

Memorandum

DATE: July 9, 2010
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of July 5-9, 2010

Attached to this week's Friday Memo are the monthly Board & Commission updates for June 2010. As mentioned at the Council Strategic Planning Session, this communication tool will continue to be used as the Council considers this an effective tool in providing information between the Boards and Commission and the City Council. Those contributing please note your efforts are appreciated. Next month's report is scheduled to be included with the August 6, 2010 Friday Memo.

The staff working on the City Hall window maintenance project will review the initial bid plans and project scope to ensure the project remains within the budget allocated for the project. Last Friday, a representative from the I&S Group was onsite to gather as built information to develop the initial drawings. Staff also discussed the overgrown shrubs and trees surrounding the building. Phase I of this project would be to eliminate some of the over growth to enable construction to move forward and to improve the building security. Removing the overgrowth around the building should help in the efforts to curb the increased level of graffiti and acts of violence/vandalism that have become more frequent in the last several months. Mr. Shakal, Facility Maintenance Supervisor, will develop a work plan for review before the removal of any plant material begins.

Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of July 5-9, 2010:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Building Inspections

Submitted by Corey Murphy, Building Permit Technician

For the week of July 2, 2010 we issued the eighth permit for a new house. That is one more than last year at this time. We have been told we will be seeing two more in the next few weeks. We have issued about seven other building construction or remodel permits for the week and have about fifteen mechanical and/or plumbing permits.

For the week of July 9, 2010 we issued an additional 12 permits. Those permits include one new residential home. This is the ninth one for the year. So far we have issued five sewer & water permits for the 4th Street project. Those permits are in addition to the 12 mentioned previously.

The Permit Summary Report for the end of June shows the YTD as compared to last year. When comparing typical projects we have a total value increase of about \$200,000 on about 30 less permits. That would indicate the projects are of more value than last year. If we include the huge projects in the summary the permit valuations total about 17 million ahead of last year. The numbers of mechanical and plumbing permits are basically the same as last year.

The trips for inspections at Malt-O-Meal and St Olaf New Main are steady. The smaller building remodels and additions have continued to keep us busy. We have had inspections on a commercial project downtown. We have also been working with property owners on new rental licensing.

We are working on the plan review for the Carleton Arts Union. We have already received plan changes which total about 50 pages.

Community Development

Submitted by Brian O'Connell, Community Development Director

The closing on the amended TIF note financing for the Crossing project is scheduled for July 15. As a result, funds should be available for the City to begin the improvements to the Outlot A adjacent to the Cannon River. These improvements include cleaning, grading, shaping, river bank stabilization and seeding. This work is being done by a contractor hired by the City and should begin in the next several weeks.

Housing

Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager

STIMULUS FUNDING GRANTS

We are at the end of the quarter so reports for anything and everything under the sun are due on July 6, 2010.

The Window Project (EECBG):

Staff has been working this week on the quarter reports for the EECBG grant. Since we were just given authorization on June 15th to begin this project, little more than gathering quotes has been done. July will see much more activity on this project.

HVAC Project:

The HVAC project has been released for bid. Staff will discuss next week the next steps in this process. I&S Group of Faribault did the design work for this project, and put in 46 hours of work on the project.

HOME MATTERS

The final event in the Seminar Series was Tuesday, June 29 from 5pm – 6:30pm. Representatives from Xcel Energy were on hand to talk about ways to reduce energy consumption in your home. The Cherry Street house is on the market for sale.

The two homes on 8th Street are nearing completion and will be available for purchase shortly. Up to date information on these projects can always be found at www.home-matters.org.

HOMESTRETCH

Staff is excited to announce that a Spanish Homestretch class will be offered July 6 and July 7 at the Edina Realty Offices. For more information or to sign up, call Umbelina Trevino at (507) 421-1214.

There is also an English Homestretch class in Northfield on July 10. Contact Susan Jackson at 952-270-1084 for more information or to sign up.

Planning

Submitted by Dan Olson, City Planner

The Planning Commission met on Thursday to resolve some outstanding questions relating to the downtown commercial district regulations in the draft Land Development Code (LDC). Those regulations will be presented to the City Council on July 13th. Options will be presented for regulations for the downtown core commercial area, as well as the area of Hwy #3 between 5th Street and St. Olaf Avenue. The Commission will also be requesting input and direction from the City Council on options for regulations for the Highway #3 commercial corridor outside the downtown area.

The Commission continues its review of the highway commercial district regulations next Thursday. Staff and some Planning Commission members also had meetings this week with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Carleton College to discuss the draft LDC.

ENGINEERING

4th Street Reconstruction

Submitted by Sean Simonson, Engineering Tech Coordinator

BCM crews continued with utility installations and services on Fourth Street between Washington Street and Union Street and on Union Street between Fourth Street and Fifth Street. Crews finished all the mainline sanitary sewer and watermain for this area, and started on service connections to the Right-of-Way. Crews also completed the entire storm sewer piping system for all of Phase I. Faribault Plumbing was on-site this week working on service replacements from the Right-of-Way to the structure on properties within the same area. Service replacements to the structure are required for properties that have existing lead water services, or property owners who choose to replace their service.

Grading crews continued to work on Fourth Street between Division Street and Washington Street. Crews placed the structural soil in the tree planter areas. They also continued grading for the installation of sidewalks in this area.

BCM moved into Phase II of the Fourth Street Improvements project. Phase II is Fourth Street from Union Street to Nevada Street and Union Street from Fourth Street to Second Street. Crews were on-site late in the week milling off the existing pavement on Phase II.

Next week grading crews will concentrate on sub-cutting existing roadbed materials on Fourth Street from Washington Street to Union Street and placing the new roadbed materials. It is anticipated that the concrete crews will be in late in the week to work on sidewalks on Fourth Street between Division Street and Washington Street, and curb and gutter on Fourth Street between Washington Street and Union Street.

Utility crews will work on setting up a temporary water system for the first portion of Phase II. Utility crews will concentrate on the Fourth Street portion of Phase II first which is between Union Street and Nevada Street. Residents on the Union Street portion of Phase II which is Union Street from Fourth Street to Second Street shouldn't see much construction activity for 3-4 weeks. Utility crews anticipate installing mainline sanitary sewer late in the week on the Fourth Street portion of Phase II.

Riverside Trail Extension

Submitted by Sean Simonson, Engineering Tech Coordinator

Just a reminder, a trail dedication ceremony is slated for tomorrow at 9:30 A.M. along the project corridor which runs from Riverside Park to Fifth Street.

TH #19 Bituminous Mill and Overlay

Submitted by Sean Simonson, Engineering Tech Coordinator

Staff attended a pre-construction conference in Owatonna about the project this week. The Project Corridor is TH #19 from TH #13 to Third Avenue Southeast in Lonsdale, and TH #13 from the I-35 southbound ramps to Armstrong Road here in Northfield. Crews will be starting work on Friday July 9th, on the portion west of Lonsdale. Crews aren't expected to work on the eastern portion (I-35 to Armstrong Road) until July 14th – July 22nd. Here is the link to the MnDOT project website:

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d6/newsrels/10/7/2hwy19lonsdale.html>

Surface Water Ordinance

Submitted by Brian Welch, GIS Technician

The Technical Steering Committee met on July 9 to prepare for the third Advisory Committee meeting and public open house scheduled for Monday July 12 (the meeting schedule is posted on the project website). Staff will attend the Bridgewater Township meeting on July 14 to update the township supervisors on the city's progress with the ordinance and Rice Creek Policy Document. Staff will indicate the interest and willingness of the city to collaborate and cooperate in protecting water quality within the Rice Creek watershed.

LIBRARY

Submitted by Lynne Young, Northfield Library Director

On Tuesday, Northfield area residents checked out more than 2673 books. Library staff checked in more 3612 and got them back on the shelf. How busy is this? Well, on average, we check out between 110 – 125 books per hour. This was 255 books per hour checked out and 344 books per hour checked in.

Over the weekend SELCO (regional library system) staff worked hard to increase the speed and bandwidth of the central system. This involved setting up new domain servers and making a number of associated changes. Over the weekend, the entire online catalog was down, preventing anyone from being able to place requests from home. On Tuesday, staff and the public continued to be unable to place requests. Although most of the problems have been resolved since then, it is still not possible for staff to place requests on the staff catalog (public catalog is fine) or to place requests on the statewide catalog. We hope to have all of the issues resolved by the end of this week.

The community has been treated to some great entertainment at the Books & Stars programs this year. Last week, Justin Roberts – a perennial favorite children's musician – drew over 600 people to a performance in Ames Park. On Tuesday this week, the New Riverside Ramblers had people dancing to their Cajun music at Oddfellows' Shelter. Next week look for Stevie Ray's Improv Company at Spring Creek Park. Thanks to the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council for making this year's Books & Stars possible.

The July Carnegie Centennial Concert will be held this Saturday, July 10, upstairs at the library. The group performing is Multe. The band plays traditional acoustic music from the Nordic countries. It is music with an incredible energy and drive different from other Northern European styles of traditional music. Most of it is dance music -- but for this Carnegie Centennial Concert Series program, the band will be playing some great non-dance tunes as well. The Carnegie Centennial Concert series is made by a grant from the Northfield Area Foundation.

The library has a great number of volunteers right now. The volunteers are shelving books, cleaning, doing yard work, assisting patrons with library technology and performing many other tasks as assigned. During 2010, the community benefited from over 2100 hours of time donated to the library. In 2011, we expect to exceed that number. Thank you all!

Jenny Carlson's last day as a shelver at the library was July 2. Thanks for your tireless efforts to keep the shelves in order, Jenny. Brian Jacobel, who worked for the library as a shelver last summer, has been rehired temporarily.

PUBLIC WORKS

Facilities

Submitted by Bernie Shakal, Maintenance Facilities Supervisor

Landscaping touch ups continues around the City, this week finishing up at the NCRC and a few things to tidy up around the Safety Center.

There has been some issues with the air handler that serves the third floor at the Safety Center, we replaced the fan motor about two weeks ago, but it still didn't seem to be putting out enough volume. A service technician was called to evaluate the problem and discovered that the inside of the unit was loaded up with debris, hopefully that will correct the problem.

The bids for the food shelf HVAC project were extended from last Friday until today, the 25th due to lack of bidder response. A call was made to everyone on the bid list and hopefully we will get a better response.

Recreation

Submitted by Jason Eisold, Recreation Manager

The pool has again been a busy place this past week. Our numbers for this year so far are above the previous high points in attendance in 2008 and revenue in 2009. Our attendance is up 35% from last summer's cold/rainy June/July!

The new Water Aerobics class (Saturday Morning Shake-Up) will start tomorrow (Saturday) at 9:00pm, cost is \$4.00 per person, for more information call the pool at 645-1837 or click on the link <http://www.ci.northfield.mn.us/assets/w/Water-Aerobics-Class1.pdf>

Streets and Parks

Submitted by TJ Heinrich, Streets and Parks Supervisor

The week was busy for the Street and Park department. Flags were taken down in the downtown area after the observance of Independence Day. Staff returned barricades from the 4th of July bike race. There were weed complaints investigated in the Erie, Michigan Drive area. Staff assisted with the Showmobile at Books and Stars show at Oddfellows Park this week, the event was cancelled due to inclement weather. Potholes were repaired around the City. Garrett Ave was bladed this week. The 2010 crack sealing and chip sealing contracts were awarded this week. Bituminous Materials from Faribault will do the crack sealing and Allied Blacktop from Maple Grove will do the chip sealing. The crack sealing project will begin in the next couple of weeks. The chip-sealing project will start toward the end of August. The 2010 crack sealing and chip-sealing project is taking place in the Northwest part of the City. The project map is also available on the City web site. Parks were cleaned and mowed this week. City right-of ways were also mowed. Bi-annual rough mowing of certain areas and right-of-ways has been completed

Wastewater

Submitted by Glenn Lindroos, Wastewater Superintendent

The wastewater facility control systems had some problems that were probably caused by the storms that moved through the area last weekend. There were no call outs over the weekend because of the storms, but Monday morning the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System started giving false alarms and turning on backup systems that were not needed. There were apparently multiple software problems in the programmable logic controllers and/or SCADA system. Every PLC and computer in the system was powered down and brought back up to refresh the software. The phantom alarms have not occurred for three days, so it appears things are back to normal.

Water

Submitted by Jay Hall, Water Technician

Water Systems Technician Jay Hall met with Brad Johnson from Korterra Software to discuss and view a demonstration on how their software can be beneficial for the City when used with the Gopher State One Call System. After meeting with Brad, Jay determined that this software will be beneficial to the Water Divisions needs when performing locates and plans on using the free software within the next few weeks.

The Street Department installed two new gateposts for the Water Division at the Hall Avenue storage tank. The gate was moved back about 100 feet to help prevent traffic from entering the storage tank facility. The gate was also moved back to help create access and parking for the new archery range. Summer helpers Rodney Svien and Tom Spooner had to remove and relocate one small tree to Well #4 to make room for the new location of the gate.