



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Greenlaw and Members of City Council
FROM: Beverly R. Cameron, City Manager
DATE: October 1, 2013
SUBJECT: City Manager's Update

Highlights of major activities and other notable developments:

Fredericksburg DSS Implements Therapy Dog Program - The Board of Social Services recently approved the implementation of a Therapy Dog Program at the Department of Social Services. "Buddy" and his handler Michelle Matthews, the Department's Resource Parent trainer, became a Pet Therapy team in May 2013 after completing a certified training and assessment program through [Therapy Dogs Incorporated](#). Research shows the emotional and physical benefits of dog-person contact and a growing number of states are using therapy pets in courts, schools, prisons, and juvenile facilities.



At the Department, Buddy is available on an as-needed basis to support children and reduce their stress during family meetings, visitations with their biological families when the children are in foster care, and when the Department has executed a removal in child protective services cases.

Buddy has already had a positive impact on one 3-year-old boy. "John" is in foster care and demonstrated extreme anxiety during weekly visits with his biological mother. At a recent meeting, Buddy met John in the parking lot for a walk around the block before his visit. The visit went smoothly and the next week, Buddy met John at the back door of our building and they walked together to visit with his mother. The child's anxiety level has decreased substantially and the Department can now focus on rebuilding the relationship between John and his mother.

Buddy is a 6-year-old stay at home Dandie Dinmont Terrier and weighs 22 pounds.

Detective Shares Info about Internet Scams - On September 12, Detective Patrick Lamb gave a presentation to a local organization called the Fredericksburg PC User's Group,

which is primarily comprised of retirees who share an interest in computers and technology. Detective Lamb's 2-hour discussion focused on common internet scams and particularly those that target the older population. During the presentation and subsequent question-and-answer period, Detective Lamb advised his audience on how to identify and avoid the fraudulent schemes that are used to obtain money from online victims.

Governor's Technology Award - The City was recently chosen as a finalist for the Governor's Technology Award in the category of "Innovative Use of Technology in Economic Development". Fredericksburg's Economic Development & Tourism and Information Technology Departments partnered with Worldview Solutions in Richmond to develop commercial property search functionality for the recently launched Economic Development website. The goal of this project was to provide new and existing businesses easy access to available sites and buildings within the city limits. Businesses looking to relocate or expand to the City of Fredericksburg formerly had to search by driving around the City or contacting multiple brokerages in order to discover a suitable property. The property search functionality now provides these businesses with multiple tools to assist them so they can easily find the right site or building to suit their business needs and site specifications.

The seamless integration with the City's [Geographic Information System](#) is one reason why this solution is innovative. Once a user selects a property, they can go directly to the property on the City's GIS and gather considerable amounts of information specific to that property. Some of the data that is easily available is zoning information, assessment information, parcel sketch, exterior and interior information, owner history, and multiple map layers (road lines, nature protection areas, overlay zoning districts, technology/tourism zones, historical, HUBZones). Another feature that makes this solution innovative is the amount of information that is easily accessible in a matter of seconds. All available commercial properties in the City of Fredericksburg can be easily compared, searched and mapped. Properties are easily kept up to date due to the integration with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's Virginia Scan database. Brokerages and property owners can now notify the Department of Economic Development of an available property any time of day or night by utilizing an automated form on the Economic Development website that allows submission of a commercial listing. This provides the property owner or broker with an additional venue for marketing.

One of the many advantages of the City's property search is that it is populated and updated by the Economic Development staff on a daily basis, providing real time information without waiting for review or approvals from other sites. Internal reporting generated by the site allows staff to modify individual reports for property owners and brokerages for monthly updates. The EDT Commercial Property Search site can be accessed via this link: <http://www.fredericksburgva.com/propertysearch/>

