

Mayor's Report

19 November 2023 – 3 December 2023

Larry Jacobsen

Greetings, boss! Thanks for reading. I usually write these reports about a week before the next Nibley City Council meeting. The Thanksgiving Holiday canceled the second meeting in November, making the next council meeting on 14 December. Therefore, this report is a little early. These reports are not intended to replace the official public notifications on Nibley's website (www.nibleycity.com) and the Utah Public Notice website (www.utah.gov/pmn/), but rather to provide advance information about what the city is working on before the official notifications.

Here are the topics in this status report:

- **Malouf Community Reinvestment Agency**
- **Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization**
- **Groundwater Draft Ordinance**
- **US 89/91 Corridor Study**
- **2600 South**
- **Planning Commission Nominations**

Malouf Community Reinvestment Agency (CRA)

As previously mentioned, this agency was created by the city council in cooperation with the Malouf Companies a few years ago. The CRA provides a mechanism where Nibley City, Cache County, and the Cache County School District will reinvest a portion of the property tax increase that results from the Malouf Companies' additional development back into infrastructure on the west side of Nibley. The reinvestment funding is post-performance, meaning the funding is only available after the property tax increase is actually generated. We are approaching some important dates relating to when the base property tax before new development is benchmarked, and when the incremental tax increase starts to accrue. As often happens, there is flexibility in the Malouf Companies' business plan, and Justin Maughan, Nibley City Manager, and I met with Malouf employees to talk about specific dates associated with the CRA. We agreed to wait as long as possible to establish these dates, and we anticipate doing so in the first few months of 2024.

Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO)

The CMPO met last week to hear the results of the annual audit (no issues) and to discuss active transportation in Cache Valley. Landis Wenger, Cache County Active Transportation Coordinator, gave us an update on the county-wide bike and pedestrian trails network. Good news: Nibley City's plans and existing trails fit well with the county plan. Landis told us about a

group known as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC, link below) that works for bicycle and pedestrian safety education and outreach. BPAC participation is open to the public, and their next meeting is on 13 December at noon if you are interested. I may have found another important meeting to attend.

<https://cachempo.org/committees-boards/bpac/>

Ronda Menlove, UDOT Commissioner for our region, attends most of our CMPO meetings, and she described UDOT's recent practice of building active transportation amenities that include bike paths and walking trails in conjunction with road projects. That is certainly a goal for important corridors in Nibley (1200 West, for example). I have asked UDOT employees several times about the incremental cost for UDOT to include active transportation within a road project as opposed to adding active transportation as a stand-alone project. I am certain we would get a good deal on consolidated efforts, and I will let you know the incremental costs when I learn them.

We have some winter-time challenges in Cache Valley when it comes to active transportation. However, when you ask Google for the top cycling cities in the US, Minneapolis, Minnesota, tops the list. I hope we can learn some tips from Minneapolis on making active transportation work, even in the winter.

Groundwater Draft Ordinance

Nibley has lots of groundwater, especially in certain areas of our town. Too often, high groundwater causes problems for individual landowners as flooded basements and problems for city infrastructure that include the sanitary sewer system and the stormwater system. Tom Dickenson, Nibley City Engineer, and Nathan Laursen, Nibley City Councilmember, have led the charge on a new ordinance that would change how we decide where new basements could be constructed in Nibley. We had a lively discussion on the proposed ordinance in our last Nibley City Council meeting and another long and lively discussion last week in committee with additional city staff.

To me, this is where local governance "earns its keep" as we try to find the balance between property rights of individual landowners and the collective rights of the community. The individual property right in question is whether landowners are allowed to build basements on their own property. The potential impact to the community comes when that basement fills with groundwater. It's easy to think that water is the homeowner's problem, but unfortunately lots of basement flood water gets discharged into the sanitary sewer system. When this happens, we all pay higher fees to Logan City to process what was groundwater before the wrong basement was built. By the way, the practice of putting ground water into the sanitary sewer system is illegal. Even the more responsible practice of using sump pumps to move groundwater from basements out to city streets has its problems. That street water flows into Nibley's storm water system that has been designed to handle surface water that comes as precipitation in severe

storm events. We were lucky last spring when high groundwater was pumped to city streets that we didn't also get a major storm with lots of precipitation. Had that happened, we could have overwhelmed our stormwater system and flooded homes, both with and without basements.

The draft ordinance is still under consideration by the Nibley City Council, and I'm biting my tongue to avoid giving you my own opinion on how we should draw the line on allowing basements (you might be surprised if I told you!). Regardless, I won't go into detail here, but instead, I encourage you to keep up with the goings on of the council. I am confident that we will find the best solution by working through specific issues. I will say here how much I appreciate the dedication of city staff to solve difficult problems, and how much I appreciate the chance to have lively discussions at all levels of governance within Nibley City.

US 89/91 Corridor Study

US 89/91 is an important transportation corridor to Nibley citizens and Cache County residents. It offers potential economic development for our city as well mobility for the citizens of Cache Valley. These two goals are often at odds with one another, and thoughtful planning and appropriate regulation are essential as we move forward. UDOT is sponsoring a study that looks at long- and short-term goals for US 89/91 from the Brigham City I-15 Interchange to the "Y" intersection with Hwy 165. Nibley City is involved in that study, and we had a meeting last week in an on-going series of meetings. I feel the study is achieving the right tradeoffs between opposing goals, and a balance is emerging between philosophical statements and potential plans for specific portions of the US 89/91 corridor. We aren't done with this planning effort, and I will come back to it in future status reports.

2600 South

This might be the last mention of 2600 South for a while. The landowner signed the agreements that we talked about in the last report, including the city's desired warranty on the road. Once the appropriate plat and agreements are filed with the county, Nibley City can safely accept ownership of 2600 South that is west of 1200 West, and the citizens can be assured that the road will be completed with future development. It's been an interesting effort to get to this point, and I believe our perseverance has paid off. I look forward to the potential next phase of possible commercial development along the road.

Planning Commission Nominations

One of my responsibilities as mayor is to appoint, with consent of the Nibley City Council, members of the Planning Commission. It has been a pleasure during the past two weeks to speak with existing planning commissioners about the upcoming appointments and exciting to talk to potential commissioners about their interests and passion for serving our community. I

will recommend nominations to the city council before 1 February 2024, the end date for planning commission terms.

Congratulations to the successful Nibley City Council candidates in November's election, and more importantly, many thanks to all candidates who put their name on the ballot. We live in a great place, as shown by the motivations and qualities of all the candidates.

Please call, text, or write anytime. If you would like me to send you these reports, please let me know with an email. I promise I will not share your email address or use it to campaign during an election. My thanks to those who have asked to receive these reports.

Most of all, thank you for giving me this job,

Larry

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My continued appreciation to volunteer Leslie Maughan for proofreading and reviewing these reports for clarity before you see them.