
City Manager's Report

APRIL 19, 2010

Administration & Finance

➤ Assessor:

The March sessions of the Board of Review were completed with the Board considering valuation adjustments on 704 parcels, down from 794 in 2009. Eighteen financial hardship reduction requests were considered, up from ten in 2009. The percentage of requests where the Board made an adjustment was 60.66%, up from 57.84% in 2009. This is not surprising since 2009 had a constitutional 4.6% inflation rate multiplier on taxable values but a -.3% for 2010, thus eliminating many of the requests for reduction of only taxable value where the Board had no authority to act.

➤ Budget and Accounting

The external auditors are on site. They have initiated the internal control review and preliminary work for the annual audit which is expected to begin this week.

The 2010 scorecard will be published for the first quarter during the week of April 30th.

City Commission has approved the notice of intent to issue 2010 Capital Improvement Bonds. The bonds will be sold through competitive bid on June 2nd.

➤ Purchasing/Risk Management

In collaboration with City Departments bid documents were prepared, invitation for bids advertised and distributed through the City's website, and bids received for five purchasing projects.

Purchasing hosted a brown bag lunch of other public purchasing professionals from governmental entities in Kalamazoo County to discuss various topics of interest. This networking promotes intergovernmental cooperation and professional improvement.

Worked with Western Michigan University Purchasing staff to combine our temporary services requirements and jointly bid them for a three year term contract.

➤ Treasury

The delinquent real property tax data for tax years 1998 through 2009 was successfully transferred to the County Treasurer and loaded on their delinquent tax system in mid-March. Actual settlement work papers are nearing completion and should be forwarded to the County no later than April 16th. The County will pay all taxing authorities for the 2009 delinquent taxes. This payment should be made by the end of June. The delinquent 2009 City tax amounts, after final settlement capture, are as follows:

City Operating	\$1,573,667
Solid Waste	\$126,566

Prior year taxes will be remitted to the City as payments are received.

The City's bank accounts with National City Bank were officially converted to PNC over the weekend. The accounts are PNC accounts effective 4/12/10.

Community Planning & Development

➤ Planning

At its March 4th meeting, the Planning Commission received an update on the Master Plan project, including a copy of the draft plan. Two Commissioners began their service on the Commission, and the Nominating Sub-Committee made a recommendation to appoint Todd Hamilton to fill the upcoming vacant seat of Commissioner Wienir. The draft Wind Energy and Bicycle Parking Space ordinances are in the final stages of staff review, and are anticipated to be reviewed by the Planning Commission in the next two months. Four site plans were processed in March, including a building addition for a new restaurant on Westnedge Avenue, site improvements to Croyden and Milwood Elementary schools, and a building addition for an existing restaurant on Drake Road.

➤ Zoning

The Zoning Board of Appeals held a meeting on March 11th. At that meeting, the Board approved a dimensional variance from the required stacking spaces for a drive thru window for the reuse of a drive thru window at 4426 W. Main Street, where Mackenzie's Bakery is relocating a satellite store. The Board also approved a dimensional variance for a front yard setback of six feet for a proposed portico on the single family dwelling at 2905 Pasadena Street.

The Zoning Board of Appeals elected officers for 2010. Board Chair – Rachel Hughes Nilsson, Board Vice Chair – Karl Freed and Secretary - Karl Freed.

➤ Building & Trades

In the month of March 2010 there were 188 permits issued, representing \$21,702 in fees and \$1,060,592 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 468 representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$3,510,743.

➤ Neighborhood Development

Staff is in the process of developing the 2010 Annual Action Plan and invite citizens to comment on the draft Plan. A copy of the Plan will be available for review from April 8th through May 10th in the Community Planning and Development Department, located at 445 West Michigan Avenue, Suite 101 W or on the City's website at www.kalamazoo-city.org/cdbqprogram.

The intent of the Annual Action Plan is to identify how the City will utilize the federal grant funding received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) during the program year (July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011) to address the priority needs identified in the City's 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan. Questions or comments concerning the Annual Action Plan can be directed to: Julie Johnston, johnstonj@kalamazoo-city.org or (269) 337-8210.

Economic Development

➤ Riverfront Area

Staff is continuing to work with People's Food Co-op regarding their proposed relocation to 507 Harrison Street.

Staff has requested a proposal from LKF to incorporate the logo in banners to tie in with corridor improvements and marketing through events.

A Northside/River's Edge clean-up is scheduled for May 15th. Partners in the event include the Northside Business Association, Sunrise Rotary, AmeriCorps, and Habitat for Humanity.

Staff submitted a Letter of Interest for a National Endowment for the Arts grant in conjunction with the Mayors' Institute on City Design for the extension of WMU's sculpture trail/tour through downtown and neighborhoods along Arcadia Creek and the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail to River's Edge. We expect to be notified of the application's status on April 8th.

➤ Davis Creek Business Park

The last few rounds of methane sampling are nearly complete. Afterwards, a final report will be generated for summary of findings and review. An update presentation was given to the Kalamazoo County BRA during their March 25th Board meeting, and it is anticipated that an update will also be given to the City of Kalamazoo BRA in the near future.

➤ Brownfield Redevelopment

Staff presented at the 2010 Spring Conference of the West Michigan Chapter of the Air & Waste Management Association on March 18th held at the Eberhard Center at Grand Valley State University. The conference title was "Success in a Changing Climate," and the session that included City staff was during the "Brownfields Success Panel Discussion." Staff described the BRI program and the critical partnerships between communities, consultants and developers, and what is working in today's difficult climate.

The last Site Prioritization #3 meeting was held on March 25th. Sites were ranked by those present at the meeting, and staff followed up with those who couldn't attend. Staff is now compiling the results of the effort and beginning to draft a report.

On March 10th, the State Senate approved proposed legislation to expand the list of eligible activities in Act 381 to include acquisition-related expenses for which local Tax Increment Revenues could be used to reimburse municipalities and Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities for their related expenditures. It is expected that the bill will be taken up after the spring legislative recess for reconciliation and signed into law by the Governor.

Staff has been working on the approved BRA acquisition of the former Panelyte property from the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority. Due Care activities have been largely completed. Next steps include securing some assistance in making sure federal All Appropriate Inquiry has been carefully considered and to request a letter of comfort from the EPA as we move forward with acquisition of the site.

Staff finalized the draft 2009 Annual BRA Report. The report will be brought forward to the BRA for their feedback and approval in April.

Staff has held discussions with several interested parties this past month to discuss issues relating to potential brownfield redevelopment projects.

Human Resources

- Respecting Differences Diversity Awareness Event

This year, our 12th Respecting Differences diversity awareness event, *The Power of Forgiveness*, will take place on Thursday, April 22nd at 1:30 p.m. and Friday, April 23rd at 9:00 a.m. The presentations will be held at the State Theatre.

This year's speaker is Immaculée Ilibagiza, who is a living example of faith put into action. During the 1994 Rwandan genocide Immaculée and seven other women spent 91 days hiding silently together in the cramped bathroom of a local pastor's house. She emerged to find her family had been brutally murdered. Knowing she would have to overcome immeasurable odds without her family and with her country destroyed, she spent time in that tiny bathroom teaching herself English with only The Bible and a dictionary. Later she would come face to face with the killer of her mother and her brother and say the unthinkable, "I forgive you."

The presentation, question and answer period will last approximately 90 minutes.

Information Technology

- SAN Upgrade

Staff upgraded the Storage Area Network (SAN) from 15TB to 16TB and re-configured the backup mirrored SAN to iSCSI. This allows the backup SAN to be moved offsite to another City location thus increasing the overall redundancy and disaster recovery aspects of the SAN.

- Cell Phones

Staff moved all cell phones (outside of Public Safety and Public Service phones) from Sprint to Verizon. The benefits from this include cost savings, much better coverage and workability, and better phone options.

Parks & Recreation

- The Fairmount Dog Park construction plans went out for bid with the bid opening on March 31st.

- A public input meeting was held on March 2nd, regarding the grant applications for the Woods Lake Beach and LaCrone Park improvement projects. Staff continues to work with Larry Harris and Associates, who is preparing cost estimates and site plans that are required components of the grant applications being submitted to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environments Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (for the Woods Lake Beach project) and to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (for the LaCrone Park project). Both grant applications are due April 1st.

Staff made a presentation to the Environmental Concerns Committee about the Woods Lake Beach and LaCrone Park projects.

- Staff attended a meeting at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KCF) to learn about their up and coming “Match Day” event, which is designed to help organizations build up the endowment funds they have established. On Match Day, KCF will match each dollar donated, with .50¢ of each dollar matched up to \$1,000, to be available for immediate use. This is part of a year-long celebration of the Foundation’s 85th birthday.

The Friends of Recreation will be participating in this event to raise money for the Municipal Recreation Endowment Fund. The event will be held in Bronson Park on Wednesday, June 23rd from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm.

- Staff met with Pam Roland to discuss desired improvements at Martin Luther King Park. Staff will be working on several landscaping projects in 2010.
- The Art Hop was held on March 5th at the Youth Development Center, with Art Time and the Oakwood After-School program participants displaying their artwork. Thirty (30) people were in attendance at the event.
- Staff attended the Kalamazoo Youth Development Network meeting, which highlighted issues related to social networking sites. The meeting included presentations on bullying and how to more effectively use the social networking sites for program promotion.
- The Summer Activity Guide is at the printer and will be distributed the week of April 5th. City resident registration for summer programs begins April 12th and open registration begins the week of April 19th.
- The Street Academy has wrapped up the class section of the program and given their first presentation to Mayor Hopewell, Commissioner David Anderson, and family members of the youths involved in the program. Twelve speeches were presented, covering issues from high school drop-out rates to anti-blight issues. Two more presentations are scheduled in April.

Public Safety

- After a thorough review of cases, Criminal Investigation Division compiled a list of the top burglary and drug related robbery suspects. This information was disseminated throughout the department to provide a target list in an effort to assist in crime reduction. We were able to ID two groups of suspects responsible for numerous of breaking and enterings.

- Operations personnel continue to be assigned based on contemporaneous crime trend analysis. All divisions of public safety participate in the weekly “crime fighters” initiative.
- Officers continue to mentor youths in multiple settings, including schools in the Explorer Program. Plans are in the works for an upcoming Youth Town Hall meeting.
- As of April 5th, 16 methamphetamine labs have been investigated by KVET for the year.

Public Services

- Engineering and Public Safety are coordinating efforts for the 2010 Street and the Broken Window Program.
- City crews are continuing to patch pot holes as required.
- Management has consulted with Plant Operations staff to identify minimum acceptable temperature conditions within various buildings at the Harrison Facility. Modified the existing HVAC in the Pilot Plant to reduce the makeup air and the heating load in this building (approximately 40% less gas is now being used in this building).
- Lyondelle (Millennium Holdings) is currently negotiating with EPA and Federal Court regarding environmental liability settlement; will impact outcome of Allied Site. US Bankruptcy Court has determined Millennium’s liability and has instituted a 15-day comment period. City staff is preparing comments at this time for submittal by April 20th.
- Letters of support were submitted with the proposal to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE) to implement stormwater control improvements for the Milham Golf Course. A Portage & Arcadia Creek Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled for March 23rd.
- Mass mailings have gone out to all water customers notifying them of the upcoming Spring Hydrant Flushing Program to take place April 18th through April 24th. A media release was also sent out the week of April 12th.
- The 2004 Master Plans that were developed for both Water and Wastewater are going to be updated in 2010. Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber is being contracted to update the Water Plan, and Jones & Henry has been hired to update the Wastewater Plan.
- Competent person training for excavation work was conducted in March; continuing to update and clean up personnel training records for Harrison and Stockbridge personnel. Completed an analysis of MIOSHA 300 Reports and Workman’s Compensation claims for 2009. Conducted some field inspections of Field Services job sites.

Transportation

➤ Ridership

Fixed route ridership for the month of February totaled 224,116 passenger trips. That represents a loss of 42,421 passenger trips, or a -15.9% decline in usage under that mode. Productivity also dropped 23% from 33.09 passenger trips per service hour in 2009 to 25.34 passenger trips per service hour for 2010. Metro County Connect saw a 0.2% increase with 10,112 trips being taken v. 10,096 in February last year. The Community Service Van program saw a drop in usage from 1,290 trips last year to 644 trips this past February.

➤ State Gas Tax Proposals

The MDOT 2011 budget proposal offered by the Governor is currently at a standstill in Lansing due to the inability of MDOT to provide a 20% local match to available federal highway and transit funding. It is unclear at this time when the 2011 transportation budget will be acted on. The legislature is faced with finding \$80 million on the road side and \$30 million on the transit side to match available federal funding, that is estimated at \$570 million in federal transportation funds. While proposals have been put forth including gas tax increases and diversion of auto-related sales tax, these bills have not been scheduled for any Committee action at this time.

➤ Diesel Fuel

Our last purchase of 18,000 gallons of diesel fuel for 2010 came in at \$2.2140 per gallon. The average price per gallon for 2010 is \$2.17. Diesel fuel is budgeted at \$2.80 per gallon for the year.

➤ Shelter Replacement

As part of the Transportation Department's 2009 Stimulus funding, we are intending to replace up to 70 bus passenger shelters that have reached the end of their useful life. This \$300,000 project is currently out to bid with award anticipated by the end of May and installation scheduled through the summer months.