

Jim Palenick

From: Jim Palenick [jpalenick@dallasnc.net]
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2013 10:42 AM
To: 'rcdc18@charter.net'; 'ronniemorrow@att.net'; 'hoylewithers@yahoo.com'; 'huggybarber@att.net'; 'scott.martin@duke-energy.com'; 'jonsara@msn.com'
Cc: 'Maria Stroupe'; 'gbuckner@dallasnc.net'; 'btrudnak@dallasnc.net'; 'slambert@dallasnc.net'; 'Doug Huffman'; 'David Kahler'; 'amartin@dallasnc.net'; 'J. Thomas Hunn'; 'jpage@dallasnc.net'
Subject: Town Manager's weekly report (#42)
Attachments: Philbeck Letter.docx; Philbeck Letter pg 2.docx

Mayor & Board of Aldermen:

Please accept the following as the **Town Manager's Report for the Week-ended Friday, August 23, 2013.**

- Electric Utility Director Doug Huffman will be undergoing some minor surgery and, as a result, is likely to be out of the office for a period of a week or so (beginning next Monday) recuperating. Doug will be available by phone at home during this time, however, Ronnie Cabe will be ably running the Department in his absence. We are extending our collective wishes to Doug for a speedy recovery.
- Mayor Coleman has informed me that I am to suspend further efforts to purchase the needed equipment and/or hire the two, new Electric Department employees Budgeted in the FY2013-2014 Electric Fund and designed to transition to in-house tree-trimming vs. contracted services. Instead, an Agenda item will be included for the September 10th Meeting, under "Old Business" for discussion and possible action for the Board to alter or amend this direction and portion of the Budget. Also to be included on the next Agenda is a similar, Old Business discussion item to equally review the Budget for, and possible design, purchase, and construction of the digital reader-board display sign for Town Square. All efforts on these two matters have now been suspended.
- Mayor Coleman and I met this week with William Farris, the original developer of the High School Apartments, who updated us on the current state of the project, as well as the status of the CDBG Loan repayment to the Town, and plans for the original principals (Farris included) to transition out of ownership as they look toward retirement. As part of this transition, and due to some financial constraints triggered by the economic downturn and limiting the ability to adjust rents upward, the Town will be getting a formal request from the developer/owners to extend by five (5) years (from the current date of 2024 to the proposed date of 2029) the time at which the principal "balloon" pay-out of the \$230,000 will be due to the Town. We tentatively negotiated this solution as a less impactful request than the initially-proposed desire that the Town accept the deferral of its \$3,720.00 in yearly interest payments to correspond with the balloon principal pay-out. I believe as now structured, the request is entirely reasonable and we are likely to have it as a formal Agenda item for action at the September Meeting.
- Bob Starr will be retiring from his position as Water Treatment plant operator effective Saturday, August 31st. Josh Lay, currently employed in Streets and Solid Waste, has been named as his replacement. In turn, we now have a resulting opening for the position of Equipment Operator in Streets and solid Waste which we have begun advertising to re-fill. These changes were anticipated and Budgeted for within the approved FY 2013-14 Town Budget.
- In addition to the request for capital funding assistance submitted by the Dallas Historic Courthouse Foundation and Board of Aldermen to the Gaston County Tourism development Authority, the Mayor and I have now also authored a letter (copy attached) to Dallas' County Commissioner, Tracey Philbeck, asking that he, and his fellow County Commissioners consider providing some level of funding support for the project as well. We felt it certainly can't hurt to cover all possible funding sources from the County, particularly if the Tourism Development Authority decides not to honor our request, or to cut it back in substantial portion.
- In today's mail we again received a Notice of Violation and Recommendation for enforcement regarding our Wastewater Treatment Plant's, or plant operator's, inability to meet State-mandated parameters for discharge

limits. This has been a particularly troubling Spring and Summer in this regard, and points to the ever-more likely long-term likelihood that the Town may have to resign itself to completing the inter-connect line and becoming a wholesale treatment customer of Gastonia, since our plant cannot consistently meet requirements. This latest violation is certain to mean another civil fine, as well as a continual eroding of the Town's credibility in the eyes of the NCDENR. I am genuinely frustrated with our performance and will be seeking a detailed action plan for either clear improvement, or a strategy and time-line to move away from Town treatment.

Thank You,

Jim Palenick
Interim Town Manager

**Mayor**

Rick Coleman

Aldermen

John Beaty
Allen Huggins
Scott Martin
Darlene Morrow
Hoyle Withers

Town Manager

Jim Palenick

Town Clerk

Maria Stroupe

Town Attorney

J. Thomas Hunn

Public Works

Bill Trudnak

Electrical

J. Doug Huffman

Police Chief

Gary Buckner

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Fire Chief

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August 21, 2013

Mr. Tracey Philbeck, Vice Chairman
Gaston County Board of Commissioners
P.O. Box 1240
Dallas, NC 28034

Re: Dallas Historic Courthouse Renovation

Dear Vice Chairman Philbeck:

On behalf of the Dallas Historic Courthouse Foundation (DHCF), as well as the Town of Dallas and its Board of Aldermen, allow me to submit a formal request to you and the Gaston County Commission for funding assistance in support of the capital fund-raising campaign currently being undertaken by the DHCF to fully preserve, renovate, and enhance the historic (1848), Nationally-Registered Courthouse Building and Town Square Plaza in Dallas, in the Heart of Gaston County.

The Courthouse building is the enduring symbol for and cultural heart of the Town of Dallas and is arguably the most significant historic structure in the County -- actually pre-dating the 150-year history of the Town of Dallas, and having served as the original Gaston County Courthouse and center of Gaston County government from 1848-1911. With the planned expenditure of nearly \$1 Million in enhancements and upgrades, this iconic Gaston County edifice will be reborn as a quality, publicly-accessible, meeting, gathering, conference, training and banquet facility in order to further economic development, aid in cultural tourism, bring visitors to local hotels and lodging facilities, and support both the Gaston County Museum and Gaston College.

To the fullest extent possible, we plan to award the reconstruction contract and sub-contracts to Gaston County contractor/vendors and we estimate that the work will support 20-25 full-time, trade positions for a period of 8-10 months. In addition, once renovated and operating, the facility will provide new part-time employment to a facility-manager/event coordinator and offer substantial new business for local caterers, florists, printers, wedding planners, and hotels.

The Town of Dallas has already committed over \$520,000 to this important economic and community re-vitalization project and the DHCF has submitted nearly a dozen, formal Grant requests for additional funding to local and regional Foundations and Non-profits; along with pursuing ongoing solicitations for individual contributions, and conducting multiple, fund-raiser events.

In addition to the added economic and cultural value to be derived from the re-purposing of this idyllic, postcard-like cornerstone of Gaston County history, we hope also to honor and memorialize the local, regional, and state-wide contributions to higher education made by Dallas and Gaston County's favorite son, Dr. William C. Friday, as embodied in his lifetime of service and achievement. The re-naming of the revitalized facility as the, "**Dr William C. Friday Memorial Conference Center**" will serve to remind our State that one of its great academic leaders was raised and nurtured in Gaston County, and that Gaston County takes great pride in that legacy.

As detailed in the completed design plans, the "Conference Center" will consist of a series of small meeting/multi-purpose rooms on the first floor, to be used for community functions, cultural and educational workshops, art displays, other local events, and as a polling place. The upper floor (originally the County Courtroom and Judge's Chambers) will be redeveloped as a large, open multi-purpose banquet and event space to be supplemented by a small catering kitchen and storage area. All areas will (for the first time) become fully ADA-accessible with the addition of an elevator and stair tower. The Town Square Plaza and Courthouse grounds will see paving and walkway improvements; landscaping upgrades; the addition of street furnishings; seating areas; and reflective areas and outdoor sculpture.


This project can ultimately achieve success in the short-term with its capital campaign, as well as credibility and success over the long-term with its ongoing operations, if it receives the endorsement of the Gaston County Commission as well as the one-time contribution of capital funding assistance.

Your gracious consideration in this matter is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Rick Coleman

Rick Coleman
Mayor



James M. (Jim) Palenick
Interim Town Manager

Cc: Dallas Board of Aldermen
Board of directors, DHCF