
City Manager's Report

NOVEMBER 16, 2009

Administration & Finance

➤ Assessor

Completed scanning of all property transfer affidavits & Principal Residence Exemption into the BS&A Assessing system for ease-of-reference by staff and the public.

Implemented BS&A Internet Services on a real-time basis for greater public access to information.

Worked with Treasury and the Chief Financial Officer to complete Sales Study model and tax estimates for 2010 Budget.

➤ Budget & Accounting

Prepared summary of technical review for 2010 City Budget.

Worked with Public Safety, Public Services and Information Technology to prepare RFP for scheduling and timekeeping software for payroll, and further to identify the proper technology platform to integrate equipment/fleet tracking and internal billings.

Continued to work with Treasury to update Miscellaneous Receivables process for greater procedural efficiency and centralization.

Assisted Chief Financial Officer in preparing and analyzing information to provide to employee unions regarding the 2010 Budget process and outcomes.

➤ Pension Administration

Corresponded with the IRS to request an update on the process of notifying several former employees who have retired without a vested pension benefit that they have employee contribution balances remaining in the system which the former employee must withdraw from the pension trust fund or risk having forfeited to the City.

➤ Purchasing/Risk Management

Preparations are taking place for the Fall sale of surplus auction in October.

The October Purchasing newsletter was prepared and distributed.

➤ Treasury:

Finalized go-live for Utility Billing application.

Worked with Chief Financial Officer to finalize Tax Increment Financing projections.

Finalized revenue projections for the 2010 General Fund Budget, including 2009 year-end estimates.

➤ Chief Financial Officer

Prepared 3rd Quarterly Report of economic situation and city-wide budget monitoring issues.

Completed proposals, analysis and recommendations for 2010 Budget options for avoiding layoffs and service reductions, including opening negotiations with employee unions on existing contracts, furloughs, enhanced retirement initiatives, and so on.

Community Planning & Development

➤ Planning

The Planning Commission did not hold a meeting in October. A site plan was processed and approved for a building addition to the West Colony Graphics facility on West KL Avenue. Draft Wind Energy Regulations are being finalized and will be reviewed by the Planning Commission next month.

➤ Zoning

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on October 8th. At that meeting, the Board granted a dimensional variance of 8% from impervious cover requirement, which will allow Kalamazoo Metro Transit to construct a 4,200 square foot addition on the north side of the building at 530 N. Rose Street. The Board also granted a dimensional variance to allow a twelve square foot sign in the front yard and up to eight customer visits per day for an office use in the Residential- Multi Dwelling District. Lastly, the Board denied a variance request by Kalamazoo Christian High School to allow for the installation of four 80-foot tall light poles, which would illuminate the football field and track.

➤ Anti-Blight

Ongoing economic dislocation has left a large number of homes vacant due to mortgage or tax foreclosure. The Anti-blight Team currently monitors nearly three hundred vacant and blighted homes to assure they remain closed and pursues code enforcement against their owners as needed.

Demolition of blighted, abandoned, and dangerous houses funded by the federal

Neighborhood Stabilization Program is now well underway. Thirteen homes have been demolished and contracts have been awarded for ten others. It is anticipated that at least fifty (50) houses can be removed before the end of this year. Their removal will eliminate many public nuisances and provide opportunity for open space and re-development.

➤ **Building & Trades**

In the month of November there were 235 permits issued, representing \$34,410 in fees and \$2,555,866 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 2,132 representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$47,926,121 bringing in nearly \$367,562 in revenue.

➤ **Neighborhood Development**

Staff will release the 2010 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding application in November. Applications will be due mid-December. CDBG funds are awarded to local agencies to fund housing and community development activities that assist individuals with low-and-moderate incomes. Funds will be for projects to be conducted during the period of July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011. While staff have not yet been notified of the City of Kalamazoo's 2010 annual CDBG allocation, the 2009 budget was approximately \$1,800,000. Questions regarding the 2010 CDBG application or process should be directed to 337-8044.

Economic Development

➤ **Riverfront Area**

The preliminary utility plan for the Corridor Improvement Study has been prepared. LKF Marketing is continuing to work on the branding component.

A ribbon-cutting was held for the gateway mural at North and Gull streets.

Staff arranged for a music performance in the silo on Jack Coombs Trail.

➤ **Davis Creek Business Park (DCBP)**

DCBP infrastructure construction is complete and we are in the process of infrastructure dedication and a closeout of the EDA grant.

Real estate marketing signs have been ordered for the DCBP site, and information regarding the site has been posted on the various MLS systems.

Site efforts are underway for MDEQ-led contaminated soil and former refinery foundation removal activities.

Several rounds of methane sampling have been completed and draft reports have been submitted to staff and reviewed. Minor revisions and formatting are being updated for the final product.

➤ Brownfield Redevelopment

A Brownfield Plan Development Agreement for the East Michigan Avenue project was approved by the BRA at the September 17th board meeting. The \$10 million acquisition and redevelopment project is intended to redevelop buildings located in the 100 block of East Michigan Avenue with commercial space on the first floor level (10,000 square feet) and 20 units of residential space on the upper floors (20,000 square feet), while creating the equivalent of 72 full-time jobs. The project will also be LEED certified. The BRA committed up to \$200,000 or 11 year's worth of actual tax increment revenue in support of the project and will support the developer's MBT credit application to the State of Michigan, which was preapproved by the MEDC on October 13th.

Davis Creek and Riverfront real estate marketing flyers have been created (with assistance from LKF Marketing) and are ready for distribution.

Staff prepared and submitted an application package on October 12th for the next round of EPA Brownfield Site Assessment grant funding. The application is for another community-wide hazardous substances grant in the amount of \$200,000.

A contract has been awarded for the demolition of the former Superior Cleaners property. Demolition work should begin soon.

Staff explained the brownfield program to a non-profit exploring relocation through adaptive reuse or new construction. Uses include warehouse, simple packaging, distribution, office and retail. Staff is compiling a list of possible sites.

Staff has held discussions with at least three interested parties over the last two months to discuss issues relating to potential brownfield redevelopment projects.

Staff presented on the subject of Local Site Remediation Revolving Fund at the MDEQ/MEDC-sponsored BRA Workshop held in Lansing on September 29th.

Staff has been attending the MDEQ-led discussion groups related to the proposed redesign of Part 201 and Part 213 held in Lansing over the past several months. These efforts are scheduled to wrap up on November 10th.

Staff has been working with consultant, Anne Couture, to establish a state-wide Association of Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities. A second meeting of interested parties was held and included representatives from South Haven, Muskegon, Leelanau County, East Lansing, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Holland. Next steps are to investigate organizational, board and membership structure and draft a mission statement.

➤ Economic Development

Staff hosted a booth highlighting the City's revolving loan fund programs at the Minority Business Alliance Business Expo in the Radisson. The booth was visited by approximately 40 individuals and firms.

The City has been awarded \$762,000 in Energy Efficiency and Community Block Grant formula funds for the City Hall Energy Optimization and Demonstration Project. Staff is now working to bid and develop specific grant objectives.

Staff responded to various information requests from 11 business prospects interested in starting or expanding a business in Kalamazoo.

Information Technology

➤ BS&A Cash Management/ERP Phase II Project

NCC Utility Billing data was converted to BS&A from October 14th through October 18th. BS&A Staff was on site for three weeks (10/12 – 10/30) to train City Staff and to assist with initial billing cycles. Utility Billing went live on October 19th, and was the last application to implement in the ERP Phase II Project.

➤ EDEN Oracle to SQL Database Conversion

EDEN data migration from Oracle to MSSQL database environment was completed and went live on October 12th. Events preceding final migration included installation of new virtual server CITYSQL04, setup of Microsoft SQL Environment and database structures, initial EDEN data migration (08/10/09 – 08/28/09), module testing period performed by select City staff (09/01/09 – 10/08/09), final preparation and migration (10/10/09 – 10/11/09).

Parks & Recreation

➤ Staff continues to work with the Sunshine Rotary on improvements to the Rose Park Veteran's Memorial. Staff went to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation with the Sunshine Rotary to discuss the endowment fund that is held at the Foundation.

➤ Staff made a presentation on the Fairmount Dog Park to the Kalamazoo Dog Training Club. The purpose of the meeting was to update the group on the project's status, distribute "Buy a Brick" campaign flyers, and discuss other fundraising options.

➤ Staff met with Greg Ayers, President of Discover Kalamazoo, to explore opportunities to work with Discover Kalamazoo to market our facilities and parks to bring tournaments and events into the community. In addition, Discover Kalamazoo is a member of the National Association of Sports Commission, which has an

economic impact tool to assist us in capturing information that leads to the economic impact of events within a community. Staff will be following up with Discover Kalamazoo on those future opportunities.

- The 3rd Annual Conference on Inclusion & Community Participation, titled "Creating Community Together," was held at the Nazareth Complex. Panelists included Kalamazoo Nature Center, City of Portage Parks, City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation and other area agencies. The purpose of the panel was to inform the audience about what is being done with regards to inclusion. There were 124 people in attendance.
- The Youth Development Center (YDC) has been working with the Westside Rocket Football coach along with Future 4 Teens program staff to provide homework help and teen workshops for YDC youth and the Westside Rocket Football team. The program ran on Tuesdays 5:30pm to 7:00pm at the YDC, from September 15th through October 27th, and served 25 to 35 teens. The workshops offered were Cultural and Racial Awareness, Identity Development, and Self Image.
- The YDC Liaison has been working with a Phoenix student three days a week on behavior issues; personal hygiene; as well as, appropriate personal relationships with family, friends, teachers, and peers. The student will be returning to his regular school (Maple Street Magnet) by the next marking period.
- The Youth Action Council (YAC) has its first official member and recruitment is continuing as the YAC is slowly being rebuilt. Promotion of the council centers on the benefit to other youth and their community. Meetings are on Wednesdays, from 4pm to 5pm. The YAC's pledge is "The Youth Action Council: responsible to self, Youth Development Center and community."
- Hip Hop Dance classes for boys and girls, both beginner and advanced students, are being held at the YDC. The classes are held on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and the class instructor is Charles Curtis Sanders. Charles is a dance major and has worked at the YDC and for the Summer Youth Adventure Program. The class will be preparing to perform at the December art hop.
- The Halloween River Trail was held on October 24th at Mayors' Riverfront Park and over 300 people were in attendance. Participants enjoyed Trunk or Treating at a variety of vehicles including a fire truck, ambulance and City Recreation vans. Two wagons made their way through the haunted trail, with many participants screaming the entire way. Younger participants enjoyed the carnival games, pumpkin decorating; as well as, the apple cider and donuts. All in all, the night was a great success.
- The Oakwood After-School program participants went to the Art Hop where their work was displayed. The Art Hop took place at the Youth Development Center, with Art Time, Oakwood After-School program and the East Side Youth Center participants displaying the art relevant to the 1800's. This event was in recognition

of the City's 125th Anniversary and the movie about the history of the City was shown. Twenty five people were in attendance.

- Staff attended the Kalamazoo Public Schools open house at Maple Street School for the Arts Middle School. Staff promoted upcoming after school programs, the YDC and special events to families and school personnel; as well as, answered questions and informed those that attended about a variety of opportunities available to the community, like the proposed Dog Park, the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, and the Friends of Recreation.

Public Safety

- From April through September, CPO's, in collaboration with Public Service and Community Planning and Development, deployed "blight enforcement teams" to address quality of life issues in the Edison, Eastside, Northside, Vine, Arcadia and Knollwood neighborhoods. This initiative resulted in the removal of over 600 junk autos from the neighborhoods. Additionally, trash was cleared, dilapidated residences were fixed and/or condemned, lighting was improved, sidewalks were repaired and streets were cleaned.
- Community policing/interaction continues to be emphasized. Operations personnel are heavily involved in the October 28th – 30th Citizen's Police Academy. This intensive program is intended to educate residents about Public Safety operations and forge relationships between officers and citizens. Patrol personnel, including supervisors and zone officers, continue to attend each neighborhood meeting in their assigned districts.
- Directed and saturation patrols are implemented to address noted crime trends; as well as, neighborhood concerns and quality of life issues. During October, there were two significant events regarding the policing of the area around WMU. First, there was the annual WMU vs. CMU football which has historically resulted in violence and disturbances in and around campus. Second, there was the WMU homecoming football game. Both events were policed with patrol officers who were supplemented by officers from all divisions in Public Safety. Both weekends involved large crowds but neighborhoods remained safe and peaceful throughout.
- With the return of college students into neighborhoods and apartment complexes near WMU and K-College, officers have provided crime prevention information to those residents who are susceptible to crime, particularly larceny and burglary. Operations personnel continue to be assigned based on contemporaneous crime trend analysis. Operations, along with all divisions of public safety, participates in the now weekly "crime fighters" initiative.
- 84 methamphetamine labs have been investigated by KVET to date for 2009.

Public Services

- Construct Arboretum Roadway

Contract approval for design and right-of-way acquisition for improvements along Solon Street from Howard to the new Arboretum Parkway is approved and being processed.

- 2009 Local Street Project

All streets completed with the exception of Wilshire. Wilshire will be moved to 2010 to accommodate a large excavation project on the abutting properties that could place a considerable amount of heavy traffic on the roadway.

- Portage Creek Trailway

The bridge project over Portage Creek will be completed this year. Options are being evaluated for the section of the Kalamazoo Valley River Trailway from Westnedge to Harrison. Identified properties that will need to be acquired in order to follow the preferred path for the Portage Creek Trailway between Upjohn and Mayor's Riverfront Parks and quotes are being obtained for a consultant to manage property acquisition.

Transportation

- Millage Passage

On November 3rd, the voters of Kalamazoo overwhelmingly approved the 0.6 mil levy request to continue public transit operations in the City of Kalamazoo through 2012. This millage, which passed 76% to 24%, will be combined with the countywide millage of 0.4 mils that was approved on May 5th. The third element of the financial plan put forth by the County Administrator and the Kalamazoo City Manager is the proposed fare increase from \$1.35 to \$.150.

- Fare Increase Proposal

On November 5th, the Transit Authority Board held a special meeting specifically to take up the Department's recommended fare increase. After extensive discussion and comments and suggestions from the general public in attendance, the Board passed a motion to recommend to the City Commission to formally approve the fare increase as presented. That recommendation will now go to the City Commission and be presented as part of the Public Hearing that will be held on November 16th.

➤ Combined Paratransit Service Contract

On November 2nd, Apple Bus began operations of the new Metro County Connect demand/ response service. This new program combines the countywide Care-A-Van paratransit service with Metro Transit's ADA Metro Van service. A fleet of 44 demand/response vehicles owned by the City and leased to Apple Bus Company will be used in this program. While there did appear to be some small glitches in the initial start up, Apple Bus staff and Metro Transit staff are working through them.

➤ Diesel Fuel

On October 26th, Metro Transit purchased 18,000 gallons of ultra-low sulfur B5 blend diesel fuel at a cost of \$2.30 per gallon. The average year-to-date price per gallon for 2009 is \$1.70. Metro Transit budgeted \$2.80 per gallon for diesel fuel in 2009.