

State of the City Address

Fairhope Mayor Tim Kant

Sunday, March 24, 2013

Good afternoon, I want to thank Fairhope First for hosting this event each year for our citizens. Also, thanks to our Dogwood Court for being here, during Spring Break and all of you being here on this beautiful Palm Sunday.

First, I would like to recognize our Fairhope City Council, Kevin Boone, Jack Burrell, Diana Brewer, Rich Mueller and Mike Ford. Kevin and Rich are in the audience. The Council is moving at a fast pace, they have reinstated the funeral escorts and appointed Joe Petties as Police Chief of the Fairhope Police Department.

Looking back at 2012, we hosted the Governor's Conference, the Ozone Baseball Tournament and the Fairhope football field was awarded the Field of Excellence by Pioneer. New things for 2013, include the Fairhope Film Festival set for November, the 2.5 Million Aviation Training Center at the Fairhope Airport. It is very exciting to think that your children can go to school here, learn skills at the Aviation Training Center and find a job in the area. The Fairhope Veteran's Memorial will be dedicated on April 2 at 10 a.m., everyone one is welcome and encouraged to attend. Also, the Catholic High School will be built in Fairhope within the next two years. We have some really exciting things to look forward to

in 2013.

Moving on to City Government topics-construction has increased from 49.9 to 81.7 Million. New Single Family Houses have increased from 144 to 248. The City of Fairhope has adopted the 2012 building codes, our ISO rating has improved to a 5, we are working on the Volanta watershed project, sidewalks at Fairhope Elementary School and to allow the hospital to expand, as they are in the Medical Overlaid District. New projects that are in process are the Objects building in downtown Fairhope is going to be rebuilt, the old Theater Building on the corner of Fairhope Avenue and Church Street, Country Place Senior Living is about to break ground behind Arbor Gates and the Colonial Inn will be rebuilt on South Mobile Street.

The City of Fairhope had several employees retire this past year: Ed Nolte, Sewer Plant Manager; Rose Fogarty, Finance Director; Sandy Kelly, Court Magistrate; Joe Ramos, Electric Department; Julius Pettaway, Sanitation; Steve Seay, Gas Superintendent. If any other City employees are in attendance today, please stand. Thank you for all you do for the City. This year, Nancy Bell was recognized as Employee of the Year. Nancy has been with the City of Fairhope for 10 years and works as Payroll Administrator, when she is not doing payroll she is working with the finance department. We have a total of three people that work in the finance department.

Moving onto Public Utilities, Fairhope received the best water award for the State and the Region, now a sample of our water will go on to the National Competition. I would like to recognize the Water Department for doing a great job! Also, I would like to mention that AMEA (who supplies the City of Fairhope with power) signed a contract with Alabama power until 2025. Because of this contract, the residents of Fairhope should not be affected with an increase for about 2 ½ years.

Moving to Finances, since 2000, the City has had a positive increase and remained in the black, again this year. Total Revenue for fiscal year 10/1/11 – 9/30/12 was \$63,846,838 and total expenses of \$58,391, 445, leaving \$5,455,393 in excess revenue. Total cash in the bank including all accounts as of 9/30/12 is \$35,811,223, 64% increase over last year.

Looking forward to 2013, our Capital Projects need attention and we are working together to address those needs. As well as, our compressive plan needs to be looked at, as Airbus is moving into the area, we need to look at how big we want our city to be and the amount of annexation that will be considered. In addition, we have reduced costs, by eliminating five manager positions, reducing take home vehicles and overtime. The City also paid off the library loan, saving us \$515, 000 and reducing transfers by 50% in the amount of \$300,000. The debt reduction plan is also in place, if we keep on the same track we are on all the City's

debt will be retired in 19 years. Total debt payments for current fiscal year is \$4,578,069, payoff for next fiscal year is \$4,755,000, decreasing debt service by \$410,000.

Looking toward Recreation Improvements, the Manley Road Soccer Complex will be built this year. This is an active community and it needs to be able to have the resources available to our young people who want to play sports. The community park is in need of repair, whether it is removal of the current structure and it be built for the City or a community build. It needs to be available for all children and will be ADA accessible. Also, I meet with the students at the Fairhope schools; Fairhope Middle School students shared their thoughts and concerns with me. The City will address the Irrigation at the Quail Creek golf course this year.

In addition to sports recreation, we are also making plans to install sidewalks from Rock Creek to Hwy 104, Parker Road, Main Street to Hwy 98, Quail Creek and Blue Island. There has been enough talk about these projects, it is time to make a plan and implement it. Some of us love to walk or ride bikes; we are working to make plans to also connect our neighborhoods.

The City is working to finish the street resurfacing on Fairhope Avenue/Hwy 98 and the streets that were not completed last year. Plans are in progress to complete these projects. Also, the turn lane on Hwy 181 will be funded and completed by the State.

The Utilities Capital Projects are also underway, the Morphy Avenue Power Line project with the Electric Department involving metal poles and 44 lines will cost \$600,000, the start of the sewer plant project costing \$2,000,000 and the Rock Creek Waterline will be \$1,000,000.

Over the past 10 years we have been looking at ways to stop storm water, we do not want to have the problems Dog River has. The City is proposing the purchase of 108 acres with the Restore Act money. I was recently in Washington, DC with some of our council members and meet with our senators and congressman. I shared our finding with them and they were very encouraging and receptive, they said to keep moving forward. The City Council and the Dyas family are working together to make this a win for everyone. The Restore Act will address many projects; this is the only submission the City of Fairhope will make in hopes to receive funding from the Restore Act.

Last year, I started an Anti-Litter Campaign contest with the 5th graders at Fairhope Intermediate School and J. Larry Newton. This year's winner did a great job on creating the art for the contest; her name is Bryleigh Johnson and is a student at J. Larry Newton. I would also, like to recognize our Volunteer of the Year Mary Gregg. Mary started volunteering at the Fairhope Public Library in 2003 (when the library was in its former location), has been president of the Friends of the Library twice, manages the bookstore, since 2008, has worked as

chair or co-chair on the Chocolate & Champagne Fundraiser committee, this event has raised for than \$60,000 for the library, been an active volunteer with Arts & Crafts, Alabama Coastal BirdFest and past co-chair of the Dauphin Island Race. Mary settled in Fairhope in 1997.

“Standing up for quality ensures Fairhope’s future.” –Mayor Tim Kant

Fairhope First now presents....the Quality of Life Recipient for 2013 to...Donnie Barrett.

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