



TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Milton Dohoney Jr., Interim City Administrator

CC: John Fournier, Assistant City Administrator
Sara Higgins, Strategic Planning Coordinator
Stephen Postema, City Attorney

SUBJECT: 2021 Year End Communication

DATE: December 20, 2021

As I am a few days from taking time off for the season, I wanted to provide you with a year-end communication. First, and foremost let me extend Happy Holidays to each of you and your families. It has been a fast two months since my mid-October beginning, and I continue to find my opportunity with you to be very gratifying. We have many talented and dedicated staff. It's an honor to lead them. I have received positive feedback from the team who had the responsibility for implementing our recent planning session with you. They got to demonstrate what they are passionate about – substantive work serving our residents.

Staff Transitions:

Calendar year 2022 will ring in with several more staff changes.

Colin Smith, our Parks Manager, will be leaving on January 3, 2022. He has provided outstanding passionate leadership to the City for many years. He will be missed. A national search will be launched to find his replacement.

Craig Hupy, our Public Services Area Administrator, will be retiring on February 11, 2022. He has given over three decades of service to the City of Ann Arbor. I have updated the position description for his role, and we will be securing a search firm to find his replacement. Before the end of this calendar year I will name an interim to replace him while the search is conducted. I want there to be a smooth transition so naming an interim early will allow for an overlap.

Dave Borneman, our Natural Area Preservation (NAP) Manager, will also be leaving us in February. He is the founder of the program. We are losing a lot of institutional knowledge with the loss of all three people.

While losing key performance is always in some ways sad it is also exciting because the organization gets to evolve in a manner that should strengthen our ability to serve our residents. We will strive to make our leadership changes unfold in a way that invigorates our operations.

Asking for Our Best:

Parks Manager Colin Smith recently approached me about several instances where members of the public interacted with our staff in a way that in short was unacceptable. I made this a discussion item at one of our Executive Team meetings and received feedback from other areas of the organization that confirmed what staff has experienced in Parks.

To help improve civility across the organization we are launching a campaign titled “Be Kind. We take your words to heart.” I have attached a screenshot of the signage that will be posted around our facilities encouraging the public to be on their best behavior.



Be kind.

We take your words to heart

City of Ann Arbor employees work incredibly hard to deliver exceptional services that sustain and enhance a vibrant, safe and diverse community. While we're here to help you, we have the right to work in a safe environment. Aggressive or abusive language and behavior will not be tolerated.

Thank you for your support and understanding.



Employee Recognition:

As I had mentioned previously we will be starting a new employee recognition program in January. It will be called "A2 Difference Makers." Employees will be able to nominate their peers for a results-oriented job performance. We will select up to three recipients per quarter. They will be noted in our newsletters, featured at our Executive Team meeting, given a certificate, and invited to a virtual lunch with me.

In Person Meetings:

We are still working on all of the necessary steps in anticipation of the state mandated in-person meetings set to commence with the new year. A slightly different layout will be employed in the Council Chambers to ensure everyone's safety to the extent possible. We will be encouraging the public to wear masks and be vaccinated but cannot require it. We are requiring it for members of our boards and commissions that are under jurisdiction of the Open Meetings Act (OMA).

Staff has determined that no more than ten people can be allowed in the basement conference room. Anything more would violate the protocol for social distancing.

I am pleased to report that as of this writing approximately 74% of our board and commission members are in compliance with our vaccine mandate. We've lost a few members and are likely to lose more with some people making the personal decision to not be involved with in-person meetings.

Planning Session Follow Up:

During Council Planning Session on December 13th, I was asked a question about communities our size using federal lobbyists to advocate for them. I did some limited checking and found a couple of examples. Salisbury, North Carolina, population 33,727 uses one. So does Yuma, Arizona, population 96,349. With lobbyist assistance they were a recipient of a USDOT RAISE grant for \$10.6M.

We still have to decide if this is right for us at this moment in time. We will continue to aggressively pursue our parochial interests whatever is ultimately decided.

Operations:

When I toured each of our fire stations I was informed that we have no formal agreement with U-M for use of their facilities when we need to stand up an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Ours is a handshake agreement. Be advised that I have informed our Fire Chief and Emergency Manager that we will be seeking a written agreement. There are certain areas where a handshake arrangement may be sufficient. Having certainty about our ability to respond to a full-scale emergency on behalf of our residents is not one of them. I hope we can bring you an agreement in 2022.

Within the HR department our new Interim Director Marc Thompson is settling in with staff. Meetings have been held with the search firm, so we anticipate shortly after the new year getting the process off the ground to recruit for the HR Director, the Director of

Organization Equity (or new DEI position) and trailing not far behind the Deputy HR Director.

Closing:

It is obvious that we have a great many thing to tackle in the new year. The staff working in concert with you is the only way we can achieve our goals. Enjoy your time the next couple of weeks. Even for the non-sports fan, it would be of benefit to the city if the Wolverines get a chance to play for the national championship. The number of worldwide media impressions for Ann Arbor is marketing we couldn't begin to pay for.

See you next year!