

**Good Evening and Happy Wednesday Memphis!**



The month of October has arrived, bringing excitement to local, state, and federal government alike!

When I wrote my last recap, the deadline for the 2020 Census was September 30. *However*, due to a subsequent U.S. District Court ruling, the deadline has been **extended into October**. As a result, there is still time to be counted.

I said it then, and I will relay it again now: Responding to the Census is vital to the future well-being of your community, from a financial and electoral standpoint. If you value our children, their schools, our clinics, hospitals, and highways, stop what you are doing and **[submit your Census response, today!](#)** The opportunity only occurs once every ten years.

Additionally, Tennessee's voter registration deadline for those seeking to vote in the November 3 State and Federal General Election was October 5. If you registered, **early voting runs October 14 – October 29**, Monday through Saturday, at 26 locations across Shelby County (**[see sites and times here](#)**).

Finally, the **deadline** to request an **absentee ballot is October 27**. Remember: Tennesseans may now cast absentee ballots if they believe (1) they, (2) someone in their care, or (3) someone in their household has an underlying health condition that makes them more susceptible to COVID-19.

Keep these dates in mind as we each strive to *be counted* in the days ahead.

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This week your Memphis City Council met to discuss measures focused on moving Memphis forward. If you were not able to virtually participate in the meeting via live-stream on the Council website, via YouTube, or via 88.5 FM (WQOX), a full review is provided, [here](#).

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### **Spread the Word – Job Opening:**

The Memphis City Council currently seeks qualified candidates for a Legislative Research Analyst position. All applications must be submitted by **Monday, October 12, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. (CST)**.

For more information, see the listing, [here](#).

### **Requesting the Creation of a Voter Education Program:**

The Council believes that to be productive, you must be informed. In the context of voting, you must also be registered! With that in mind, yesterday, we approved a resolution requesting that the Memphis, Light, Gas and Water Division (MLGW) create a voter education program to provide voter registration information to MLGW residential account holders.

According to Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in 2018, the State of Tennessee had the *third lowest* voter-registration rate in the nation. Although various factors contributed to that outcome, ready access to accurate voter registration information remains a solution. Looking ahead, the Council believes its present effort will work toward increasing the number of Memphians who participate in the electoral process, i.e., a process that is necessary to building a government that is not only representative, but also accountable.

### **Waiving Transit Fares on November 3:**

Keeping with the theme of activating our citizenry to exercise their constitutional rights, yesterday, your Memphis City Council approved a resolution urging the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) to temporarily waive all transit fares on November 3, 2020. In researching the topic, an analysis of the United States Census Bureau's *American Community Survey* data showed that there are census tracts within the City of Memphis where approximately 46.8% of households lack access to a vehicle. Although transit fare is a negligible expense to some, the cost represents a financial burden for others.

Therefore, in an effort to remove barriers to the ballot box, the Council's measure works to provide MATA-transit riders with access to buses, trolleys, and paratransit services, **at no charge**, for a full twenty-four hours on November 3.

In doing so, the Council stands firm in its position that voting is the foundation of our democracy, and that ensuring participation in the voting process is key to a functioning republic.

### **Protecting Our Churches - Update:**

On August 18, the Council passed a resolution establishing a 180-day moratorium on the issuance of demolition permits of churches over fifty years old on Summer Avenue. The decision was aimed at preserving the character of our diverse communities, and the structures that have served our citizens for generations.

The Council action also requested a report from the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development proposing zoning amendments that preserve historic churches along the corridor.

*As an update:* Yesterday, the report was delivered. Its findings recommended rezoning certain properties along Summer Avenue, between Holmes and Sevier Street (Area 1 of 2) and between Berclair and Stratford Road (Area 2 of 2). In response, the Council approved a resolution authorizing the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development to proceed with the submittal of an application to effectuate its rezoning recommendations.

Once the application is submitted and receives the required Land Use Control

Board and Memphis City Council approvals, the formal rezone will take effect, likely in early 2021. In the meantime, other potential zoning changes along the corridor will be investigated. Taken together, this progress represents continued momentum focused upon the thoughtful preservation, and appropriate utilization of our local edifices.

### **City Council Grant Funding:**

After receiving and reviewing numerous applications from Memphis-based non-profit agencies, yesterday, the Council approved the allocation and appropriation of \$1,950,000 in City Council Grant funds to agencies and initiatives working to promote the welfare of Memphis residents. The Council recognizes the selected non-profit agencies as valued partners in the continued effort to improve the lives of Memphians.

### **Funding for the Division of Fire Services:**

Yesterday, the Council approved a resolution accepting and appropriating grant funds in the amount of \$8,000 from FM Global. These funds will be used to purchase tablets and related accessories to assist with fire investigations that help investigators efficiently determine the causes of fires.

### **Funding for the Division of Police Services:**

Yesterday, the Council approved three resolutions to accept grant funds in the collective amount of \$420,000 from the Tennessee Highway Safety Office. Specifically, the monetary amount will be used for the purpose of funding personnel overtime and supplies for the Division of Police Services.

***Looking Forward:***

As we move ahead, I am and will always be honored to serve you each day as part of a thirteen-councilmember team working to transform our great city into a place of opportunity for all. Stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed regarding the activities taking place here at City Hall.

With earnest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrice J. Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P" and "R".

Patrice Jordan Robinson  
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council  
District 3