

Memorandum

DATE: February 26, 2010
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of February 22-26, 2010

The *Legislative Conference for Cities, Counties, Schools and Townships* will be held on March 25 at the State Capital in St. Paul and the *LMC 2010 Annual Conference and Marketplace* will be held on June 23-25 in St. Cloud, MN. Please contact me if you would like to attend either of these conferences.

Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of February 22-26, 2010:

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BUILDING INSPECTIONS**

Submitted by Jim Kessler, Building Official

This week the department staff worked with the software to determine which permits are not complete. We have had some issues resolving permits without final inspections. We are preparing to inform contractors and homeowners on the unfinalized permits. Staff has been working with Incode to rectify some software issues.

The rental program management is absorbing a fair amount of time. The illegal rental enforcement along with preparing a new rental ordinance licensing cycle is part of the activities. There have still been a few rental inspections this week.

The KFC project is complete and has an occupancy certificate from this office. The St Olaf project and smaller building projects still are in process.

We met with Carleton on the new arts union and reviewed the code issues as the process progresses toward final plans.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by Brian O'Connell

The process of revising the flood plain regulations to reference the newly updated floodplain maps in both Rice County and Dakota County is beginning. The existing ordinance will need to be amended to refer to the new map panel numbers and also to revise the definition of the term "regional flood protection elevation". This revision will reflect on a temporary basis the elevation difference along the Cannon River in Dakota County in comparison to Rice County that is occurring due to a data glitch from FEMA. These amendments will be coming to City Council sometime in late April. These amendments to the ordinance need to be complete prior to June 18, 2010 in order to stay in compliance with DNR and FEMA requirements.

Community Development staff will be working with the City Attorney to organize background material for City Council discussion related to the process of beginning discussions with Bridgewater Township on the

change to the existing annexation agreement. This is in relation to the direction given recently by City Council with respect to the Praver/Gill annexation request.

Economic Development

Submitted by Jody T. Gunderson, Economic Development Director

The Economic Development Authority met on Thursday and discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Director as defined by the Northfield City Council. The Board also discussed Work Group assignments and the expectation that they would meet over the next week to solidify the draft 2010 EDA Work Plan. The Board is expected to discuss, and potentially amend, the draft initiatives during the March 11, 2010, EDA meeting and adopt its work plan for 2010. The EDA's Business Park Master Plan Steering & Technical Committee will be meeting again on March 18, 2010, to prepare for meetings with the City's Council, Planning Commission, and Public Open House in April.

Housing

Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager

Staff has been working on the EECBG grant, due next week. This grant is part of the stimulus fund and is designed for cities, counties and municipalities to make energy improvements. We are looking at replacing windows at City Hall and replacing the traffic light bulbs with LED bulbs. This grant was originally due the end of January and the City did not submit at that time, due to requirements of a 10 year simple payback on the project. However, the State re-released the grant with the amendment of a simple payback of 15 years. The projects the City was hoping to submit fit these new criteria.

Planning

Submitted by Dan Olson, City Planner

The Planning Commission met on Thursday and continued its review of the draft Land Development Code (LDC). The Commission is making significant progress on its review of standards for the existing residential areas of the community, including ordinance language for infill and redevelopment in those areas. Staff also met with the Labor-Management Committee on Wednesday to brainstorm new ideas for the employee wellness program that began in December. New ideas include a smoking cessation program and forming a Weight Watchers group.

ENGINEERING

Stormwater Ordinance

Submitted by Katy Gehler, City Engineer

Staff attended the Rice Creek Concerned Citizens group meeting where the focus of the discussion was on the monitoring plan. The first step to define the monitoring plan will be to identify where the springs are located that feed Rice Creek. This time of year is a good time to locate the springs, as they are easily visible through the snow cover. Saturday, Feb. 27, 2010, a subgroup of the citizens group will be walking Rice Creek to locate and map the springs.

The project webpage has been fully developed and will be updated throughout the project process. A list server has also been created to provide email updates to interested persons. A link to sign up for the list server can be found on the project webpage.

4th Street Reconstruction

Submitted by Katy Gehler, City Engineer

A project meeting was held with design staff on Wednesday to discuss both the remaining design schedule and the construction phasing. Plans will be submitted to State Aid for review by the end of next week. Staff will be incorporating guidance provided by the council on Tuesday, March 2, into the final design documents. Staff will ask the council to approve the plans and authorize bids on March 16, 2010 which is in line with the original schedule. Staff will hold the final neighborhood meeting the week of March 15, 2010. Notices for this meeting will be going out to residents early next week.

Due to the scale of the project and location near the downtown, staff will be including more detailed phasing within the contract documents. To make the utility connections and correct an ongoing drainage issue at the intersection of Division and 4th Street, a portion of the intersection will have to be reconstructed. This work is anticipated to take 2-3 weeks and will require disruption to the flow of traffic. However, the intersection will remain open on three legs. This work will be first in the phasing and is anticipated to be complete early June before summer events are in full swing in Bridge Square. The remainder of the block through the Washington Street intersection will be phased to be complete by the July 4th events. The next phase will include 4th Street from Washington to Union and all of the Union Street blocks. The next phase will pick up the rest of 4th Street and the final phase will be the individual blocks south of 4th. There will be events in Central Park that may be impacted by the construction. However, the City will work with the contractor to minimize any disruptions. Due to the size of the project, work is anticipated to take the entire construction season.

Rice County Transportation

Submitted by Katy Gehler, City Engineer

Mr. Walinski and Ms. Gehler met with representatives of Rice County on Wednesday to discuss road conditions, project needs, and prioritization within the City of Northfield. Several county roads within the city are in need of repair or reconstruction. Many of these roads have aged well beyond the typical useful life of a pavement and do not meet today's standards for urban roadways. Staff will be drafting a resolution for the council to consider that expresses the City's priorities to the County including the need for pedestrian accommodations in urban settings and funding strategies.

Rice County SHIP

Submitted by Brian Welch, GIS Technician

City and Community Ed Staff met with the Rice County officials in charge of managing the SHIP grants to promote healthy living within the county. The county would like to see the county municipalities coordinate to develop coherent and collaborative programs to improve safety and use of non-motorized transportation options. To this end the county will coordinate a task force of representatives from each city in the county to develop plans and funding requests through the SHIP program. Initial discussions centered on signs for bike transportation routes within the cities as well as coordinated public education materials for different media formats.

LIBRARY

Submitted by Lynne Young, Director

The Library's Teen Board sponsored a third successful Cabin Fever Mini-golf tournament on Sunday, February 21. The Teen Board is planning to use the \$600 they raised to purchase new materials for the Teen Area.

Debby Nitz and Leesa Wisdorf participated in the High School Career Fair on 2/26 to speak with 10th graders about librarianship as a career choice, including the education required, the different types of libraries, and what a typical work day would be like.

Debby Nitz is a member of a regional library (SELCO) committee that is working on the digitization of local resources. Some of the legacy funding that SELCO will receive is going to be used for preserving the print legacy of this region – local newspapers, yearbooks, locally produced scrapbooks, etc.

Lynne Young and Leesa Wisdorf paid a brief visit to the newest Rice County Library. The Lonsdale Public Library will open on Tuesday, March 2. Diana Tallent has done a great job of pulling things together for the opening.

Lynne Young held orientation meetings with Betsy Spethmann and Char Carlson, new library board members.

PUBLIC WORKS

Arena

Submitted by Jason Eisold, Recreation Manager

The Arena has installed the AED (Automated External Defibrillator) that was awarded to the city by the Northfield Area Foundation. The AED unit will be shared between the Arena and the Outdoor Pool. Training was offered this week to Arena staff that were interested in getting certified. The arena will begin its final month of operation next week. Closing date for the arena is March 21. Additional Open Skate and Open Hockey Times will be posted in the coming weeks. Check the Arena web site for updated information.

Facilities

Submitted by Bernie Shakal Facilities Maintenance Supervisor

Bernie met with engineers from the I & S Group at the NCRC Facility to obtain a proposal and recommendations for improving the cooling requirements in the C.A.C. warehouse area. The City has received a grant to fund this project. Initially when the facility was built, the warehouse was not designed for the use that it is being used for today. With the added coolers and freezers producing heat, it makes it difficult to maintain a cool enough temperature for the food items being stored.

Contractors were hired this week to remove snow from the west side of the Transit Facility so that the vent stacks from the heaters could be repaired from previous snow damage. There has also been some rain gutter damage, but that will have to wait until the ice melts.

A.C.E. Boiler Company was at the NCRC this week to make the repairs to the boilers, this was necessary due to improper installation by the previous contractor. This repair work will not be any additional cost to the City.

Streets and Parks

Submitted by TJ Heinrich, Streets and Parks Supervisor

Staff has been busy clearing street corners and storm water catch basins to aid in water flowing during the warm weather. City park ice rinks were maintained. The rinks will be closed for the season next week. City staff is currently building gates to be installed on the new sidewalk in Way Park to prevent cars that continue to drive on the new sidewalks. Staff attended forklift truck training on Thursday. Potholes continue to be filled around town. Staff assisted the Facility department with pool cleaning at the Northfield Community Resource Center.

Water

Submitted by Doug Lien Water Division Manager

All staff attended a forklift safety training course at the Maintenance Facility on Thursday morning. There was classroom and hands on training to better prepare the operators on general operation and safety practices when using a forklift.

Operators Scott Murphy and Lenny Moore repaired a fire hydrant that was hit at the corner of Jefferson Road and Oak Lawn Drive. A Traffic break-off kit was used to fix the hydrant. The repair took about two hours to complete.

The Water Division is still getting good residential participation on the Radio Read meter replacement program. The Operators have replaced 726 meters so far this year.

cc: Department Managers

