

Memo

To: Mayor and Council
cc: Department Heads
From: Pat MacQueen
Date: October 19, 2009
Re: Manager's Report

Tax Rate Setting

Sandra Rourke from the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) came here last Wednesday to carry out the tax rate setting process with Finance Director Blandine Shallow. Typically, the Finance Director goes to DRA in Concord for this, but this year they came here which saved us the trip. Although the rate is not official until DRA confirms it, we are expecting that it will be set at the same rate as last year at \$29.82 as intended by the City Council.

Downtown 155B Orders

The bids for the cleanup of the southern parcel of the burnt out downtown properties were opened this afternoon at 3pm.. The apparent low bidder is AD Drouin in the amount of \$9,980 and hopefully the work will begin next week and will have 21 days to complete. We were approved to be able to use Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds for this cleanup which means that the cost won't have to come out of City coffers as has been the usual case in the past. We are still waiting for CDFA approval for bidding the northern parcel. We expect that approval any time. It appears at this point as though we will simply bid the second parcel with a specification which will call for taking the large brick wall down to just above the roof line of the neighboring building to the north and capping it. Then in the spring, we will let a separate contract to clean up or cover the southern face of exposed wall.

As a side note, a pre-bid walk through was carried out this morning for 844 Third Avenue which is the burnt out Boule' block.

NH Municipal Energy Assistance Program

As indicated by the attached letter from the NH Municipal Energy Assistance Program, our application to them for inclusion in their energy assistance program has been accepted. Applications were received from all ten NH counties. The NHMEAP will be meeting with us in the near future to assess the need for an energy inventory of our buildings.

ATV Connector Trail Update

Last Wednesday, people involved in implementing the new cross-town ATV trail met to finalize plans for the implementation. Planning for a ceremonial grand opening/ribbon cutting were begun with the tentative date being set for Saturday, November 7th at 10am starting at the Jericho Mountain State Park parking lot. Mayor Bertrand will host a brief ceremony there with hopefully Governor Lynch and DRED Commissioner Bald saying a few words, then there will be an ATV procession on the new trail across town to the Tondreau parking lot where Mayor Bertrand will read a proclamation and cut the ribbon officially opening the new connector trail. From the group will proceed to Success Pond Road and then return via the connector trail back to Jericho Mountain State Park.

Burlington Biomass Plant Tour

If you would like to see a bio-energy plant in operation, a tour of the McNeil Biomass Plant in Burlington, VT has been scheduled for November 6. The bus will be departing from the Brown Company House (this may change if there is need for more space to park) at 8:00 am and will return here at 6:00 pm. This tour has grown out of the AVER Committee which has been meeting to study the implications of the Laidlaw proposal prior to any EFSEC process which Laidlaw may file for in the future.

CPD District Heating Meeting

Clean Power Development arranged a meeting on Thursday morning October 8th. The purpose of the meeting was to explore District Heating possibilities which could derive from the excess heat generated by the Clean Power Development at the WWTP. Dr. Morris Pierce who is a leader and expert in this field attended the meeting. He is a professor at the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY. He agreed that he would do an initial kind of feasibility report based on City data in order to get an initial feel for the general feasibility and initial size, scope and cost of such an undertaking.

Several groups have been studying the possibility of biomass heating for individual facilities as well as for whole districts. Because of its size and its relatively dense layout, Berlin would seem to be an likely candidate for district heating which would serve initially at least the downtown area as well as perhaps one or more city institutions such as the High School (which is separately looking at biomass heating) the prisons and the hospital to name a few. I would expect that we will have something back Dr. Pierce in the relatively near future.

WWTF Rural Development Grant and ARRA

We will be meeting with RD and State officials in Concord on October 21st to go over the application we submitted for \$9M in RD loan/grant assistance for improvements to the WWTF. We have now also received word that there still may be a possibility of stimulus funding (ARRA) assistance with this project. We had applied for that funding in the first round of stimulus funding in February of this year, but did not make the cutoff of the first round due to the fact that our project (due to lack of funds) was not shovel ready.

Now, partly due to the fact that some of the previously funded communities may be taking RD loan/grants instead of the DES ARRA funding, DES has notified us that we may now also be eligible for their ARRA stimulus funding again. We will undoubtedly be discussion both approaches with both DES and RD officials at our meeting on the 21st.

NH Municipal Energy Assistance Program

Made possible through the NH Public Utilities Commission and the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions Fund

October 9, 2009

Patrick MacQueen
Town of Berlin
168 Main Street
Berlin, NH 03570

We are pleased to inform you that your application to participate in the NH Municipal Energy Assistance Program has been accepted.

Your town will be assigned an Energy Project Assistant shortly. These part time staff people will contact your town representatives and schedule a time to meet in order to begin the first phase of the program and assess the need for an inventory.

Upon receipt of this letter, please e mail Sarah Harpster and provide the following:

- The name, address, phone and email address of the person you wish to represent Berlin in this project (and with whom the Energy Project Assistant will work)
- The meeting day and time of your governing board
- Your town website address

Sarah's email address is sharpster@cleanair-coolplanet.org and her telephone is 603 352-2172.

We very much look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Roger Stephenson
Clean Air-Cool Planet
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Jeffrey H. Taylor
Jeffrey H. Taylor and Associates
Concord, New Hampshire

Clay Mitchell
SDES Group

Dover, New Hampshire

Robert J. Walker
Sustainable Energy Resource Group
Upper Valley

Gabe Zoerheide
Vital Communities
Upper Valley

PS - Christa Koehler, Manager of State and Local Government Programs, is also available to answer questions. ckoehler@cleanair-coolplanet.org (603) 570 7508