

## Summary of Ward 5 Meeting, October 12, 2020

### Agenda Topics

[To see the Ward meeting video click here](#)

#### **FY21 Budget (Mike Leonard, city Chief Administrative Officer)**

Revenue shortfall of about \$5M due to COVID/gaming shut down

Water bill will go up about 2% for each of the next four years; west Biloxi water well to be replaced (approx \$1M)

Water service expanding to meet water needs of new residential areas under construction

Infrastructure in west Biloxi is aging... Example, Tanglewood subdivision water lines to be replaced very soon

Property tax rates have not increased (for the 26<sup>th</sup> year)

#### **Debuys Road resurfacing update (Mike Leonard)**

City sent letter to Gulfport mayor and Harrison County months ago, but no answer yet... we'll keep trying

#### **Popp's Ferry Bridge P3 Project (Mike Leonard)**

Meeting in Jackson with Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) in a couple of weeks

Spent almost \$6M on land acquisition for Popp's Ferry extension; submitted grant to Gulf Coast Restoration Fund

New Popp's Ferry bridge will be almost \$125M; will need federal help; have to buy 69 residences on Popp's Ferry Rd

City's talked to a company, as an option, about building a for-profit/toll bridge; not likely public will support this choice

Still, city is look at options to replace the current Popp's Ferry bridge with a high-rise, four lane bridge

Bridge is aging, has to open frequently during hurricanes for boat traffic, closing/locking mechanism fails at times

#### **Census 2020 update (Kristi Kelly Hicks) – Ms Hicks did not attend; no update**

#### **MGCCC proposed road (Jerry Creel, Director of Community Development [includes code enforcement] Status**

No contact from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College officials about the proposed road

MGCCC officials, last time we spoke, will be happy to have discussions with residents, when ready to move forward

#### **Short-term rentals in west Biloxi (Jerry Creel)**

A little over 300 licensed short-term rentals in the city; short-term rentals are not allowed in areas zoned residential

Working to schedule a Council workshop to look at increasing the licensing fee... 10:30, Tuesday, Oct 27, city hall

Are allowed, as a conditional use, in areas zoned RM-20 and RM-30 (A conditional use requires Council approval.)

Are allowed in all commercial zones except Neighborhood Business, where it's only allowed as a conditional use

#### **Snyder Center repairs (Sherry Bell, Director of Parks and Recreation)**

Replaced the air conditioning chiller, replaced the perimeter fencing, extensive work to the pools, new grating and

piping in the mechanical room; still left to do: replacing the multi-room doors and painting the building inside/outside

Also, recreational activities offered at the center were mentioned

#### **Pennzoil Park, playground equipment (Sherry Bell)**

Playground equipment is 20 years old; applying for grants to replace; contact us if you have any fundraising ideas?

► **Notable:** City/children's summer camp not funded in this year's budget; anticipate it will be added if revenue is up.

#### **Popp's Ferry Road extension (Christy LeBatard, Director of Engineering)**

Still acquiring right-of-way for the project; still working to acquire remaining construction money; this is part of the

larger project involving replacement of the current Popp's Ferry bridge.

### **Oakmont Place, demolitions (Christy LeBatard)**

Six homes are ready to be demolished; contractor has, apparently started initial work on this; will add 3 more houses

### **Churchill Avenue, ditch improvement (Christy LeBatard)**

Met with River Place residents of affected properties; agreed to monitor the project to see if recent work was effective

### **Saenger Theatre, update (Christy LeBatard)**

Working on exterior and roof right now; replaced fly tower, replaced the roof, installed new HVAC exterior equipment; found new leaks; received grant recently to help fix the brick exterior and water infiltrating through the bricks; planning to repair the front façade as the next step

► **Notable:** Pine Grove Ave drainage line recently repaired; keeping an eye on south end of repair for deterioration

### **Speeding, Briarfield subdivision and Channel Mark (Maj Ron Lessner, BPD)**

Manpower has been down due to COVID and medical leave; when manpower is up to full staffing, in the next few weeks, we'll be monitoring speeding in the neighborhoods. Occasionally when we stop someone in a neighborhood for speeding, it's the person who complained about speeders in the neighborhood!

### **Homeless concerns (Maj Ron Lessner, BPD)**

This will be an ongoing issue... non-profit and for-profit groups help when/where they can... but some individuals really don't want the responsibility of owning/renting a home or working; we've gotten some additional support from city court on sentencing guidelines; some people end up in jail because they can't control themselves... the homeless on the old Broadwater property have moved from that area and have likely moved west; some property owners permit the homeless to stay on their property (by Edgewater Estates), we'll be checking with those owners about entering their property to monitor the homeless

► **Notable:** Police department has curbed a lot of the panhandling in the open road

### **Camera network, citizen participation (Sgt Shane Steele, BPD)**

Let us know if you're interested in participating in the FUSIS registration program so we'll know which owners have camera systems that cover public areas (roads, for example). Your camera footage may help us solve crimes; if you want to talk more about this program or cameras, contact me and I'll be glad to speak with you.

## **REMINDERS**

- ✓ Water rates increase October 1; reflected in your October water bill.
- ✓ Garbage fee increase October 1; reflected in your October water bill.

✓ Citizen Representative, Craig Ross, 228.435.6271 or [cross@biloxi.ms.us](mailto:cross@biloxi.ms.us)  
Your concern/complaint will noted and routed to the correct department for action.

✓ Ward 5 eblast is sent every Sunday... to receive it, send me your email address... it's free!

✓ Next Ward meeting, about February/March, 2021