

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch
City Manager

SUBJECT: ***Status Report***

DATE: March 1, 2012

Status Report

1. 15th Annual Maryland Bicycle-Pedestrian Symposium

On February 22nd, the City was represented at the 15th Annual Bicycle-Pedestrian Symposium held in Annapolis at the Miller Senate Office Building. City staff has attended this event for at least the past 11 years. The purposes of the Symposium are to: educate advocates and attendees; identify common issues in local communities and statewide; set priorities for improving the future of bicycling in Maryland; and, demonstrate the economic impact of Maryland's bicycling community. Presentations by transportation and bicycling professionals occurred throughout the day. The City of Bowie once again had an exhibit promoting our trail system. Topics covered by 13 speakers at the Symposium included: Trail and Infrastructure Funding Opportunities in Maryland; the Capital Bikeshare Program in Arlington, VA and Washington D.C.; Bike Maryland Legislative Agenda; Bicycling Initiatives in Maryland; Bicycling Tourism in Maryland and Economic Development and Impacts; and, the Maryland Bikeways Program. Several participants and attendees visited the City's exhibit and discussed trail-related current events and projects with staff.

2. BGE Follow-up Trimming

BGE has notified staff that they will be involved in re-trimming work on ten of the 22 feeders in the City. This will mainly involve cutting 1" to 2" branches and will be focused on trimming to the BERAP standards. It is not anticipated that trees will be removed, except for those that are hazardous trees. Notification will still be provided to residents prior to work being done. This will only involve a few trucks. Lewis Tree Service is the company that will be doing this trimming for BGE.

3. International Council of Shopping Centers Mid-Atlantic (ICSC-MA)

City staff again led a team of economic developers from Prince George's County at the annual Mid-Atlantic Idea Exchange for the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). Team membership included representatives from the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, the City of College Park, and the City of Bowie. More than 1,800 registrants saw our information exhibit; many carried home our literature; and several talked at length with staff.

Staff made two important observations:

- Grocery stores aren't aggressively seeking new locations. Those that have seen Bowie's limited location choices have expressed concerns about various site specific conditions and government regulatory matters above the City level. The Bowie facts are that there is only one potential grocery site in the City and it is small compared to current industry size standards. The only potential grocery site in Bowie is the 34,000 s q. ft. former Giant space at Pointer Ridge. There is no other potential grocery store location within the City at this time.
- There are certain retail developers who would be interested in purchasing existing Bowie retail centers should any of them be placed "for sale".

4. Mid-Year Budget Review Follow-up

The following information is in response to questions raised by Council last Tuesday night:

- Newsletter: 165 people have signed up to receive mailed copies.
- Church Road Park: The project is expected to start in early May and be complete before the end of June.

5. Recycling Carts

On March 21st, we plan to begin distribution of carts in Buckingham, Derbyshire, Foxhill and Kenilworth. There are a total of 1,983 homes in these sections and they will all receive one of the 65-gallon carts with a hinged lid and wheels. The cost of these carts is being partially funded through our Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.

Postcards notifying residents in those areas were mailed Monday. And each cart will have a package of information regarding recycling attached to the handle. It is proposed that all remaining residents receive carts in FY13. Distribution of those carts is expected in early fall.

6. Street Light Bill

The House Economic Matters Committee held a hearing on February 23rd regarding a proposed bill, HB 712 – Street Lighting – Purchase of Equipment by Local Government and Tariff. You authorized Public Works Director Jim Henrikson to testify in support of the bill. Representatives of other jurisdictions, including Annapolis, Laurel, Mount Airy, Gaithersburg and the City of Baltimore also testified.

The street light bill addresses three main issues. First, it defines a negotiation process for municipalities to purchase street lights from power companies. Although this was allowed as part of an earlier bill, some municipalities felt that the power companies had not been negotiating price in good faith. However, since Bowie already owns 98% of the street lights in the City, this issue was more for other jurisdictions to push.

The second part of the proposed bill referenced LED street lights and specifically allowed them to be used. In the past, there has not been a tariff rate available for street lights and this bill could help facilitate a changeover to LED street lights.

The third part of the bill is the one of most interest to the City of Bowie. It specifically allows local jurisdictions to continue to maintain their own street lights connected to power company cable. BGE has started to show resistance to Bowie continuing to do so without the addition of expensive fused disconnects. This change in BGE policy is the reason why the Peach Preserve street lights weren't energized months earlier than they were. BGE cable was energized in place next to all of those street lights, but BGE refused to make the connections so the developer had to install all new street light cable parallel to the BGE cable. This is a current reason for a protracted delay in energizing existing street lights at Melford. St. John Properties has completed a street light cable design and is prepared to spend approximately \$125,000 on installation of cable if the bill doesn't pass.

Mr. Henrikson testified in favor of all three parts of the bill with emphasis on the third part, which is most of benefit to Bowie. Along with the testimony of the other jurisdictions mentioned above, Pepco and Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) testified against the bill. Jim felt their testimony was a little weak in that their main point seemed to be that the bill wasn't really necessary. BGE did not support the bill and had four representatives in attendance, but chose not to testify against the bill.