

**Memorandum**

DATE: April 4, 2008  
TO: Mayor & Council Members  
FROM: Al Roder, City Administrator  
RE: Friday Memo for the week of March 31 – April 4, 2008

Here is a list of city activities for the week of March 31 – April 4, 2008:

**Administration**

Item number 14 - “consider proposal to modify organizational structure” is being removed from the April 7 agenda and moved to the April 21 agenda. Amending the organizational structure is an important issue that should be addressed with the entire council present. Council members Cashman and Pokorney will not be at Monday's meeting.

**Information Technology**

The Fiber Optic Feasibility Task Force member met with various communication vendors this week to discuss their openness to work with the city on fiber optic endeavors. The meetings were fruitful in that we have gained a perspective from each vendor on their thoughts for fiber optics opportunities in Northfield. Next week the task force will sum up all the information and begin the list of items to be included in the feasibility study.

Kurt Wolf and Melissa Reeder attended an informational meeting at the League of MN Cities to learn more about vitalization of computer servers. This technique allows us to put individual servers on one larger box. For example: the Finance server and the GIS server can reside on the same physical computer, however they are configured to operate completely independent of each other on that one computer. Other cities are seeing benefits in lower hardware costs as well as improved disaster recovery. A side benefit has been found be less energy usage (less power and air conditioning) essentially because you have fewer computer servers. We have started this vitalization configuration at our Safety Center and plan to continue the rollout with our Finance and data storage systems at City Hall.

Melissa Reeder setup a Webinar with a software vendor and Jason Eisold to view a software package that would help with pool membership cards. Jason is seeking a technology solution that will streamline the pool check-in and membership process.

The NCRC telephone voice mail system is failing. This system is about 10 years old and needs replacement. Plans are in place to move the voice mail system that was at City Hall prior to the phone upgrade to the NCRC, entailing installation costs only.

**Library**

During the last week in March, the national Public Library Association Conference was held in Minneapolis. Only the library director has previously been able to attend this conference, so the nearby location made it possible for several library staff members to attend and benefit from it. It was a great learning experience for everyone who participated!

A public meeting to respond to the library’s new long-range plan will be held on Tuesday, April 8 at 7:00 p.m. at the library. The Library Board is looking for feedback, so please consider attending. The new plan will be put up on the library website, and we will take comments until May 7.

National Library Week is coming up, April 13-19. Celebrate libraries and the work that librarians and other library staff members do by visiting one of Northfield's many fine libraries. The Public Library will have drawings, puzzles and other activities. We also hope to have volunteers out "carding" people in the community again.

## **Public Services**

### **Building Inspections**

The City has received seven applications for board positions on the new Rental Code Board of Appeals; the board needs five members to convene. The Mayor and City Council must now review, approve and select the board members. Once the selection is complete the board members will convene and select a Chair and Vice Chair.

The City has only received one application for the proposed Building Code Board of Appeals. The City has advertised in the Northfield News on four different occasions. The cut off date for applications is April 25, 2008.

The Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for the Upper Lakes Food facility. This business will bring about 60 to 70 new job opportunities to the City.

### **Community Development**

Community Development staff has spent time evaluating the need to revise the rental license fee of the City. Staff will be making a report to City Council late in April on the rental inspection program in general and the need to revise the fee.

Staff continues to evaluate the financial implications of the annexation petition for property west of the hospital, It is expected that an update report to the EDA Board will occur next Thursday.

### **Economic Development**

Staff worked with a new client who hopes to secure property near the Q Block. This could be a great opportunity for all the owners of property on Q Block to get together and work on improving the entranceway to the City. Another meeting was held with the owners of The Crossing to determine ways to increase foot traffic and marketing efforts throughout the development.

Upper Lakes Foods received their Certificate of Occupancy this week and we are excited to see them open. The Building Department did an exceptional job in working with them, going beyond normal work hours and providing excellent customer service! Thanks so much for helping above and beyond!

The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation visited City Hall this week. Staff was able to review some of the partnerships they provide and promote, as well as some new incentives geared towards Bio Technology.

Staff attended the Chamber of Commerce Business to Business After Hours event at Allina Medical Clinic on Thursday evening. It was a great opportunity to view the expanded facility and network with other community business people.

### **Engineering:**

#### *Woodley Street*

Staff held a neighborhood open house on April 2, 2008 from 5:00-6:30 PM in the Council Chambers to present the options for the landscaping plan. There was a good showing of residents bordering the project corridor. Staff received public input, which will be presented along with the landscaping plan at the April 21, 2008 Council meeting. Pending a decision on the plan, work to relocate trees will be completed this spring prior to the growing season as recommended by the forester's report.

Property Acquisition continued this week. The consultant has been working to make sure that any questions or concerns property owners have about the acquisition are answered. There are a number of residents along the corridor

that are on winter vacations. Acquisition of these parcels has been slowed until their return. The status of the properties as of Friday morning was:

Number of Properties	Northfield	Rice County	Total Project
Total Properties to Acquire	22	5	27
Verbally Committed	5	0	5
Signed Forms	5	2	7

**Water Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction**

The design team continued to finalize plans and specifications that will be presented to the City Council on April 7 for approval and authorization to bid. In particular the design team developed the traffic control plan for the three phases of work that is anticipated. Staff also met with a business owner along the project to acquire additional public parking during the construction. The property owner was open to the idea and staff will be drafting an agreement for their consideration.

**Cannon River Sanitary Sewer Crossing**

Work is anticipated to resume on the Cannon River Sanitary Sewer River Crossing next week. The contractor is expected to finish the pipe work in the coming week weather permitting and complete the final grading when the site conditions allow.

**Mill Towns Trail Bridge**

MnDOT and the FHWA have approved the changes to the Mill Towns Trail Bridge plans and contacted staff this week to set a letting date. Staff will request Council to authorize bids at the April 21, 2008 Council meeting.

**Facilities**

The office project at the Safety Center is finished with the exception of the carpet base around the perimeter of the room and the window treatment. The furniture has been moved in and Capt Schroeder should be able to move in next week.

Facilities has also been assisting with some demolition work at the Arena. The roof that covered the refrigeration units on the north side of the building has been removed.

Bernie Shakal has been working with Johnson Controls at the NCRC building assisting with coordinating the lighting upgrade. Also Bernie attended a meeting that was held with the tenants at the NCRC to explain the other Johnson Controls energy conservation projects.

Facilities continues to work on furniture refinishing projects at the Library as time allows.

**Housing**

The HRA held the second Community Input Meeting this week on the Southbridge Development. Andy Masterpole from Yaggy Colby presented four different concept plans for the neighborhood outlay. Efforts were made to keep the rough-graded roads in place and use placement of the homes to utilize passive solar energy. Staff will meet with the other partners on this project, (Three Rivers and Greater MN Housing and Andy Masterpole), to assess the feedback from the meeting and work to develop one concept plan for neighborhood design. Staff will also work with the City Planner and ACP our Comprehensive Plan consultant to make sure the elements of new urbanism and form based code design are present where possible throughout the neighborhood.

Staff continues to work on developing resources for foreclosure prevention in Northfield. City of Faribault and Rice County HRA are also analyzing the foreclosure rates and concerns throughout the county; resources to help our communities will be combined and collaborated where possible, as we all realize no community is immune to this growing concern.

### **Planning**

Planning spent a good portion of the week working on the edits and revisions to the draft Comprehensive Plan, which the Planning Commission has recently completed reviewing. Staff will make the revisions and then have the Commission review these changes before a joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting is set to review the draft Plan.

### **Recreation**

The arena renovations are underway. To date the contractor has removed the old refrigeration system (mats), compressors, condensers, and dehumidification system. With the removal of the old refrigeration system there were several hundred gallons of glycol removed from the system. That glycol was recovered and taken to be recycled.

The book fair is currently taking books Mon-Fri from 4:00-6:00 and Sat. 10:00-2:00.

The pool pumps will be serviced due to the ice in the pump house some time in the next few weeks. Tests will be done on each motor to determine if any moisture is present in the motors.

### **Streets and Parks**

The big news this week was the train derailment and the Streets crew assisted as needed with the work up there. When a shelter was built over the top of the tanker leaking the sulfuric acid there was a need to keep the rain/snow away from the acid so several pumps with hoses were borrowed and used to pump the water away.

Also on Monday and Tuesday with the wet heavy snow the crew was busy plowing the roads. Also on Wednesday morning snow removal was conducted downtown due to the cold temperatures at night, which would slow the melting of the snow from the gutters. After the plowing was completed it was time to catch up on some necessary maintenance on the equipment.

After the snow plowing was done the crews were back out performing pot hole repairs with hot mix from St Paul's Bituminous plant. The hot mix repairs are much more durable than the cold patch that was used in the winter.

Finally the crew started to change out private street signs with a different color sign. The private streets are shown with blue signs and the public streets will continue to be green.

### **Wastewater**

During the week Wastewater Operators completed maintenance on the ten primary air blower units in the BAF (Biological Aerated Filter) building. The blowers are connected to an air grid that insures the filter media is an aerobic and healthy environment for the beneficial bacteria utilized in the secondary treatment process. The blowers also provide a supply of scouring air used in the backwash sequence.

cc: Department Managers