 President yielded just under 3,100 absentee votes) and we expect this year's number to break 5,000!

Campaign Signs

There had been several accusations through social media that City of Saco employees were removing political signs. City Administration has been adamant from the start that we would follow our zoning ordinance and that of state law regarding campaign signs. However, due to the accusations, the City of Saco did investigate and found no wrong doing on the part of staff and that no one from the city has removed any candidate's political campaign signs along the right of way to date. If you have any questions regarding the proper placement of a political sign, please contact our Code Enforcement office at (207)284-6983.

The City of Saco follows our local Zoning Ordinance 707-3 and State of Maine Law for the placement and removal of Temporary Signs, including Political Signs.

The City of Saco will only remove a political sign if we receive a complaint, and it violates one of these mandates, specifically, (707-3, 4)...Political signs are prohibited in city parks, on traffic islands, or on trees in the right of way. Political signs shall be placed only in locations which do not create visual obstructions for traffic and pedestrians...

Or (Maine's Section 4. 23 MRSA §1913-A Categorical Signs. L.) ...A temporary sign may not be placed within 30 feet of another temporary sign bearing the same or substantially the same message...A sign under this paragraph must be labeled with the name and address of the individual, entity or organization that placed the sign within the public right-of-way and the designated time period the sign will be maintained within the public right-of-way.

Farmer's Market Move

Shortly after the City acquired the Unit 91 property in tax foreclosure, we were approached by a representative of the Saco River Market indicating they were unable to pay their rent and that booth rental fees received from vendors were less than the summer rental rate as set forth in the lease that was in place.

We were informed that as the summer began many of the vendors would move to other outdoor farmers markets where they paid little or no fees for booth rental. Given the reality of this situation and the City's desire to promote and support all local businesses including the local agricultural and artesian / craft businesses, we agreed to a reduced rent for the summer with the understanding that we would be moving forward with a plan to dispose of the property. We indicated that the market could stay located here until the sale of the property, but in the fall we would need to increase rent to cover the heating costs associated with the space (which is only being utilized a few hours on Saturday mornings).

This fall, the farmers market approached the City and given the RFQP process for the sale and redevelopment of the Unit 91 property, they inquired if they could stay thru the winter. Our response was that the market could stay until the property was sold, but they'd also have to cover a portion of the heating cost. Given this cost barrier and the uncertainty of available space that would come with the sale of the property they looked to move to the second floor of the former St. John Episcopal Church in Biddeford. However, due to the zoning ordinance, it's not an allowable use and the group has found a home for the winter in Pepperrell Center Event Space through November and December.

Connecting with the Community in the digital age

Last week we posted on Social media our efforts to connect with the community through email distribution lists. Many members of the community are part of the Pepperrell Post email we send out monthly. We've added several additional groups in which community members can receive information on specific topics, such as: Camp Ellis, Downtown Saco, North Saco, Parking Bans and Cancellations, Pepperrell Post Newsletter, Route 1 Corridor. On the left hand side of the city [website](#), citizens can "sign up for notifications" and self select which groups they would like to be a part of. If you'd like to be notified via email, please select which topics interest you using the link to the right.

You can remove yourself from any of these lists at any time. In addition, we are working to make utilization of the community signs in front of the train station and the fire station.



Stackpole Creek Bridge

The City is working with CPM Constructors (Contractor) on their request for a contract time extension. Throughout the construction process, CPM has encountered several unexpected existing condition issues that have resulted in additional work and time delay to the project. The contractor is committed to completing the work of the contract at no additional cost to the City; however, they are requesting a time extension for final completion of the project from November 15, 2016 to May 31, 2017. As part of the current discussions, the Contractor has agreed to sufficiently complete the majority of the work this fall and winter to allow for the re-opening of the Stackpole Creek bridge by January 27, 2017 for at least one-lane of traffic.

The DPW staff have been monitoring CPM's construction activity throughout the process and they are supportive of the contractor's request for a time extension.

Police Chief Position

The job opening for the [Police Chief position](#) is coming to a close this Friday, November 4th. The next step in the [process](#) has the Screening Committee meeting to review the resumes we've received, interview the best candidates, and move several names forward to the Interview Team. The Screening Committee is chaired by Deputy Director of Human Resources MaryLou Kadlik and includes Fire Chief John Duross, Director of Public Works Patrick Fox, Police Dispatcher Steve Kierstead, Council David Precourt, and Vangel Cotsis, a Saco community resident.

Special Projects Manager

We had 30 applications for the Special Projects Manager, a new position that will be housed in City Administration and will assist the City Administrator on specific community tasks and requests from Council. We are in the process of interviews this week and should be making an offer by end of day Friday.