

**Memorandum**

DATE: March 19, 2010  
TO: Mayor & Council Members  
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator  
RE: Friday Memo for the week of March 15-19, 2010

The Safety Center Architectural Firm Selection Workgroup met Friday morning to review the scoring and ranking of the 17 firms that submitted proposals. The overall quality of proposals was very good, which made for good deliberation from members of the Selection Workgroup.

Listed below are the firms which submitted proposals and the scoring and ranking of their proposals:

Firm	Rank	Average Score	Total	Firm	Rank	Average Score	Total
S.E.H.	1	86	602	Buetow & Associates	10	72.86	510
Collaborative Design Group	2	84.57	592	SMSQ	11	71.28	499
Wold Arch.	3	81.86	573	Yaggy Colby	12	69.57	487
Professional Design Group	4	78.86	552	Tushie	13	68.14	477
KKE	5	77.57	543	Kodet	14	65.57	459
292	6	76.43	535	VJAA	15	62.29	436
BKV Group	7	75.71	530	Oertel	16	57.43	402
SJA	8	75.29	527	Lamperts	17	54.43	381
Julie Snow	9	74.29	520				

The total number of available points per proposal was 700 points. The firms have been notified and the next step will be interviews with the top five scoring firms. The tentative schedule for those interviews is Friday March 26, 2010. Members of the Selection Workgroup include: Council Members Pownell and Zweifel, Mr. Steve Schmidt, Mr. Steve Spehn, Mr. Brian Erickson, PW Operations Engineer, Police Chief Mark Taylor, and myself.

On Thursday, Ms. Katy Gehler, PE, City Engineer and I met with a small group from the Northfield Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee, Mr. Jim Gleason, Mr. Jerry Anderson, and Mr. Tom Furlong, a representative from Dundas, Mr. Tom McMahon, PE and MnDOT District 6 representatives continuing our discussions on improving access and traffic conditions along the Highway 3 Corridor. The Hwy. 3 access issue was first brought forward at a Chamber of Commerce Transportation Forum early in 2009 when potential changes to the Heritage Drive/Hwy. 3 intersection were identified by Mn/DOT. The issues identified for discussion include improving safety and highway access in conjunction with reviewing existing intersection controls, frontage roads (present and future), signal timing for pedestrians, and vehicular speed conformity to posted speed limits. The ongoing effort is to align the development of the Mn/DOT Hwy. 3 Access Management Plan with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan. A more

thorough review of these discussions will be forthcoming with the City Council in April, which will also include a formal request by the City for a speed study of Hwy. 3 and an analysis of the current signal light settings along the Hwy. 3 corridor for both pedestrian crossing and vehicular traffic control.

**Draft Agenda** – starting this month, I will be adding a future draft of the City Council agenda items for the upcoming month to the Friday Memo. This update will be included in a mid month Friday Memo. Please be aware the Draft Agenda of the upcoming month is subject to change. Additions and deletions of items will occur in an effort to best accomplish the Council goals and the necessary successful operation and business of the City. April's draft agenda is located at the end of this report.

**Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of March 15-19, 2010:**

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Community Development**

*Submitted by Brian O'Connell, Community Development Director*

Staff is preparing a summary of annexation positions and policies that the City Council discussed and established at the work session of March 9, 2010. These positions and policies will be on the City Council meeting of April 6, 2010 for approval by the Council. These positions and policies will serve as a foundation for upcoming discussions with officials from Waterford Township and Bridgewater Township.

Staff has researched the amount of commercial and industrial building square footage that had been constructed since the year 2000. This information has been forwarded to the planning consultants who are preparing the Master Plan for the Business and Industrial park. This information will serve as a basis of determining how much building square footage has been absorbed (built) historically and also be used with other information in projecting how much future building square footage and corresponding land area should be planned for in the business and industrial park.

### **Economic Development**

*Submitted by Jody T. Gunderson, Economic Development Director*

The Economic Development Authority's Master Plan Steering Committee met on Thursday to review the revised concept plans drafted for the property south of Highway 19 (The Praver /Gill properties). There were three concepts drafted utilizing the input provide during the charrette session in December. Each of the three concept plans had a distinctive transportation network, providing special attention to environmental surroundings. Much of the discussion revolved around the land uses proposed, and how the transportation can be developed to minimize the impact to the environmental features adjacent to the properties.

The Economic Development Director submitted some preliminary information to Senator Franken's office as it relates to what progress has been made and potential costs associated with developing infrastructure for the proposed business park west of the hospital. Last year, the City annexed land and began master planning the area for future development. Once the City Council has determined how and under what terms the area will develop, the availability of Federal and State Funding will be critical to advancing the project.

### **Housing**

*Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager*

#### Elianna Townhomes

Window Coverings (blinds) and fire extinguishers were installed in the Elianna townhome units this week, which were the final items to be completed prior to tenant occupancy. Both units have been rented and will be occupied by late spring 2010. The Homeowners Association for Fargaze has been excellent to work with and has become more stable as more of the units in the HOA become occupied/purchased. Snow removal was timely this winter and the company did an excellent job. As other issues come to light, the HOA is

addressing them quickly and efficiently. This is a prime example of how foreclosures and vacant units can negatively affect whole neighborhoods, and subsequently need to be rebuilt once the units are turned over to new owners. The HRA is proud of the small role they played in helping revitalize this neighborhood, which was truly an effort made possible by all the homeowners and tenants in the HOA.

### Home Matters

Since we are on the topic of foreclosures, the Home Matters project continues to progress. Home Matters is a collaborative effort between Three Rivers Community Action, Northfield HRA, Blue Cross Blue Shield of MN, among others, at foreclosure acquisition, demo, rehab and resale, in an effort to revitalize neighborhoods.

The house at 311 Cherry Street is nearly finished and staff is meeting with the other partners next week to establish a timeline for open houses and educational sessions on all the sustainable and healthy living aspects of this home. Staff will continue to report updates through weekly chatter, and the City's website will also carry information under the Housing Section, as well as a link to the Home Matters blog site, maintained by Three Rivers Community Action.

The other two houses, located on Eighth Street, have been bid for rehab and both projects are in the early stages of demo and construction. More information and pictures will be available as the project moves forward, on the blog site.

Blog Site: [www.home-matters.org](http://www.home-matters.org)

### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Programs

The rush of first-time homebuyers has slowed, but staff is receiving calls from many lenders and realtors in the community inquiring about the program. A quick over-view of the program:

- There are still funds available
- There are no preferred lenders-any lender can utilize this program
- It is compatible with Rural Development, FHA, VA and conventional loans, as well as other downpayment programs like CASA
- It is \$5,000 in a 0% interest, deferred loan for downpayment assistance and/or closing costs. The loan is repaid upon resale or refinance of the initial loan
- Applications are available by calling Staff at 645-3047 or online at <http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/housing/housingprograms>

Other CDBG programs have funding available as well. There is funding left in:

- Manufactured Home Rehab: \$2,000 grant for rehab to owner-occupied manufactured homes in Viking Terrace or Florellas;
- Manufactured Home Demolition and Acquisition: \$2,000 for demo of existing unit and \$5,000 towards the purchase of a new(er), code compliant unit in either Viking Terrace or Florellas. This is also a grant program;
- Homeowner Rehab: \$8,000 low interest loan for specific rehab projects to increase the safety and energy efficiency of owner-occupied homes in Northfield.

All programs and applications can be found at <http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/housing/housingprograms>.

The Rental Rehab program also has funds left. This is a \$10,000 grant for landlords renting to tenants at or below 80% median income, to improve the safety and energy efficiency of their units. Information and applications can be found at <http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/housing/rentalhousingprograms>

### Stimulus Funding

Staff has been working with Facilities staff to write and release a Request For Proposal for engineering services at the Northfield Community Resource Center for a new/updated HVAC system for the Food Shelf. It is anticipated that RFP's will be mailed today (March 19) and are due back April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Housing staff is involved in this project because of the accessibility this office had to stimulus money through the CDBG program and the connection with social service programs. To request a bid packet, please contact Barb Yaeger-Thompson at 645-3045.

### **Planning**

*Submitted by Dan Olson, City Planner*

Both the Planning Commission and Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) met this week. The Planning Commission continued its review of the Land Development Code (LDC) by reviewing regulations for accessory uses and structures. The HPC discussed the possible designation of Way Park as a heritage preservation site. Both the HPC and Park Board are interested in the designation, and will request that the City Council give an indication as to their interest in the designation. This issue is expected to be a Council agenda item in the near future.

Staff met this week with individuals involved in creating an iPOD tour of the downtown area. The City Council may recall that the City received a grant from the State Historic Preservation office in 2009 to create this tour. It is expected that the completion of the project will meet the grant deadline of July 2010, and that the tour will consist of descriptions and stories of six historic buildings in the downtown.

### **LIBRARY**

*Submitted by Lynne Young, Director*

The City has received 15 applications for Grace Whittier grants. Unfortunately, since interest rates are so low this year, the Committee will have just under \$4,000 to grant. Grace Whittier committee members are: Beth Berry, Dale Ness, Helen Preddy, Kris Vohs and Erica Zweifel. The Committee asked that the Mayor's Youth Council be able to participate in the grant review process, and Katherine Peterson and Liv Thompson will also participate in the discussion next week.

Kathy Rush and Laurie Kodet attended a new technologies workshop for libraries in the Twin Cities this week.

Thanks to Bryan Haugen, Chris Vanzuilen and Bernie Shakal for repairing lights at the library. The lights improve building security and are much appreciated.

Representatives of the Owatonna, Faribault, Red Wing and Northfield Public Libraries met with reps from Recorded Books for a demonstration of downloadable audio books and to discuss a joint contract in an effort to improve service and decrease costs.

Registrations are filling up for NO-School library programs to be held during Spring Break. All of these programs will be held from 1 – 2:30 in the afternoon: Fancy Nancy Tea Party on Tuesday, March 30; Star Wars on Wednesday, March 31 and Camp Wannareada on Tuesday, April 1 (no it's not an April Fool).

All performers have been hired for this year's Books & Stars program. This year the Books and Stars Program will again be made possible by a grant from the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council (SEMAC).

The Friends of the Library held their annual meeting on March 9. A crowd of 40 gathered to hear speaker Cary J Griffith speak about his book *Opening Goliath: Danger and discovery in Caving* that is a finalist for this year's MN Book Awards. Equipment purchased by the Friends enhanced the evening's presentation with the use of the new flat screen television and computer cart.

The third Centennial Concert was held on Sat. 3/13. Dave Hagedorn and Kevin Clements gave great jazz performances on the vibraphone and bass respectively. Over 50 people attended the concert. The concerts have been made possible by a grant from the Northfield Area Foundation. Refreshments were provided by the Ole Café and Goodbye Blue Monday.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

### **Arena**

*Submitted by Jason Eisold, Recreation Manager*

This is the final weekend for the ice arena. The last Open Skate will be Sunday from 3:45-5:15pm. Ice will be removed next week to begin preparation for the Northfield Hospital Auxiliary Book Fair. Thank you to all of the users of the arena this past season, over 1300 hours of ice were rented over the 180 day season, almost 100 hours more than any previous operating season. Information will be out next week about Pre-Season Pool Pass Sale dates and times. Check the pool web site next week for more information [www.ci.northfield.mn.us/parksandrec/pool](http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/parksandrec/pool)

### **Facilities**

*Submitted by Bernie Shakal Facilities Maintenance Supervisor*

Facilities had a busy week tending to ground water levels at the Safety Center, due to a pump failure, water began coming through the floor in the lower level. The pump was replaced and the water extracted from the carpet.

Bernie met with a representative from the Firestone Company at the Liquor Store to discuss the warranty of the new roof that was installed last fall. He sited some issues, and will be contacting Central Roofing Company to correct. Final inspection cannot be done or payment made until this is corrected.

More work was done this week to the steam heat system at City Hall, additional parts had to be ordered and the project should be finished next week. Hopefully this repair will eliminate the hammering noise in the pipes.

We have started to make adjustments to the HVAC systems within the City to transition into the warmer temperatures. Significant progress has been made with the Johnson Controls automation system, especially at the Community Resource Center, making it easier to manage temperatures.

### **Streets and Parks**

*Submitted by TJ Heinrich, Streets and Parks Supervisor*

Spring street sweeping is in full swing. Pothole repairs continue throughout city. This past week 15 tons of bituminous were used for repairs. City trails markers were removed and some trail cleanup was performed.

New street signs were delivered this week and preparations will be made to install them. A new Federal/State Mn/DOT mandate requires that all street signage be changed from 4-inch letters to 6-inch letters and the new signs use a highly reflective lettering material. Over the next four years all street signage will be changed. The estimated cost to the City at this time is approximately \$40,000. Additionally, the new signs will require replacement at the 10 – 12 year mark because of the degradation of the reflective material over time. Current street signs have a life span of 25 plus years. Installation work will be completed in house to contain costs.

### **Wastewater**

*Submitted by Glenn Lindroos, Wastewater Superintendent*

A relatively rapid snow melt in combination with the frost going out of the ground in many areas have caused water tables to rise and some moderate flood conditions in the Cannon River watershed. Under these conditions some of the older sewer lines in town do experience some groundwater infiltration, which this year have increased total flow to the wastewater treatment facility by about 400 gallons per minute.

Treatment costs go up a little due to some additional chemical and electrical usage, but there are no other noticeable effects on treatment processes. Compare this to 15 years ago, when similar circumstances would have increased flow by 3000 gallons per minute and caused some real operational issues. Some major projects designed to reduce system infiltration to acceptable levels were completed several years ago and have clearly been effective. The remaining infiltration has a minimal effect on overall operations and is not cost effective target these areas for immediate replacement. These areas will, however, eventually be rehabilitated through the infrastructure replacement program that the City has in place for all of its underground utilities.

## **Water**

*Submitted by Doug Lien Water Division Manager*

We have sent out 2,000 letters for the Radio Read meter project. We have 1,250 meters replaced or scheduled to be replaced up to the date of 4/30/2010. We have 300 meters left with about 750 letters not responded to yet. We will stop sending out meter letters now and use the rest of the meters on hand for final readouts (change of property ownership which still has old style meter), stopped meters, and snow birds when they get back to Northfield. We will resume the meter program in January of 2011 when we have a new budget to purchase the last 1500 meters. Completion of the program will be in December of 2011.

Locates have increased slightly over the last week.

## **Draft Agenda Items April 2010**

In an effort to accomplish the city council's goals, the following is a draft agenda for the month of April 2010. Regular council meetings are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of each month; work sessions are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Note: \*\* meetings only if needed for items to be acted on. (These are subject to change). Additional meetings/work sessions will be scheduled as needed. **The Draft Agenda of the upcoming months agenda items is subject to change.** Additions and deletions of items will occur in an effort to best accomplish the Council goals and the necessary successful operation and business of the City.

### **4/6 – Council meeting**

- Presentation – Drug & Alcohol Task Force
- National Library Week Proclamation
- Council approves architect selection
- Safety Center Preliminary Site Selection
- First reading of Ordinance No. 909 - Graffiti ordinance
- Budget reduction planning
- In-kind Grant Program
- Annexation Policy Position
- Preliminary Agreement Crossings Property
- Video Streaming Enhancements
- 2010 Council Goals

### **4/13 –Work session**

- Introduction of Mark Henke – Hospital Administrator
- Waterford Township - discussion with Town Board Supervisors
- PC report on suggested land dev code requirement for residential districts
- Community Education & Recreation Agreement

### **4/20 - Council meeting**

- Second reading of Ordinance No. 909 - Graffiti ordinance
- Archery Range Site Approval/Agreement

- Union of Youth/Key Property Request
- Safety Center - Identification of preferred locations
- Items related to 4<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction Project:
  - Assessment hearing continued from 12/21/09
  - Accept bids and award contract
  - Adopt assessments

Discussion Item

- EDA Master Plan Steering Committee Report and Update - EDA NW Annexation Area Master Plan

4/27 – Work session\*\*

cc: Department Managers