

Administration

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Lovell and City Council
FROM: Kevin L. Sutherland, City Administrator
DATE: June 10, 2019
RE: **CA Reflection of the Last Four Years**

After almost four years as your City Administrator, I request that the Council shift from discussions about an extension of my contract and look to hire a consultant to identify the qualities you want in your next administrator, as I no longer wish to extend my contract beyond December 31st.

I truly appreciated the opportunity the Council from 2015 gave me to serve this community and the one-year extension this Council has afforded me. In this time, we've accomplished a host of difficult and controversial tasks. From the funding for Stackpole Bridge to keep it looking historic; the foreclosure, management, and sale of Unit 91 on Saco Island which will now become an additional 30 higher end residential units; the approval of the Ecology School Contract Zone which recently received nearly \$9 million in funding; shortfalls in funding for our Schools that Council supported in order to keep them strong; and the uncertainty of the Saco Island East project which may still see progress in the months to come.

I took some time over the last few days to reflect on what we have achieved and the list, while not comprehensive, is rather incredible.

Community Development:

- Worked to rebuild and re-energize Saco Spirit (now Saco Main Street) and provide a growing level of funding. This has also led to an increase in event attendance for its various annual events.
- Efforts to strengthen our relationship with surrounding communities:
 - Shared positions with Old Orchard Beach and Biddeford.
 - The creation of a joint committee of Saco and Biddeford Councilors and staff.
- Assisted in the creation of and continuation of work to strengthen Age Friendly Saco's presence in our community.
- Increased funding for other local and regional agencies – including: Shuttle Bus, Dyer Library, Seeds of Hope, etc.

Planning and Economic Development:

- The build out of Mill Building 4 with 150 residential units and additional commercial space.
- Natural Gas expansion throughout our Downtown, Industrial Park, and Mill Brook Business Park.
- Updates to the zoning ordinance to allow for CIA Cafe to open on Beach Street.
- The renovation of the church and added residential on Cutts Ave – eventually 80 units.
- The sale of nearly all our remaining industrial/business park inventory.
 - Lots 1 and 2 are all that remain in Mill Brook
 - Baha, LLC – small commercial condos for startups and small businesses (Lot 3)
 - Keith’s Meter Service (Lot 4)
 - Maker’s Acres (Lot 5)
 - Pond Cove Millwork (Lot 6)
 - Ashley Lauren Designs (Lot 7)
 - Precision Manufacturing (Lot 9)
 - Dock and Door Handling (final lot on Willey Road/Industrial Park)
- Purchased land to develop into additional business/industrial parks and are currently working on a federal grant for infrastructure needs.
- Zoning changes to help bring Ready Seafood to Route 1 and with it 200 jobs.
- Saco Biddeford Dental Associates building the last remaining undeveloped site before I-195 on Route 1.
- ConvenientMD and Hancock Lumber will soon break ground.
- Attempted to address Paper Streets – kicked the can another 20 years for less than half of the original list (had hoped to revisit when things slowed down...).
- Saco has the only opportunity zone in York County.
- Seven existing TIF districts were amended that meet today’s standards and Saco’s infrastructure needs.
- An update to the Comprehensive Plan that took just over a year to accomplish.
- An extensive process including the training of City staff and community leaders as facilitators, the creation of zoning steering committee, community survey, charette and workshops to prepare for an update to the zoning ordinance (still to come).
- Worked with Council to amend several dozen zoning ordinances including Contract Zones (creation or amendment).

Infrastructure Needs:

- An extensive amount of work to move the dial on a solution for the Camp Ellis Jetty including numerous community meetings with residents.
- Infrastructure upgrades within budget to bring our Transfer Station into compliance with state regulations.
- Nearly \$12 million in Bond approvals – PW facility, Sewer expansion on Route 1, and a long list of other Capital Improvement Projects.
- Easements from residents to place Saco River dredged sand on the beach in Camp Ellis.

Strengthening External Relationships:

- Federal delegates; Susan Collins, Angus King, and Chellie Pingree (primarily because of our work to resolve the Jetty with the ACOE).
- Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC); our Grants and Projects Specialist worked closely with SMPDC staff to identify grant opportunities for Brownfield Mitigation and they also assisted us in achieving our Opportunity Zone recognition.
- Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG); while Saco is not a member (it was a RAD as part of this years' budget), it oversees PACTS which we are a part of. The impact Portland has on Saco is far greater today than it was five or ten years ago. I have worked hard the last few years to continue the conversation about transportation, job creation, and expansion of business from Brunswick down through Biddeford.
- Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS); this organization is our federal MPO. We compete (or partner) with the rest of the Greater Portland region for federal funding for transportation dollars and transportation infrastructure. Saco's City Administrator currently sits on the Executive Committee, helping to ensure funding for the Southern part of the region but with my departure, this seat will likely go to the Manager in Old Orchard Beach.
- Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA); we're working closely with the MTA over the redesign of Exit 36. Saco has a strong working relationship with the administrative staff at MTA.
- Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT or MDOT); the Commissioner was a former employee of MTA and assisted Saco in its request to do an engineering study on the turnpike exit in Saco. We also work closely with DOT on a host of other studies, like the Route 1 corridor, and plan out the paving schedules for collector roads and state roads.
- Northern New England Passenger Rail Association (NNEPRA a.k.a. Downeaster); being a station community of the Downeaster, we've worked hard to better partner with NNEPRA. In addition to attending several station meetings a year, we've hosted the NNEPRA Board here in Saco, assisted in presenting the benefits to having a train stop which has created new opportunities for the Downeaster (such as additional trips to Brunswick, conversations about expansions West, and talk of a morning commute from Wells up to Portland to service

commuters), and, finally - not to brag, but Saco is now the stop in which Santa gets off the train to participate in the Parade of Lights in December.

- Mayor's Coalition; advocating for Saco's and other like communities needs to state legislators and regulatory agencies.
- Maine Municipal Association (MMA); advocating for Saco's and other like communities needs to state legislators and regulatory agencies. In addition, Saco's Information Technology Director will be presenting at the MMA Conference in the fall about municipal cybersecurity.
- Maine Town and City Managers Association (MTCMA); each of the last three years, Saco has been a leader in presenting information to the other town and city managers – from the Mayor of Ithaca being their keynote speaker in 2016 (my former boss); a panel of Saco interns discussing their experiences and importance of having this program in 2017; our Marketing and Communications specialist presenting on social media and steps communities can take to increase community engagement in 2018. Again, in August – Saco's Director of Public Works and I will be presenting concurrent tracks on developing a Capital Program.

These have all helped strengthen Saco's position and recognition across the region and in the State of Maine

Administrative/Personnel:

- Worked with Council to create or update 20 administrative ordinances.
- Separated Human Resources from Finance.
- Created a Facilities division within Public Works that has saved the City money and has put some priorities around our building needs.
- Added a Marketing and Communication division in Administration to rebrand, promote our community, and expand Saco's presence in social media and news media.
- Rebuilt the Parks and Recreation Department and its Advisory Committee that has helped put greater prioritization on our Parks.
- Merged Planning and Economic Development.
- Updated the City Charter with seven amendments including an amendment to make the entire document gender neutral.
- Two complete overhauls of our City website.
- Expanded the number of Public Safety employees to meet the needs of a growing City.
- A focus on updating our internal processes to meet today's needs and the development of procedure manuals to ensure continuity in the absence of an employee.
- Six union contracts completely updated and approved this past year, a seventh union de-certified.

I am proud of the work we've achieved and the team we've built. Honestly, that has been the hardest part of my decision to pursue other opportunities, but I need some time away from the public sector. I'd like to focus my energy on community development from a development perspective and will be searching for a role in that field while finishing out these last few months. In the meantime, I have several goals I'd like to achieve before the end of my contract:

- Appointment of our next Police Chief.
- Saco's Zoning Ordinance updated and approved by Council.
- An update to the Personnel Policy for non-union employees and a Personnel Handbook approved by this Council.
- A Council supported bond referendum for a public safety building along Route 1.
- Confirmation of our EDA grant for the business park.
- At least 2 more development projects in the pipeline.

General Ordinance Revision/Creation in Chronological Order:

- 2016-05-02 – Chapter 99 – Firearms
- 2016-09-19 – Chapter 161 – Polystyrene Ban
- 2016-12-19 – Chapter 171 – Single Use Bags
- 2017-03-20 – Chapter 34 – Personnel Policy
- 2017-04-02 – Chapter 171 – Single Use Bags
- 2017-04-18 – Chapter 186 – Street Opening Ordinance
- 2017-05-22 – Chapter 4 – Administrative Code – Economic Development Fund
- 2017-07-17 – Chapter 147 – Multi Family Dwelling Unit Inspections
- 2017-07-17 – Chapter 165 – Recreational Marijuana Cultivation and Sale Prohibition
- 2017-09-18 – Chapter 135 – Marijuana Cultivation and Distribution
- 2017-10-02 – Chapter 186 – Building and Street Numbering
- 2018-04-17 – Chapter 171 – Single Use Plastic Bags
- 2018-07-09 – Chapter 181 – Solid Waste Article III Transfer Station
- 2018-09-04 – Chapter 64 – Animals
- 2018-12-03 – Chapter 71 – Blasting
- 2018-12-17 – Chapter 4 – Administrative Code – Economic Development Commission
- 2019-03-25 – Chapter 78 – Cable Television – Grant of Franchise
- 2019-03-25 – Chapter 87 – Electrical Standards
- 2019-03-25 – Chapter 135 – Medical Marijuana

Annual review of Chapter 112 – General Assistance Program