

## MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER

ATTENTION – LOCAL NEWS FOR PHOENIX, OREGON

Local  
 Postal Customer

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### FEBRUARY 2016 -- STATE OF THE CITY REPORT

This issue of the Mayor's Newsletter will be devoted to discussing accomplishments within the city and highlighting some of our challenges for 2016. We often do not take enough time to celebrate accomplishments within our city. At the same time, we need to constantly be looking forward in order to make this an even better place to live. To begin, I proudly proclaim that the **STATE OF PHOENIX IS VERY STRONG!** I don't consider myself a politician, but rather a short term citizen volunteer. As such, I am excited about our progress last year and our plans for the next year.



#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2015:

- Repaved 3/4 mile of city streets including the Coral Circle subdivision, part of 1<sup>st</sup> street and a section of Grove Road. In partnership with Rogue Valley Sewer, this also included new sewer pipes in the Coral Circle area.
- Chip Seal Resurfacing of the Barnum and Phoenix Hills subdivisions covering 2.3 miles. Though some in Phoenix Hills were disappointed with this not being a full repaving, it was completed at a fraction of the cost of repaving and will extend the life of those streets for at least 10-15 years. As one of our newer neighborhoods, we would not have been able to repave these streets for many years, so it was imperative to save them before the surfaces become too damaged for this type of repair.
- In cooperation with our Urban Renewal Agency, began construction on the City Center Project. This includes extending and connecting 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> streets for an internal roadway and parking lot where the Plaza Building will be built. This included acquiring and demolishing old blighted buildings on Main Street. This is an exciting project and I can envision how this entire block will look when development is completed.
- Replaced sidewalks, added parking, added bike lanes, and went from two to one lane configurations on Main Street and Bear Creek Drive. This will start to give a sense of a real "**Downtown**" to the city and make this area pedestrian and business friendly. The police report that it has already slowed down traffic which is vital to allowing pedestrian safety and small stores and restaurants to thrive. While valid reasons were reported, implementing the "Road Diet" during construction may have started this off with some confusion and concerns. When construction is complete and people have had a chance to adjust to the change, I am hopeful it will quickly become a source of pride for citizens. We will evaluate this spring and make necessary changes.
- Stood with other cities and presented the Medford Water Commission with convincing data to keep the water rate increase for Phoenix to 14% rather than the 40% that had been planned. Because we have taken so many actions to increase the efficiency and decrease the water loss in our system over the past few years we were able to absorb this rate increase and not pass it on to consumers as virtually every other city did.
- Continued to solidify our financial position as a city from what was a serious concern as recently as 2012-2013. We were given a AA- Bond Rating from Standard and Poor's, which allowed us to borrow \$3.5 million for the Urban Renewal Agency at a very low interest rate at no additional taxpayer cost. I am proud that we are a city without exorbitant utility and street fees to support parks, streets and water. Ours is less than \$30 per year per residence while other cities generally charge from \$120 to \$250 or more per year.

- Began the process to bring in 475 acres north and east of Home Depot to our Urban Growth Boundary. As the I-5 and Fern Valley Road projects wrap up this year, we will be in a great position to attract jobs and development on the east side of Phoenix in the not so distant future.
- Established an annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Elementary School and successfully worked with the High School to produce a great 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Homecoming Parade through the city. We also completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual “Dog Days of Summer Parade” at Colver Park and held weekly “Sprinkler” nights during the summer at Blue Heron Park for the kids. We have great parks and will continue to focus on their development.
- Successfully navigated the complicated issues regarding both Medicinal and Recreational Marijuana. We now have 2 Dispensaries in town and will be asking voters in November 2016 whether to approve a 3% sales tax on these establishments. No outdoor growing will be allowed in Phoenix for Recreational Marijuana and only a small amount (35 square feet) for Medical Marijuana for an approved occupant of the house. This is more restrictive than in the past and will provide relief to those that have complained about smell, view, etc.

**2016 CHALLENGES, PLANS AND INITIATIVES:** In addition to those items listed above that require further concentration, the following issues will be addressed in 2016.

- Develop new short and long term plans and expectations for the Urban Renewal District.
- Finish the Master Plan for Parks. We received a \$50,000 grant to focus on future enhancements and options.
- Continue the process to bring the land to the north and east of Home Depot into the Phoenix Urban Growth Boundary. We have only 46 acres of developable residential land in our Urban Growth Boundary which is inadequate for the growth projected. We have 27 acres of light industrial/commercial land in the city.
- Finish infrastructure projects on Main Street and in the City Center. Break ground on the City Center Plaza Building. This will be a community center with flexible interior and exterior features surrounded by a plaza and wetlands park. It will be designed to encourage special events, grower’s markets, meetings, music, etc.
- Continue efforts to maximize future efficiencies for our water system including the development of a strategic plan for the distribution system and peak flow reservoir storage.
- Ensure long term financial viability for the city with moderate growth projected in both revenues and expenditures. Save for road and water projects to avoid bond issues and other borrowing. Explore the possibilities for a new police station which is currently located in an inadequate modular building.
- Identify methods and strategies for promoting more citizen involvement in the city. Becoming much more aggressive in seeking outside grants. We have been much more successful of late in both the city and Urban Renewal with planning, parks, streets and pedestrian cross walks receiving grants.
- Increase citizen volunteers serving the city and Urban Renewal.
- Continue to upgrade and repair streets utilizing the Chip Seal technology and the lessons learned from our initial projects this year (i.e., better and earlier communication with residents, proper street care after sealing, clearer contracts, etc.).

Feel free to contact me by email at [jeff.bellah@phoenixoregon.gov](mailto:jeff.bellah@phoenixoregon.gov) . I can also be reached by phone at **(541) 535-1955 x 304**, or by drop-in hours at City Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-3pm. I am happy to meet you at other times by appointment. I especially try to respond very quickly to email!

**CITY COUNCIL**

Bruce Sophie – Council President  
Stan Bartell – Councilor

Carolyn Bartell –Vice President  
Terry Helfrich - Councilor

Chris Luz - Councilor

We encourage you to contact any of us or the Phoenix City Manager (Steve Dahl), anytime with ideas, questions or events.



**Jeff Bellah**  
Mayor, City of Phoenix

**2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL PHOENIX EASTER EGG HUNT**  
**MARCH 26, 2016 @ 11:00 A.M.**  
**PHOENIX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**