

TRENDING

The Week

Community Policing Report Gets Praise and Heat During Public Hearing

On October 1, the City Council held the first public hearing on a 478-page report, written primarily by Sgt. Fox of the Columbia Police Department, regarding possible approaches to community policing. The report outlined a 12-point program for implementation that included a call for more funding and the addition of up to 60 additional officers.

Surprisingly, only 6 members of the public showed up to air their concerns, and most took issue with individual parts of the report. Speakers generally noted that the report needs to focus more on top-down change in the department; the lack of trust between some parts of our population and the police; the defensive point of view expressed in the report that blamed the media for inflaming public perceptions about crime; and the lack of a cohesive vision statement for implementation of the plan. Some individuals and council members also criticized the report for focusing too much on the funding and resource aspects of the community policing plan and not enough on how such a plan could be launched within the existing culture of the Columbia Police Department.

Most council members acknowledged the fact that writing such a massive a report was a challenging task, but asked for a better definition of what community policing actually is and asked for the report to focus more on how to get buy in from the police department and population at-large before they start planning how to finance what could be an expensive policing program. A remark by the report's author that new ballot language for a tax increase could be prepared in time to be placed on the April Municipal election ballot was met with skepticism by individual council members.

[LINK TO COLUMBIA TRIBUNE STORY ON THIS SUBJECT](#)

Links Of Interest

[Link to Community Policing Draft Report – City of Columbia](#)

[MU's Smith Gets Nobel Nod – Columbia Missourian](#)

Mizzou at South Carolina Men's Football – 11:00 AM (CDT)
TV: SEC Network
Radio: 96.7 FM, 105.1 FM; 1580 AM

[Important Dates – November Election Calendar – Boone County Clerk](#)

Deeper Dive

CityWatch Regular Council Meeting Recap – October 1, 2018
[\(Additional Subscription Required\)](#)

CityWatch Regular P&Z Meeting Recap – October 4, 2018
[\(Additional Subscription Required\)](#)

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The Rest Of The Story

Other items of interest from City Council and P&Z hearings:

- P&Z denies Victory Christian Church request to NOT build sidewalks.
- 47-individuals parcels will ask for downzoning in central Columbia at next Council meeting
- Energy & Environment Commission asks for new look at how food waste is collected and recycled in Columbia.
- After speed tables, Thomas asks to reduce speed limit to 25 mph on Stewart Road
- P&Z asks London Drive neighbors and car dealer to work out legal issues first. Tables decision on zoning issue.
- Peters asks staff to provide historical report on sewer bond issues in Columbia

Does Electricity Grow On Trees?

A new plan to install solar panels on 93 acres of land located in eastern Columbia won council approval on Monday. The project is known as a “solar farm”, but the zoning designation will be Planned, not Agricultural or Industrial.

The applicant company has a contract with the city to supply renewable energy to the city, but disagreements over whether the operation should be defined as a public or private utility led to additional requirements for landscaping, buffering and stormwater management, and the ultimate decision to avoid heavy industrial zoning in favor of a regulated Planned approach.

The site will have low lighting, low parking requirements and perimeter screening, but will allow 48,000 individual solar panels to be installed on the property. Solar farms require no rainfall.

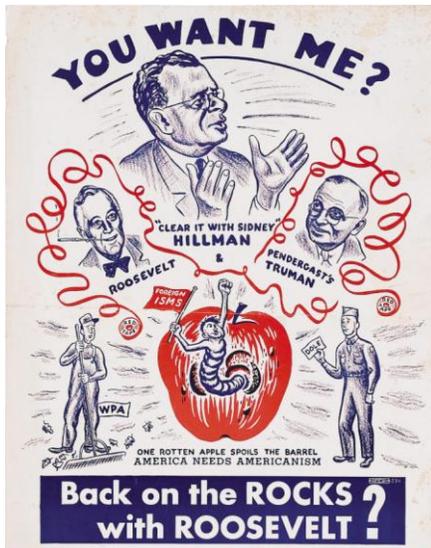
Clear Creek Project Gets Best Sewer Option

A new, 45-home, 143-acre subdivision will be built just south of the Columbia city limits. It’s called Clear Creek (due to its proximity to a creek of the same name) and will become a neighbor of Rock Bridge State Park. Appropriate zoning and plat approval was granted earlier by the Boone County Commission (since it is in the county), and utility providers will include the Consolidated Water District and Boone Electric. After action by the Columbia City Council, the subdivision will become a customer of the Boone County Regional Sewer District and will access a city sewer connection that was built years ago on this county-located property.

The city approved a required pre-annexation agreement for the non-city project to tie into city lines (even though the city lines are in the county), and the execution of an agreement between the city and BCRSD to determine who gets what in terms of sewer connection fees, rate payments and maintenance responsibilities.

Some recent projects have met resistance from the city due to the cost of infrastructure extension and the fear that new projects would not generate enough revenue to city coffers to cover costs. This project was able to demonstrate that: 1) the best option for treatment was to utilize this previously constructed sewer system; 2) sufficient capacity existed in the line; and 3) the whole agreement was reasonably fair to all parties.

The city will retain the right to annex the property in the future, but is not required to invoke that option. The builder will be allowed to build under county standards with an eye toward compatibility with city regulations. And, the inevitable output from the new homes will go into a well-designed treatment system rather than having to rely on mini-treatment systems. It’s a win-win-win situation. Council approved both the pre-annexation agreement and the agreement with BCRSD unanimously on Monday night.



Anti-Roosevelt poster circa 1944

Think recent political ads have been too negative, too nasty or just flat out untrue? It's been going on for a while. Here's an example from 1944. (Contact us if you have an interesting political item that we might feature in this space.)

Councilman Apologizes To Police

Current 4th Ward Council Member, Ian Thomas, found himself the target of police discontent this week after a public hearing on a new Community Policing report. In his remarks, Thomas implied that “there are serious violations occurring to people of color”, presumably due to the actions of members of the Columbia Police Department. Columbia Police Officers Association Executive Director, Dale Roberts, took issue with that characterization and challenged Thomas to either apologize or offer proof about specific instances of discrimination or abuse.

Thomas chose to issue an apology and clarify his initial remarks. According to a post on his constituent website, Thomas apologized “to all Columbia Police Department officers for giving the impression that I was criticizing them, which was not my intention at all. In fact, I was speaking in general terms, but I recognize my error in using careless language, and I wish to take this opportunity to emphasize my support for the courageous and difficult work undertaken by officers every day.”

Thomas further clarified his remarks by indicating that he was really criticizing the apparent “us vs. them” mentality that seemed to emerge in the draft policing report, and thought that mindset was not constructive as the city searches for new policing approaches.

[FULL TEXT OF APOLOGY AVAILABLE AT THIS LINK](#)

Skala Suggests Tenant “Bill of Rights”

During the most recent City Council meeting, 3rd Ward Council Member Karl Skala suggested that some properties owned by “absentee landlords” may require additional inspections and scrutiny from the city. He also suggested opening a discussion regarding the creation of a city-wide “tenant bill of rights”. A report on the topic is expected at future council hearings. No official report or documentation is currently available.

The deadline to register to vote in the November 6th, 2018 General Election is October 10, 2018 at 5:00 PM.

Candidates Begin Public Appearance Schedule

It's just a month from the General Election scheduled for Tuesday, November 6. In a run up to the election, paid ads have begun to fill media outlets, and direct mail is on the uptick. There are also a number of free events that will feature the opinions of candidates in some of the most hotly contested races.

Next up on the agenda is a debate, hosted by the Columbia Tribune and radio station KOPN, between Incumbent Boone County Clerk Taylor Burks and Democratic challenger Brianna Lennon. The forum will be held Tuesday, October 9 in Douglas High School Gymnasium from 5:30 to 7:00 PM.

If you can't attend, the event will be livestreamed on the Tribune's Facebook page and rebroadcast the following morning on KOPN Radio.

KFRU Radio has also announced that it will offer interview time prior to the election to all county candidates on the ballot. Interviews will be split between the *Columbia Morning with David Lile* show and *The Morning Meeting with Simon Rose and Renee Hulshof*.

CityWatch-Columbia

citywatchcolumbia@gmail.com

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New Rules To Roll

Bird Scooters are one step (or one roll) closer to gaining official acceptance by the city of Columbia. Although more than 350 of the motorized devices have appeared on the Columbia scene in the last two months, no business license has been granted to the company. Apparently, that's about to change.

A preliminary agreement will require the company to remit \$1 per day for each scooter deployed in the city; will better define both hours and areas of operation; and will not prohibit competing companies who offer alternative transportation from entering the market. Indications are that Bird is willing to fly with this arrangement.

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For other questions or suggestions, contact us at citywatchcolumbia@gmail.com.

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103 East Brandon, Columbia, MO

