

Memorandum

DATE: May 16, 2008
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Al Roder, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of May 12 – 16, 2008

Here is a list of city activities for the week of May 12 - 16, 2008:

City Clerk

Attached to the Friday memo is a motion for an appointment to the Arts & Culture Commission, which is on the agenda for the May 19th city council meeting.

Two bid openings were held on Thursday of this week:

- 2008 Seal Coat; and
- Mill Towns Trail Bridge

Final documents for the award of these contracts are attached.

Information Technology

An FM transmitter was installed in the Council Chambers this week. If you or someone you know would like hearing assistance while attending a meeting in the Council Chambers, please contact Melissa Reeder.

The LOGIS software at for the Police Department cut live on Tuesday 5/13. Much thanks goes to Kurt Wolf, Network Technician for all his preliminary work. Every squad car computer and every desktop computer at the PD had to be configured to use this software. In addition, Kurt installed two new printers. Thanks Kurt!

Work will be completed today to configure the Memorial Pool into our network. The pool also received some new membership software, scanner and camera to track pool attendees.

Liquor

Director of Liquor Operations attended a marketing seminar at the Northfield Golf Club sponsored by the Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Northfield EDA. The seminar dealt primarily with the concept of “branding” and its role in marketing strategies. Follow-up workshops will be offered in June and September.

“Summer Sippers” was the theme for our Spring Wine Club tasting, held Thursday May 17, at The Grand Event Center. We offered our usual eclectic collection of wines from around the globe, all very affordable and suitable for summer entertaining. The event was extremely well attended, and a splendid time was had by all.

Organizational meetings were held this week for the third annual Taste of Northfield, a fundraiser for the NDDC. We again will include a large beer and wine-tasting tent to accompany the various food vendors at this year’s event, which will be held June 19, 2008.

Police

The Northfield Police Department and the Northfield School District have worked cooperatively to reinstate the DARE program this spring. On May 14, 2008 three classes at the Sibley Elementary School successfully completed and graduated from the DARE program. Members from the police department were in attendance and assisted in the ceremony. Officer Paul Haider of the Northfield Police Department is the department DARE instructor.

Public Services

Building Inspection

On Thursday May 15, staff was notified that the Minnesota State Supreme Court ruled that cities that are regulating residential structures under a rental licensing ordinance cannot impose different requirements than the State Building Code. This ruling came from a court case involving the City of Morris, Minnesota. The Court ruling creates real doubt whether the current rental license program recently enacted in Northfield is valid as a result of this decision. Staff is in consultation with legal counsel to determine what effect this ruling has on the recently initiated rental inspection program. Further information will be shared with City Council at the upcoming meeting of May 19.

Community Development

Staff continues to review the proposed development regulations being drafted by ACP planning consultants.

Economic Development

The recent resignation of the Economic Development Manager has required that a team of city employees including the Community Development Director, the Housing Manager and the Assistant to the City Administrator assume economic development work activities. Staff has been following-up on projects already in progress.

Staff expects to be at the EDA meeting of May 24 with two potential business clients seeking financial assistance under the revolving loan programs of the EDA.

Interviews for the EDA intern position were completed this week. Offers of employment will be made and starting dates should be in place for the end of May 2008.

Staff has been working with the members of the EDA and legal Counsel to develop and fine tune a potential strategy to assist in managing the development of the land area associated with request for annexation associated with 3rd business park. Staff along with members of the Land Committee met with a representative from the City of Chaska to learn more about how that city began the process of land development and property negotiations for business and industrial development.

Engineering

Stephanie Peters joined the Engineering Division this week as an Engineering Intern for the summer. Stephanie will be conducting driveway and right-of-way inspections for compliance with the City standards. She will also be assisting in development of the stormwater program and completing preliminary research projects when she is not in the field. Stephanie just completed her second year at South Dakota State University and is a rural Kenyon resident.

Woodley Street

The hearing on petition to determine public purpose was held on Tuesday Morning at the Rice County Court House. The judge found public purpose for the project and appointed a commission to hear issues pertaining to valuation of the properties that have not accepted the offers. Staff continues to work with property owners to finalize the property acquisition process. 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	11	2	13
Represented by Attorney	4	2	6

The court ruling will now allow the MnDOT ROW engineer to sign the right-of-way certificate, which is needed for final project approval. Once the final approvals are granted a bid date can be set.

5th Street Reconstruction

Heselton Construction continued with the finalized punch list work. The work this week included fixing settlements in yards where sanitary sewer and water services were placed. This work involved cutting out the sod, placing black dirt, and then re-sodding the areas.

Work next week includes paving the final lift of bituminous. They are tentatively scheduled to begin on Thursday, May 22, 2008. Signs will be posted along 5th Street to inform residents of the paving schedule.

2007 MSA Project - Lincoln Parkway

Staff met on-site with Heselton Construction to go over concrete removals. They are scheduled to begin removals next week and are also scheduled to pave the wear course next week. Staff has been in contact with Heselton on the paving operation, to minimize the effect it will have on traffic flow to and from Greenvale Elementary School. As soon as a firm schedule has been handed out, contact will be made with the school, and bus service to inform them of the anticipated traffic pattern.

Cannon River Sanitary Sewer Crossing

The work completed this week includes:

- Construction of piers to attach stop logs in the outlet siphon manhole
- Construct sidewalk from TH 3 to bituminous trail.
- Final seeding, mulch, and fiber blanket.

Work to be completed next week includes:

- Construction of stop logs and invert in the outlet Siphon Manhole
- Construct temporary aggregate trail from trail under TH 3 to bituminous trail.
- Clean and test all pipes.

Mill Towns Trail Bridge

The Mill Towns Trail Bridge bid letting was on held on Thursday morning. The City received 5 complete bids with the apparent low bidder being Healy Construction. The City has secured funding in the amount of \$828,169 for the project. With the available funds the city may award the base bid items for the project plus alternative 1, slope paving.

Housing

Staff worked this week with Three Rivers Community Action to update the lease with 517 Washington. The new lease is also for a period of three years, with annual rent increases per direction from HUD.

Staff participated in a conference call with Minnesota Housing about the HECAT RFP that was released that allows program dollars for Home Stretch classes (pre-purchase classes for first time homebuyers) and foreclosure prevention dollars. Staff is studiously researching the options of applying for some funds to either bring Home Stretch classes to the Rice County area, or offering foreclosure prevention dollars. The RFP is due June 5, 2008.

Staff worked with the Northfield Community Action Center on their CDBG dollars that must be spent prior to June 30. A policy was put into place allowing for use for utility assistance or emergency rent assistance. Staff is working out a monitoring visit with Dakota County CDA to ensure that those dollars are spent correctly and quickly.

Staff received a letter last week from Rice County regarding the proposal that was sent in response to the Rice County HRA RFP for administration of the Rice County HRA. The letter states that the County received four responses and they are currently reviewing each response, as well as evaluating the option of taking the administration in-house. The County plans to deliver a recommendation to the County Commissioners in mid-June, so any additional information that may be needed for evaluation purposes will occur before then

Facilities

Facilities has been busy this week coordinating the remodeling of the former Police Chief's office, and preparing it for the new Captain when hired. The work includes removing some cabinets, repairing the ceiling, painting and installing new blinds and carpet. Also progress continues with the Johnson Control Project, which currently includes the NCRC, Ice Arena, and Waste Water Plant, just to list a few. Bernie Shakal has been busy keeping track of the progress of the heating and ventilating at the NCRC building making sure that temperatures are as comfortable as possible during the transition.

Dave Nelson and Eric Pederson have been busy this week doing some painting and building new partition doors in the rest room building at Babcock Field.

Recreation

There will be pre-season pool pass sales on the following dates: May 19 from 4:00p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and May 31 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. All sales will take place at the pool, 801 7th Street E. Patrons purchasing their season pass at these pre-season pass sales will also receive two free general admission passes to the pool to be used this summer. For more information on the pre-season pass sales please contact Jason Eisold, Recreation Manager 507-645-3017 jason.eisold@ci.northfield.mn.us

The pool has been emptied, cleaned and some minor repairs are currently taking place. Filling will began this Friday. Pool staff 'in service' training will be held on Saturday May 17 in preparation for the upcoming season. Also with the help of the Streets and Parks crew the permanent sign for the pool was installed this week.

Demolition at the arena is complete and the contractor has begun preparation work to install the main refrigerant piping. Equipment installation will begin in the near future with additional work on the floor following soon after.

Planning

The Planning Commission met this week and reviewed a variance and a Conditional Use Permit for the Greenvale Park Elementary School for some parking lot and drive up improvements on the property. The City Council will be reviewing this at their meeting on June 2nd. The Commission also discussed the proposed business park annexation, and is expected to make a recommendation to the City Council on this item on May 27th. The Heritage Preservation Commission met this week to review some improvements to a building on South Water Street and discuss their 2008 Work Plan. Staff also participated in some Human Resources safety training.

Streets/Parks

Pothole repairs are continuing and to date we've used nearly 50 tons of asphalt to repair the streets. The crew is busy focusing on the most traveled streets, but will eventually get to all the problem areas.

With the addition of the summer seasonal employees some much-needed painting of the park signs is getting underway. The downtown fountain was filled and started this week...a sure sign that summer is nearly here. The last part of the summer preparations, flower baskets, will be hung up after Memorial Day. This delay is due the cool

weather and is based on the recommendation of the nursery. Also some additional maintenance including curb replacement and parking lot cleaning is underway.

The May Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) meeting was held this past Tuesday. There were several items of discussion:

1. The PRAB reconsidered their recommendation for an archery area at Lashbrook Park after reviewing the site plan and taking comments from concerned residents and non-residents. The Cannon Valley Sportsmen Club will investigate several other potential sites in town and possibly consider a Dundas location or sites within the surrounding townships.
2. The PRAB recommended approval of the land exchange between the City and future owner of the movie theatre property on Highway 3. The future owner is planning on developing the site as a Culvers restaurant. The land exchange provides legal access to Babcock Park Rodeo grounds and provides area for a drive through for the restaurant. The PRAB recommendation was preliminary, staff will be returning with the specific details and survey information for their review.
3. The remaining discussion items included a review of the final report of the Non Motorized Taskforce, a review of council approved goals and PRAB workplan,

Water

The Water Division had another hydraulic valve wrench demonstration put on by Wachs Company from Lincolnshire Illinois on Thursday. This wrench is more heavy duty then the Hurco power wrench we looked at last week ago. The Wachs wrench will not need as much manpower and is easier to operate than the Hurco power wrench.

Superintendent Doug Lien attended a presentation on: "Synoptic Measurements of Ground-Water Levels in Major Aquifers in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area." The Suburban Utilities Superintendents Association hosted this presentation. Chris Sanocki, Study Coordinator with US Geological Survey discussed the 2008 project being performed with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Metropolitan Council.

This project is part of a regional effort to measure water levels in 3 major Twin Cities Metropolitan Area aquifers (Prairie du Chein-Jordan, Franconia-Ironton-Galesville and Mt. Simon-Hinckley) in the winter and summer of 2008. All water levels measured in the winter and summer will be compared to water levels from a previous measurement in the winter of 1989, and summer of 1990. The outcome of this project is an improved understanding of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area aquifers response to increased water withdrawals. A report summarizing the results is planned for publication in 2008/09.

Wastewater

The augers on the thermoblender were not able to get up to temperature so additional lime was required in the biosolids handling system to compensate for the temperature loss. The augers normally run at about 950 degrees and could only get up to 850 degrees. When the unit was shut down the heaters where disassembled and checked. The system was showing wear and one of the brushes on the slip ring was in bad shape. The surfaces were cleaned, polished, and the brushes adjusted. The heating unit needs to be replaced, but the repairs that were done should work until the new unit gets here.

Four staff members attended Lock out/Tag out and Confined Space Entry training this week. These are important safety-training courses for wastewater employees because these procedures are commonly required as part of their normal job duties. The other three staff members will attend the training next week.

cc: Department Managers