

## Memorandum

DATE: August 20, 2010  
TO: Mayor & Council Members  
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator  
RE: Friday Memo for the week of August 16-20, 2010

The Public Forum on the 2011 Budget meeting is scheduled for August 23, 2010, 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. As discussed previously, this is an opportunity for the community residents and groups to present their recommendations and suggestions to the Council on the 2011 Budget. The format of the Public Forum will also allow for the council to ask questions on the details and merits on the recommendation or idea presented. Current information regarding the status of the 2011 General Fund is available at [Public Forum Budget Notice](#)

Three Rivers/Home Matters was selected for an Entrepreneurship and Innovation Award from the national Community Action Partnership's Community Economic Development Project. The project will be recognized at the national conference in Boston on Sept. 2, 2010 and will be featured as a national case study on best practices for community revitalization. This award also comes with a small grant of \$1,500 to be used towards the project. More information on the Home Matters project is included with the HRA information below.

The last item listed in today's Friday Memo is the draft agenda for September 2010. The draft agenda of the upcoming month's Council agenda items is subject to change. Additions and deletions of items will occur in an effort to best accomplish the Council goals and the necessary successful operation and business of the City.

**Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of August 16-20, 2010:**

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

*Submitted by Brian O'Connell, Community Development Director*

The City Planner and the Community Development Director devoted time to researching parking standards to assist the Planning Commission in their deliberations related to the Land Development Code. Information from the Institute of Transportation Engineers, other communities' development regulations, and other sources have been researched and analyzed to provide examples of what parking standards should be included in the new regulations for Northfield.

The contract documents related to the grading and site improvements for Out Lot A on The Crossings site has been finalized with the firm of Bonestroo. They will install new seeding materials, planting, and also shape and grade the site and adjust the slope of the bank along the Cannon River to improve the condition of this area of The Crossings site. This work should begin in the next week to 10 days and be completed yet this fall.

### Housing

*Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager*

#### Home Matters

This week an open house was held for the two recently completed homes on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 400 and 406. There was a good turn-out by the community and the neighborhood. Many of the neighbors came over to see the finished project, and we heard countless stories of the history of each home as well as their gratitude at

rejuvenating their neighborhood. Each home will be put on the market shortly; further information can be found at [www.home-matters.org](http://www.home-matters.org)

The bid for 710 College Street was awarded to Einstein Bros. Construction, who also completed 400 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Work is expected to start on that home in the next week or so. This will make a total of four homes done in Northfield since last fall; there are funds to purchase and rehab more homes in this community, so the look is still on for foreclosed homes at the right price for rehab and resale.

We are getting an immense amount of positive response about the Home Matters project:

1. Three Rivers/Home Matters was selected for an Entrepreneurship and Innovation Award from the national Community Action Partnership's Community Economic Development Project. The project will be recognized at the national conference in Boston on Sept. 2, 2010 and will be featured as a national case study on best practices for community revitalization. This award also comes with a small grant of \$1,500 to be used towards the project.
2. Three Rivers/Home Matters was selected by the Housing Assistance Council for a Green Building/Healthy Homes grant of \$10,000. The project was one of 24 awarded nationwide, and one of just three awarded in Minnesota.
3. Home Matters was nominated for a Minnesota Community Pride award co-sponsored by the Minnesota State Fair, MinnPost.com, and Minnesota Rural Partners. We will have a booth at Carousel Park at the State Fair on Sunday, August 29 where the winners will be announced.

### Community Development Block Grants

Just when things look as if they are slowing down, they speed back up. This week saw four requests for First Time Homebuyer loans, an approval on one Manufactured Home Demolition and Acquisition, and a request for another MH Demo/Acquisition. The great news is, there are funds available for all requests, if their applications meet requirements. The current housing market in Northfield is still prime for first time homebuyers, with several homes under \$175,000 and even under \$150,000.

### Stimulus Grants

*Information provided by Bernie Shakal, Maintenance Facilities Supervisor, Brian Erickson Public Works Operations Engineer.*

The HVAC upgrade at the Food Shelf is a go! We were able to locate additional funds to help with this upgrade. Currently, we are waiting on the contractor to accept the contract and the construction will commence. Thank you to the Community Action Center for your patience and diligence with this project, as well as your contribution to this upgrade.

The window and traffic light grant is still moving ahead. The traffic lights are on order and will be installed once they arrive. The City Hall Maintenance Project will replace all the existing non-thermally broken, untinted, single-pane windows and doors in City Hall with new thermally broken, bronze tinted windows and doors that will reduce the heat transfer between the interior of the building and the outside. Window frames will be changed from the bare aluminum frames to the bronze frames. It is estimated that the repairs will reduce the energy requirements by approximately \$11,000/year. The project is being funded through a 50/50 cost share grant from the Department of Energy, with ARRA Stimulus Funds

### **Planning**

*Submitted by Dan Olson, City Planner*

#### Zoning Board of Appeals/Planning Commission:

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on Thursday and reviewed a recent Supreme Court decision relating to a new court interpretation of an existing State Statute detailing when variances may be approved. The court ruling makes it more difficult for Cities to approve variances as it now must be proven that the property owner has no reasonable use for the property if the variance is denied. The Planning Commission then met to make a recommendation on revisions to Chapter 34 (Land Development Regulations) relating to the

proposed storm water ordinance in Chapter 22 (the City Council approved the Chapter 22 ordinance on first reading on Tuesday). The revisions to Chapter 34 are to avoid conflict or duplication of the new ordinance in Chapter 22. The Planning Commission also completed its review of the highway commercial (C2-B) regulations in the draft Land Development Code (LDC). Some members of the Commission, City Staff, and City Council will meet with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce on Monday to discuss the C2-B regulations. The Commission will present the C2-B regulations at the Council Work Session on Tuesday.

#### Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC):

The HPC gave approval of a concept plan for some alterations to the exterior of the Northfield Historical Society building at the corner of Division Street and Bridge Square. The alterations, which mainly involve providing a new handicapped entrance off of Bridge Square, are expected to be finalized by the Historical Society in October, and are part of a larger goal of renovating the building back to its appearance in the late 1800s. The HPC also approved two new signs for downtown, and wrapped up its review of the new iPOD tour for downtown. The City received a grant from the State of Minnesota to complete the iPOD project, and most of work on the iPOD project was completed by the Northfield Historical Society. Tours can be viewed on the Historical Society website, [www.northfieldhistory.org](http://www.northfieldhistory.org) or on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) HPC members and City Staff are very pleased with how the tours turned out.

#### Northfield Roundtable

Staff attended the Roundtable discussion on Friday morning at the Archer House which brought Bill Johnson, an urban design consultant, to discuss a vision for the future of the downtown area. The group members spent a good amount of time in a small group visioning exercise for the area around 2nd and Highway #3. One of the key goals was to provide better access off of the highway.

### **PUBLIC WORKS**

#### **Facilities**

*Submitted by Bernie Shakal, Maintenance Facilities Supervisor, Brian Erickson Public Works Operations Engineer*

We are busy this week with the annual pool maintenance project at the Senior Center; the pool is closed August 16th thru the 29th. This year we are having the pool and the deck area re-grouted, doing this will preserve the tile and enhance the appearance. Other work includes mechanical issues and preventive maintenance with pumps etc.

#### **Streets and Parks**

*Submitted by TJ Heinrich, Streets and Parks Supervisor*

The Street and Park Divisions had a variety of tasks this week. Staff cleaned all city parks and mowed parks and city right-of-ways. Staff repaired potholes around the City. Staff assisted the Rice County STS crew with tree removals this week. Trees were removed at Water St and Hwy 3 overpass. Trees were also removed at the eastern end of 6<sup>th</sup> St to aid with the install of new trails in Old Memorial Park. Trails are being installed on the eastern half of Old Memorial Park. M&W Blacktopping from Waterville, MN is installing the trails. Letters were sent out to property owners this week in preparation for the 2010 Seal Coating project. The letters explain the project and the start date of August 30. There is additional information about the project available on the City web site.

#### **Water**

*Submitted by Doug Lien, Water Supervisor*

Water Superintendent Doug Lien called Automatic System to look at #4 well because of a well pump failure that occurred. Duane Larson from Automatic Systems responded on Friday morning and went to the site to see if he could find the problem. Duane found that the pulse contact from the flow meter was not functioning which was caused by a cable connector that had been over tightened and that pulled the reed switch enough so it would not allow the magnet to cause the switch to go into charge status. Duane replaced the cable from the reed switch on the flow meter head to the junction box and the problem cleared up. Duane started the well up three times with the flow calculation working each time in the PLC.

## **Wastewater**

*Submitted by Glenn Lindroos, Wastewater Superintendent*

The last of the chemical feed lines and bulk storage tanks that hold sodium hypochlorite and sodium bisulfate used in odor control systems at the facility were replaced this week. Over time these chemicals deteriorate the plastic and chemicals start to leach through the tanks around seams and fittings. When small amounts of dried chemical are noted on the outside of a tank, the tank and related piping need to be replaced because eventually it will start to leak. These systems have been on line for about 10 years and all 4 tanks have been replaced within the last 12 months.

## **DRAFT AGENDA September**

In an effort to accomplish the City Council's goals, the following is a draft agenda for the month of September 2010 Regular council meetings are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of each month; work sessions are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Note: \*\* meetings only if needed for items to be acted on. (These are subject to change). Additional meetings/work sessions will be scheduled as needed. The Draft Agenda of the upcoming months agenda items is subject to change. Additions and deletions of items will occur in an effort to best accomplish the Council goals and the necessary successful operation and business of the City.

### **9/7 – Council meeting**

- Items related to the Preliminary budget adoption
  - a. Approving the HRA tax levy for 2010 / Payable 2011
  - b. Approving the EDA tax levy for 2010 / Payable 2011
  - c. Approving the City tax levy for 2010 / Payable 2011
  - d. Approving the preliminary General Fund Budget for 2011
- Items related to Stormwater Management
  - a. 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of Ord No. 911 - Stormwater ordinance
  - b. Approve summary publication of Ord. 911
  - c. First reading of Ordinance No. - Revisions to Chapter 34
- Authorize bids – Babcock Park Interceptor & Lift Station (?)
- Approve Local 70 General Unit 2011-2012? Labor Contract
- Letter of support for Friends of the Depot
- Accept bids and award contract for City Hall Maintenance Project
- Approve the conservation easement for the Spring Creek Wetland Bank

### **9/14 – Work Session**

- LDC - Zoning Map/Future Land Use Map
- Discussion on Department Reorganization
- Welcome Center Task Force Report
- Review of Bridgewater Township response to Praver/Gil Annexation Request
- Review of Key Term of New Joint Orderly Annexation Agreement with Water Ford Township

### **9/21 – Council meeting**

Accept bids & award contract – Babcock Park Interceptor & Lift Station

### **9/28 – Work session\*\***

CC: Department Heads