
City Manager's Report

JULY 20, 2009

Administration & Finance

➤ Assessor

The statutory July session of the Board of Review will be held on July 21 for the purposes of correcting clerical errors, approving late-filed Principal Residence Exemptions, and considering financial hardship exemptions.

➤ Budget & Accounting

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report was completed and received from the auditors on 06/30.

➤ Pension Administration

The annual report was published the week of 07/13. Benefit statements was distributed to all employees the week of 07/06.

➤ Purchasing/Risk Management

The Purchasing Division was notified that it received the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement award for the third consecutive year.

The Purchasing Manual has been placed on the City's intranet for reference by City staff. One printed copy was also distributed to each department.

➤ Treasury

Delinquent tax module implemented (go-live) on 06/19. Delinquent Personal Property and Special Assessment modules are still in process.

Community Planning & Development

➤ Planning

At the 06/04 Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval of a request to the City Commission to vacate a portion of the W. Michigan Avenue right-of-way to the University Roadhouse Restaurant, approved a special use permit for MetroPCS to locate telecommunication antennas and equipment on the roof of the apartment building at 1004 Douglas Avenue, approved a special use permit for the SAE fraternity (currently located on Short Rd.) to use the existing building at 3315 W. Michigan Avenue for a fraternity, and

recommended approval of a request to the City Commission for text amendments to the zoning ordinance regarding murals.

Five site plans were processed during the month including the new airport terminal building, a building addition for Sweet Manufacturing on S. Burdick, a building addition for the Hinman Stadium Shoppes on Stadium, a building addition for National Products on E. Crosstown, and re-use of a vacant building on E. Crosstown for a barber shop.

➤ Zoning

At the 06/11 meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Board denied a dimensional variance to add an additional dwelling unit to a duplex on a small lot at 520 Pearl Street. At that same meeting, the Board granted a dimensional variance to allow 18-foot antennas to be mounted on top of the Crosstown Parkway Apartment building at 550 W. Crosstown Parkway and also denied a use variance to allow outdoor music festivals at 417 Forests Street, which is zoned for Commercial Office uses.

➤ Building and Trades

In the month of June there were 196 permits issued, representing \$33,734 in fees and \$3,392,885 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 1,133 representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$21,404,404 bringing in nearly \$181,375 in revenue.

➤ Neighborhood Development

Staff continues to seek eligible funding to address the City of Kalamazoo's housing issues under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA):

\$758,089 of Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing (HPRP) funds have been applied for through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In order to consolidate efforts and maximize benefits, the City and the Kalamazoo County Continuum of Care, including Housing Resources Inc. (HRI) and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), will be coordinating HPRP funding from HUD with similar program funds from MSHDA.

\$495,533 of Community Development Block Grant - Recovery (CDBG-R) funds were requested from HUD on 06/05. These funds will assist the NACD grocery store project, a homeless prevention funding pool, street and infrastructure enhancements in the City, and the Minority Business Alliance job training program.

Staff is coordinating with the newly forming Kalamazoo County Land Bank in seeking Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding, round 2 (NSP2). The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) plans to serve as lead agency with a consortium of communities within Michigan in requesting NSP2 funds from HUD. The City is applying for funding in the range of \$15 million to assist core neighborhoods with abandoned, vacant, and blighted residential structures.

Economic Development

➤ Riverfront Area

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority's purchased 505 and 510 East North Street from the railroad is complete.

A meeting was held 06/18 to review proposed riverfront corridor improvement solutions based on stakeholder interviews. Staff requested additional information from the traffic study.

Staff supported riverfront arts activities, including a planned mural and singing in the silo on the Jack Coombs Trailway during Art Hop and Fete de la Musique.

➤ Davis Creek Business Park

The repair and reseeding of the west bank of the storm basin has been completed.

Staff has begun the process to close out the EDA grant received for infrastructure construction at Davis Creek Business Park.

➤ Brownfield Redevelopment

Brownfield Plan Amendment #15 was approved by the City Commission on 06/29.

An application has been submitted to the State for the purchase of tax-reverted property at 901 Porter Street by the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.

Staff reviewed responses to the RFQ for realtor carousels. Committee interviews were conducted with two candidates for BRA work. Staff is holding follow-up meetings with those candidates prior to making decision.

Staff participated in the application process for Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 funds, which will be funneled through MSHDA to the Land Bank.

➤ Economic Development

An Economic Opportunity Fund loan was made to the Kalamazoo Municipal Golf Association in the amount of \$225,000 to be used for clubhouse improvements and the acquisition of a liquor license at Eastern Hills Golf Course.

The City Commission has approved a \$40,000 Small Business Revolving Loan to Zoorona, LLC. Final loan documents are being prepared and reviewed, and the loan closing will be held shortly.

The Economic Development Department will be hosting a booth at the Michigan Economic Developers Association annual meeting which will be held August 18-21 in Kalamazoo.

Human Resources

An all employee picnic will be held on 08/12 from 2:30-4:00 at Bronson Park. We have 124 milestone employees this year and they will receive a Meijer cash gift card and certificate. Rain location is in the Metro Bus garage.

Coldstone Creamery will be providing four different flavors of ice cream to all employees. We will also provide our very own *Splash* bottled water. Milestone service awards honoring 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 year employees will be presented at the picnic. All employees will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a \$25 giftcard; there will be a chance for four (4) employees to win.

Free tickets will be available at the Employee Appreciation Celebration and at the gate for the Kalamazoo Kings baseball game scheduled for 08/12, at Mayors' Riverfront Park. Game time is 6:35 pm.

Information Technology

- BS&A Cash Management/ERP Phase II Project - BS&A Tax Billing Go-Live was 06/19, and 2009 Summer tax bills were mailed 06/30. As of 06/26, Tax Billing and Miscellaneous Receivables information is available via the City's website. BS&A staff and IT Staff have been in communication regarding the UB data conversion, including file layouts for the UB tables.
- BS&A Field Inspections Project - Staff has been configuring the 12 Panasonic Toughbooks in preparation of delivery to the inspection staff. Conversion and training is scheduled for August.
- 2009 Aerial Photography Update - The Pictometry International, Corp. 2009 color photography was delivered on 06/11. This is now available for viewing via Pictometry software, from the City Online GIS, and from ArcView GIS software.

Parks & Recreation

- The Friends of Recreation Golf Classic was held at Eastern Hills on 07/17.
- Staff is working with a group of volunteers that are avid users of Knollwood Park and have coordinated several park clean-up projects with City Staff. In addition, they are working with Public Services to educate the local area on stormwater collection issues to try and reduce inappropriate contributions to the storm sewer.
- Staff is working with Public Services on evaluating the dam at Deeks Pond, which is part of Spring Valley Park. The dam has deteriorated and is in need of repair. In 2004, the City had a natural feature inventory/report completed for Spring Valley Park/Deeks/Williams Pond. There were some special concern species identified in this area. Staff will be evaluating how to incorporate the pond area into the park (fishing locations, nature viewing decks and trails) utilizing all this information.
- The Frays Park Improvement project is nearing completion. Improvements include a new barrier-free playground, and a walkway through the park. A new drinking fountain is soon to be added.
- Paramount Charter Academy was awarded this year the MEEMIC Insurance/Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation Department Sportsmanship Trophy for the 2009 COED Flag Football League. A grant from MEEMIC Insurance allows the City to provide the trophy; as well as, other supplies necessary to run the league. The trophy will be displayed in the office of the winning school until the start of next year's league.
- Summer seasonal recreation staff took part in the Kalamazoo Youth Development Network training, along with other youth-serving agencies. Training included how to work with children who have special needs, new games and how to deal with behavior issues. These staff also took part in training specific to the Parks and Recreation Department and programs. Areas covered in the training included review of City policies; as well as, providing workshops in art/crafts, and sports/games. Other areas included performing arts with the Director of Education, Outreach and Youth Programs at the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre, reading to children, and 'Writing Together'. Training was also provided on recognizing the signs of child abuse and how to report it. In addition, Life Ambulance reviewed good first aid practices.
- Recreation staff held Site Supervisors meetings to prepare them for start up of the mini-camps. The meetings covered a variety of onsite management issues, review of field trips and special events for each camp; as well as, covered the expectations the City has of each Site Supervisor.

- The Trail Program Coordinator for Kalamazoo County Parks & Expo Center met with the staff from Spring Valley and Douglass Community Center mini-camp sites to review upcoming collaborative programming on the Kal-Haven Trail.
- The Summer Mini Camps began at six locations throughout the City. All camps were full with 55 youths registered and a waiting list was established. Each site has a theme, which is supported by field trips and special guests. The sites and their corresponding themes are:
 - Arcadia - Creative Writing
 - Douglass - Martial Arts
 - MLK Westwood - Water Wonderland
 - Spring Valley Park - Outdoor/Nature
 - Upjohn Park - Alternative Sports
 - Woods Lake - Performing Arts

In addition to the various themes, all sites include art/crafts, sports/games, performing arts; reading and specialty time where the children choose an activity of concentration to participate in for the six weeks.

- Gymnastics began with 20 participants. The class is being held at The Bullard School of Dance and includes tumbling and some equipment, for ages 5-12. Art Time began with 16 students. Youth create a variety of projects with instruction in areas such as drawing, pottery, textile and jewelry design.
- The Writing Together program began at Arcadia – Creative Writing Camp for ages 9-12. This program meets one day a week for six weeks and is designed to improve literacy and expand creative expression.
- “Poetry as Performance” began at Woods Lake – Performing Arts Camp for ages 9-12. This program meets one day a week for six weeks and is designed to introduce youth to writing and performing their poetry and prose.
- The Summer Youth Adventure Program began the week of 06/22. This is the 13th year of the City collaborating with Kalamazoo Community Mental Health Services (KCMHS) to provide this program; which this year, runs from 06/22 – 08/13. The program is funded entirely by KCMHS.
- Kik Pool opened to the public on 06/15. The City has received a lot of positive comments regarding all of the renovations, which include new marcite finish to the pool, new fence, renovated eating area, new awnings, new front entrance counter and sidewalk extension.
- The Summer Solstice Swim Meet was held at Kik Pool from 06/19 – 06/21. This meet is sponsored by the Great Lakes Aquatics Club and brings in teams from many Midwest states and Canada. This year over 305 swimmers attended this competition.

- Public Safety partnered with Parks and Recreation, Safe Kids Coalition and many other businesses and held a Bike Rodeo in the parking lot of Mayors' Riverfront Park on 06/22. The event went very smoothly, 36 youths from the Spring Valley Mini Camp attended. Kids were able to register their bikes, have a quick tune up, given safety tips and participated in a scavenger hunt on the trail at Mayors' Riverfront Park. Over 65 youths participated in the event and each received a new bike helmet.
- Summer programs at the Youth Development Center (YDC) have begun; over 40 youths are spending their days at the YDC. They are able to work on the computers, play games, basketball, read and socialize. The Teen Night program, which normally runs from 5pm-11pm, began on 06/19. Unfortunately, due to the weather, the event ended early and the kids were transported home.
- The 2nd Annual Portage Hurricanes Fastpitch Softball World Series Qualifier Tournament was held at Versluis/Dickinson, 06/19 – 06/21. This event was for 10U-18U age divisions. Staff made field improvements to accommodate fastpitch play and with using only ten of the fields, a total of 50 teams played in the tournament this year. Since the improvements were made on all fields, giving them a wider range of use, rentals at the complex are expected to increase.

Public Safety

- There was another crime fighters meeting in the month of June. Officers were updated on the bank robberies and advised that the case was going to go federal as two of the suspects were in custody.
- Operations personnel, including CPO's, conducted the first Youth Leadership Academy during the week of 06/15. This academy, an intense week-long program, included 31 area youths and was highly successful. In 2007, KDPS began summer youth academies and participated in the Michigan State Police Leadership academies. A second leadership academy is forthcoming. The SRO assigned to Loy Norrix is temporarily assigned to patrol functions during summer break. Officers continue to mentor youths in the Explorer program.
- Community policing/interaction continues to be emphasized. Our 2009 summer initiatives plan places heavy emphasis on partnerships to reduce crime and violence - the cornerstones of community policing. Public Safety Officers will work closely with youths engaged in summer employment programs. Patrol personnel, including supervisors and zone officers, continue to attend each neighborhood meeting in their assigned districts.

- CPO's, in collaboration with Public Services and Community Planning & Development, have begun deployment of "blight enforcement teams" to address quality of life issues in various neighborhoods beginning in the Edison, Eastside and Northside neighborhoods. This initiative, which addresses such things as unsafe homes, junk automobiles, trash, and the trimming of overgrown trees along the roadways and sidewalks to enhance lighting, will continue during the summer months.
- 62 methamphetamine labs have been investigated by KVET to date for 2009.

Public Services

- Sent out over 770 notices for tall grass violations, eventually referring over 235 for mowing. Approximately 400 property owners have complied and mowed their own properties. Received 395 calls from residents regarding tall grass concerns in May, and over 180 thus far in June.
- 2009 Local Street Project - Charlotte Avenue, Chandler Avenue and Pratt Road are complete. N. Rose Street, Staples Avenue, Kent Avenue and John Street have been started.
- Riverside Cemetery was vandalized over Memorial Day holiday with over 50 tombstones knocked over. Coordinated 16 burials, including 2 FIA, 8 cremations, and 6 full burials.
- The architectural firm, Tower-Pinkster, was selected to prepare the evolution of a "green" type roof. They are expected to have the report to us by 07/08. Information required for the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant has been supplied and the application has been received by the Federal Government.
- Preliminary boundary survey has identified properties that will be impacted by preferred trail route from Mayors' Riverfront Park to Upjohn Park. Preliminary work for boundary survey for section from Westnedge to Harrison has been authorized. Establishment of actual boundaries will facilitate decision for final trail route in that section.
- Wellhead Protection Program - A final summary report will be prepared at the end of June for the Nonconforming Use Project associated with the WHP Ordinances and Performance Standards. Staff is preparing the Annual Report for the WHP Grant period 07/01/08 through 06/30/09.

- Allied Disposal Site - Millennium Holdings & Arcadis are in process of setting up a meeting with residents along east property line where limited seep sampling was conducted in April 2009. Staff will prepare a letter for Homecrest Circle Homeowners Association summarizing results of sampling which indicated the surface water groundwater interface as determined by the sampling was similar to background for that area (i.e. there's no evidence of contaminant migration from disposal site.) Millennium continues to work with the City to both grant access to former Panelyte site and to obtain access to former Performance Paper mill site to conduct groundwater measurements.
- Amendment to Residuals Management Plan will be submitted during third quarter; to request approval to field store and grower apply treated biosolids; Staff will also update current program costs for land application of Class A biosolids to determine how to implement in 2010.
- Work in progress to create a personnel training records file that will be compliant with MIOSHA standards; considerable time being spent observing Field Services operations; updating and revising numerous Safety SDPs (Standard Departmental Policies); have had preliminary meetings with IT to discuss Eden training records module; will be revising communication procedures during Inclement Weather SDP following meetings with field groups to receive their input; developing new 'Role of the Supervisor in Safety Programs' training; will be conducted next month; Asbestos Awareness Training has been scheduled for late June for certain personnel.

Transportation

- Combined Paratransit Service Contract - Both the City and the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority (KCTA) have now extended the Metro Van and Care-A-Van contracts respectively for up to an additional six months. This extension will allow the bidding process for a new three-year contract to be completed with bids scheduled to be opened on 07/14. Both programs have been combined into one single contract which will improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of our demand/response services.
- Vehicle Replacement Program - As part of the combined program noted above, the City of Kalamazoo has awarded contracts for additional accessible vans and cutaway vehicles for the new demand/response contract. This will allow the successful vendor to use only City owned vehicles, which will also make the bidding process more competitive. Vehicles will start to arrive the second week of July.
- Diesel Fuel - On 06/29, Metro Transit purchased 18,000 gallons of ultra-low sulfur B5 blend diesel fuel at a cost of \$1.88 per gallon. The average year-to-date price per gallon for 2009 is \$1.55. Metro Transit budgeted \$2.80 per gallon for diesel fuel in 2009.

- Project Updates - In addition to the demand/response contract, A/E work will begin on the design of a planned administrative office expansion as of 07/10. This project is being funded through discretionary capital funding secured by Congressman Upton in 2008 and 2009. Additionally, seven proposals are under review for the completion of a Comprehensive Operational Analysis that will examine both fixed route and demand/response services currently offered by Metro Transit. The Department expects to make a recommendation for award by the City Commission at the 08/03 Commission meeting. The project is expected to commence in September following the start up of fixed routes serving Western Michigan University students.