

Mayor's Report
18 April 2022 – 23 April 2022
Larry Jacobsen



Note 1

It's been a quiet week in my adopted hometown, Nibley, Utah ^{Note 2}. Here is an indication of what's going on in Nibley City governance.

- Roads: 3200 South closure
- Roads: 2600 South opening and traffic light update
- Utah League of Cities and Towns Conference
- Miscellaneous

Rather than type full names and titles throughout this report, I use these references.

Justin	Justin Maughan, City Manager
Darren	Darren Farar, Engineer
Levi	Levi Robers, Planner
Cheryl	Cheryl Bodily, Recorder

Roads: 3200 South Closure. This week, Nibley City announced the closure of 3200 South to complete the roundabout. When Darren and I discussed this, he showed me that despite the impact of a 15-day closure, it made sense to get it done without traffic rather than prolong a partial closure and try to keep traffic moving. One of key issues was the time required for the concrete to cure. The nature of a roundabout means that vehicles – especially semi-trucks – sometimes climb a mountable curb on the inside of the roundabout. If we don't let that concrete cure appropriately before driving on it, then we will be closing the road again to replace the damaged concrete. If that happens, then it will be done at the expense of the citizens of Nibley.



Sometimes I tell my boss at my day job, "We don't have time to hurry." I hope that you, my boss at this job, will accept that logic as well.

Back to the discussion with Darren, I asked that we advertise the closure at an appropriately long distance away from, and at an appropriately long time before, the road is closed. Staff has done that with signs and posts to the Nibley FB Page and Nibley website. I sincerely apologize for the impact on all of you all while 3200 South is closed. I know it will be an asset to our community when it is finished.



Roads: Update on Opening 2600 South and a Traffic Light. The beat goes on... As discussed, the private road at 2600 South was built by the landowner at their own expense and not with taxpayer funds. That may seem a surprise, but that is the norm for building roads in Nibley. Once the road is complete, then the landowner can dedicate (give) it to Nibley City, and the responsibility for maintenance (snow plowing, resurfacing, etc.) then belongs to us. The road at 2600 South is not finished. It lacks curb and gutter, sidewalks, and landscaping. While we would love to open that road (in part, to get a traffic light installed sooner at 2600 South and US-89/91), we must be careful to not create the liability of Nibley citizens being forced to finish the road.

Also, as discussed, we are working through a partial dedication to let us open the road before it is complete while still protecting Nibley. The new news this week is that the landowner arranged a phone call between the Utah Speaker of the House, Brad Wilson, and me (gulp, just the two of us) to try to accelerate UDOT's installation of the traffic light. I explained to Speaker Wilson that we want the light, and that US-89/91 planning for more than twenty years has anticipated a light in that area. However, I also explained my respect for the processes on which governance operates. That includes Nibley City's process as well as UDOT's process. We are trying to accelerate that process, but not abandon it.



Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT) Conference. Councilmembers Norm Larsen and Kay Sweeten, along with Justin and me, attended a two-day conference organized by the ULCT. Over the past twenty years, I have found this organization to be an effective way to learn the duties and powers of municipal governance. In addition, the ULCT puts a meaningful effort into lobbying the Utah Legislature on behalf of municipalities.

A common theme for this conference was growth, and especially its impact on cities and towns. Not surprisingly, Utah's 18.4% population growth between 2010 and 2020 was more than any other state. I'm sure you would agree that the term "growing pains" is an understatement. The irony for me is that this growth did not occur without encouragement. Utah has worked aggressively for economic development for decades. We need to deal with the resulting growth, and I see that as a symptom of Utah's (and Cache Valley's) success rather than a symptom of failure. In one conference session, I asked other elected officials how they felt about turning down the economic thermostat that strives for less economic success. I don't think I made my point very well. Maybe next time, I will try to make the same point by asking the following question.

Are we tired of winning yet?

I hope that asking that question will at least show us that we are getting what we as a state and as individual communities have strived for. I know, there is room for individual disagreement on defining success, especially after we see the impacts of success. Regardless, I believe we are dealing with what we hoped and worked for. I'm still looking the thermostat knob and wondering if we are willing to turn it down after we find it.

I usually come away from ULCT conferences with a soundbite that helps me in municipal governance. Here is one I picked up from a mayor in another town.

Run your city professionally rather than politically.

Because I asked the people of Nibley to check the box next to my name, I guess I am a politician (but I can change, if I have to, I guess ^{Note 3}). I don't like the designation because I'm simply a citizen with a purposeful interest in our community. The election is over and I'm beyond the top of my "political" game. I appreciate the professional manner that our staff, along with the appointed and elected officials, approach their work. I am going to remind myself to strive to be a professional rather than a politician for the next 3.67 years. Oh my, that's a long time from now.

Miscellaneous. About ten mayors and I met with the Cache Chamber of Commerce last week. I appreciated and enjoyed it. Despite my social awkwardness, I was surprised to recognize many people that I already know. I look forward to more of their meetings. Maybe I will ask the Chamber of Commerce if they are tired of winning yet.

Several citizens have reached out to me to talk about individual issues – sometimes complaints – with the city. Please continue to do so. Although solutions can sometimes be elusive when considering multiple points of view, I appreciate hearing about the issues. I especially appreciate the dedication of our staff to solving those problems. We are professionals, not politicians.

And that's the news from Nibley, Utah; where all the women are strong, all the men good looking, and all the children above average ^{Note 4}.

You are my boss. Thanks for reading this report. Please call, text, or email.

Larry
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Notes:

1. Mayor Quimby from The Simpsons
2. Garrison Keillor talking about Lake Wobegon on the Prairie Home Companion
3. The Possum Lodge Oath about being a man from the Red Green Show
4. Garrison Keillor talking about Lake Wobegon on the Prairie Home Companion