
City Manager's Report

MAY 17, 2010

Administration & Finance

➤ Assessor

May 1st is the annual transition date in assessing where all taxable values for the year are finalized as to homestead/non-homestead portions, with those values being reported to the County as the legal basis for the 2010 tax levies. The data is then "rolled over" to the next assessing year, so that staff can begin the work toward developing the 2011 values.

➤ Budget and Accounting

The external auditors are completing on site work this week. Reports will be prepared to meet the June 30th deadline.

The "discovery" phase of the IntelliTime scheduling and timesheet software is underway. Weekly project meetings are scheduled to coordinate citywide participation.

➤ Pension Administration

During the May meeting of the Retirement Investment Committee, the group will meet with the actuary to review the 2009 valuation and to set the parameters for the 25 year study.

➤ Purchasing/Risk Management

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

The twice annual intergovernmental surplus property auction was administered by the Purchasing/Risk Management Division. The auction was held at the County Fair Grounds and was well attended by many potential buyers.

➤ Treasury

Due to office renovations, the Treasury Office is planning to temporarily relocate to the Stockbridge facility, 415 Stockbridge Avenue, beginning May 24th through August 9th. Payments for all tax and utilities (water/sewer) will be accepted at the Stockbridge location during this time with office hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Treasury Office will remain closed during the initial 2010 summer tax collection season through the entire month of July.

Upon completion of renovations, currently anticipated to be August 9th, all tax and utility (water/sewer) customers will be permanently located at the City Treasurer's Office, 241 West South Street, including requests for establishing new or changing existing utility accounts. Office hours for the Treasurer's Office in City Hall are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Community Planning & Development

➤ Planning

At the April 1st Planning Commission meeting, the Commission approved a special use permit for a religious assembly use in an existing building at 632 Locust Street, recommended release of the draft Master Plan for public review and comment, elected new officers, and voted to have City staff continue the current site plan review process.

Nine site plans were processed during April including: additions to the Wild Bull restaurant, a new building for Interact of Michigan, additions to the Community Mental Health residences on Oakland Drive, an addition to the Metro Transit bus garage, a new building for the Gospel Mission, an addition to Kali Beauty Supply on W. Main, and antenna additions on three existing cell tower sites for Verizon Wireless.

➤ Housing

Housing inspectors and Seasonal Code Enforcement inspectors took part in the neighborhood sweep in Edison and Northside with KDPS on April 19th and 20th. Numerous private property/housing violations were cited as part of the sweep and follow up is underway.

➤ Zoning

At the April 8th Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, the Board granted University Commons at 4418 and 4620 Stadium Drive the following variances: 1) a dimensional variance to replace an existing nonconforming off-premises sign along Stadium Drive and 2) a dimensional variance to erect a 216 square foot freestanding sign along S. Drake Road. The signs for this commercial strip center are all being replaced as part of the face-lift for the complex. At the same meeting, the Board also granted Faleh Holdings, LLC at 1614 and 1624 W. Main Street, a dimensional variance to allow a building addition within four feet of the east side property line. This is a 2000 square foot addition on the rear of the building at 1416 W. Main Street.

Zoning reviews were also completed in April for all Pawnbrokers and Secondhand Dealer businesses within the City limits.

- Cash-N-A-Flash (806 Riverview Drive)
- Ted's Appliances (2425 East Cork Street)
- Nash Outlets (579 Portage Street)
- TNT Pawnbrokers (3938 South Westnedge Avenue)
- Fast Cash (939 E. Cork Street)

➤ Anti-Blight

The Anti-blight Team continues activities related to the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). Demolition of twenty-five blighted, abandoned, and/or dangerous houses has been completed and another twenty are out for bids. It is likely that over fifty houses and at least one commercial structure will be demolished or under contract by the end of June. Also, specifications are in the final stages for quality rehabilitation of seven houses under the NSP1 program. At the same time, planning, preparations, and preliminary activities are underway for many more rehabilitations and new home construction through the NSP2 funding in conjunction with the Kalamazoo County Land Bank Authority.

➤ Building & Trades

In the month of April 2010 there were 169 permits issued, representing in \$2,529,840 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 647 representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$6,047,584.

➤ Neighborhood Development

The City of Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo County Land Bank Authority hosted a Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP2) Community Partner meeting on April 22nd. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the \$15 million NSP2 grant with neighborhood, non-profit, and faith-based organizations working to improve housing and neighborhoods in Kalamazoo. More than 30 community leaders listened to a program overview, actively engaged in a question and answer session, and brainstormed about potential NSP2 implementation strategies.

Over the next few months, subsequent NSP2 meetings will be held with stakeholders and interested parties, including six neighborhood meetings throughout the NSP2 target area. Questions regarding NSP2 can be directed to Community Planning and Development at 337-8044.

Economic Development

➤ Riverfront Area

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

The draft corridor improvement plan was presented to the City Engineer and staff for their feedback. That draft is now being edited so that it can also be used as an education piece.

A Sunrise Rotary kick-off to fund-raising for Veterans Memorial Rose Park will be held on May 11th, and a multi-partner Northside and riverfront clean-up, spearheaded by Habitat for Humanity and AmeriCorps, will be held on May 14th and 15th. LKF's branding effort is nearly finished. They are working to complete the logo so that banners can be designed and installed prior to the river clean-up effort take place.

Staff was notified that the grant letter of interest submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts did not result in an opportunity to apply for a grant. Committee members are interested in looking for other funding sources 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.

Staff is providing limited support to the August 2010 Water Festival being spearheaded by Kalamazoo River Watershed Coalition.

Staff arranged for Trybal Revival to sing in the silo on Jack Coombs Trail.

➤ Davis Creek Business Park

An additional work order in the amount \$39,325 has been approved by the Kalamazoo County BRA from their EPA Petroleum Grant to continue the cooperative investigation of methane and due care/redevelopment of Davis Creek Business Park. The work order is proposed to gather additional data in cooperation with MDNRE that will allow:

- a) a Due Care Plan Template to be developed for future occupants, which would include guidance for implementation of approved mitigation methods and sample plans for construction;
- b) development of methane management strategies; and
- c) a Feasibility Analysis to determine if the methane can be used as a fuel source.

Envirologic has had preliminary discussions with suppliers and engineers related to the use of micro-turbines for electrical generation at the site. Depending on the quality and long-term availability of methane at the site, this could be a unique application for this “green” industrial park. Afterwards, a final report will be generated for summary of findings and review. This effort is scheduled for completion in late summer of 2010.

Marketing efforts for redevelopment of the property are ongoing.

➤ Brownfield Redevelopment

We were made aware that the City of Kalamazoo's EPA grant application package (for \$200,000 in the assessment of hazardous substances) submitted in November 2009 was not approved for funding. Staff will request feedback regarding the application and will apply to the EPA again when the next opportunity arises.

Staff prepared the 2009 BRA Annual Report. The report was adopted and recommended for City Commission approval/acceptance during the April 15th BRA board meeting.

Staff attended two separate meetings related to the Kalamazoo River/Allied Landfill Superfund site. The meetings were held specifically to discuss the proposed bankruptcy settlement between Lyondell Industries and the EPA. The settlement was approved despite much public outcry to the contrary.

➤ Economic Development

The bid process for replacement of the chiller unit at City Hall was completed, and a purchase order has been issued. Design activities continue for the vegetative (sustainable/energy efficient) roof replacement for City Hall, while initial specification language is under development for the design/rehabilitation of City Hall window systems. These projects are being funded through \$762,000 in Energy Efficiency and Community Block Grant formula funds.

An IFT transfer application for Reith-Riley Construction Company was approved by the City Commission on March 15th.

Staff conducted business retention visits with 14 companies.

Staff responded to various information requests from six business prospects interested in starting or expanding a business in Kalamazoo.

Human Resources

The City of Kalamazoo is holding a Health and Benefits Fair for City employees on June 16th at Harrison Street Facility from 11:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. Why have a Health and Benefits Fair?

- First, the health and well being of our employees makes for a happier workforce.
- Second, the City offers employees a multitude of benefits, yet employees are often unclear or unaware of the value and scope of these benefits.
 - The Health & Benefits Fair will present a variety of demonstrations and services so all employees will find something of interest.
 - Vendors will include providers of both traditional and non-traditional medicine, senior care, eye-care, local health clubs and many others.
 - The Health & Benefits Fair will feature many of our providers, who will be on hand to explain their services and answer your questions.

Spouses and family members are welcome.

Information Technology

➤ VPN Enhancements

Staff recently upgraded the network firewall to support a new version of VPN software. VPN is used to access the internal City of Kalamazoo network from a remote location. The new version of software is more secure and easier to use.

Parks & Recreation

➤ Grant/Fundraising

Grant applications were submitted on April 1st, to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environments Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for \$363,200 for the redevelopment of Woods Lake Beach Park and to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for \$100,000 for the redevelopment of LaCrone Park. Communities will be notified in the fall of 2010 if awarded.

Friends of Recreation are working on the 14th Annual Golf Outing and will be participating in the Kalamazoo Community Foundation's Match Day campaign to raise money for the Municipal Recreation Endowment Fund. "Save the Date" postcards for the Annual Golf Outing and Match Day event were designed, printed and mailed to the Friends of Recreation mailing list and supporters as a reminder of our summer fundraising events.

Staff has been working with the Sunshine Rotary for upgrades to the lighting system at Rose Park Veteran's Memorial. The Rotary's goal is to raise \$30,000 to match City capital improvement funds. There is a Rose Park Veteran's Memorial lighting "Kick-Off" event scheduled for May 11th, which is to help raise funds for the lighting improvement project.

Staff was awarded \$2,593.70 for three 21st Century Learning grants to provide after school programs at several of the 21st Century sites. The grants will help fund programs for Math/Archery, Act Out and Chess Club.

Staff applied for three grants to Sears Memorial, VanderRoest, and Youth United Way requesting \$3,000 for various programs. Sears Memorial and VanderRoest have been awarded.

Parks and Recreation was awarded a \$900 grant from the VanderRoest Fund. This will assist with the Young Adult Program Students effort to participate in the Southwest Michigan Community and Leisure Conference event, which includes kayaking sprints, a billiards tournament, line dancing, chili cooking and race walking. Over 60 students will compete this year and the event competitions are part of a process to involve students in community-wide events, such as walking races and the Downtown Chili Cook-Off.

Staff has been awarded \$88,000 from Kalamazoo Community Mental Health (KCMH) for the Summer Youth Adventure program this summer. This is the 14th year in which KCMH has funded this program.

Plans for the Kalamazoo Center for Youth & Community are continuing to forge ahead. The Board of Directors and Articles of Incorporation have been completed, the Bylaws are being developed, funding is being sought to reimburse the architect, and the City has provided confirmation of the use of Rockwell Park; as well as, their commitment to vacate the road. Fundraising is to begin this year, as soon as the building and programming design have been finalized. The Program Advisory Committee has asked partners to fill out a questionnaire regarding the proposed programs for the Center. Once the committee receives all the information, they will compile it to determine what the target market is; as well as, outcomes and facility needs.

➤ Parks

Staff's recommendation is to award the Fairmount Dog Park project to "5 Leprechauns". It is anticipated that the project will go to the City Commission for approval in May.

A trailway/river volunteer cleanup will be held on May 15th, at Mayors' Riverfront Park, the Red Arrow Golf Course, Rose Veteran's Memorial Park, the Jack Coombs Trail, and Verberg Park. This event will include removal of invasive species such as garlic mustard, honeysuckle and box elder. When the invasive species are removed, the native plants will have a better chance of being established again.

Staff met with the Athletic Director of Kalamazoo College to discuss opportunities to relocate the college's athletic events, while the College is undergoing construction for a new athletic complex. They are investigating the relocation of softball, baseball, soccer, and football. We will be working with them on the details over the next several months.

➤ Farmer's Market

The annual Farmers' Market meeting was held on April 22nd. At this meeting, the vendors were informed about the City's intent to develop a master plan for the Market, along with a marketing plan for future improvements.

➤ Recreation

Several new events/tournaments have been scheduled at City sports facilities, and included the Ultimate Frisbee tournament that took place this month at the VerSluis/Dickinson complex.

Adult Summer Softball League registration was completed in April. Approximately 165 teams registered to play this year. Games begin on May 2nd, at

Versluis/Dickinson Fields.

The Parks and Recreation Summer Activity Guide were distributed to 40,000 residents. Registration for programs began on April 12th for City Residents and April 19th for non-city residents. All of the mini-camps have been filled and a wait list has been established for each camp. Swim lessons are filling fast as well.

➤ Youth Program & Initiatives

Staff is working with Mayor Hopewell, Commissioner Miller, and various youth serving agencies in preparing an application for the “100 Best Communities for Youth.” The deadline for submitting the application is in May.

Staff has taken a positive and supportive role with Public Safety regarding the Youth Town Hall meeting scheduled for May 22nd at Bernhard Center.

The 6th season of the MEEMIC Insurance/City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation Department Co-ed Flag Football Season started the week of April 29th, with teams from nine Kalamazoo Public schools playing in the league. The teams are made up of 4th and 5th graders and each team will play eight games.

Staff began programming for the 3rd graders at Milwood Elementary for the Lunch and Learn program. This program provides structured recreation activities for the students during their lunch hour. Staff have been programming for the 4th and 5th graders at Milwood Elementary since September, 2009.

Act Out is a theatre program that is being offered at both Washington Writer’s Academy and Woods Lake Elementary, as part of the 21st Century After-School Program. There are 14 students at each of the sites. The youth explore acting and performing arts as a tool for self-exploration and to prepare the students for productions in their schools or the community.

The Art Time class held an end of program gallery show to display their art work. The youth showed their acrylic paintings in personally designed frames and reflected their inspirations for their work. Family and friends were invited to attend and treats were served. There were 25 people in attendance.

Auditions took place for this summer's production of the comedy "Beauty is a Beast". The play will be performed this summer for Plays in the Parks, which is an extension of the Act Out program. Fourteen youth, ages 9-14, took part in the auditions. The five date schedule for the play presentation is:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
July 9	Frays Park	12:00 pm
July 14	Mayors Riverfront Park	12:00 pm
July 16	Bronson Park	12:00 pm
July 23	Upjohn Park	12:00 pm
Sept 10	Studio 246	5:30 pm

Staff attended the open house at El Sol Bilingual School; as well as, conferences at Woods Lake School for the Performing Arts, to promote the summer programs offered by our department.

Public Safety

- Criminal Investigation Department collaborated with Operations Division and Information Management to evaluate an increase in aggravated assaults that occurred last month. During the evaluation it was discovered that nearly all the assaults were committed by a known suspect.
- A Blight Operation began on April 19th and 20th. This was the first of four phases planned for the summer. This focused on Edison and the Northside Neighborhoods.
- Officers continue to mentor youth in multiple settings, including schools. Officers continue to mentor youth in the Explorer program. Plans are in the works for an upcoming Youth Town Hall meeting.
- KDPS Explorer Post #265 drove to Alpena's CRTC over the weekend of April 25th. The two teams of five participated in competition against 35 other Explorer post teams from various departments throughout the United States. Competition was very intense again this year, with top scores in all events being either a 99 or 100. Both teams placed in the top ten of all events and in the overall competition.
- 18 methamphetamine labs have been investigated by KVET thus far for the year.

Public Services

- Latest edition of "View from the Curb" was mailed to residents which included schedules for bulk trash, brush, and recycling collections.

- City is replacing an old inefficient 'west' chiller at City Hall. This project was recently bid and the contractor has commenced the installation of this equipment. The chiller is expected to be completed by the end of May.
- City Mechanics have attended separate training classes in current engine technologies for GM and Ford vehicles. Next class scheduled in June will go over Chryslers Technologies. Operational and safety training was offered to all mechanics and operators that will be using new concrete saws purchased in 2010.
- Spring Flushing took place the week of April 18th through April 24th. Mass mailings went out to all water customers regarding the annual spring flushing.
- The 2004 Wastewater and Water Master Plans are in the process of being updated.

Transportation

➤ Ridership

Fixed route ridership for the month of March totaled 236,487 passenger trips. That represents a loss of 24,456 passenger trips, or a -9.4% decline in usage under that mode. Productivity also dropped from 30.11 passenger trips per service hour in 2009 to 23.9 passenger trips per service hour for 2010, a 21% decline. The situation is much the same across the State and nation as transit agencies report declines in overall ridership. Metro County Connect, however, saw an increase with 1,291 trips taken, or a 12% increase.

➤ Diesel Fuel

Our last purchase of 18,000 gallons of diesel fuel, on April 28th, came in at \$2.42 per gallon. The average price per gallon for 2010 is \$2.23. Diesel fuel is budgeted at \$2.80 per gallon for the year.

➤ Office Expansion

Work continues on the plans for expanding the administrative offices of the Metro Transit facility. The 2,500 square foot addition will also include a formal board room. Architectural drawings have been completed and the City's Site Review Committee met on the project on April 29th. Bid documents are being completed and the project should be let before the end of May. Care is being taken to relocate the existing trees on the building's north side. This project is being funded 80% federal and 20% state.

➤ Reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Program

Work continues slowly in Congress on the reauthorization of the federal highway and transit programs. The previous reauthorization bill expired on September 30, 2009, and we are currently operating under extensions of that program. Work continues in committees, but Congress is not expected to take any real action until the fall.

The situation is much the same at the State level with the 2011 transportation budget proposal stalled because of a lack of State match to the federal highway and transit funding.