

Memorandum

DATE: March 5, 2010
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of March 1 – 5, 2010

I have been asked to provide the Council a few thoughts on my long-range goals over the next several years. Simply put, my goal in the next three to five years is to improve the practice of good governance for the City of Northfield. The goal I have given my leadership team is to make Northfield the best-governed small city in the State of Minnesota. Governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which those decisions are either implemented or not implemented. Perhaps only an ideal that will be hard to attain, in my opinion it is worthy goal.

To achieve good governance will require the ongoing review of old agreements, the updating of outdated ordinances, City codes and policies, and an ongoing review of continuous improvement in the delivery of services that are provided to/for the citizenry. Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. The assistance requested by the City, which by definition in this case is the City Council, is a willingness to engage in this process, to bring your ideas and recommendations forward, and to provide clear direction on your decisions.

Attached to this week's Friday Memo are the monthly summaries from various boards and commissions.

The Cannon River Sportsmen Club has continued their work to identify and develop an archery range site for Northfield archery enthusiasts. After unsuccessful attempts at locating an archery range at Compostella, Spring Creek, and Lashbrook Parks, an alternative site was identified on City owned property that currently houses the east water tower. This property is located outside the current City of Northfield municipal boundaries in Northfield Township under the jurisdiction of Rice County for land use and permitting. Currently the Sportsmen Club has been working with Rice County Zoning/Planning updating the current county code to allow for an archery range within the Urban Expansion Area. The Rice County Commissioners recently approved the changes in the code. The next step is a public hearing on permitting this use, which is tentatively scheduled by Rice County on April 1, 2010. If approved by Rice County, the final archery range layout and agreement for construction and use with the Northfield Sportsmen Association and the City of Northfield will be developed. Prior to being brought forward to the City Council for consideration of approval, the plan and agreement will be reviewed by the PRAB and Planning Commission.

Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of March 1 -5, 2010:

CITY CLERK

Submitted by Deb Little, City Clerk

The Primary election has been moved to Tuesday, August 10, 2010. The change was made to comply with a federal law designed to provide adequate time for military and overseas voters to cast ballots. The candidate filing period will be Tuesday, May 18 – Tuesday, June 1, 2010.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development

Submitted by Jody T. Gunderson, Economic Development Director

The Economic Development Director met with the EDA's Work Groups this week to finalize a draft of their 2010 Work Plan. At the February 25th Board meeting, members were assigned to various work groups and asked to review the work that was completed at their strategic planning retreat, and draft the work plan initiatives they proposed to undertake in 2010. The 2010 work plan will be discussed and considered for adoption at the EDA's March 11, 2010, Board meeting.

The Economic Development Director, Community Development Director, the City's planning consultant, and representatives of St. Olaf met this week to discuss the progress that has been made with the Business Park Master Plan. This was an opportunity to get direct input from representatives of St. Olaf as it relates to the property the college owns adjacent to the Hospital. Based upon the comments made during the meeting, it appears that the master plan for the area was addressing potential concerns they may have as it relates to future development.

Housing

Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager

Staff completed and submitted the EECBG grant to the State for improvements to City Hall and traffic light upgrades. It is anticipated that the State will determine grantees by the end of March. If awarded, the City must begin both projects before June 1, 2010, and they must be completed before July 2011.

Staff has leased both of the townhomes owned by the HRA. These are both market rate units, purchased with the intention of providing larger, family-friendly rental properties in the community.

Planning

Submitted by Dan Olson, City Planner

The Planning Commission met this week to continue its review of the draft Land Development Code (LDC). The Commission is almost ready to complete its review of residential ordinances for existing residential areas, and is expected to provide that language to the City Council at the April 13th Work Session. The Commission will soon begin reviewing the regulations for future residential areas. Staff met with the HgKI consulting firm this week to review the work of the EDA master business park steering committee and the three development concepts that have been created for the 530-acre area west of the Northfield Hospital.

FINANCE

Submitted by Kathleen McBride, Finance Director

Preliminary Pay 2011 Property Values – Dakota County has preliminary property values for next year on their website. Market value totals for Northfield show a decrease of 7.1%. Agricultural properties led the decline with 9.6%, followed by residential – down 7.2% and commercial / industrial down 4.4%.

LIBRARY

Submitted by Lynne Young, Director

Two St. Olaf students are researching the library's history. Kenzie is working on the script for the DVD that is scheduled to premier on May 5 at St. Olaf's Viking Theater. Another group of students will do the actual filming. Sarah is working on the exhibit which will open at the Northfield Historical Society on April 22.

Looking ahead, author Siri Hustvedt will read from her work at the library on Friday, March 26, at 7:00 p.m. T. J. Stiles, National Book Award winning author of *The Last Tycoon*, will be here on Friday, April 23 from 4:30 – 5:30.

Lynne Young received word this week that the library has been awarded a \$7,000 "fast track" grant from the Minnesota Historical Society to write and publish a historical brochure about the library.

Kathy Ness is in New York City for a conference sponsored for a "Picturing America" contest. Her travel and attendance at the conference were provided by the conference sponsors (The American Library Association, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Humanities and THIRTEEN/WNET) because of her use of the "Picturing America" art work in the 2009 summer reading program.

LIQUOR STORE

Submitted by: Stephen DeLong, Liquor Operations Director

The Minnesota State Auditor has released the 2008 Analysis of Municipal Liquor Stores.

http://www.osa.state.mn.us/Reports/gid/2008/liquor/liquor_08_report.pdf

The report shows a continued increase in sales, but contradictory numbers regarding net profits.

From the Executive Summary:

- The combined net profits from all municipal operations totaled \$20.4 million in 2008. This represents a decrease of \$2 million, or 8.9% from the level generated in 2007.
- Over the past five years, net profits for off-sale operations have increased 23.5%.
- During 2008, Minnesota's municipal liquor operations reported a 13th consecutive year of record sales totaling \$303 million. Total sales generated in 2008 increased by \$11.3 million, or 3.9% over 2007.
- Total transfers to other city funds were \$17.8 million, an increase of 8.9% from 2007.

The Northfield store generated \$2,629,524 total sales in 2008, with transfers to the General Fund of \$131,280.

We will offer an in-store beer tasting this Friday evening from 4:00 to 7:00 pm, featuring our Irish beers of the month:

- Guinness Draft
- Guinness Extra Stout
- Harp Lager
- Smithwick's Ale

PUBLIC WORKS

Facilities

Submitted by Bernie Shakal Facilities Maintenance Supervisor

With some assistance from the Street Department crew, we were able to catch up on some projects. One task was a return steam line at City Hall that had a small hole; a 20 ft. section of pipe was replaced. Other continuing work with the heating system includes replacement of steam traps and control valves.

Progress continues on the re-keying project at the Northfield Community Resource Center (NCRC) facility, Bernie met with the Best Locks representative on Monday to work on the details for the various lease holders within the NCRC, when the preliminary plan is complete we plan to meet with the lease holders individually to discuss changes that they might want to make, and then meet with all lease holders to finalize the plans for the project. A goal of April 15, 2010 is set for this project to be complete.

We received a proposal back from the engineering firm that was contacted to provide design services for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system improvements for the warehouse area of the Community Action Center at the NCRC. The warehouse area consists of a storage/work area and shop located on the first floor. The City has obtained a grant to provide more air conditioning into the area where foods are stored.

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 drainage. St Paul Public Works opened their bituminous plant this week, which allows staff to use hot mixed bituminous to fill potholes. Hot mixed bituminous holds much better in potholes. City park ice rink maintenance has been discontinued for the season. The compost facility has seen activity, turning of the compost rows occurred this week. Final maintenance was completed on the City street sweeper, which will be out in the next couple of weeks. Spring maintenance has begun on turf equipment. Staff met with MnDot officials to discuss the repairs that need to be done on an approach panel on the 5th Street Bridge.

Wastewater

Submitted by Glenn Lindroos, Wastewater Superintendent

The Report View software, which was outdated and would soon be unsupported by the software provider, was upgraded this week. This software takes real time data from the facilities SCADA system as well as information manually entered by staff and puts the information into several daily, weekly, and monthly reports. Most of the reports are used by staff to verify normal operation of equipment throughout the treatment system. One report summarizes all the flow data and laboratory information required for monthly reporting to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The latest version of Maintenance View, the software used for the facilities preventive maintenance program, was also installed and tested this week.

Water

Submitted by Doug Lien Water Division Manager

Water Division Staff and Ryan Kiefer (Street Shop Mechanic) determined that the operating handle on the new Wachs Wrench (valve wrench) we received and mounted on the truck had a major safety hazard that could cause serious injury to an operators fingers. We contacted the manufacturer of the wrench and shared our concerns about the safety on the handles design. Wachs agreed with our assessment and redesigned a handle that we received and installed on Thursday. We feel that this new handle has eliminated the potential injury to our operators.

On Wednesday, Operators Scott Murphy and Lenny Moore performed our monthly Bacteria Samples.

Water Systems Technician Jay Hall completed our monthly Fluoride Report and sent the results to the Minnesota Department of Health.

cc: Department Managers