

## Memorandum

DATE: October 24, 2008  
TO: Mayor & Council Members  
FROM: Joel Walinski, Interim City Administrator  
RE: Friday Memo for the week of October 20-24, 2008.

This week City staff continued discussions with the Greenvale Township supervisors negotiating an annexation agreement concerning the St. Olaf, Sorem, Fink and Lysne properties. I believe the track of the negotiations remains consistent with the direction provided by the Council at several previous work session discussions. Staff has scheduled the next meeting with Greenvale Township for November 5, 2008. City staff will report back to the Council at the November 10, 2008 work session and ask the Council to review and reconfirm the directions of the agreement negotiations.

In November, the Council will be asked to review and approve a rate increase for the residential garbage fees. I've attached a press release provided by Rice County on the increase in tipping fees. This increase is a result of the outcome of the Bridgewater Township Rice County lawsuit. The cost increases incurred by the County as a result of the suit will be passed on to the users of the landfill. The fee structure for the increase is based on increased tipping fees based on tonnage. This does present the City of Northfield and its residents an opportunity to lower its fees if the single sort recycling were to be embraced and fully utilized by local residents. We will be looking at ways to promote this effort and will be tracking numbers to compare the effects of single sort recycling.

Finally this week, staff has continued to review budget items and look for structural changes that could affect operating budgets in 2009, 2010, 2011 and beyond. These items include employee medical insurance, work comp insurance, energy management, staffing workloads, etc. This review will continue to be ongoing as we work towards finalizing this years budget and look towards the future and the uncertain financial times.

Below is a list of city activities and information provided by the department directors and managers for the week of October 20-24, 2008:

### **City Clerk**

*Submitted by: Deb Little, City Clerk*

A group of students from Washington Street Academy visited City Hall on Monday to learn about the elections process.

Health care absentee voting was conducted at qualifying nursing homes in Northfield on Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday this week. Staff and election judges go to each location to assist nursing home residents with absentee voting. The qualifying locations in Northfield per the definition under state law for voter outreach are the Long Term Care Center at Northfield Hospital, Three Links Care Center and Northfield Care Center.

Absentee voting is available at City Hall until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 3. We will also be open on Saturday, November 1, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There is some confusion on absentee voting versus the reports of early voting options available in other states. In Minnesota voters may vote via absentee for the following reasons:

- Absent from your precinct
- Illness or disability
- Serving as an election judge in another precinct
- Religious discipline or religious holiday or observance

- Eligible emergency declared by the governor or quarantine declared by the federal or state government

Starting Tuesday, October 28, voters may authorize the delivery of their absentee ballot by someone else. This is known as agent delivery. These voters must be:

- Patients in hospitals, residential treatment centers, or nursing homes
- Residents of group homes
- Residents of battered women's shelters
- Residents of assisted living facilities
- Voters who are disabled
- Voters who would have difficulty getting to the polls because of incapacitating health reasons

The voter must complete forms to authorize the agent delivery process and must have a preexisting relationship with the agent. Additional information regarding this process is available at City Hall or on the City's website.

The Secretary of State has sample ballots available on their polling place finder page at <http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>. This allows users to find their polling location and see the ballot for their specific ward and precinct.

### **Information Technology**

*Submitted by: Melissa Reeder, IT Director*

Invites for the Fiber Optic Open House have been mailed to all council, boards and commission members. Invites were also sent to the members of the Fiber Optic Feasibility Task Force. Thanks go out to Kathy Fredrickson for her help with the project. The open house, scheduled for November 6<sup>th</sup> is from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Doug Dawson from CCG Consulting will be here to visit with the community about the survey process and feasibility study. Please come!

Kurt Wolf completed the fiber link from the Street Department to the Transit building. This underground link formerly was connected via several data converters. The new fiber end and termination box make this a more reliable connection.

Kurt Wolf and Melissa Reeder attended LOGIS training to learn how to install and configure GPS systems for the squad cars. The GPS devices will assist 911 Dispatch (Pearl Street). With a Global Positioning device, Dispatch will know the physical location of all squad cars and be able to dispatch appropriately by their location. Installation in the squads will begin in the month of November.

For those of you at the last Council Meeting, you may have noticed some technical problems. A video scan converter went bad and it caused a blurry purple hue and screens to cut in and out. The converter was from our previous video system and most likely over five years old. Our vendor installed a temporary converter until a new one can be ordered and installed.

### **Liquor Store**

*Submitted by: Stephen DeLong, Liquor Store Manger*

#### **RFP for New Municipal Liquor Store**

The City of Northfield is currently receiving proposals for the purchase, lease or development of property for a new municipal liquor store.

A pre-submission conference was held Wednesday, October 22, in Council Chambers. City staff was on hand to answer questions from potential proponents regarding the RFP and the proposal process.

The proposal deadline is November 5, 2008.

#### **Obscure Wines**

We will offer an in-store wine tasting Saturday from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. Nathan Patzlaff, sales representative from Quality Wine and Spirits will pour (and expound) the following selections from our current sale:

Tariquet Blanc (France)  
Barone di Valforte Pecorino (Italy)  
Muruve Toro Roble (Spain)  
Coppola Malbec (California)

### **Library**

*Submitted by: Lynne Young, Library Director*

The Northfield Public Library Teen Board in conjunction with the Mayor's Youth Council and the Union of Youth will present "Too Cool for School" on Saturday, October 25 from 6-9 pm, at the library. Check out the bands and the new mural and enjoy some snacks.

Joan Ennis has set up meetings with the faculties at the High School, St. Dominic, and Greenvale Park during the next three weeks. She will present information about library resources and ways in which the library staff can assist students.

The library installed a new digital microfilm reader/printer. This machine scans text and photos from the library's newspaper microfilm. The scans can be printed on one of the library's printers or saved to a flash drive for later use.

The Library Board met on Tuesday evening with special guest Joel Erickson, Lonsdale City Administrator. The Board also welcomed Jaime Rossow as one of the new liaisons from the Mayor's Youth Council. Board committees have been working hard on a variety of projects including ways to increase the value of the library's investments, developing a PR plan, partnering with other organizations in the area, and evaluating the two concepts for the library expansion.

Library use increased by over 4% in September. For the year so far, use is up 7% over 2007. People using the self-check option at the library accounted for about 16% of circulation. Not only can people check out their own materials at the library but they can also renew materials on their own online account. Using the library's web page, [www.northfieldmn.info](http://www.northfieldmn.info), go to the gray box and look for "My Account." With your library card and PIN number, you can see what you have checked out, renew items, and make or delete requests. Soon, there will be an option to pay fines online!

The library is conducting the annual patron satisfaction survey. Staff will compile the results, along with all comments and suggestions, and will use these results both to improve service and evaluate whether or not current goals and objectives are being met.

### **Public Services**

#### **Building Inspections**

*Submitted by John Brookins*

The plans for the St Olaf Old Music Building are in for review and permit issuance. This building is undergoing a complete remodel and will be used for classrooms and office space. The completion date is estimated to be sometime in the summer of 2009.

Jasnoch Construction Company will be building a 45 unit apartment building. The footing and foundation permit has been issued. The completion date for this project is yet to be determined.

#### **Community Development**

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

Staff met with Greenvale Township officials Tuesday evening to continue to discuss and negotiate the annexation agreement. Several items appear to have reached an agreement in principle while other larger important items remains unresolved. The issue of tax reimbursement versus a large annexation payment remains a point of disagreement but small progress is being made. Staff will meet again on November 5<sup>th</sup> since Greenvale has agreed to meet at a special meeting on this topic. The EDA has agreed to pay the expense of the meeting that Greenvale charges.

An updated report on the status of many issues related to The Crossings project was presented to City Council Monday evening. These issues related to the status of sales, status of the foreclosure proceeding, tax payment status, status of the sale of the remaining parcels still owned by MnDOT and other project details.

The Community Development Director and the City Engineer met with representatives of the MnDOT, MPCA, Mendota Homes, and the City's legal counsel on the project to review the status of the environmental clean up on the property still owned by MnDOT and the corresponding progress that is starting to occur on the sale of the MnDOT property to the City of Northfield.

MnDOT will be installing a "soils cap" on the property that MnDOT still owns on The Crossings site. This will result in MnDOT obtaining a No Further Action Letter from the MPCA which also leads to the activity of selling the land to the City. The soils cap will require further mitigation by Mendota Homes once building construction begins. Basically MnDOT is undertaking a minimal effort to resolve the environmental condition on the property they plan to sell and are imposing a deed restriction that will presumably effect the sale price of the property.

A pre-submission conference related to the liquor store proposal process occurred Tuesday. Several groups were in attendance seeking direction on the proposal process.

### **Economic Development**

*Submitted by Jody Gunderson*

The EDA held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday and passed a resolution requesting that the Northfield City Council formally amend the EDA's enabling resolution to clarify issues that were in conflict with its by-laws. The board also discussed setting a date for a meeting to develop the 2009 EDA work plan. Additionally, there was discussion of the role the infill committee would play as it relates to grading the proposals that are presented for the proposed new liquor store.

The EDA Director met with the Northfield Chamber of Commerce board to introduce himself and discuss what initiatives the EDA has undertaken, as well as discuss other issues that affect economic development in Northfield. Additionally, the Director responded to two separate requests for information regarding property in Northfield that is zoned industrial.

### **Housing**

*Submitted by Michele Merxbauer, HRA Manager*

Work continued and was completed on the first floor unit of 517 Washington. The floors were replaced in the kitchen and bathroom, a new sub-floor installed in the bathroom, new bathtub, and shower door was installed. The old bathtub had been leaking for quite some time and thus precipitated the need to replace so much of the bathroom. The new tub is completely sealed and the shower door, rather than a shower curtain, will help to keep the water in the tub and not on the floor.

Staff worked with the GIS technician to put together a map of foreclosures in Northfield for all of 2007 and the first three quarters of 2008. Staff is preparing a report of the foreclosure issues in Northfield to share with City Council and the Northfield HRA in November. To date, Northfield has seen 42 foreclosures in the first 3 quarters of 2008. This is significantly less than Faribault and Lonsdale for the same time period.

**Planning**

Submitted by Dan Olson, City Planner

Staff continues to review changes to the draft development regulations that are being prepared by ACP with assistance from McBride-Dale Clarion. Staff is scheduling meetings with Advisory Group in the near future to begin the discussion of the proposed regulations.

The Planning Commission will meet next Tuesday to review the draft Transportation Plan, as requested by the City Council. The Development Review Committee (DRC) met this week to review a preliminary plat to create three commercial parcels south of the Arby's restaurant along Highway #3. The Planning Commission will consider this plat on November 5th. Staff continued to review drafts of the proposed Land Development Code in preparation for review by the Advisory Group assisting this effort on November 10th.

**Engineering**

Submitted by Katy Gehler Hess, City Engineer

**WATER STREET PARKING / FIFTH STREET ENHANCEMENTS & RECONSTRUCTION**

Work this week focused on the railing and seat walls located on Washington Street. Northfield Construction finished this work up late in the week, and Heselton prepped the sidewalk on Washington Street for concrete. Guth Electric was also on-site this week and finished hooking up the Street Lights on Fifth Street from Water Street to Washington Street.

Next week North Country Concrete will be on-site to finish the sidewalk work on Washington Street, and Culberts Nursery will be on-site to finish up the sodding and planting on the east end of the job.

**WOODLEY STREET RECONSTRUCTION**

Friedges continued working on the box culvert extensions. The north side of Bridge 66J30 was completed and backfilled late in the week. The only remaining work on the north end will be the painting of the Ashlar Stone, which will be completed next spring. Pours were completed on the south side of Bridge 66J30, and the north side of Bridge 88484.

Frieges has their grading crew in late in the week to prep the east end for sand and class 5. They are still unable to sub-cut the south 1/4 of the road due to Qwest Communications having their facilities in the way. The new cables have been placed, Qwest is currently working on splicing the old lines over to the new lines. This work is scheduled to be completed early next week.

Work next week will concentrate on finishing up the bridge culverts and road work. Once the Qwest Communication lines are out of the way, work will progress at a much faster pace.

Public Works Operations:

Submitted by Brian Erickson, Public Works Operation Engineer

**Facilities**

Bernie Shakal, Facilities Supervisor

Facilities accomplished various projects around the City this week, We assisted the Police Department with some house cleaning, there were old desks, furniture and various electronic equipment to dispose of.

Dave Nelson prepared the snow blowers for the various facilities and placed ice melt at needed locations for the upcoming snow season.

Bernie has been busy assisting Johnson Controls with fine tuning heating and cooling issues at the NCRC. Bernie and Eric Peterson are correcting some problems with the in-floor radiant heat at the NCRC and should be finished sometime next week.

Bernie attended a training session on the operation of the dehumidification equipment at the Arena on Thursday

### **Recreation**

Jason Eisold, Recreation Manager

The arena project is 95% completely, contractors will be in next week to finish up the wall in the mechanical room and back Nov. 3 to install the safety netting on the east end of the rink. All mechanical equipment is installed and up and running. The Grand Re-Opening Event for the Arena will take place Friday, November 7 from 11:30am-1:30pm, for more information on the event contact the area at 507-645-6556.

The pool had additional concrete installed this week to provide space to store the thermal blanket reels that we will be implementing next season and also provide additional paved areas for visitors to enjoy. We will look to purchase additional deck furniture to fully compliment this area.

### **Streets and Parks**

TJ Heinrichy, Streets & Parks Supervisor

The Street and Parks department spent the week finishing a few fall winterization projects. The Bridge Square fountain has been winterized. Staff also winterized the City pool locker rooms. Residential streets continue to be swept through out the City. Next week some residential streets will see loaders remove the leaves on their streets. The City compost site has seen a dramatic increase in activity due to the fall leaves. Staff has also dealt with a few critter removals from streets this week. The Rice County Sentenced To Service crew finished painting the City downtown bridge railings this week. They also cleaned and trimmed the lilac hedge at Riverside Park. Preparation of snow equipment still continues.

### **Wastewater**

Glenn Lindroos, Wastewater Superintendent

The air conditioning unit that cools a UV disinfection system failed. The UV system overheated so the backup UV system was put on line. Repairs where made and the system was put back on line.

The emergency generator had problems about 1 month ago during its normal monthly test. The equipment supplier was called in but could not find any problems with the set. The test schedule had been increased to weekly until confidence was gained in operation of the unit. During the first three weeks everything functioned normally. This week the system failed after about 30 minutes of operation. The problem appears to be in the systems programable logic controller. The system is useable but not 100% dependable. The equipment suppliers will be here again today to isolate and hopefully rectify the problem.

### **Water**

Doug Lien, Water Superintendent

Jeremy Evenson from Johnson Controls, along with electrical contractors from Collisys Electrical and Premier Electric came to the Water Division on Tuesday, October 21st, to look over the sites for connecting up wireless communications equipment. The intent is to install wireless equipment at each of the Water Division's locations to monitor the grounds with security cameras. If the wireless communications work well operating the security cameras, the Water Division will use the same equipment to monitor and control the pumps and equipment with the SCADA (Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition) computer. The current system communicates with phone lines and very outdated technology.

Water Operator Dean Huschle took the group on a visual inspection of the locations which included the Water Division office, the well sites, the storage tank sites, the booster station, the Safety Center and Mohn Hall on the St. Olaf College campus. Bid proposals from the two electrical contractors should hopefully be turned in within the next week or so.

Construction on the remodeling of #2 pump house is underway. The north outside wall will be removed on Tuesday October 28th and should be replaced by the following Friday. A new 8' x 14' wall will be installed along with a 8' door. Construction should be complete by mid November.

cc: Department Managers