



DATE: October 15, 2010
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Tim Madigan, Interim City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of October 11-15, 2010

Administration

The State Legislature will be meeting in special session on Monday to address the disaster relief bill for the recent flooding (a draft copy of the bill is attached). I have asked Chris Hood to have his firm Flaherty and Hood to monitor the special session legislation to ensure Northfield's interests are being addressed. They are doing the same thing for a number of other cities on this legislation.

Bradley Peterson from their office sent this note on the question I asked of how this legislation will benefit private business:

"A brief scan of the bill looks like 10 million is given to DEED to award to local units of government for loans/grants to affected businesses. The statute that is referenced in the bill is here: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=12A.07> and looks pretty straight forward. I do know however that there was an auditor report that criticized DEED and a city in 2007 for not appropriately overseeing the dollars spent through this program, so I imagine that oversight will be pretty strict this time around."

Memorial Park - arrangements have been made to adjust the new trails at Memorial Park to a 5% grade this Fall. That will leave \$3,000 from the project budget for trees to be planted in the park this year. The NESNA is planning providing additional funds for more trees in the park for this year as well.

Below is information on city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of October 11-15, 2010:

CITY CLERK

Submitted by Deb Little, City Clerk

Staff has been working on election preparation tasks, election judge assignments and making arrangements for Health Care Facility voting. There will be approximately 110 election judges serving voters in Northfield's 9 polling locations on November 2. Absentee voting continues at a brisk pace. Residents of the City of Northfield may vote by absentee ballot through Monday, November 1 in the Administration Office at City Hall, 801 Washington Street during the following times:

- Monday-Thursday: 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- Additional Days:
 - Friday, October 29: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 - Saturday, October 30: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Contact the City Clerk's office at 645-3001 or visit the City's website www.ci.northfield.mn.us for additional information.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Building

Submitted by Jim Kessler, Building Official

This week has been a little slower than the past few. The river levels are receding. We are monitoring the river wall for movement. No movement has been recorded.

Inspections for the big projects are continuing. The Arts Union is installing footings and foundation walls. The reinforcement of the 1910 building roof framing has begun in full earnest. Demo of the existing auditorium floors and balcony are progressing. Underground plumbing is progressing; the new water service has been installed, and some ductwork has started. The St. Olaf New Main is in various stages of completion. The painters and ceiling installers are working on the upper floors, the exterior curtain wall installers are closing up the new additions, the plumbing, mechanical and electrical crews are in various stages of completion. We are working with the teams to inspect the building as things get closed up. The Mayo project has been working to get the water and sewer connections completed at North Avenue. The sewer connection is over 30 feet deep making it a challenge.

The residential contractors are trying to stay busy. The contractors are finding work but it has been smaller scale projects. The construction on house's numbered 10 and 11 are still in the framing stage. Plumbing and mechanical installations are progressing on both homes.

The building inspections office issued a total of 7 building permits and 4 plumbing or mechanical permits this week. We also issued a permit for the installation of a newer trailer house at Viking Terrace.

The rental inspections are still trickling in. We completed nine rental inspections this week. We are also reviewing the current housing ordinance for recommendations on updates and revisions.

Economic Development and Community Development

Submitted by Jody T. Gunderson, Economic Development Director

The Northfield Economic Development Authority met in special meetings over the last two weeks to review and approve a total of \$100,000 in loans to six local business adversely affected by Cannon River flooding in late September. The loan funds are drawn from the EDA's Downtown Revolving Loan Fund, which is dedicated to improvements and economic development investments to strengthen the core business district. The EDA had approved a temporary change of eligibility for loans from this fund at a meeting on October 1, 2010.

Three west side business – Larson Printing, West Bank Properties, and Froggy Bottoms, Inc. – each requested \$20,000 loans. JEKLL, LTD (owner of the Larson Printing building) requested \$18,100, Manawa LLC (owner of the Archer House River Inn) requested \$13,791.45, and Chapati, Inc. requested \$8,600. The personally guaranteed, 24-month loans carry an interest rate of 1.5%, with principal and interest payable at term.

The flood relief loans is restricted to activities that mitigate damage to buildings or interiors; damage to business operations due to loss of power; costs associated with clean-up due to flooding; damage to inventory; or damage to equipment.

Additional loan applications will be accepted through November 30, 2010. Affected businesses or building owners should contact Jody Gunderson, Economic Development Director, for information about the application process. For more information about flood relief grants and loans available through the City of Northfield, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Southeast Minnesota Initiative Fund, visit

www.ci.northfield.mn.us/assets/p/projects/Flood_2010/river_flood_properties.html.

The Master Plan Steering Committee held its last meeting prior to submitting the Business Park Master Plans to the Planning Commission, Economic Development Authority, and the City Council. The Committee

discussed comments that were received from the public during and after the open house on September 23rd. The final draft is scheduled to go before the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Authority on November 18th, and the City Council will review and discuss the final draft at the November 23rd work session. The Steering Committee's ultimate goal is to have the City Council adopt the Business Park Master Plans as an amendment to the Northfield Comprehensive Plan.

Housing

Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager

Home Matters

There will be an Open House at 400 and 406 8th Street on Saturday, October 16 from 11am to 1pm. These homes are for sale and also open to tour, to see what the HRA and Three Rivers has been up to with the Foreclosure Acquisition and Rehab project. We are quite proud with how well these homes continue to turn out. Many thanks to our local contractors for their excellent work!

Please see the attached hand out for more information.

HRA Board Meeting

The HRA met on Thursday and made revisions to the Rental Rehab program, allowing landlords to re-apply for the grant program every three years for upgrades to their rental units. This is a \$10,000 grant program for landlords to increase the safety, security and energy efficiency of units rented to low/moderate income households.

The HRA also approved amendments to the First Time Homebuyer and Manufactured Home Acquisition program, increasing the legal fees charged back to the client. This change coincides with the increase in legal fees the HRA has received from Hood and Flattery, legal counsel for the HRA.

Community Development Block Grant

On Thursday, staff attended the annual CDBG/RIG Workshop and Community Revitalization Group meeting with Dakota County Community Development Agency to review the FY 2011 CDBG application, 2010 redevelopment incentive grants and Met Council updates. Whereas the Met Council updates do not apply directly to Northfield, staff was able to gather information on the redevelopment incentive grant, which has not been applied for in the past by Northfield. Staff is working with the Economic Development Director to identify an appropriate project for this grant, which is a maximum of \$250,000 with a 2:1 match of funds. Staff also brainstormed with the CDA on alternative ways to utilize CDBG funds to more precisely fit changing housing needs in our communities, specifically addressing foreclosure issues.

Homeless Response Team

Staff attended the monthly Homeless Response Team meeting in Faribault this week. This group is comprised of housing agencies countywide that meet monthly to discuss funding availability, programs, and needs throughout the county. This month we discussed the Homeless and Hunger Awareness Week, which is November 14-20. Every year, there is a memorial and program that occurs in Faribault and Jim Blaha of the Northfield Community Action Center spends Thursday evening of that week sleeping in Bridge Square to raise awareness of the homeless community. The memorial will also spend some time in Northfield this year; the memorial consists of a headstone made of plywood and painted grey, with the name of each homeless person who died on the streets in the last year. This information is gathered every year by MN Coalition for the Homeless. This year, one headstone will feature the name of a mother and her four children, all under the age of 6, who died homeless this past spring.

The HRA discussed homelessness at their meeting this week as well, and wondered what kind of numbers Northfield has for homeless individuals, and what demographic they meet. This is information that is hoped to be shared at the Housing Summit the HRA is hosting on October 26th.

PUBLIC WORKS

Facilities

Submitted by Bernie Shakal, Facility Maintenance Supervisor

Progress continues on the City Hall maintenance project, a pre-construction meeting was held this week to discuss a starting date and to set up a construction schedule to coordinate with office occupants as to when they may need to relocate. Facilities will assist occupants to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible. We will not have a firm start date until we receive the window delivery date.

The monthly pool cleaning at the Senior Center was done this week along with pool equipment maintenance which included installation of a new motor on the main pump, and some repairs on the chemical injection system.

Significant progress was made this week in finishing up the re-keying project at the NCRC, there are a few loose ends to come together yet, but we should be finished next week.

Streets and Parks

Submitted by TJ Heinricy, Streets and Parks Supervisor

Street and Park flood cleanup is near final completion. The River Commons area is completed. The concrete and limestone areas have been cleaned and disinfected. The lights in the River Commons area are being re-wired and electrical services replaced. Staff HAS removed all barricades in the River Commons area. The Crossing area saw a large amounts of sand removed due to the flood. Flags were taken down in the downtown area after the observance of Columbus Day. The downtown flower baskets were removed this week. Sechler Park has resumed normal operations. Babcock Park is still closed due to the need for fence repairs but the park turf cleanup has been completed. There were two-picnic tables rescued from the river. Parks all saw general cleanup this week. Preparations have been made for next week to install a donated basketball court in Prairie Hills Park. Potholes were repaired throughout the city. The compost facility yearly compost screening is completed. Staff is now moving the existing rows to make room for the incoming fall leaves. Staff prepared equipment for fall leaf cleanup.

Just a reminder during this fall season, citizens are not allowed to rake, blow or discharge debris into City streets as per the Storm Water Ordinance. The whole ordinance can be found at

<http://library.municode.com/ordinances/13439/Ordinance%20No.%20911.pdf>

Section 22-351. – Prohibition of illicit or illegal discharges

(c) No person shall throw, deposit, leave, maintain, keep, or permit to be thrown, deposited, left, or maintained, in or upon any public or private property, driveway, parking area, street, alley, sidewalk, component of the storm drain system, or water of the state, any refuse, rubbish, garbage, litter, or other discarded or abandoned objects, articles, and accumulations, so that the same may cause or contribute to pollution. Waste deposited in streets in proper receptacles for the purposes of collection is exempted from this prohibition.

Transit

Submitted by Brian Erickson, Public Works Operations Engineer

Due to furlough requirements the dispatcher will be out of the office on Friday (10/15) and Monday (10/18). The bus riders have been notified via flyers that have been in the buses all week. Anyone who has a ride scheduled has been asked to schedule their return ride as well. Additionally, the phones will be transferred to the cell phones that the drivers carry; however, the drivers cannot answer the phone until they are stopped. As they are able, the drivers will return phone messages.

Streets

Submitted by Brian Erickson, Public Works Operations Engineer

Staff met with MnDOT officials this week regarding the street light poles that had fallen down. Based on the information that was discussed staff will be contacting the material supplier and continuing to work with MnDOT for resolution on this issue.

Water

Submitted by Doug Lien, Water Superintendent

Wastewater Operator Adam Murphy and Water Operators Scott Murphy and Lenny Moore finished flushing all the fire hydrants in town at 6:00 a.m. Friday morning. Watermains are routinely flushed to remove minerals as they accumulate in the distribution system and check the operational integrity of the fire hydrants.

On Tuesday morning Water Systems Technician Jay Hall assisted B & B Excavating with the repair of a residential curb-stop that was leaking at 1020 S. Division. The 1000 block of S. Division had their watermain shut off for 2 hours during the repair.

On Thursday morning Water Systems Technician Jay Hall and Seasonal Employee Rodney Svien flushed the new watermain on Union Street between 6th and 7th Street. A bacteria sample was taken and sent into the lab for testing. If the bacteria sample comes back negative, then the watermain will be turned on and put into service sometime on Friday. It takes 24 hours for the lab to determine if a bacteria sample is negative or positive.

Wastewater

Submitted by Glenn Lindroos, Waste Water Superintendent

About 3000 tons of biosolids were removed from storage at the wastewater treatment facility and applied on agricultural land in the area this week. The application was done at a rate that will provide about 125 lbs of nitrogen per acre for next year's intended crop. Weather conditions did not allow us to haul on hay producing ground this summer so the storage area was extremely full when land finally opened up this fall.

LIBRARY

Submitted by: Lynne Young, Library Director

Because of the way the Library's 2011 budget narrative was written, questions have arisen about the future of bookmobile service in the City. Until the end of 2009, the Library provided outreach bookmobile service to daycares and other stops within the community. Beginning in 2010, bookmobile service has been limited to special events and programs. The budget request for 2011 does not include restoration of full bookmobile service. However, a library staff member is in the process of becoming properly licensed to drive the bookmobile, and the Friends of the Library are willing to continue financial support for maintenance. With staffing and outside financial support in place, we plan to provide service to special events such as Books & Stars and Bridges to Kindergarten. The Library Board is also looking at other possible sources of funding for bookmobile service.

The Library's "Party Like It's 1910" kicked off with a story-telling and poetry reading event featuring Garrison Keillor. Work of local poets Leslie Schultz, Jan Mitchell, and Toni Easterson were read and celebrated. More than 300 people attended the event which was held at the UCC Church. The handanger fiddles of the *Lars Skjervheim* Spelemandslag accompanied the 300+ attendees of the event to the library for a reception following. Mr. Keillor's Common Good Books sold books at the library, with 20% of the profits going to the Friends of the Library. It was a "WOW" event.

The 2nd event – the Friends of the Library 4th Spelling Bee – was held last night at the Grand. Eleven teams of three competed fiercely for the honor of being recognized as Northfield's best spellers. Juli Baynes, Allison Koster, and Jane Fenton (of the Countryside Animal Hospital team) narrowly beat out a highly competitive KYMN Radio team. Bonnie Jean Flom led the crowd in a song featuring the MANY contributions of the Friends of the Library.

Several library staff members were able to attend the Minnesota Library Association conference in Rochester October 6-8. The staff members will share what they learned at staff meetings, through written reports and an online blog.

A dedication ceremony for the Library's new outdoor reading area will be held at 2:00 on Sunday afternoon, October 17. The reading area was given in memory of Betty Dahle by her family.