

Washington Park Town Crier, Christmas 2016

1) CHANGE ON THE WAY? Town Board considers privatization of some services.

Alvin left the Town's employ a few months ago. Brian will retire February 1st, just 50 days from now. James is here, by himself. (Backed up by the Clerk – with her CDL, and day labor as needed.)

This point in time finds the Town Board, and all of us residents, facing the same personnel challenges that all small businesses and corporations face in managing the rising costs of health insurance in addition to liability insurance, salary demands, and personnel benefit package elements.

The short story is that the Town Board, which has been considering and discussing these challenging concerns, is committed to trying some major changes in the delivery services the Park provides. In a word.... PRIVATIZATION OF SOME SERVICES along with staff reduction and reducing some of the expensive equipment the Town now operates.

The Town Board has recently and informally discussed privatizing garbage pick-up with two local companies. Both companies do work near Washington Park, and are consistent in the manner and cost of service delivery. Using their large 96- gallon roller garbage cans, the Park would go to once a week pick-up at the street. Both companies said this schedule works well and that almost without exception persons that are pessimistic will, after a month or so, become satisfied. This service will cost the Town less than half of what the Town pays its own staff for the same work. The Town, of course, would pay the contractor, not the residents. Some residents may not be able to get their large garbage can to the street. The company will make individual arrangements to pick up their garbage cans where it is convenient.

The cost to the Park is estimated at \$16,000 per year for one day/week pick-up. Like garbage pick-up, removing grass, limbs, and even white goods pick-up involves the same amount of time (a day a week) and would cost about the same. The Town Board is researching the details of privatizing that service too; maybe with the same contractor, maybe a different provider. The Town spends much more than the \$16,000 per year for one day/week pick-up. If the service is privatized, the Town will not need to maintain or replace our 30-year old compactor truck, buy insurance fuel, or pay for work on hydraulic systems. And, of course, the Park would not likely fill either of the two vacated staff positions - Alvin's or Brian's.

With privatization there will still remain work for one staff person; and, like now, the Town will occasionally need day labor for two-man tasks. The Board thinks privatization is worth a trial run and, with Brian's upcoming retirement, that the early spring of 2017 is the time try it.

All the information above is forward looking. The Board has done a lot of due diligence on this; but has not advertised for bids yet... or signed any contracts. Discussions with potential contractors were informal. And, Brian has not retired yet. But this is the landscape the Board sees now. The Board is expecting to institute these changes in early February.

TALK TO US WITH YOUR CONCERNS WHETHER POSITIVE, NEGATIVE, OR CAUTIONING... BEFORE AND DURING THE INAUGURATION OF THIS NEW SERVICE INITIATIVE.

2) The WP Planning Board was sworn in on Wednesday, September 7th by Town Clerk, Dennie Dale. Three new members and three previously serving members participated in the ceremony. They replace a previous Planning Board chaired John Crew. The Town Board is appreciative of their time and dedication. The new WP Planning Board is made up of residents of the Town. They are Beth Byrd-Chair, Ricky Peed-Vice Chair, Ashley Jones-Secretary, Anne Baxter, Seth Laughlin, and Bill Rianhard. The Town Board looks forward to working with the new Planning Board.

3) Golf Carts. The Town has no ordinances pertaining to golf carts. The Town Board has received notice of dangerous driving and of inattentive driving of carts. The Town will not likely adopt any controls on the use of golf carts for two reasons. This Town Board, like previous boards, thinks it is unwise to adopt regulations when the Town lacks staff or equipment to enforce an ordinance. Secondly, there exists a number of NC State General Statutes (statewide in coverage) that relate to golf cart use on public roads. The Statutes are enforced by local law enforcement and by the State Highway Patrol.

The Town encourages parents to provide direction on the use of golf carts on our streets. In a collision the laws of physics apply before the laws of the Town or the State! Those laws of physics favor a 3,500 pound car or truck over a 700 pound golf cart.

4) New preliminary Flood Plain Maps are being rolled out by FEMA. The new *preliminary* flood plain maps were reviewed recently by FEMA staff at a meeting with elected officials and Emergency Management staff. The changes were interesting and important. The new *preliminary* flood plain maps reduce by almost half the number of Washington Park homes that were judged as flood-prone. FEMA has a website that anyone may use to see both the current FEMA maps and the new *preliminary* flood plain maps. The flood boundaries are superimposed on aerial photos so you can clearly see your house as well as the draft flood boundary. (<http://rfris.nc.gov/fris/>)

Don't call your insurance agent yet!! The FEMA representative said that it will be approximately 18-24 months before the new maps are reviewed, revised if appropriate, and finally approved for general public use. But the changes for Washington Park residents will be important and positive from a financial perspective. Insurance will cost less for many residents. Properties in the Park will be easier to sell, and therefore worth more when flood risk and insurance costs are reduced.

NOTICE: A PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THE PRELIMINARY FLOOD PLAIN MAPS

DATE: Thursday, December 15th

TIME: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

PLACE: Washington City Hall Council Chambers

5) Holiday Season. Garbage pickup during the holidays will be **Thursday, December 22nd, Tuesday, December 27th, and Tuesday, January 3rd.** There will be no Town services on Friday, December 23rd, Monday, December 26th and Monday, January 2nd, in observance of the holidays.

Happy
Holidays!

Finally, the Board wishes each of you and your family a
Joyful and Safe Holiday Season, and a Great 2017!