

Memorandum

DATE: July 16, 2010
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of July 12-16, 2010

Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of July 12-16, 2010:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Building

Submitted by Jim Kessler, Building Official

This week we have been busy with field inspections. A majority of the inspections were on smaller residential additions and remodeling projects. We also licensed seven new rentals this week. The St. Olaf New Main project has required a couple of inspections this week as well.

The Jefferson Square Townhome remodeling project is underway and will continue for the next few months. The project includes new roofing and siding, and interior remodels of all the units. A new community building is also being built on site.

We issued a permit for another new house this week. This continues the trend of more new houses than last year. The City currently has four new houses in the construction phase. We have one additional house in for plan review.

We have been turning up the heat on the persons responsible for addressing the house that was burned on College Street a few months ago. We are trying very hard to have them remove it and not use public funds. We have seen a lot of communication between the parties but no action. We may be addressing City Council early in August on this item.

We have also been dealing with a few properties in town that have blight issues. We have sent letters to property owners that have junk in yards and rental property owners that have siding missing and porch guardrails in disrepair.

Total for this week are ten building permits issued plus six mechanical and/or plumbing permits. We have an additional five building permits in for review or ready to be issued.

The Carleton College Arts Union is still in plan review. We understand the plans have a third addendum, which is scheduled to be released late next week. The project is progressing with demo.

Economic Development

Submitted by Jody T. Gunderson, Economic Development Director

City staff met with representatives of the Dakota County Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Development on Monday. Representing Dakota County was Ms. Heidi Welsh, Department Manager; John Mertens, Senior Planner; Kurt Chatfield, Planning Supervisor; and Mary Jackson, Senior Planner. Northfield's City staff presented background on the status of the master planning for the proposed business park west of the

Northfield Hospital. Dakota County representatives provided insight on matters related to transportation and potential development opportunities. Both government agencies agreed it would be beneficial to meet more frequently to discuss what is occurring in Dakota County and Northfield in order to enhance planning and maximize funding opportunities.

City staff also attended a meeting on Wednesday night with the Bridgewater Township Supervisors. Katy Gehler, City Engineer, and Brian Welch, GIS Technician, discussed the elements of the draft Northfield storm water ordinance. The Economic Development Director and Brian O'Connell, Community Development Director, discussed the potential amendment to the orderly annexation agreement with Bridgewater Township. The Bridgewater Supervisors agreed to contact Northfield's city staff about the direction they would like to proceed after having time to discuss the matter during one of their work sessions.

Housing

Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager

The HRA met last week and reviewed the 2011 Budget, to the extent possible. Revenue forecasts are not yet completed, but the Board focused on what projects they know they would like to fund in 2011 and discussed project and funding priorities that reflect the mission of the HRA. In August the budget will be finalized with revenue forecasts and ready for Council review.

Staff is working to update the housing portion of the website, both because an update was due and there were some technical difficulties anyway with information deleted and wrongly formatted. Online changes should be evident next week.

HOME MATTERS

Bidding on the College Street home will occur shortly. Contact Jenny Larson at Three Rivers Community Action for more specific timelines. 507-732-8510.

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.

Planning

Submitted by Dan Olson, City Planner

The Planning Commission met on Thursday and briefly discussed the direction from the City Council on the downtown commercial regulations in the draft Land Development Code (LDC). The Commission will review revised ordinance language at their meeting next week. The Commission also began their review of the highway corridor ordinance language. Next Thursday, the Planning Commission will be reviewing two applications related to the development of the Mayo Clinic property on North Avenue: a request to reduce the required number of parking spaces for the property, and a request to rezone the property to Mixed Use Development District. The annexation of the Mayo Clinic property is proposed to be completed on Tuesday with the approval by the Municipal Boundary Adjustments office.

The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) met on Thursday. They approved a new sign for the Mandarin Garden Restaurant and listened to an iPod audio for the new tour of downtown Northfield. The Development Review Committee (DRC) reviewed two Site Plan Review applications submitted by Carleton College. The first application is to construct a new parking lot at 2nd and Union Streets. This new parking lot was required by previous City approvals for Carleton office uses in the vicinity. The second application is to reconstruct a parking lot north of Laird Stadium on Highway 19.

Staff met on Monday with Staff from Dakota County planning to provide an update on the master plans for the proposed new business parks in Northfield, as well as other miscellaneous planning issues in Northfield. Staff also attended the third and last meeting to receive input on the draft of the stormwater ordinance.

LIBRARY

Submitted by Leesa Wisdorf, Adult and Youth Services Manager

The Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission reviewed landscape designs for an outdoor reading area to be constructed on the southwest side of the library grounds. Permission was granted for the project that will be funded by a memorial gift to the library. The design will utilize materials that can be removed and reused in the library expansion.

The Library Board met Wednesday night to review various subcommittee reports including the Rice County library budget request for 2011.

The Friends of the Library, Lynne Young and members of the library board met Thursday evening with Peter Pearson, president of the St. Paul Friends of the Library and Sue Hall, coordinator of Library Strategies to continue dialog and discussion of a Friends Foundation. The focus of the evening included defining the mission and structure of a foundation, a determination of funding needs and establishing preliminary fundraising goals.

The Library's Centennial History is nearly ready for publication. Bruce Colwell was commissioned to research and write about the history of the library as part of the Centennial with funds provided by a Legacy grant in conjunction with the Minnesota Historical Society.

The library hosted another full house Saturday, July 10 for the Carnegie Centennial Concert. The audience enjoyed music from the group Multi, who performed traditional acoustic music of Nordic countries. Coffee from Goodbye Blue Monday and cake from the Ole Store add to the festivities at all Centennial concerts.

Books and Stars was held indoors due to Wednesday's bad weather. Next Wednesday The Splatter Sisters will bring silly songs and fun for all to Way Park. Booker opens at 6:30 with the performance starting at 7pm.

PUBLIC WORKS

Facilities

Submitted by Bernie Shakal, Maintenance Facilities Supervisor

Bid response for the HVAC project at the Food Shelf was very minimal, and over budget. A decision was made to reject bids and rebid the project. Potential contractors were added to the list in hopes of spurring more interest. Bids will now be due Friday July 23, 2010.

A meeting was held with the I&S Group early this week to modify plans for the City Hall window maintenance project, as of now we have a 95% plan for the project, so the complete plan should be completed next week. Phase 1 of this project would be to remove a substantial portion of the overgrown shrubs around the building to enable the contractor to perform their duties and also improve the security around City Hall. The east side of the building would only need minimal removal by pruning the shrubs, the west side has a few larger shrubs on the northwest corner that would have to be removed. Most of the shrubs on the north and south ends would have to be removed, since they are overgrown and up against the building. This phase could start the week of July 25.

With the hot weather that we had this week it kept us busy with A/C problems at various facilities around the City.

Streets and Parks

Submitted by TJ Heinrich, Streets and Parks Supervisor

The week was busy for the Street and Park Department. There were four weed complaints investigated this week. No parking on Saturday morning signage was installed in the Sesquicentennial Legacy Plaza. There two other traffic signs repaired. The showmobile was not used at the weekly Books and Stars show due to inclement weather. Potholes were repaired around the City. The 2010 crack sealing will begin next week

if weather allows. Parks were cleaned this week. The summer hockey boards at Riverside Park were taken down per a request from the Northfield Hockey Association. Annual boulevard stump grinding and filling was completed this week. There are a couple stumps to be ground but need Gopher-One-State locates.

Wastewater

Submitted by Glenn Lindroos, Wastewater Superintendent

Wastewater staff experimented with a new polymer for dewatering sludge this week. There are several vendors with proprietary product lines marketing these products. As they develop new products designed to work in this type of application vendors will come here and "bench test" the product. If the product shows promise in the lab, the vendor will supply five gallons and staff will operate with it for a couple of hours and evaluate how it works. There are many variables in equipment setup that change depending on the characteristics of the polymer, so it is impossible to do a complete evaluation with this amount of product. This particular product did not look promising so no further testing will be conducted on it. If the initial testing looked better we would have ordered enough to operate for a couple of weeks and done an in depth cost analysis.

Water

Submitted by Doug Lien, Water Superintendent

Water Superintendent Doug Lien and Water Technician Jay Hall met with Gregory Johnson from Bolton & Menk on adopting a new Hydrant flushing program that would scour the water mains better than the conventional way of flushing. Staff would shut down valves and cause the water to run at a greater velocity from one direction through the mains causing the removal of mineral deposits from the walls of the water main. Bolton & Menk would design the program from our mapping system and put together a route and S.O.P. on how to accomplish this task.