

Good afternoon from the Mayor's Corner. Below please find our weekly staff Significant Acts for August 3-7, 2020.

Initial Notes

1. We conducted our first Comprehensive Plan (Complan) Update Stakeholders Committee Meeting on Wednesday. After the Director of Planning and Development discussed the calendar for the plan update that extends into early 2021, and described key parts of a Complan he led the committee through a SWOT analysis of the City where Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats were identified, discussed, and captured for inclusion in the plan. The next Complan Update meeting is scheduled for September 9th but the first Public Hearing to solicit community input is Monday at the City Council meeting.
2. Dr. Deborah Birx, who leads President Trump's COVID-19 Taskforce, took 30 minutes out of her busy schedule to speak to Georgia city officials during the weekly Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) coronavirus call Tuesday morning. Dr. Birx reviewed highlights of a report on how Georgia is doing with respect to the coronavirus (the Task Force regularly produces a state-specific report on the impact of COVID showing the spread, impact, and actions required to combat the virus).

She pointed out that 110 of 137 Georgia counties were considered in the "red zone" in terms of positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, and that the state has yet to "turn the corner". Dr Birx emphasized the only way to combat the spread of the virus, at least until we have a vaccine, is through 1) good hygiene (washing hands, sneezing into a tissue or the crook of your arm), 2) avoiding congested areas (bars and the like), especially when indoors, 3) maintaining at least 6 feet of social distancing, and 4) wearing a mask if you cannot social distance, whether you are indoors or outdoors.

3. The City Administrator attended Friday morning's Legislative Breakfast at Savannah Rapids Pavilion. Before the General Assembly meets at the beginning of the year and when they adjourn in the spring the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce schedules events where our state representatives provide updates on their priorities, what they expect during the session, and what occurred during the session. Due to COVID-19 the post-legislative session was postponed from May.

At Friday's session US Representatives Rick Allen and Jody Hice traveled from Washington D.C. to provide insights into what is going on inside the beltway. They discussed the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) they hope will be

expanded, the next round of stimulus being debated – size and duration of unemployment benefits - the push to open schools nationwide, and so on.

State Representative Barry Fleming provided a short synopsis of the 2020 state general assembly session, and the assembled group bade farewell to the retiring President and CEO of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, Tammy Shepherd – on behalf of Mayor Jones and the City Council the City Administrator read and presented a letter of appreciation to Mrs. Shepherd. The City Administrator met the new Fort Gordon garrison commander, COL Shaw Pick, with whom he will schedule an office call in the coming weeks to get an update on Fort Gordon activities that may affect the City and surrounding areas – training, construction, opening of Gate 6, and so on - and share information about the City.

4. Our Dog Park remains closed for another week to ensure the newly laid sod takes root. We want to get the dog park open as quickly as possible but do not want to have the new grass trod upon before it is ready, lest it die and need to be replaced.

Human Resources - HR Director, Elaine Matthews, was out of the office this week; no change to statistics

Personnel Count number authorized = 129 full time; number employed = 123 full-time (No Change); 1 part-time (museum); 5 part-time / as needed (firefighters)

- vacancies – 6 (**No Change**): 2 each Police Officers; and 1 each Public Works Director, Water-Sewer Light Equipment Operator (LEO), Building Inspector, and Lab Technician

Hiring Actions – nothing to report this week

Resignations and Terminations - none

Safety / Training & Worker's Comp Claims – nothing to report this week

Finance

- the Utility Billing Department set up 40 new accounts and finalized 29 accounts, a net increase of 11 accounts

- completed review of 2019 financial statements; statements ready to present to Council at Monday's City Council meeting
- Staff accountant, Purchasing Coordinator, and Finance Director attended capital asset schedule training in Incode; new software will allow more detailed tracking of City's capital assets

Public Safety

- the Police Department arrested 8 subjects during this period: 7 for DUI, and 1 for battery (Family Violence)
- Criminal Investigation Division had 0 cases assigned and closed 5 cases
- the Fire Department responded to 12 calls: 6 fire calls and 6 medical calls
- the Public Safety Department would like to wish a happy birthday to Lt. Jonathan Scrum and F/F James Glasscock

Leisure and Recreation (L&R) Services

Parks & Facilities Updates

- cut grass at City Hall, Euchee Creek Trails, Leisure & Recreation Maintenance, Liberty Park, Liberty Park Ballfields, Municipal Court, Museum and Planning and Development
- work is complete at the Dog Park, however, we are keeping the park closed for another week to allow the new sod to take root; the dog park is scheduled to reopen on Monday, August 17th

Facilities Maintenance

- a total of 8 work orders this week: 3 at City Hall, 2 at the Fire Department and 1 each at Liberty Park, Municipal Court, and the Museum

Fleet Maintenance

- 1 job from last week completed; 1 job from last week remains open
 - Leisure & Recreation
 - John Deere Mower: routine service, replaced blades
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- Planning & Development
 - Ford Ranger: repaired a flat tire
- Public Safety Department
 - Dodge Charger: A/C issue & frontend problems (outsourced – completed from last week)
 - Dodge Charger: replaced heater hoses
 - Dodge Charger: replaced tire, check for overheating
 - Chevy Tahoe: replaced tire
 - Chevy Tahoe: routine service, replaced front tire, A/C issue, front end alignment (outsourced – not complete)
- Streets
 - Grasshopper Mower: need to replace hydro pump, hoses, and starter (not complete from last week)
 - Hustler Mower: replaced starter and battery
 - Hustler Mower: replaced front wheel / rim assembly
 - International 4300 Dump Truck: routine service
- Water/Sewer
 - Ford F-350 Utility Truck: routine service

Rental & Member Updates

- 3 new rental contracts and 4 returned contracts with payment
- facilities and fields were utilized a total of 16 hours
- 1 new gym membership

Event & Program Updates

- *Family Movie Night* – postponed to Friday, August 21st
 - Friday, August 21st at Liberty Park on the Gym Field at Dusk (approx. 8:45pm); limited space available, reservations required at \$5.00 per family, food vendors will be present
 - we are showing *How to Train Your Dragon - The Hidden World* – 17 registrations (75 guest) & 2 vendors
- *Food Truck & Farmer's Market event*

- Friday, September 11th at Liberty Park; 4 confirmed vendors
- *Fall Archery Program*
 - Tuesdays beginning August 25th through September 29th from 6pm to 6:45pm or 7pm to 7:45pm at Liberty Park Community Center
 - 12 registrations (limited to 20 registrations due to COVID-19 regulations)
- *Adult Kickball Program*
 - Mondays and Thursdays beginning September 14th through November 2nd from 5:30pm to 8:30pm (1 hour per game, 2 games per night)
 - \$25 per person, 12 persons per team max (8-person minimum); registration begins on Monday, August 10th

Miscellaneous - David Carlin and Janet Wheatley attended a GRPA District 1 meeting in Effingham County on Wednesday

Information Technology - a violent storm this week knocked out phones, some internet capability, the city hall keypad entry system, and a printer in city hall; we needed to replace a switch in Station 1 to regain connectivity and our security company is working a solution for the city hall access system

Public Works

General

- we had some exceptional training this week from AERZEN, makers of the blower system used to provide the needed air in our treatment plant; training took place over 3 days and was focused on preventative maintenance on the blowers and how to perform routine maintenance to a high standard
- Water / Sewer Superintendent met with Planning and Development Director and two developers regarding projects

Project Updates

- Phase 3 Effluent Force Main – clearing and grubbing the area where the sewer line will be installed
- Pump Stations
 - Horizon South Parkway - waiting for manholes to arrive
 - Butler Creek Pump Station – assembling valve and pipe
- Christmas Lights - made contact with AT&T, submitted their requirements for applications and required paperwork for them to get started moving their equipment on the GA Power-owned utility poles; working with Comcast for the same actions

Streets and Sanitation Department

- collected 12.2 tons of bulk waste, 5.27 tons of yard waste, and 10 bags of litter; completed 30 work orders (deliver or retrieve garbage or recycling cans)
- cut grass in the older part of the City – Williams, Bennet, Elm, Howell, Barbara, Streets, the Avenues - streets around Katherine Street (Fiske, etc.), and Robinson Avenue

Water / Sewer and Stormwater Departments

- 2 x water use history reports and 29 locates performed; repaired 4 water service line leaks; took 5 monthly TCB samples to the Columbia County laboratory
- potholed and located the 12-inch water main at the GIW booster station for a new connection
- completed and sent off monthly state water report; decanted the digester at the treatment plant
- checked on goats (watered and fed them twice); cleaned up and cut Arbor Springs detention pond; cut grass at Trudeau Trail booster station
- installed 3 new water meters in Caroleton Subdivision; asphalted 2 road cuts (3rd Avenue and Reynolds Circle)

Planning and Development

General

- 5 inspections; 17 construction permits, and 3 business licenses issued
- City Planner, Code Enforcement Officer, and Planning Director conducting windshield survey of 71 parcels in the City recommended for rezoning per the

form based code committee report; Planning Director visited several construction sites with Turnipseed inspector

- the Department received an inquiry for annexation of a parcel along Harlem Grovetown Road adjacent to Caroleton Subdivision; developer interested in a multi-use project of single-family homes and townhomes
- held our first Comprehensive Plan (Complan) Update meeting during which the committee conducted a SWOT analysis of the City (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
- first public hearing for the Complan Update will be Monday at the City Council meeting

Code Enforcement Update

- continue to pursue owners of properties needing grass cut
- several “tractor trailer” parking violations resolved by requesting drive/owner relocate to an approved parcel
- Brighton Apartments fence installed in preparation for filling the swimming pool
- 126 VFW Road arranging for sewer connection to alleviate open discharge of “gray water”

Development Highlights

- Brighton Apartments - working on the buildings and the apartments; they will let us know when they will conduct the next round of paving within the development
- Estates of Deer Hollow, Phase 2 – mulching and clearing stumps; started installing the silt fence

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

- Managed Help and Information Desk- Received 36 calls regarding Code Enforcement, Utilities, Financial, Elections, P&D, Stormwater and Streets.
- Several walk-ins were for Utilities, Notaries and fan donations
- Managed and maintained all social media and website platforms on daily basis
- Press release to media regarding “Fan Drive” at City Hall which started Monday, August 3, 2020 (sent to all television, newspaper and radio media)
- Rotarian duties

- Viewed Friday's Legislative Breakfast at Savannah Rapids Pavilion via Live Stream
- IT assigned training x's 2
- Learned new Requisition form on City's new software
- Posted Agenda and Supporting Documents for City Council Meeting on Monday, August 10th at 6 p.m.
- Promotional Items for giveaways (price quotes)
- Planning new projects for different city departments (would like to do one a month)
- 2020 Census push (looking for other ways to do last minute push)
- FAN DRIVE- received about 30 fans this week; dispersed 8-10 fans. (I was off Wed but was told some fans were still received and donated)
 - Reported by TV news, News Websites and radio media
 - Please share that we have plenty of fans to give to those in need at City Hall, Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Key Events

- **August 10th – City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Zoom, *which will include the First Comprehensive Plan Update Public Hearing*; City Council Meeting preceded by Work Session at 6:00 p.m.**
- August 18th - Association of the United States Army Breakfast and Briefings, 7:30 a.m. (webinar)
- August 20th - Staff Update, 10:00 a.m., Zoom; *also*, Planning Commission Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, *if needed*
- August 26th – Quarterly Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Regional Meeting (Virtual), 2:00 p.m.
- **August 27th – Work Session, 6:00 p.m., via Zoom (*changed from August 24th, the fourth Monday of the Month; from now on Work Sessions will be held the fourth Thursday of the Month*); *also*, GMA Workforce Development Meeting (Virtual), 1:00 p.m.**
- September 3rd – Staff Update, 10:00 a.m., Zoom; *also*, Board of Zoning Appeals, *if needed*

- September 4th – City Offices Closed at Noon, Staff Released Early for Labor Day Weekend
- September 7th – Labor Day, City Hall and Offices Closed
- September 9th – Complan Update Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Council Chambers
- **September 10th – Columbia County Chamber of Commerce “State of the Community” Dinner, Columbia County Exhibition Center**

Closing Comments

- next week two of our Directors will begin the Leadership Columbia County program that will run through May 2021; Janet Wheatley and Bradley Smith will join their classmates for a meet the class event at Savannah Rapids Pavilion next week – as an alumnus of the LCC program the City Administrator will join them at this event

Please enjoy the rest of your weekend,

Mayor Gary E. Jones

(Posted on behalf of Mayor Jones by Public Information Officer Ashley Campbell)