

Good Afternoon and Happy Wednesday, Memphis!



Before I begin the first recap for the month of November 2021, I want to thank the students of Tennessee Prep Academy (TPA) for attending the Memphis City Council meeting last night. The eighteen young men, led by TPA President, educator, and coach, Mr. Harold Rayford, displayed a sincere interest in their community, which, ultimately, led them to the City Hall Council Chambers.

In addition to offering an enjoyable sight, their participation was an inspiring reminder of the importance of nurturing young minds for the purpose of encouraging participation in civic life at every level, regardless of age.

Soon enough, these students will take on leadership roles of their own. Until then, it is incumbent upon us all to work to ensure that the community we pass to them is better as a result of the progress we are willing to work toward today.

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With that in mind, yesterday your Memphis City Council convened to bring key improvements to the city we each call home. If you were not able to participate in the meeting via in-person attendance, live-stream on the Council website, or 88.5 FM (WQOX), a full review is provided, [here](#).

Enforcing Zoning Text Amendments related to Smoke Shops:

On February 16, the Council approved a resolution establishing a 273-day moratorium on the issuance of permits for smoke shops. The thirty-nine-week period provided time for the creation of zoning changes capable of addressing citizens' concerns related to smoke shops operating near schools, school-aged children, and residential neighborhoods.

Fast forward to yesterday, where the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development presented, on third and final reading, its proposed zoning text amendments via Ordinance No. 5796.

Per the department's recommended zoning amendments, smoke shops – seeking to commence operation within Memphis and Shelby County – “shall be located no closer than 1,320 feet from any school or park, as measured from the parcel that contains the smoke shop and the parcel that contains the school or park.” Keep in mind, originally there was no such restriction regarding proximity.

Therefore, after careful consideration, the Council approved these welcomed changes, viewing the Ordinance as a critical step forward in protecting our valued communities and the health of our most-precious citizens – *our youth*.

Receiving an Update from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation:

Along these same lines, the Council values its relationship with state agencies who share a common mission to enhance your quality of life.

As such, yesterday we requested that Mr. Evan Spann, Deputy Director of Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) - Field Operations, attend the [morning Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee](#) to provide an update on the organization's work being achieved within Memphis/Shelby County from an environmental and human health perspective.

Notably, Mr. Spann's update emphasized the invaluable contributions of TDEC's Division of Remediation (DoR), which implements the Hazardous Waste Management Act, in coordination with state and local government entities, to compel the restoration of inactive, hazardous properties so that these sites are well-suited for future development, and no longer imperil the community at-large.

As we support TDEC's remediation efforts, which have recently directed over \$22,523,981 to the Greater Memphis region, take a moment to view their November 2 presentation, [here](#), so that you are apprised of their transformative endeavors.

Improving Memphis' Parks System:

On a related note, by promoting methods aimed at protecting our lived environment, the Council finds benefit in improving our recreational spaces for long-term personal and physical enrichment.

In doing so, last night we unanimously approved a resolution accepting an in-kind donation in the amount of \$7,450 from 901 Volleyball. Specifically, the funds will be used to improve and maintain volleyball courts at Tobey Park.

And, although I often underscore the progress taking place throughout the City of Memphis' Division of Parks and Neighborhoods, yesterday Director Nick Walker went a step further by presenting a comprehensive update of the work accomplished within the department on citizens' behalf over the last quarter.

Highlights included the following:

1. *Seniors Centers*, of which there are five city-wide, i.e., Lewis, McWherter, Frayser-Raleigh, Orange Mound, and Ruth Tate, served 14,349 meals between April 1 and August 31,
2. *Community Centers*, of which there are twenty-two city-wide, experienced a collective enrollment of 857 children between June 21 and August 6, educating campers on Memphis' unique cultural, social, and historical background,
3. *Park Activation Events*, which have taken place each week since June 21, saw 3,151 youth and adult participants, to-date, and counting, with opportunities that involve, but are not limited to, movie nights, ballet, yoga, cardio, and tai chi,
4. *Organized Athletics/Aquatics*, which comprise soccer, baseball, softball, golf, kickball, swim lessons, and free swim, counted 13,155 participants across all age groups,
5. *Leftwich Tennis Center's Complete Rebuild* is now ready to begin,
6. *Ed Rice Community Center's Complete Rebuild* is now sixty-five percent complete,
7. *McFarland Park's Playground Renewal* is now eighty-five percent complete,
8. *Wolf River Greenway's Phase 4 Construction* is now eighty-five percent complete, and finally,
9. *Providing a full Parks CIP Overview*, there are thirty-four total projects, with eighteen in the design phase, twelve in the construction phase, three in the bid phase, and one completed.

Taken together, the Council views these developments as both positive and necessary as we strive to secure healthy outcomes for all Memphians.

View Director Walker's presentation, [here](#).

Funding the Division of Fire Services:

By the same token, as we push to improve citizens' well-being, safety must be given due attention. Therefore, yesterday the Council passed a series of resolutions in the total amount of \$1,307,596.22, all focused upon funding the *Best in Red*.

By the numbers, the dollars will be utilized in the following manner:

- I. \$1,000 accepted and appropriated from PDI 2/Nice-Pak Park, to be used for Emergency Medical Services-based medical supplies,
- II. \$5,000 accepted and appropriated from Georgia Pacific, to be used for the purchase of extrication suits and safety boots,
- III. \$14,800.22 accepted as reimbursement funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security related to Tropical Cyclone IDA, *and*
- IV. \$1,286,796 accepted via grant funds from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to be used for the annual sustainment of Tennessee Task Force One.

Spread the Word – MLGW Payment Assistance Programs:

Finally, as we move through the fall season, and anticipate winter's return, spread the word regarding MLGW's available payment assistance programs, of which many exist!

For instance, did you know there are *at least* ten "major assistance programs" currently offered to utility customers in need of support?

Yesterday, Mr. Jim West, MLGW Vice President and Chief Customer Officer, accepted the Council's request to attend the [morning MLGW Committee](#), where he outlined the various ways you, as well as your neighbors, can seek billing-based relief at any given time.

View MLGW's payment plan(s) presentation, [here](#).

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Looking Forward:

As always, I am honored to serve you each day as part of a thirteen-councilmember team working to transform our 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.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Colvett, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chairman Frank Colvett, Jr.
Memphis City Council
District 2