

Memorandum

DATE: June 5, 2009
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator
RE: Board And Commission Memo May 2009

Thank you to the Board and Commissions that have submitted information as a follow-up to their Board and Commission actions and meetings in May. The June information will be due by July 6, 2009 and posted on July 10, 2009.

Below are items of interest from the Northfield Boards and Commissions:

Arts and Culture Commission

Submitted by Philip Spensley, Chair

The Arts and Culture Commission has been supportively involved in collaborative discussions with the Watering Hole for the Arts and the River Arts Quarter to determine methods and potential funding sources for marketing Northfield as an Arts Town destination.

Human Rights Commission

Submitted by Sgt. Bill Olsen, Staff Liaison Human Rights Commission (HRC)

The Northfield Human Rights Commission monthly meeting was May 14, 2009 and discussed the following:

Mayor Mary Rossing and City Administrator Joel Walinski presented information on the importance of the upcoming 2010 United States Census. Mayor Rossing and Mr. Walinski asked for the Human Rights Commission's help with forming and developing a Complete Count Committee. The Complete Count Committee is charged with developing and implementing a plan designed to target the unique characteristics of a community and help ensure all of the population is accounted for in the upcoming census. The Human Rights Commission welcomes this invitation and will make this their top priority in the coming year and into 2010.

City Council Liaison, Rhonda Pownell presented the HRC with information on Building Inclusive Communities, An Action Guide for City Leaders. The HRC is committed to building a community that is welcoming and inclusive of all people, no matter how long they have lived in Northfield, their race, or English proficiency.

Library Board

Submitted by Margit Johnson, Chair

Booker

Library circulation and use continue to climb. Booker, the Northfield bookmobile and the library's most effective outreach tool to underserved members of our community, increased its April circulation by 9% over the previous month. Note that Booker also serves as a kind of rolling "branch" library, an important feature when our children's area is currently half of what it should be to meet the demands for children's programs and services. Marj Evans deCarpio has accompanied the bookmobile to provide Spanish interpretation; she discovered that her presence on Booker has raised the profile of her services to the Latino community. A two-fer!

e-Library

Computer use in the library has increased 60% in the first four months of 2009. The Northfield library has 12 computers for public use, considerably fewer than other comparable libraries in the region. We look forward to having space for more computers and related technologies in an expanded library to meet the demand of Northfield area residents.

Library expansion

Apropos the library expansion: I participated in the EDA's day-long workshop with the Holland, Michigan group on May 15. I asked how they established priorities among their many redevelopment projects. They answered, "'Once the plan is developed, look for the opportunities, and let the opportunities determine the order of development.'" The library has its needs assessment (2006), long-range plan (2008), site feasibility study (2008) complete with concept drawings, and its site. I and other library board members will be talking to each of you in the next month about moving forward on the fall design charrette and the opportunities that await us.

Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use

Submitted by Susan Sanderson and Joan Janusz, Co-Chairs

Two members of the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use – Mary Nelson and Sharon Henry – presented at a City Council meeting this month, updating the Council on the Task Force's work and providing them with copies of the group's "2009 Report to the Community."

The Task Force is actively partnering with the Northfield Police Department, the Northfield Hospital, the Faribault Police Department, the Rice County Chemical Health Coalition, Rice County Public Health, the Rice County Sheriff's Office, and a number of other community entities on the start of a prescription drug and over-the-counter medicine take-back initiative. The hope is to have drop boxes in Northfield and Faribault by the fall where community members can bring unwanted medicines. This will coincide with an extensive community education campaign about the importance of the safe use, storage, and disposal of these medicines.

The Task Force partnered with the Northfield Public Schools and the State of Minnesota's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division to implement a Positive Community Norms campaign at the Northfield High School this school year. The data-driven campaign helped to reinforce the positive choices that the majority of Northfield youth make in a number of areas, including choosing not to use drugs or alcohol. The Task Force would like to offer its sincere thanks to Neuger Communications Group for their help with the design and implementation of the campaign. The campaign will continue next school year at the middle and high school levels.

Members of the Task Force continue to lead a court monitoring program for cases involving adults providing alcohol to minors or cases involving the dealing of drugs. Task Force members read Victim Impact Statements at three court sentencings this past month.

The Task Force is excited about the prospect of welcoming three additional members – Curt Benson, Judi Harper-Malecha, and Kristine Matson. These community members have applied and are awaiting confirmation from the City Council.

For more information on the Task Force, visit www.mayorstaskforcenorthfield.org

Mayor's Youth Council

Submitted by Zach Puitt, Co-Chairs

The Mayor's Youth Council welcomed its new members for the 2009-10 school year. Approximately 30 local high school sophomores applied for the eight openings. The current youth council reviewed these

applications, first using a blind reading (with names removed) and then from the finalists, working to assure that the council had a broad cross-section of local youth. Recommendations were forwarded to the Mayor and City Council for review and approval.

With the addition of the new members, the Mayor's Youth Council says goodbye to its eight phenomenal graduating seniors. These young people have done a fantastic job over the past two years. See attachment for a list of their future plans – they are all off on new adventures. As a follow-up to the Northfield Youth Summit on Marketable Skills that they hosted this winter, the Mayor's Youth Council is working to create a website for local young people. The site will feature volunteer, internship, and job possibilities for youth, as well as upcoming community events of interest to local young people. Remaining funding from the initial summit grant from the Minnesota Alliance With Youth will cover expenses related to the start-up of the site.

Members of the Mayor's Youth Council partnered with the Northfield in Bloom Committee and the Northfield Police Department for the second year to plant the flower boxes on the pedestrian bridge downtown. In addition to helping with the planting themselves, the council also recruited other youth to assist with this fun activity. Many thanks to Judy Code and Lynn Vincent for their work coordinating the planting.

Planning Commission

Submitted by Dan Olson, Staff Liaison

Mayor Rossing filled the open seat by appointing Paul Miller to the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission held its two regularly scheduled meetings in May, which consisted primarily of discussion of the draft Land Development Code (LDC) and details on City Planner Dan Olson's attendance at a workshop on form-based codes.

Since the last monthly update, the complete Land Use Advisory Group also met for four hours to continue discussion of the draft Land Development Code.

The ad-hoc subcommittee (Commissioners Davis, Nakasian, Thomas) working on the new land development regulations met several times throughout the month to formulate recommendations for the City Council on how best to proceed with the revision of the LDC.

Commissioners attended various meetings in their respective capacities as liaison to other City boards. Several members of the Planning Commission were among the city officials attending the presentation by the Holland, MI group.

In addition to the meetings and activities above, Commission Chair Colby attended two meetings of the Public Safety Building Task Force, of which he is a member, and Commissioner Thomas gave a presentation to the EDA Policy Subcommittee in anticipation of that group's review of the draft LDC.

cc: Board & Commission Chairs
Department Managers