

Memorandum

DATE: December 11, 2009
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator
RE: Board And Commission Memo November 2009

Thank you to the Board and Commissions that have submitted information as a follow-up to their Board and Commission actions and meetings in October. Information for the December memo will be due by December 30, 2009 and posted on Friday, January 8, 2009.

Below is information submitted from Board and Commission Chairs or members, the items of interest are from the month of November:

Environmental Quality Commission

Submitted by Daniel Jones, Chair

During the month of November, the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) worked on several issues of local environmental interest, including the Praver-Gill annexation and residential solid waste management. EQC chair Daniel Jones provided a response on November 13 to Joel Walinski's request for input on the Praver-Gill annexation. With regard to solid waste management, the EQC received additional information from staff on the volume of waste generated by Northfield residents, and the rates charged for varying sizes of containers. The EQC is reviewing this and other information to evaluate whether changes might be recommended to the Council in order to better meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 5, Objective 5 on reduction of solid waste generation. The EQC continues to supervise several subcommittees and task forces on energy, local food, and transit. Each of these subcommittees remains active in developing advice and suggested policies for the Council and for Northfield residents.

Human Rights Commission

Submitted by Commissioner David Schlosser

- Much of the meeting this month involved a dispute between renters and the management and towing company at Viking Terrace. Six visitors from Viking Terrace arrived and described what they experience as harassment and extortion through the use of vehicle towing as an enforcement tool at Viking Terrace. They stated that the things they describe are done to Latinos and not to Anglos. One of the people present had used a video camera to document some of the incidents they describe. Sgt. Bill Olsen investigated after the meeting, and reported that the owners have a different story. We have invited the owners to our December meeting and will withhold any suggested course of action until after this discussion.
- Reported on the meeting with official Census Bureau staff of October 21.
- Discussed census marketing calendar and plans.
- Discussed request by St. Olaf students that we send a letter to President Obama requesting that he meet with the Dalai Lama as soon as he has finished meeting with the Chinese president.
- Nancy Madsen contacted the HRC about what she perceives as unfairness in the CAC's vehicle donation program. She will contact ombudsmen; issue tabled until result known.
- Martin Luther King Day celebration plans were discussed. Speaker is set. Chair will send out funding requests. Musical group invitations will be sent out this week. Master of Ceremonies set.

Will check on recording event. There will be no reception this year. Theme is "Let's Walk Hand in Hand."

- Concern was expressed about handling volume of census work after January 1 when we will be down to 5 members with 4 vacancies on commission.

Library Board

Submitted by Margit Johnson, Chair

Library Expansion

The Library Board thanks the City Council for moving the proposed library expansion forward by placing it on the 2010-2014 CIP and starting the budgeting and planning processes. We look forward to the creative, community-wide process of expanding the library and integrating vehicle parking in the north end of Division Street into this venerable anchor of downtown Northfield.

Fundraising Feasibility Study

We have selected Library Strategies of St. Paul to conduct our fundraising feasibility study. Work will begin in January 2010. Library Strategies is the consulting arm of the St. Paul Library Friends of the Library. They have worked successfully with numerous clients in MN and elsewhere, on small and large libraries. They understand the Minnesota economic climate and patterns of philanthropy. We look forward to working with them and reporting back to you in the spring 2010.

Circulation

Circulation of library resources increased again this month by 5.36% over the same month last year. Like the strong women that they are, Lynne Young and her staff stand poised with the classic carnival sledgehammer, ready to drop the hammer that sends the ball rocketing skyward to ring the bell that marks the 400,000 annual circulation record and then some by the end of December!

Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use

Submitted by Joan Janusz and Susan Sanderson, Co-Chairs

- Provided support to the Town Hall Meeting that was held on November 8, 2009, at the Main Street Moravian Church. The event featured a panel of five local speakers sharing their personal stories of addiction and recovery in Northfield. More than 100 community members attended this event. The Task Force wishes to offer its sincere thanks to these individuals for sharing their stories and to Pastor Amy Gohdes-Luhman for her leadership organizing this important Town Hall series.
- Supported the "Take It to The Box" medication disposal program, which has been in operation for two months. Community members continue to bring their no longer needed prescription and over-the-counter medications to the disposal boxes in the Northfield and Faribault Police Stations. The first pick-up by the medication disposal company took place recently. During the first six weeks of the program, more than 150 pounds of medication had been collected in Northfield alone.
- Coordinated the Task Force's monthly column for the *Northfield News*. The November piece focused on the importance of parental involvement in preventing youth substance use and tips for parents to promote good choices by youth.
- Working on a parent education series for middle and high school students. The campaign will feature a number of postcard mailings and columns with parenting topics about preventing youth substance use.
- Continuing to lead a court monitoring program of Rice County cases where someone is charged with supplying drugs to others and/or providing alcohol to minors.

- Continuing to partner with the Northfield Middle School on a Positive Community Norms campaign at the middle school throughout this school year. Neuger Communications Group is again donating their services to help lead this campaign, which was piloted last year at the Northfield High School. The campaign stresses the healthy decisions made by most Northfield students, including the decisions not to use alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs.
- A subcommittee of the Mayor's Task Force is beginning conversations about the resources and supports available to young adults (ages 18-23) in the community.

For more information on the Mayor's Task Force, visit www.mayorstaskforcenorthfield.org

Mayor's Youth Council

Submitted by Katherine Peterson, Chair

This past month, the Mayor's Youth Council has been working on raising awareness about our planned new website in the community, in hopes of getting local entities to submit opportunities for youth to be posted on the site (volunteer possibilities, internships, upcoming events, job opportunities, etc.). We've made flyers with information about the website and contact information for the MYC that we plan to personally hand out to local organizations/businesses. We have also made posters/flyers to hang up in all the Northfield schools.

We've also been working on getting the National League of Cities' "Mayor's Action Challenge for Children and Families" application filled out to present to the City Council. We have met with local organizations (including Growing Up Healthy, the PRIMETIME after school collaborative, and the Early Childhood Initiative) to gain insight into what they are working on and to foster increased collaboration. Now, we are working on getting all of the ideas organized into concise, achievable action steps that we will bring to the City Council in early 2010.

Finally, Mayor's Youth Council members continue to attend meetings of other city boards and commissions, providing youth input and volunteering to assist with projects that these other entities have coming up. The Mayor's Youth Council is always open to discussing collaborative possibilities with any local group.

Park & Recreation Advisory Board

Submitted by Rick Vanasek, Chair

The Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) supported the proposed annexation with the assumption that the zoning and the Greenway Corridor Plan would be strictly followed. The PRAB also gave final approval to plantings of trees and shrubs along eastern border of Lashbrook Park. The idea of having a landscape architect on retainer was mentioned and may be discussed in the future.

cc: Board & Commission Chairs
Department Managers