



Commentary: David Goins Summarizes First Five Months as Mayor

by David Goins
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ALTON - The first five months have been a transition period for my administration. And I would be less than honest if I said there haven't been some mistakes, but with that said I remain as committed as ever to making Alton a place where families can work and raise their children.

In reviewing my first five months in office, I would say the biggest challenge has been to get my hands around the city's financial records, audit, and reporting procedures. After taking office, we hired a temporary person to reconcile the city's financial monthly statements. Unfortunately, we were delayed in hiring a comptroller due to the City's residency requirements, but I am pleased to report that Ms. Debbie Dunlap has

been hired as the new comptroller. She possesses over 30 years of accounting, grant compliance and administrative experience in both government and private sectors. Currently our comptroller, treasurer and I are examining the City's financial deficit and researching the various usages of the America Rescue plan Act funds. Once specific purposes are determined, we will discuss usage possibilities with the City Council, then the community.

Recently community safety has been the focus and neither Chief Pulido, nor I are happy about these incidents of violence in downtown Alton and in a couple other areas of the community. We have implemented new policies, including greater police presence in downtown Alton on Friday and Saturday nights; zero tolerance for violations of city ordinances such as the drinking of alcohol outside, loitering, fighting, and anything that creates public disorder. We will increase police visibility via additional officers in the downtown area and in other problem areas of the community. We will not tolerate violation of liquor laws and state statutes or city ordinances that create public disorder and reduce the public safety of our citizens.

I am pleased to announce that my administration has met regularly with Alton Labor and Trades Leaders and have jointly signed a new Project Labor Agreement (PLA). This agreement establishes the terms and conditions of employment for a specific construction project.

Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville has been engaged to assist my administration with grant writing opportunities, as well as to develop the framework for an Alton Community Comprehensive Strategic Planning process. The focus of this effort will be to identify short- and long-term projects to address critical City needs and opportunities. Recognizing the current opportunities for stimulus funding from the State and Federal governments.

This Community Comprehensive Strategic Plan will provide a shared vision for residents and city leaders, manage future change, and help the city achieve its potential as a destination community to live, work, and visit. Together with these partners, we can focus on economic development, community development, and the revitalization of areas including downtown, the riverfront, and Broadway. In light of the federal and state stimulus funding resulting from the Covid-19 Pandemic, the city has an unprecedented opportunity to address short- and long-term infrastructure, tourism, and economic development needs.

Under the Alton Public Works Department, infrastructure, street, and cleanup initiatives are occurring. Public Works Director Mike Parsons is working closely with our council members to identify and prioritize street and sidewalk repairs and to ensure equity across neighborhoods. Director Parsons will continue to announce pending work before

it begins to minimize potential disruptions to residents and commuters. Our primary goal will be to focus on critical repairs to our streets and sidewalks, along with city beautification and cleanup

Other infrastructure and city cleanup initiatives include the Alton State Street Drainage Improvement; Turner Tract Sewer Separation where Illinois American Water Company must separate sewer water from stormwater pipes; William Street Brick replacement project repairs resulting from the 2019 flood; Paving and sealing of approximately ten streets; Continuation of Phase 2 Safe Routes to School Projects including the widening of sidewalks, construction of retention walls, and improved stormwater drainage, along Rock Springs Drive, from College to Memorial Drive. In addition, the city street sweeper will remain in each of the City's seven wards for two weeks before it moves to the adjacent ward. I want to reiterate that the FEMA funding for the Riverview Drive project is still in place and has not been pulled from the Alton Community,

The City Council and I are aware that we are facing challenges such balancing the City's budget, diversifying our police department, public works and park and recreation and we are working to find solutions to the issues.