



**TO:** Mayor and City Councilors

**FROM:** Rich Olson, City Manager

**REF:** FYI ~ Week Ending February 18, 2011

**COPY:** Email Distribution

1. During the Public Participation section of the City Council meeting held on February 14, 2011, a citizen voiced questions/concerns about a proposed development adjacent to the Farm Fresh store. The development group, NRP, has applied for tax credits to support the development in Elizabeth City. The application for tax credits is completely independent of Elizabeth City and is made directly to the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. The City was not asked to sponsor their application. Over the last few years, a number of groups that have developed in Elizabeth City have used this vehicle, such as Rivers Edge and Tanglewood Lake Apartments. Several years ago, Renaissance Village received an allocation. NRP did request that the City sponsor a CDBG-HD grant for \$250,000, which would have been used to defer the cost of drainage improvements associated with the site and to mitigate adverse impacts to the floodplain. I informed them that the City would not sponsor the CDBG-HD grant due to the manner in which the funds would be utilized. In addition, the CDBG-HD funds would have counted against the City's CDBG aggregate limit, which would have adversely affected several priority projects we will seek funding for in the future.
2. During yesterday's meeting of the Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc. (ECDI) Board of Directors, we discussed ECDI providing funding for additional trash cans and benches downtown, once the utility relocation phase of the Elizabeth Street project has been completed. The board expressed a willing tone to help fund those improvements. In addition, they expressed an interest in having all of the new concrete sidewalks downtown constructed of stamped color concrete. I have asked Sean Robey to provide me with an engineering estimate for that additional cost. That cost will not be covered by NCDOT and will be the City's responsibility.
3. City staff continues to have challenges integrating the CDBG funds for the North Road Street and Pearl Street project with the NCDOT Elizabeth Street project. After consulting with HUD's environmental officer, we cannot use the Environmental Assessment and FONSI issued by NCDOT for the Elizabeth Street

project. We will need to do our own EA and submit it to the State Clearinghouse and appropriate federal agency. The City will be submitting a draft of the EA on Monday to DCA. Once blessed, it will be forwarded to the clearinghouse, the federal agency and to the Catawba Indian nation, which is also required. This process will take 45 to 60 days. Under CDBG rules, we cannot open bids until we have a FONSI and a release of funds from DCA. This delay has the potential to adversely affect Contract #1 of the Elizabeth Street Utility Relocation Project. The longest contract time for an item within Contract #1 is the construction of the Pearl Street lift station. Staff will be requesting that NCDOT and DCA allow the City to issue a separate contract for this stand alone segment. If this can be accomplished, we hope to meet our contract completion date of December 15, 2011 for the North Road and Pearl Street construction project.

4. Planning Department staff attended a workshop on "Floodplain Management" this week at the Currituck County extension office in Barco. Some of the topics covered included record keeping, how a flood ordinance needs to outline procedures to follow, the permitting process, elevation certificates, inspections, issues in the V Zone found along the ocean shoreline, and the Community Rating System (CRS). FEMA is in the process of updating the Integrated Hazard Risk Management (IHRM) maps and the NC coastal model for all of the coastal counties. Planning staff will be reviewing the City's existing floodplain ordinance to determine if sections of it need to be updated.
5. The electrical crews have repaired the bulk of the streetlights in the City. There are still a few lights being reported. We have utilized 26 streetlight heads from Mariner's Landing and 14 from Perkins Estates as an emergency measure since neither of these subdivisions currently have homes. These lights will be replaced when the replacement order arrives at the warehouse. Karl Clow has spent several nights driving around Elizabeth City to insure that all the streetlights that may be out have been reported. I would like to thank Karl for his efforts.
6. City staff was required to submit their fiscal year 2011-2012 budget by today. Staff has redesigned the capital improvement program (CIP) and equipment replacement forms in an effort to provide additional information to the Council. Sarah and I will begin reviewing the budget requests next week. After this initial review, we will schedule meetings with each department director. We have requested that the department directors be realistic in their budget requests for the coming fiscal year. There will be a minimal amount of capital projects incorporated into the budget due to a lack of funding (unless additional debt is issued). It is our goal to have the recommended budget document to the Council by April 1.
7. The Elizabeth City Historic Preservation Commission will hold a work session this Tuesday, February 22, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Witherspoon Public Library. The Commission has invited Scott Power, Regional Supervisor/Preservation Specialist and Reid Thomas, Restoration Specialist from our Greenville Regional Branch of the State Historic Preservation Office. Topics of discussion will include: state and federal guidelines for Historic Preservation

Tax Credit opportunities; local district inventorying, expansion, and design guidelines; and public education through public-private partnerships, printed media, workshops, and funding. For more information and/or to participate in the work session, contact Angela Cole, Senior Planner by email (acole@cityofec.com) or phone (252-337-6672).

8. Emergency Management notified us this afternoon that the National Weather Service Office in Wakefield has issued a Red Flag Warning, which is in effect from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. tomorrow (Saturday). Winds are expected from the northwest at 20 to 25 mph with gusts between 30 and 40 mph. A Red Flag Warning means that critical fire weather conditions are either occurring now, or will shortly. A combination of strong winds, low relative humidity and warm temperatures creates explosive fire growth potential.
9. Encore Theatre Company's production of *Books* opens tonight and runs February 18, 19, 25, 26 and March 3, 4 and 5 in the Maguire Theater at The Center. Tickets are available at the door or from Page After Page Bookstore for \$15 each. Our own Councilman Tony Stimatz is "Eddie"! Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc. will be providing concessions with money raised supporting downtown revitalization efforts.

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