Mayor's Journal February 23-March 4

Monday, February 23: This morning started off with my regularly scheduled Monday morning Policy Meeting with the City Manager; City Attorney; Assistant City Manager and Assistant to the Mayor. Afterwards, I met with representatives from UALR regarding the preparation of a Master Plan for the Campus. In that regard, they need a copy of the mid-town ULI report in order to see how they connect to mid-town. UALR has hired a consulting firm to develop the master plan for the campus. Bob Turner, Assistant City Manager, and I met with them and discussed the importance of UALR to the future of mid-town and the University corridor.

Later in the day, I met with Reverend Howard Gardner; Ron Woods and Chief Johnson to discuss Inner City Future Net. Rev. Gardner has a garden and works with youth to grow flowers and raise dollars selling bouquets. Plus, he assists in an after school learning lab and summer program to strengthen literacy and life skills. Also, he helps in a neighborhood property pride program to beautify the neighborhood and works in a youth crime free program.

I also had our regularly scheduled I-30 Task Force meeting at Curran Hall. Director Johnnie Pugh and other key staff, along with neighborhood representatives, were present to help discuss crime in the downtown area of 9th Street. We have made a huge impact in this area since we have been meeting in the past couple years.

After the Curran Hall meeting, I sat in on part of the Southend Neighborhood meeting to discuss their 1999 improvement plan, which looks good. Brian Minyard has been a tremendous help in guiding neighborhood plans.

Tuesday 24th: What a day this has been. Began the day discussing a grant to address after school programs. Little Rock was chosen as one of six cities to participate in a planning process to help local communities establish action steps to better support afterschool programs that particularly enhance academic performance. W.J. Monagle has done an outstanding job in initiating contact and making the community aware of this program.

I then met with Dr. Tim O'Brien, Director of Arkansas Bioventures, and Charlie Cook of UAMS to discuss the working relationship between Memphis and Little Rock to develop a BioMedical Corridor along I-40 between Little Rock and Memphis. I, along with staff Paula Patterson and Odies Wilson have met with the mayor of Memphis and Rodney Slater to discuss this idea further.

Next, the City Manager, our Economic Development Director and I met with key staff at Raytheon Aircraft (Hawker). This was one of our business visitation contacts…something which we plan to do on a regular basis. Our goal is to call on existing businesses, say thanks and see if there are needs we can address. Hawker is an incredible company with nearly 800 employees engaged in the outfitting and servicing of

corporate aircraft. We are fortunate to have this top quality employer in our market and we will do all we can to support this growth segment of our economy.

In my January address, I appointed Virgil Miller, of Metropolitan Bank and Central High Principal, Nancy Rousseau to co-chair the fiftieth anniversary event commemorating the 1957 school crisis. Nancy, Virgil, Bruce Moore, Paula Patterson and I met to begin laying the foundation for this significant event to be held in 2007.

I also met today with a representative from Children's Hospital to discuss the master planning process underway at the Children's. Very soon we should have something exciting to be presented to the public about the future of the area in and around the hospital campus.

And finally, the City Board held its agenda meeting and a reconvened meeting…what a busy day.

Wednesday, February 25: Today I spent the day at the Arkansas Municipal League for the Cash Management Trust meeting; Investment Committee meeting and the Executive Committee meeting.

Thursday, February 26: Mid-morning, I had the honor to marry a couple named Tyrus Chapman and Sheila Pascal. They have a young daughter together, who is just precious. Director Joan Adcock set up the marriage and was there in attendance. I wish Tyrus and his lovely bride Sheila the best of luck as they begin their lives together.

In the afternoon, Shayla and I attended Elijah Harris' going away party from Entergy. He is retiring after 33 years of dedicated service. I wish him a happy retirement, as he will be missed.

Friday, February 27: Today was such an awesome day. I spent the day out in southwest Little Rock focusing on a targeted neighborhood the City is cleaning up. In my State of the City Address, I mentioned I wanted to spend more time in the neighborhoods and we are trying to do this monthly. Also, I noted a safe city initiative and through the program, we are targeting certain areas of the city and between our Housing; Police and City Attorney's offices, we cleaning up some overdue areas.

We began with a brief overview from our Housing and Police departments on the codes violations issued in the areas of Dailey Drive, Gardner Road, Baseline and Fairfield Drive. They issued over 90 citations in a short period of time. The mobile home off of Dailey Drive has been targeted and many of the mobile homes have been deemed "unsafe".

We then took a tour of the areas and the next targeted neighborhoods. What a difference this is making! One thing that made my day was the renovation of apartments, now owned by Mr. Marshall off of Crenshaw Drive called Meadowcrest….if you haven't seen these lately, you need to drive by, they have completely changed for the better. He has

added security cameras and is screening his applicants more thoroughly to ensure only quality residents reside in his complex. I have asked that he come down to the City Board meeting on March 16 to be recognized for his outstanding community efforts.

We then ended the day with a luncheon at the Southwest Community Center. Many surrounding businesses and schools and neighborhood association presidents were in attendance. We discussed our initiatives and received feedback from them. Overall, the day went extremely well and I look forward to our next "Targeted Neighborhood Day".

In closing, I will be out of the office from Saturday through the following Sunday on vacation with my wife and also attending a National League of Cities conference later in the week in Washington. I will return on Sunday, just in time for the Little Rock Marathon Awards, so until then…have a great week!