

Nibley City Mayor's Report

15 April 2024 – 28 April 2024

Larry Jacobsen

Greetings, boss! Thank you for reading this report. Please be sure to check the official public notifications on Nibley's website (www.nibleycity.com) and the Utah Public Notice website (www.utah.gov/pmn/) for more information.

As always, my sincere appreciation to volunteer Leslie Maughan for proofreading and reviewing these reports for clarity before you see them.

Here are some highlights from the past two weeks and the topics in this report:

- **Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant Applications**
- **Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT) Mid-Year Conference**
- **Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO) Visit to Cache County**
- **US 89/91 Corridor Study**
- **Nibley's Yeates Spring and the Upper Hyrum Blacksmith Fork Canal**

Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant (UORG) Applications

I have great news to share, and I was tempted to save it for the end of this report. However, I decided that sometimes it's ok to eat dessert first. Nibley City has been working on a couple of UORG applications. The first one is a bicycle skills course and pump track, known as Phase 2 of the city park in the Ridgeline Park development. City staff and a group of volunteers on a steering committee have been working on this application in conjunction with a professional company who specializes in design of these bike tracks. Tom Dickenson (Nibley City Engineer), Justin Maughan (City Manager), and I traveled to Saratoga Springs last week to give a seven-minute presentation to the UORG award committee. I might have complained a little bit about the duty cycle of four hours of driving for a seven-minute presentation. However, thanks to staff's work, the committee's effort, and the design company's help, we were notified that the \$750k grant will be awarded to Nibley. This is going to be a great asset to our regional community.

That was only the first piece of good news on a UORG application. A group of volunteer citizens has been working on another application to construct learning stations for Nibley's Firefly Nature Park. This proposal is a great follow-up to the \$15k grant for the outdoor classroom from last year. Yup, good news again, another \$10k secured by this group of volunteers. Success leads to more success.

Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT) Mid-Year Conference

Several council members, a planning commissioner, city staff members, and I attended the ULCT mid-year conference in St. George. These are great opportunities to interact with other cities to learn from the presenters about new approaches to municipal issues and to interact with other cities. I brought home a couple of take-aways from different sessions. The first one, which I already partly knew, is that Nibley City allows far more public comment during meetings than what is required by Utah Code. For example, we start each council meeting with a public comment period. In addition, many public hearings are handled by the planning commission and not required at council meetings. Nevertheless, we often repeat those public hearings in council meetings. We saw videos of some horrific public comments from other municipalities, and I realize that is a possibility that could happen anywhere. Although reducing the opportunities for public comment might reduce that risk, I'm happy to stick with what we are doing.

The second take-away came from a session where elected officials in areas of rapid growth had the chance to talk about concerns in their towns. To me it seemed that this turned into a complaint session about growth and change, without talking about solutions to deal with or mitigate that growth. I get it. Lots of Nibley citizens express their concerns about what Nibley is now compared to the Nibley they grew up in or the Nibley they moved to. After listening to lots of complaints, I asked a question of the group at the conference. What drives the growth in Utah and Cache Valley? Why do so many people want to live here? To me, the fundamental answer is because we have been so successful with economic development. Cache Valley's low unemployment rate and Utah's #1 ranking on economic outlook for the past 17 years (link below) make it possible for people to work and live in a beautiful place. This economic success is what we have strived for, and if we had fewer jobs to offer our kids and other people who want to move here, then we wouldn't have the problems associated with growth. I asked if we shouldn't suggest to our state legislators and governor (see the next topic) that we take our foot off the gas? That suggestion didn't go over so well, and it might not compute with you as you read this report. In part, I asked this question hoping that we would understand there are worse problems to have, and because we have worked for economic opportunity, we also need to work on dealing with the consequences of overwhelming success.

(<https://www.richstatespoorstates.org/article/americans-flock-to-winning-states-new-rich-states-poor-states-rankings/>)

Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO) Visit to Cache County

Ironically, when I asked other elected officials at the ULCT conference if we should suggest to our state leaders that we take our foot off the economic gas pedal, I had that very opportunity back home when the GOEO visited Cache County. I was invited to this GOEO meeting as a member of a subgroup of the Bear River Association of Governments (BRAG). The GOEO's presentation was all about the overwhelming success Utah has had with economic development, and specific successes in Cache Valley. The response to my gas-pedal question

at the GOEO meeting was received with even less enthusiasm than at the ULCT conference. One of the great Utah successes the GOEO presenters talked about was Silicon Slopes, a hoped-for Utah version of Silicon Valley. I mentioned the article “Move Over Silicon Valley – Silicon Slopes Coming Through” (link below) and told the GOEO presenters how a couple of Lehi Council Members approached me last week at the ULCT conference wondering if we really wanted to create a Silicon Valley in Lehi. Please understand that I am not against economic development. However, I wonder if we currently have too much of a good thing. Let’s enjoy the benefits of economic success while we work to mitigate the impacts of that success.

(<https://businessinfocusmagazine.com/2022/04/move-over-silicon-valley-silicon-slopes-coming-through/>)

US 89/91 Corridor Study

City staff and I have been attending several months of meetings associated with a corridor study on US 89/91 between Brigham City and Logan City. This effort is wrapping up, and we attended one of the study’s final meetings last week. The intent of the study is to identify issues with traffic congestion, mobility, safety, active transportation, viewscape preservation, and future growth impacts on this UDOT highway while thinking about long-term solutions to those issues. The consultants did a nice job of envisioning big-picture, limitless funding solutions that include large-scale rework of many key intersections. All together, those solutions would amount to hundreds of millions of dollars. There is no current funding for any of these improvements, but this is how the process starts. UDOT and the jurisdictions along this stretch of US 89/91 have previously agreed to an access management plan that has recently expired. At the very end of the corridor study meeting, UDOT mentioned a concern that Nibley City needs to pay attention to. Although the old access management plan anticipated future traffic signals in the areas of 2600 S and 4400 S on US 89/91, UDOT said the new management plan should address whether those signals are still justified. I say they are for the safety and mobility of Nibley citizens. The new signal at 3200 South is a huge improvement, but I’m not ready to give up on additional signal locations. US 89/91 is about more than getting vehicles as quickly as possible from Logan to I-15.

Nibley’s Yeates Spring and the Upper Hyrum Blacksmith Fork Canal

The Hyrum Blacksmith Fork Canal Company is doing some work on their upper canal that Nibley City’s Yeates spring flows into. This is the spring that used to contribute to our culinary water supply and was contaminated with diesel fuel about 15 years ago. It hasn’t been worth the volume of water from the spring to go to the expense of protecting that spring from future contamination. Therefore, we have simply put the water into the Hyrum canal. We will be working with the canal company to figure out what to do with the Yeates spring water and how to do it. I have some ideas for that water, but it will take more work. Please stay tuned.

If you are not receiving these reports via email, and if you would like to do so, please let me know and I will add you to the list. Whether it's with good news or to express a concern, please call, text, or write anytime.

Thanks for your interest in Nibley City!

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