



TO: Mayor and City Councilors
FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager
REF: FYI ~ Week Ending February 4, 2011
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1. The City, in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, held a Public Informational Meeting on the Elizabeth Street Reconstruction Project (NCDOT TIP Project U-4438) and the City's related utility relocation work on Tuesday, February 1 at the Arts of the Albemarle facility on Main Street. Approximately 200 people attended the event. During the information presentation, NCDOT representatives provided an overview of the four phases of the street reconstruction project, as well as the traffic control measures that will be employed during each phase. Sean Robey and Paul Fredette provided information on the four phases of the City's utility relocation project. Detailed handouts were provided to those in attendance. After the formal presentation, breakout sessions were held for those wishing to discuss the projects in more detail. Eight persons completed contact request forms and Sean Robey and his staff have already made those personal contacts. We will be doing some additional follow-up with these individuals. To date, we have had twelve firms view the construction plans and five firms have purchased a set of plans for the project. The mandatory pre-bid conference will be held next Thursday, February 10.
2. City staff has been receiving inquiries regarding the work going on at the former S & R building located at 502 W. Ehringhaus Street. Goodwill, Inc. received an administrative site plan approval on December 10, 2010 to do minor changes and parking lot improvements to this site. Approval was given to remove the glass enclosure on the front of the building and construct a brick and glass façade. The parking lot will be modified and upgraded for 60 parking spaces. Landscape islands will be installed to comply with the City's Unified Development Ordinance. A building permit was issued on January 20, 2011 for building modifications. The site has been recently fenced for construction purposes.

3. In my FYI of October 15, 2010, I advised the Council that, since Elizabeth City is classified under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, the Department of Justice will have to approve any modifications to the current voting wards because of redistricting made necessary by the 2010 Census. There will be a short window to accomplish major requirements if we are to meet the filing deadline for the October elections. Previously, I advised the Council that if the City cannot get approval before the filing deadline in July, we will have to wait until February 2012 to hold elections. This was based on information provided to staff by the School of Government. This week, staff requested a clarification of this information. The first question is whether the districts can be redrawn and pre-cleared by the Justice Department at least three days before filing of candidates is to open. Filing opens on the fourth Monday in July (NCGS 163-294.2(c)(1) for nonpartisan elections), which is July 25th. Therefore, the new districts need to be pre-cleared by Friday, July 22nd to have the election this year. If the election is postponed, when it is held in 2012 depends on the kind of election method a city uses. Since Elizabeth City uses the nonpartisan election and runoff method, the election would be held in May 2012 at the same time as the party primaries for county commissioner, legislature, Congress, etc., and the run-off, if needed, would be held a month later at the same time as the second primary for those other offices. The filing of candidates would begin in February 2012. As we have previously discussed, staff and the Council have a lot of work to do on the important issue of redistricting in a very short amount of time.
4. This week, the Charles Creek Bridge deck and approach ramps for the bridge were completed. The contractors will now be removing all of the false work (forms) for the deck and will be starting on the sidewalks and bridge railings. The project continues to move forward without problem and on schedule. On Wednesday, February 16th the City will be opening construction bids for improvements to the Water Street/Southern Avenue intersection to eliminate some of the intersection flooding experienced during wind tide events on the Pasquotank River. With City Council approval to award that contract, we will be able to coordinate the final surface paving for both projects at the same time, thus improving the appearance of the entrance to the downtown area from the south and west approaches to that intersection. Especially now that the structure is looking like a bridge, we continue to ask that all curious onlookers continue to remain outside of the contractor work zone and behind the safety fencing during active construction hours, as well as after hours, for the safety of all.
5. The repairs to the Wastewater Treatment Plant from the catastrophic failure of September 14, 2010 and the later problems with the clarifier are

now substantially complete. All that remains is the raking and seeding of some of the grassy area and the removal of some remaining construction materials that were used for the project. Final bills are still coming into the City for this project as we finalize the impact of the damage on the City budget.

6. This week, City staff attended the County Water Committee Meeting. We learned that the current target date for substantial completion of the County reverse osmosis water treatment plant is March 31, 2011. The County hopes to be able to go through a plant startup and shake down any operational problems by May 1st at which time they will be ready to deliver water to City water customers on Halstead Boulevard Extended. The City's recently executed agreement with the County has a "take or pay" provision that will require the City to purchase 250,000 gallons of water per day from the County when they are ready to deliver water from the new RO Plant. There were discussions at the County Water Committee Meeting regarding possible water delivery points to the City. The area of Route 17 South was discussed with possible ways that a portion of the "take or pay" provision of the agreement could be satisfied in that area of the City.
7. ElectriCities continues to monitor and plan for the Progress Energy and Duke Energy merger. Since the announcement on January 10, ElectriCities has created two teams to lead the organization through this process:
 - The Merger Advisory Team will provide broad oversight and includes the leadership from the ElectriCities Board of Directors and both the NCEMPA and NCMPA1 Boards of Commissioners.
 - The Internal Merger Team will direct the comprehensive evaluation of the effects of the merger on ElectriCities Members and the Power Agencies. This team includes all executive staff and is led by Steve Shelton, Chief Operating Officer.

Progress Energy and Duke Energy are valuable business partners of NCEMPA and NCMPA1 and ElectriCities staff members are meeting with them to understand the details of the proposed merger. I will continue to keep you informed as I receive additional information.

8. We received information yesterday from the Golden LEAF Foundation advising that the Senate Appropriations Committee has voted to divert the Foundations' annual settlement payment of \$68 million to the State's General Fund. Over the last several years, Golden LEAF funding has played a major role in Elizabeth City's economic development efforts and we have received over \$2.5 million dollars to assist with various projects.

Staff will be making a recommendation to the Council that a resolution be adopted opposing this diversion of funds by the General Assembly.

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