

**Mayor's Report to City Council
March 9, 2010**

Parks Plan Award

The City of Lancaster and Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc. have been honored with an award from the American Society of Landscape Architects for our Urban Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. In presenting the award, the Society noted that the City's comprehensive parks plan addresses the challenges of successful public space utilization, employs an effective private-public partnership to foster community participation, and exemplifies many attributes of Smart Growth. Our Comprehensive Parks Plan was also cited as a useful guide for open space enhancements, recognizing that 'green' infrastructure improvements benefit the City's environment, health, and quality of life.

Purchase of Property

In accordance with previous authorizations from City Council, today we settled on the purchase of the former Treasury building behind City Hall. The purchase price and closing costs for the building totaled approximately \$259,000.

While we have no immediate plans for the property, we decided that we should move forward with the purchase for several reasons:

- The current property owners have been in limbo as to what to do with the property since last year, when initial discussions with the City about purchasing the building began. They had started to do some work on the property and suspended that work while our discussions continued. It would not have been fair to keep the current property owners on hold any longer.
- After many years of looking for alternative locations to consolidate most City operations under one roof, it is clear that one of the few remaining options is to consolidate using the current City Hall and some adjoining properties. While we are not in a position to move forward with construction of an annex to City Hall in the near future, it is in the long term best interests of the City to control this property in order to enable future expansion.

The funds for this purchase are from the City's Capital Improvement Program which is funded entirely with proceeds from the 2007 bond issue. Funds from bond issues can only be spent on capital projects which represent long-term investments by the City. Bond funds cannot be spent on annual operating, salary or benefit expenses. The City Council approved Capital Improvement Plan budget included use of up to \$5,000,000 of bond funds for the purchase of new, or renovation of current, City property to consolidate scattered City operations. This is a small investment that can eventually save the City significant expenses if an expansion of City Hall is eventually pursued.

Federal Courthouse

As you know, the Federal Government is moving forward with plans for the long-awaited construction of a Federal Courthouse in the City. We've met with Judge Lawrence Stengel and representatives of the General Services Administration to discuss the site selection process for this \$30 million dollar project. Newspaper advertisements and internet postings have specified

plans to construct a new, stand-alone Courthouse of approximately 37 thousand square feet. The media has already reported on sites that were discussed in our meeting. We've been advised that the GSA and the US Court will work with our community in a site selection process that is expected to take 3 to 6 months for completion.

NEW HUMAN RESOURCES CHIEF

I'm pleased to report that this week, Cristina Vivo began serving as the City's new Human Resources Bureau Chief. This position has been vacant since last June, and having Ms. Vivo on board has been worth the wait. Cristina has 14 years of experience in municipal government as the Director of Personnel for the City of Casselberry, Florida. She brings public sector experience that includes a long history in labor relations, contract negotiations, policy and benefits administration, and training. In spite of last month's record-breaking snowfall, Cristina has relocated to Lancaster with her husband, Richard, and their 50 pound dog and 2 cats. We welcome her to the City and look forward to working with her to improve service to our employees and to our residents.

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