



MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT A COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH I. GIARRUSO III



We're only four months into 2021 and so much has happened. Last year was particularly difficult for so many people. I'm proud to represent such incredible neighborhoods, whose residents step up every day to help each other. While there are a number of important topics to be addressed, this newsletter will focus on improved communication and zoning notices, the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, and roadwork updates.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at Joseph.Giarruso@nola.gov or 504.658.1010.

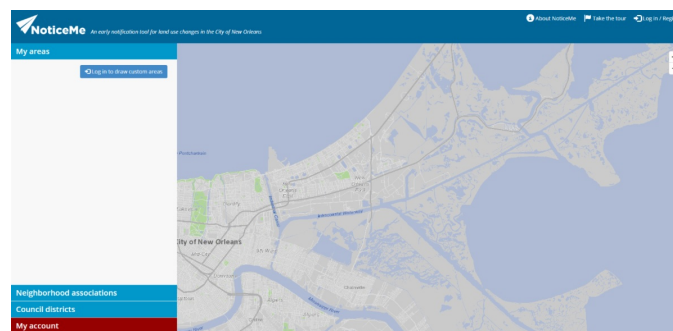
Best,

Joe

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION & ZONING NOTICES

Communication is the key to providing residents and businesses a clear set of guidelines. I am spearheading two important policy changes for improved and easier land use communications.

Permit Notification: In the past, residents were frequently unaware of new construction and renovations in their neighborhoods. Most new construction and renovation do not require any public participation if the project follows zoning codes. This process



leaves many people in the dark, and can cut down on the already-tight timeline neighbors have to appeal new development to the Board of Zoning Adjustments. Without the proper notice, neighbors could not challenge the appropriateness of those types of permits.

My office worked with Safety and Permits to add these specific notices to NoticeMe so neighbors were no longer caught off guard. As a reminder, NoticeMe allows you to be notified of zoning requests and permits in any neighborhood, any council district, or even citywide. I appreciate how quickly S&P worked to update NoticeMe to provide more transparency for residents. You can sign up for NoticeMe [here](#).

NPP Update: Pre-COVID, proposed zoning changes required (at a minimum) in-person community meetings where neighbors interact directly with applicants. The current emergency provisions, introduced during the height of COVID last year, only require applicants to provide an email address or phone number to affected neighbors. That does not allow for real neighborhood engagement. This far into the pandemic, everyone is using telephone or virtual conferences to meet. Zoning requests affecting near neighbors should follow a similar process.

That's why I've authored a motion – co-signed by all Councilmembers - to require teleconferencing, virtual, or other remote meeting formats to satisfy NPP requirements during a declared emergency. This motion, passed unanimously, authorizes the City Planning Commission to study this change and make any other appropriate recommendations to the Council. The Council is the final word on proposed changes.

SWBNO UPDATES



We wanted to update you on billing, pumping and power. Regarding billing, I still receive daily complaints of excessively high water bills from residents across the city. My staff meets weekly with Sewerage and Water Board (SWBNO) customer service officials to help remediate specific residential bills. If you have a billing complaint, please send it to our office.

In pumping news, on March 24, the pump at DPS 12 near Lakeview went offline, causing water pumped

from the lake into the City. SWBNO is beginning the in-house design process to replace the current hydraulic vacuum system with a pneumatic (air-driven) vacuum system for DPS 12. This will take 6-9 months to complete.

SWBNO reports Turbine 4 should be online by May and Turbine 5 should be operational no later than mid-June. Weatherization of Turbine 6 is expected by this summer bringing significant power redundancy back to the drainage system. A portion of SWBNO's power issue derives from the intricate process to deliver energy to our centuries-old turbines. The solution partially lies in constructing an energy substation at the Carrollton water plant. My office has been working with stakeholders for months and continues to work on funding for this vital project; some of the funding for these upgrades come from the Mayor's Fair Share deal.

Some longer-term power advancements include:

- Static Frequency Changer purchase and installation - 2022
- New Turbine 7 commissioning – early 2023
- Entergy substation – potential completion 2023

If you're having issues with your SWBNO bill or infrastructure issue, please don't hesitate to contact my office at 504-658-1010.

ROADWORK UPDATES

Many District A streets are currently under construction. Work is ongoing in Lakeview, Mid-City, Hollygrove, Carrollton, Black Pearl, and most of Uptown, and thousands of residents are impacted.

The Department of Public Works will discuss the pace of ongoing and future Joint Infrastructure Recovery Request (JIRR) roadwork at the April 15 Public Works Committee meeting. You can watch the livestream of this meeting beginning at 10 a.m. at council.nola.gov.

If you have issues accessing your home or want to know the progress of street work, please contact my office. If you want to know if your street is included in any project, visit RoadworkNOLA's website.



Have a great project idea for your community?
APPLY FOR A 2021 GRANT TODAY!
Eligible applications for the 2021 grant program will be accepted from:
February 17 - April 14, 2021 at 8:00 pm ET
Learn more and apply:
AARP.org/CommunityChallenge

Since 2017, grantees installed **5,649** tangible permanent or temporary improvements in their communities, and supported **938** resources, activities or programs, including the ones below.

AARP Community Challenge
Our friends at AARP have kicked off the 2021 Community Challenge grant program and are now accepting applications for the new grant cycle. The program is aimed at sparking change and improving the quality of life for people of all ages in communities nationwide. Visit www.AARP.org/CommunityChallenge to learn more about the program and how eligible organizations can apply through the April 14th deadline.

Questions or concerns? Please don't hesitate to contact my office at (504) 658-1010 or email me at Joseph.Giarrusso@nola.gov and continue to follow along on my social media pages below.



New Orleans City Council
Councilmember Joseph I. Giarrusso, District A