

THE CITY OF  
**ELIZABETH CITY**  
NORTH CAROLINA



**TO:** Mayor and City Councilors

**FROM:** Rich Olson, City Manager

**REF:** FYI ~ Week Ending October 28, 2011

**COPY:** Email Distribution

1. The contractors have moved on to Phase III work for the downtown Elizabeth Street (DOT Project U-4438) utility relocation project. During the construction of Phase III, McMorrine Street will be closed between Colonial Avenue and Elizabeth Street and between Colonial Avenue and Main Street. Colonial Avenue will remain open. We anticipate that Phase III will be completed near the end of November. As always, we ask that you remain vigilant and drive with extra caution in the construction zone; and, we thank you for your patience as we finish this major project downtown. All state requirements have been completed in order to start Contract 2 in the Pearl Street and North Road Street area. The City anticipates having a pre-construction meeting next week and issue the contractor a notice to proceed by November 7, 2011.
2. The restriction that is currently in place and being enforced on the Elizabeth Street/Pasquotank River Bridge project that does not allow a left turn onto Water Street when coming into Elizabeth City off the bridge continues to be a problem. To help direct the motorists and notify them that the left turn is not allowed onto Water Street from the bridge, the contractor will be adding a number of lane delimiters to help direct drivers away from a left turning movement. This past week, Archer Western started the construction of a work bridge along the southerly side of the existing bridges in order to move their large crane out to the bridge construction area. Also during the next few weeks, we will see crews starting to clear a path for the new drainage way on the north side of Elizabeth Street. Currently, the contractor is clearing the way for the major drainage route behind the schools and to the storm water pump station at the intersection of Water and Elizabeth Streets. On or about November 15, 2011, they will be offsetting a water main behind the schools during the nighttime hours to make way for the drainage pipes.
3. On Wednesday, Bobbi White and Jeffrey Simpson of the Parks and Recreation Department and I, met with Emily Gaydos and Dan Hasseling of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to discuss the growing population of domestic geese and ducks along the City's waterfront. The Parks and Recreation

Department has had several complaints from citizens about the large number of ducks and geese blocking the roadways and intersections, becoming more aggressive, and leaving droppings in all the parks and facilities along Charles Creek. Although most people find a few birds acceptable, problems develop as the bird numbers increase. These problems include: overgrazing of grass and ornamental plants, accumulation of droppings and feathers, and aggressive birds.

The USDA estimates the animal population to be well above 80, which is not a sustainable number for that area. The ducks and geese are destroying the vegetation along Charles Creek as well as Dog Corner Park, and leave unsightly messes under the Waterfront Pavilion, the picnic shelter at Charles Creek and the fish fry shelter at Dog Corner. These facilities can be cleaned on Friday for weekend events and by Saturday morning the animal droppings are back. These droppings are not only unsightly, but smell and are health hazards as well.

The USDA recommends that the City use an integrated damage control program, which includes habitat management, harassment, and enacting and enforcing a no feeding policy. Management techniques such as no longer allowing people to feed the animals, conducting harassment procedures such as using trained dogs, pyrotechnics and noise-making devices, modifying the landscape to allow the grass to grow to prevent the birds from nesting, and installing barriers such as fences may be used to discourage the birds from staying in the area. According to the USDA, using a variety of techniques and approaches usually provides the most effective relief from the bird damage.

The Parks and Recreation Department will be working very closely with the USDA in the months to come to decrease the population by at least half in order to ensure that the remaining birds remain healthy and our parks remain attractive and friendly.

4. This week, the City received notice that NCDOT has rejected both bids for the proposed sidewalk project on US Highway 17 South between Providence Road and the Applebee's entrance to the stores at Farm Fresh. The City will advertise a solicitation for construction bids next week anticipating a bid opening on November 22, 2011. NCDOT has requested that the City host a mandatory pre-bid meeting for all contractors interested in submitting a bid for this project. We anticipate the pre-bid conference will be held on November 9, 2011.
5. After waiting for a couple of months for the water elevation in the Pasquotank river to go down low enough for the contractors to work on the Water Street Intersection Project, the City has been notified that the contractor will start work within 10 days. The contractor is planning to put a 30 inch plug into the drainage pipe that goes to the River to prevent the river from backing into the project area. As planned, we hope that when this project is complete, the frequency of flooding occurrences in this intersection will be minimized and only the most extreme of wind tide events will affect traffic in this area

6. Phase IV of Contract II of the Elizabeth Street utility relocation project will directly affect operations at City Hall. Phase IV is scheduled to begin December 1, 2011 and should be complete, weather permitting, by March 1, 2012. Access to City Hall will be a problem. At certain times, Colonial Avenue and Martin Luther King Drive will be shut down. Sidewalks will be torn up and existing parking for customers will not be available. In addition, the City's drive-up window will be out of service. The City has 7,500 individuals per month who pay their bill at City Hall. Although the contractor has not provided his project schedule for Phase IV, staff has concerns that we will not be able to have a functional customer service department. Staff has made arrangements to open a satellite customer service center at Southgate Mall. The cost to establish a temporary service center for four months is approximately \$12,500. Unfortunately, staff has not been able to find a suitable site that has a drive up window.

Administrative functions presently located at City Hall, such as Finance and Administration, will continue to be located at City Hall and arrangements will be made to accommodate employees and visitors at this location to insure access for City Council meetings and all other board and commission meetings. Staff will maintain one customer service window at City Hall that will handle the customers who brave the elements to pay their bill at City Hall. Back office support including the switchboard and bill processing will remain at City Hall. New service applications and three customer service windows will be set up at the mall. Shirley Freshwater, the customer service manager, will oversee operations of the satellite location. Hours of operation will be from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. At the close of business each day, all monies received will be deposited in the City's financial institution. Supervision of the employees that remain at City Hall will be handled by Sarah Blanchard.

The Temporary Occupancy Agreement has been executed and forwarded to the Southgate Mall property owner. We have made arrangements for phone and internet service; and we have ordered the equipment required to secure our data. Plans are also well underway for the furniture needed. Fire department personnel will build the counter that will be used by the customer service clerks.

7. City staff has submitted a letter of interest to Community Investment and Assistance (CI), formerly DCA, for funding to help defray the costs of Phase III of the Roanoke Avenue drainage project. CI requested letters of interest for Hurricane Irene damage from communities located in the 37 Presidential disaster-declared counties. CI is considering utilizing HUD funds to help mitigate damages that were caused by Hurricane Irene. Only non-entitlement cities are eligible to submit letters of interest. It is not clear if HUD has funds available at this time; but rather has engaged the state to determine if funds could be reprioritized for this purpose. CI is exploring short term and long term recovery options. Phase III of the Roanoke Avenue drainage project could cost the City approximately \$1,000,000.

8. A new Christmas tree is in our future! Next week, a new Christmas tree will be planted at Waterfront Park. This Deodar Cedar is being given to the City by a local family. Additional information on a dedication and the donation will follow at a later date.
9. The 53<sup>rd</sup> Albemarle Craftsman's Fair is being held this weekend at the Knobbs Creek Recreation Center. Show hours are Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. and on Sunday from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The fair features 46 craftsmen and the Guild Booth. Meals are being provided by Montero's.
10. Upcoming Event Reminders:
  - Joint City/County meeting on Monday, October 31 at 4 p.m. in the Community Room of the Pasquotank County Public Safety Building
  - The Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting its annual State of Education Breakfast on Wednesday, November 2 at 7:30 a.m.

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