

Memorandum

DATE: January 29, 2010
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of January 25-29, 2010

A follow-up to the Council action on January 4, 2010 regarding a grant application to the MN Department of Energy for an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. Attached to today's memo are the findings from the staff team working on the grant application. Unfortunately several projects that had been identified to possibly be funded through this program do not meet the grant eligibility guidelines of a 10-year simple payback. We'll continue to review our projects and grant opportunities to identify those projects that may be eligible for future grant programs.

As a follow-up to the Council's Strategic Goal Planning Session last Tuesday, the February 9 Council Meeting and Work Session will include a review and next steps discussion for the development of the 2010 Council Goals and Initiatives, and scheduling for the follow-up discussion on Council Goal #4 which focuses on the decision making process.

Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of January 25-29, 2010:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development

Submitted by Jody T. Gunderson, Economic Development Director

The Economic Development Authority held its regular Board meeting on Thursday and elected Jenelle Teppen as its President, Steve Engler as Vice President, and Rhonda Pownell as the Secretary/Treasurer. The Board also agreed to execute annual Professional Service Agreements with the Northfield Enterprise Center for \$50,000, and the Northfield Downtown Development Corporation for \$35,000. The Executive Committee will provide their committee assignment recommendations to the Board at its February 11, 2010, meeting. The committees are expected to prepare a draft of the EDA's 2010 work plan for approval at their February 25, 2010, Board meeting.

The Economic Development Director also met this week with the Mr. Keith Stover, President and Ms. Marsha Danielson, Economic Development Dean, for South Central College to discuss potential collaborations that might occur with the City of Northfield and its businesses. Also attending the meeting was Brian O'Connell, Northfield's Community Development Director, Ms. Deanna Kuennen, Rice County Economic Development Director, Mr. Jeff McMenimen, Director of Design for Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc., and Ms. Ruth Lysne a resident of Northfield and a professional educator for over 50 years.

Housing

Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager

Staff is preparing a Request for Proposal for property management services for the Elianna Townhomes. Services requested include background checks, lease-up services, and maintenance. The RFP will be sent to property management companies and also advertised on the website and the local newspaper.

Planning

Submitted by Dan Olson, City Planner

The Planning Commission met on Thursday night to continue its review of the draft Land Development Code. The Commission is making progress in comparing the Comprehensive Plan policies relating to residential development with the draft regulations. Staff participated in training for the new laserfiche program that the City is undertaking to convert its paper documents to an electronic format. Staff also attended the monthly Labor Management meeting. The discussion centered on how to better promote the City's new wellness program to employees.

LIBRARY

Submitted by Lynne Young, Director

Three Rice County Commissioners – Steve Bauer, Jeff Docken and Galen Malecha - and County Commissioner Gary Weiers joined Library Board members Barb Altstaetter and Bob Bruce for a tour of the library on Tuesday, January 26. Since Rice County will provide over \$182,000 or about 18% of the library's budget in 2010, it was important for them to see our operation. They had a chance to tour the Buckham Memorial Library in Faribault in December.

During January, we have had large turnouts for story time. The library is a great place to bring children on these cold, cold days.

The first event in the Carnegie Centennial Concert Series will be held on Saturday at 7:00 p.m. at the library. Coffee and dessert will be served beginning at 7:00 p.m. and the concert will begin at 7:30. All concerts will be held upstairs at the library. These concerts are made possible by a grant from the Northfield Area Foundation.

A small work group made up of Margit Johnson from the Library Board, Tim Braulick from the Friends of the Library and Lynne Young met with Lynn Giovannelli from Library Strategies to begin work on materials for the fundraising feasibility study.

The library still has paper tax forms here. Although the demand for printed forms is down, they still fly off the shelf. Library users can also print forms from the IRS and state revenue departments from the library computers. The available tax forms are single page forms (not multi-part) for individual use.

Lynne Young has been working on two grant applications for legacy fund dollars. One grant, co-sponsored by the Northfield Arts Guild and Historical Society, will go to SELCO and, if received, will be used to pay for a joint anniversary party with the Arts Guild to be held on April 25. The rest of the grant will help to pay for the upcoming Carnegie Library exhibit at the Historical Society and the DVD that will be produced about the library. St. Olaf student interns will be doing the research for the exhibit and DVD and will also be recording and producing the DVD. A second grant application is going to the Minnesota Historical Society for the creation and printing of a historical pamphlet about the library.

In conjunction with Community Services at the Northfield Public Schools, Kathy Ness has prepared a grant application to go to the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council to fund Books and Stars. SEMAC has supported Books & Stars for the last couple of years.

PUBLIC WORKS

Facilities

Submitted by Bernie Shakal, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor

It has been a busy week making adjustments to heating systems around the City. One facility that still has some issues is the Community Resources Center. Most other areas have been balanced to satisfactory temperatures with the exception of the Senior Center. Program errors were discovered in the Senior Center area and corrections were made which now give room temperatures in the low to mid 70's. Another facility that needed some fine tuning was the Waste Water building; the temperature had to be increased at the air handler to discharge warmer air in the rooms.

At City Hall, Council Chambers we installed new water traps in the steam lines to try to correct the noise problem in the heaters, if that works we have other heaters in the building to repair.

Bernie had a meeting with our contact from Stanley Security Systems this week to conduct a survey of the NCRC facility to determine costs to re- key the building. This improvement would give us the ability to regain control of the keys that are issued and put the facility on the same system as the rest of the City.

Streets and Parks

Submitted by TJ Heinrich, Streets and Parks Supervisor

The week started with staff dealing with some light and drifting snow. Various streets were plowed and de-iced. Downtown walks were swept and de-iced. Residential city walks were swept also. City skating rinks were flooded and maintained. Boulevard tree trimming is ongoing. Preventative maintenance was performed on snow equipment.

Transit

Submitted by Brian Erickson, Public Works Operations Engineer

A request for proposals (RFP) for environmental site assessment phase II and DOT section 4(f) and 6 review for the Transit Hub is being advertised in the Northfield News and will also be sent out to several firms. This RFP is necessary to see if clean up of the site is necessary as well as investigating whether redesignation of some of the land is required prior to constructing the Transit Hub. If clean up is required then this contract will develop a work plan for accomplishing the clean up. Actual clean up and design contracts will be solicited separately. Proposals are due at 12:00 p.m. on February 11, 2010 and the anticipated award will be February 15.

Waste Water

Submitted by Glenn Lindroos Waste Water Division Manager

2009 Wastewater Facility Review

The Northfield Wastewater Treatment Facility was in compliance of all MPCA and EPA standards for all parameters tested in 2009. A summary of the effluent quality data for Biochemical Oxygen Demand, Total Suspended Solids, Ammonia Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Fecal Coliform Bacteria is as follows:

	Annual Average	EPA/MPCA Monthly Standard (max allowed)	Highest Month
BOD	3.4 mg/l	25 mg/l	6 mg/l
TSS	6.4 mg/l	30 mg/l	8 mg/l
Ammonia	0.14 mg/l	8.9 mg/l	0.3 mg/l
Phosphorus	0.62 mg/l	1.0 mg/l	1.0 mg/l
Coliform	14 CFU/100 ml	200 CFU/100ml	22 CFU/100 ml

The facility operated well within all standards every month with one exception. The phosphorus results for May were within standards, but right at the limit. Mechanical problems with a chemical feed system were the cause of the higher than normal results.

A review of the influent flow and load data indicate the facility is operating at about 65% of its theoretical capacity. Assuming industrial and domestic growth occur at projected rates, the system has the capacity to serve the City's needs for many years into the future. Substantial capital reinvestment will be required to replace worn systems as time goes on, however.

The other factor that may influence the need for facility expansion are more stringent regulations that may be implemented by the MPCA/EPA.

Water

Submitted by Doug Lien Water Division Manager

Water Systems Technician Jay Hall and Public Works Operator Lenny Moore discovered a broken chlorine vent hose at well #3 while changing the chlorine tanks. They replaced the chlorine vent hose and checked all the other well sites to determine if hoses needed to be replaced. The vent hose at #4 well was very brittle also, they changed that vent hose to prevent it from breaking in the future and causing a chlorine leak.

Seven hundred letters have been sent out to residents of Northfield since the beginning of the year, in regards to changing out water meters. We have only made 288 appointments so far with 220 meters replaced already.

cc: Department Managers