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APALACHICOLA

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City Manager Updates,

- Recently, our volunteer fire department fire truck was damaged by a low hanging branch when responding to a call in the city. Following up with city departments, they have identified several areas within the city limits where tree branches impede the drive lanes. I'm having our folks review the city streets to identify any tree limbs that interfere with vehicle passage (over roadways or from shoulders), using the FDOT minimum vertical clearance of 14.5 feet. As we identify these areas, we will be clearing the branches that restrict vehicle movement, especially for emergency response vehicles.

- Florida statute require cities to evaluate its Comprehensive Plan via the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) process every seven years to determine if plan amendments are necessary. The city did this in 2019 and updated our plan in 2023. It was relayed that as we had done the plan update in 2023, the next EAR was due in 2030. Unfortunately, that guidance was not accurate and the Dept of Commerce notified the city that we need to update our plan. I am working with Apalachee Regional Planning Council and Commerce as we will need to get our update completed within 1-year, or risk not being able to adopt future comp plan amendments.

- Phase 1 (River Side) of the V-Dock project is on schedule, with the contractor remobilized o/a Feb 13th. This week they are bolting support infrastructure via boats and not using the crane so it may appear they are not on site. This project originated from Hurricane Michael damage, and a funding application was sent to FEMA in 2020/2021, but not followed up on, and is closed. When the project was bid out in 2021 the costs came in too high to execute the full project. Discussions with contractors estimated a full replacement cost to be \$1.5M – \$2M, and several options were pursued to reduce the project scope. In the end the TDC committed to fund a reduced scope (Phase 1- River Side) at slightly more than \$1M. HG Harder's was awarded the contract in April 2025, and they began work in August 2025. TDC funding for the project is over a 2-year cycle, awarding \$500K each FY. When HG Harders completes Phase 1 of the project in the next 60-90 days, there will still be 473 linear feet of the dock that needs to be demolished and rebuilt at an estimated cost of \$640K. That was previously identified as Phase 2 – Bay Side reconstruction. We have not identified the funding for this portion of the dock and are contacting several entities to see if any additional funding could be available. We are also checking how much is available in the Battery Park account. The overall project scope was to demolish the old pier on both sides of the point, re-use existing pilings where able, reset the pilings, reconstruct the decking and railings, replace 10 Dock Utility stations, construct concrete landings where the pier meets the shore, and to construct a concrete sidewalk on one side and a path on the other side with dedicated handicap parking spaces.

- We have good news on the Riverfront Project. We worked with Congressman Dunn's office who contacted their federal partners and we have received the permits for the Downtown Revitalization project including authorization to demolish the Popham building. As mentioned in the last commission meeting, the next step in this process is to apply for Authorization for Grant Funds from Commerce. Once that is received public comments are solicited for 2 weeks. We will then get an RFP out, hire a contractor, and start construction. The project has been extended until 9/30/2027 so timing is not critical if we stay on our projected timeline.

- The Florida Department of Commerce CDBG-Disaster Recovery (DR) audit scheduled for Apr 20-22 has been delayed until May. Our Grants Manager, Leslie Glaze and I met on this, and we contacted the state explaining we are currently undergoing the Joint Legislative Audit. They understood, as the Commerce audit is more of a monitoring review of Hurricane Michael Hazard Mitigation, Infrastructure Repair, and Hometown Revitalization awards.
- The city is in receipt of the new and updated Consent Order for the Wastewater Treatment Facility. This order is a final consolidated product from previous consent, final and judicial orders, and inspections. The only remaining item from the prior deficiencies is the requirement to build a new treatment facility by December 31, 2030. This construction will include a new headworks structure, screening, grit removal equipment, and two new Sequence Batch Reactor basins and blowers. Until construction is complete, we will continue to monitor the structural integrity of the headworks and provide DEP quarterly reports on the construction project status.
- Charles Chapman from C4 Consultants has been notified of his selection to perform the Commissions' Strategic Planning session. The proposal selected was a 2-year plan (based on strategic visioning) versus a longer-term strategic plan due to the upcoming elections in November. I met with the consultant last Thursday to discuss timing, next steps, and scope. The consultant knows the commission meeting schedule, and I included the potential for workshops to be held on the 3rd Tuesday in the coming months. The next step is for virtual interviews to be held between the commission, key staff, and the consultant over the next 2-weeks, and will include recommendations for individuals to make up a community stakeholders focus group. I am tentatively scheduling Charles for the May 5th Commission meeting to introduce him and to for him to provide an overview of the project.
- I will be attending the Developing a Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan training webinar later this month. This training is focused on drinking water and wastewater utilities in Florida and helps utilities develop cybersecurity incident response plans.
- We continue to advertise for our open Front Office & Utility Billing, Water/Sewer Field Crew, and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator positions.

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