

## April 6, 2018 GAC Reports

### **MetroPlan – Keith Keck**

The UCA Center for Community and Economic Development briefed seats are still available for the Small Developers Conference to be held on May 31.

— MetroPlan voted to move an emergency project to the top of the obligation fallout funding list for a Jacksonville Bridge Project needed to alleviate a neighborhood from being cutoff whenever any significant rainfall falls.

— MetroPlan was briefed on several potential governing body restructuring options. These options will be discussed at the April 16-17 MetroPlan Retreat that is being hosted by Hot Springs Village.

### **Healthcare and Medical Services - Richard Johnson**

It was previously reported that the Saline Health System would be locating a new medical clinic at Hot Springs Village with the proposed location to be just outside of the Village East Gate. The existing facility will require significant renovation to convert to a medical office building. A second site located at the Good Samaritan campus on Desoto Blvd is also being considered at this time. A decision will be made soon to determine the most feasible site. The new clinic is projected to be completed and ready to see patients in the September/October timeframe.

It has been suggested that CHI St Vincent is currently planning changes that could impact the access and delivery of medical services at its HSV clinic locations however efforts to obtain more information were unsuccessful.

During the recent activities to develop a Comprehensive Master Plan to serve as a guide for future development for HSV, "Healthcare and Medical Services" has been designated as one of the issues that could impact future growth. As part of a study conducted by the Governmental Affairs Committee to assess the HSV Medical Community a Directory was developed listing all healthcare and medical practitioners and providers, their location, and their hours of operations. The directory was to serve as a resource guide for visitors and Village residents and newcomers seeking medical services. Action to complete the product for distribution is underway. Pam Avila is editing the current version of the directory and Lou Otto will be overseeing production of the final product. Richard Johnson will be responsible for maintaining the accuracy and of the data. There is no timeline for completing the directory.

### **Hot Springs—Jerry Yeric**

- The 621 acres between the corporate limits and Lake Hamilton, at the center of a two-year controversy received some resolution last week with the state Court of Appeals clearing the

way for Hot Springs to execute the January, 2016 ordinance that called for the area's annexation.

- A settlement was approved in the class action lawsuit filed against Hot Springs' false alarm ordinance establishing a \$110,000 fund for the 255 class members. The city and the Municipal League each contributed \$55,000.
- The Arkansas Department of Health has reported the capacities it approved for the city's two water treatment plants are too high an admission prompted by a letter it received from the engineering firm the city has contracted for consultation on its water system and the design of a new treatment plant and distribution system.
- The Hot Springs Metro Partnership has announced Thermal Fusion! This new business incubator is being established in downtown Hot Springs to help get new businesses off the ground. Clients of Thermal Fusion will receive highly discounted office space for lease and access to all modern office amenities such as meeting rooms, utilities, etc.

#### **Garland—Jerry Yeric**

- President Hogan announced that Phase One of National Park College's master plan is "imminent." This phase will include a new entrance on Mountain Pine Road for more visibility, and a new 51,000 sq. foot student commons building, a marine technology building and a remodel of the Gerald Fisher Building.
- John Howard will become the county's full time attorney in April with an annual salary of \$100,000. Human Resources Committee job description calls for Howard to issue legal opinions and advice, serve as the Quorum Court's legal counsel and fill other duties assigned by the county judge.
- The Hot Springs Senior Center has temporarily closed until it can relocate from the old Hot Springs National Guard Armory at 210 Woodbine St., CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs announced Friday. The hospital is looking for a temporary location until it can find a permanent spot to deliver services it provides to about 50-100 seniors a day for more than 20 years. The Area Agency on Aging of West Central Arkansas is the program's primary benefactor.

#### **2018 POA Board Election—Jerry Yeric**

Elections are the foundation of democratic governance. As pointed out in the CMP, the village operates as a quasi-municipal government. Moreover, the function and responsibilities of boards have drastically changed with the withdrawal of Cooper Communities. This change is clearly reflected in the electoral process for the board members are held more accountable and are called upon to make more decisions than past boards. There are two components to elections. The first is straightforward—who won and who lost. The second is not, for it attempts to explain why, and by its nature is difficult for

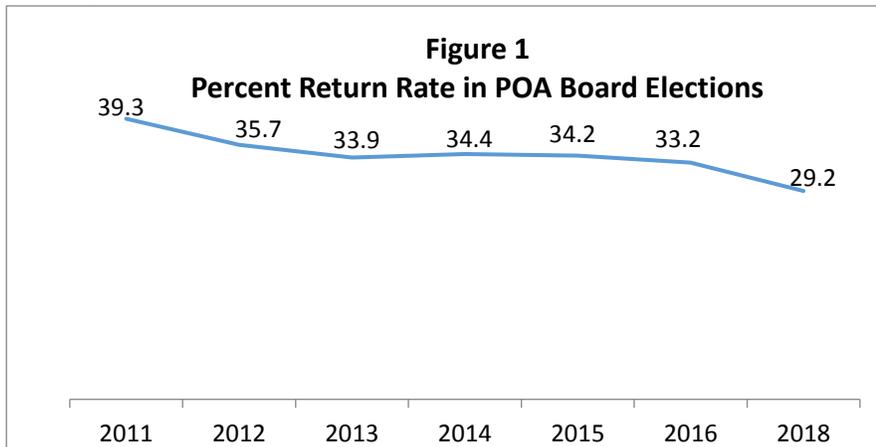
there are a number of reasons and some may not be rational, reasonable or understandable. This said, there are several observations that can be made regarding the POA board election that contributes to our understanding of the election. Aside from the results, there are three areas that place the results in a broader context. They are: (1) the percentage of eligible voters who cast a vote—turnout. (2) How the votes were distributed between resident and non-resident property owners, and finally, (3) The role of incumbency..

### Results

Nancy Luehring and Buddy Dixon were separated by 2 votes in total votes, each receiving 24.3 percent. Cindi Erickson was the third member elected with 19.5 percent of the total vote, followed by two incumbents, Marcy Mermel at 18.8 percent and George Parker at 13 percent.

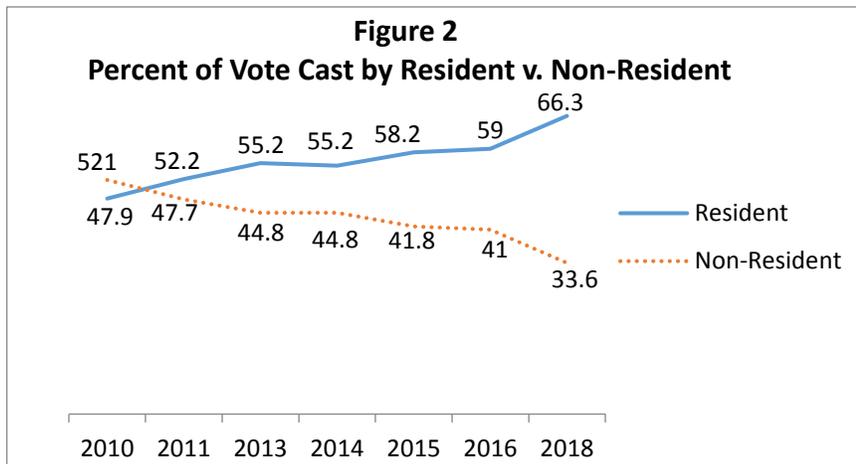
### Turnout

Turnout is the critical element in all elections for both a practical and theoretical reason. The practical component is that a candidate cannot win without those who favor their candidacy going to the polls and casting a vote. The theoretical facet concerns the health of the democratic process for the larger the turnout the more likely the vote reflects the will of the people and not a small sub-set. There are two aspects to this issue that need to be addressed.



The first is seen in Figure 1 and that is the percent of property owners in good standing who voted. As the figure indicates there has been a ten percent decline in voting since 2011. This election had the lowest turnout during the period with 29.2 percent returning their ballot. There were 23,599 ballots mailed which was 102 more than in last board election in

2016. The second question, frequently a topic of public discourse, is the inordinate control of the non-resident property owner over the election of the board. However, the data clearly do not support this contention. Since the 2010 election, the majority of ballots have been cast by resident property owners and the 2018 election indicates that his pattern has markedly increased. As Figure 2 indicates, the percent of the vote cast by residents was 66.3 percent compared to the non-resident vote of 33.6 percent. The significance of this distribution is not only the impact resident voters have on board elections, but it also provides valuable insight into the changing nature of the community in a broader context. Whereas in the past non-resident voters voted at a higher rate than residents, that pattern was reversed after the 2010 election. It should be noted that in the 2010 election the winning candidates received more votes from residents than non-residents. The significance of this figure goes beyond the numbers for it illustrates the changing nature of the electorate and that they are predominately our neighbors. It also indicates the changing role of the board since it, not the developer, is viewed as final the decision-maker. In the past there was always the outside developer



(Cooper) who was viewed as the ultimate decision-maker; those days are past and now the burden falls to the actions of the board.

Incumbency

Being an incumbent is perceived as an advantage in elections and there is an abundance of research to support this contention at all levels of government. However, the history of incumbents being re-elected in HSV is quite

different. Since 2000 there have been ten candidates who have sought re-election to the POA Board in a contested election<sup>1</sup>. Only three have succeeded (Breckon and Shoemaker in 2006, and Adkins in 2008). The remaining seven have been unsuccessful in their re-election (Wolfe, in 2006, Jackson in 2010, Feather and Brandt in 2012, Bateman in 2015, and Mermel and Parker in 2018). In the past two contested elections where incumbents sought re-election, they were unsuccessful. Two of the three carried the resident vote (Bateman and Mermel) but lost the non-resident vote. The remaining five unsuccessful candidates each received more non-resident votes than resident votes. To place some perspective on this, the number of votes that separated the lowest winning candidate’s total from the next candidate was calculated in all elections from 1984-2018<sup>2</sup>. The 2018 election had the 4th lowest difference with 135 votes separating the winning candidate Erikson from Mermel. The other three elections were in 1984 with a 108 vote margin separating the two candidates, 2000 with an 84 vote margin, and the narrowest margin of victory was in 1990 where only 15 votes made the difference between being elected. All votes matter, and in close elections, this is magnified.

**Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Planning Organization Report - David Whitlow**

The Tri-Lakes MPO Policy Board did not meet in March. The next scheduled meeting of the board will be May 24th, 2018.

A scheduled meeting of the MPO Technical Committee in April has been cancelled.

Robert Tucker, MPO Study Director, died unexpectedly in early March. His expertise and guidance will be missed by members of the Tri-Lakes MPO. No replacement has been named as of this date.

A public involvement meeting was held by ARDOT on Thursday, March 15, 2018, at the Living Word Worship Center on Park Avenue. The purpose of the meeting was to seek input and answer questions on the widening of Highway 7 from Highway 7 Spur (Gulpha Gorge Road) to the intersection of Highway 5 and 7 in Garland County.

<sup>1</sup> Mike Medica was re-elected in 2017 without opposition.

<sup>2</sup> Data were not available for 1999 and 2004 elections, and in 1987 and 2016 were uncontested election.

A roundabout is proposed at the intersection of Highways 5/7 and the proposed extension of MLK Parkway.

Other ARDOT projects in Garland County are continuing on schedule.

### **Broadband Services Update – Greg Jones**

#### Wireless, Etc.

Met with Steve Gill from Wireless, Etc. a wireless broadband service provider from the Hot Springs area. He had previously met with Jason Temple about a potential solution for SCADA data collection within the public utilities in HSV. His company operates wireless data services for rural areas using long range wireless technologies. We discussed the issues in the village with coverage and he feels his solution could be of benefit. However, he is looking for the POA to grant him land for towers that would be needed to cover the required areas. I am somewhat concerned about the economics of his solution since he currently charges \$170 for 25 Mbps service to his customers. He also needs about 100 subscribers for his ROI model per other which might be unachievable.

I am investigating other solutions that could be constructed with much lower capital costs. This should lead to a much lower ROI and potentially lower monthly charges for residents that would subscribe to the service.

#### Other:

I have received the draft of a letter that the residents of the Binefar/Fenix area are sending to Suddenlink to request service. There are approximately 35 homes in this service area that have limited or no broadband access. Their goal is to express the desire to the carrier to try to convenience them to cover their neighborhood. I told them I would make sure it gets to the right people at Suddenlink and follow up.

### **The Hot Springs Village Area Chamber of Commerce – Michael Dollar**

- Follow-up meeting on a 5-County Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) realignment. Organizations will press forward with marketing the area as an (asterisk) “self-defined” MSA.
- Annual Arkadelphia Awards Banquet at Henderson State University – sold out with 400 attendees. President of AR Trucking Association was guest speaker.
- First Electric Cooperative of Arkansas held a luncheon in Benton. A presentation was given by their CEO who received much positive feedback from the audience. He mentioned that broadband remains on their radar, but on the back-burner for the time being.

- A MetroPlan email from Keith Keck made the Chamber aware of Opportunity Zone grants. Garland County Judge Davis & JPs were made aware and Davis quickly submitted Census Tracts: 103, 104, & 120.01 (North Garland County) for consideration within the very tight submission deadline.
- The Chamber's Education Work Group:
  - Participating in SkillsUSA as Job Interview Judge on April 10<sup>th</sup> 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
  - Visited the state-wide EAST Conference at Hot Springs Convention Center where a short HSV video was displayed.
  - As a Community Partner with Fountain Lake, will be completing a video project when weather conditions permit.
- First Security Bank Kickoff Classic (Fountain Lake vs Hot Springs) announcement was made Tuesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 10 AM. HSV Area and Greater Hot Springs Chambers of Commerce are supporting Fountain Lake Athletic Director, Marc Davis, and the week-long schedule of events and competitions that comprise a build-up to the first high school football game of the season in Garland County. Coaches from both schools promise the rivalry will have a high degree of sportsmanship coupled with competitive, winning attitudes from their student athletes.
- The Non-Profit Panel for WED 28<sup>th</sup>'s Partner Up Luncheon at Christ of the Hills UMC were: Abilities Unlimited, HSV Community Foundation, HSV Audubon Society, and the HSV Police Academy Alumni.