

**Memorandum**

DATE: November 6, 2009  
TO: Mayor & Council Members  
FROM: Joel Walinski, City Administrator  
RE: Board And Commission Memo October 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 November memo will be due by November 30, 2009 and posted on Friday December 4, 2009.

**Below is information from Board and Commission Chairs on Northfield board and commission items of interest:**

**Arts & Culture Commission**

*Submitted by Philip Spensely, Chair*

The Arts and Culture Commission is investigating potential sources of funding, including the Legacy Funds, both in support of its own initiatives and those of others. It continues to explore criteria for identifying Northfield Living Treasures, which would acknowledge and honor artists and other individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Northfield through arts and culture. It continues to investigate the placement of public art including sculpture commissions and sidewalk poetry with potential partners. It continues its active collaborations with the Watering Hole for the Arts group, the River Walk Arts Quarter group, and the Library Board in support of their goals. The Commission is advocating for the opportunity to more productively participate in City facility and land development planning with regards to issues of arts and culture, and for one percent of new city project construction capital budgets to be allotted to the installation of public art, most immediately with regards to the safety center and the expansion of the library, similar to what has been done at the hospital.

**Environmental Quality Commission**

*Submitted by Daniel Jones, Chair*

The Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) is currently working on responding to the City Council's request for input on the Praver-Gill annexation. A response will be provided prior to the requested November 13 deadline. The EQC is also working actively on developing suggested changes in the City's solid waste collection policy, with the goal of providing incentives for residential waste reduction through composting and recycling. Altering the fee structure for the various trash bin sizes is one of the suggested options that the EQC is considering. EQC member Susannah Shmurak is also in contact with RW Farms, a local business interested in setting up a composting facility to serve the Northfield area. Finally, the EQC energy subcommittee will participate in a Neighborhood Energy Connection event providing public education on energy conservation at 7 p.m. on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Human Rights Commission**

*Submitted by Commissioner Dick Kleber*

1. We continued discussion of the complaint from a resident of Viking Terrace, with the conclusion that further investigation would be fruitless. However, since there appear to be many unresolved issues, a motion was passed to invite the Minnesota State agency responsible for the regulation of manufactured

housing parks to provide an information session. It is hoped this can be done the week of November 16 in the library meeting room.

2. The concern about Firefighter Death Benefit policies was tabled waiting to see what the anticipated letter from the City Council says.

3.a. A four-person group met prior to the October 8 meeting to work on the Census Marketing Calendar. Results were summarized and further discussed at the meeting and then sent by email to the entire HRC.

b. A group of Carleton students, led by Nick Welna, is eager to help in whatever way they can to promote awareness of the census. If permitted, they will be present at parent-teacher conferences with census information.

c. The HRC was made aware of a census presentation to be made to the Joint Governments meeting on October 21. We have requested additional time for a group of us to meet with the presenter afterwards. Note: Four members of the HRC and a group of Carleton students attended the Joint Governments meeting and met with the presenter, Mathew Falk, a partnership specialist with the Census Bureau, and Mario Duarte of the U. S. Census Bureau Office in St. Paul, for an hour afterwards. A report of these meetings will be given at our November meeting.

4. The HRC should have nine commissioners. By the end of 2009 there will be a need for four new commissioners to replace retiring and resigning members!!!

5. Four commissioners and one liaison will attend the December 4th Human Rights Day in St. Paul.

6. We voted to renew our membership in the League of MN HRCs.

7.a. The Moravian Church has agreed to serve as our fiscal agent for Martin Luther King Day.

b. Three potential speakers were selected and ordered

c. We will reserve the high school auditorium for the event.

d. The Human Rights Award nomination form has been updated and sent to the newspaper for publication.

8.a. Commissioners were made aware of several opportunities and events.

b. Opinions were solicited by the Council liaison about constructing a library, safety center, neither or both.

### **Library Board**

*Submitted by Margit Johnson, Chair*

#### **Higher circulation, fewer hours open**

Even with Sundays closed as a budget saving measure, circulation continues to beat last year's monthly circulation, up 5.2%. In September an average of 116 items were checked out every hour that the library was open. That means a book, DVD, book pack, magazine, or music CD was checked out every 30 seconds between 9:30 AM and 9 PM.

#### **The Library expansion and the CIP**

As requested by the City Administrator at your August 10, 2009 work session, the Library Board is submitting with this memo the recommendation, unanimously approved at their October 20 meeting, that the library expansion be included in the 2009-2014 CIP budget. Additionally, the expansion will be built on its current site and the area to the south of the Carnegie building.

#### **Outside funding**

All three committees of the Library Board are actively seeking outside funding for various uses. The PR Committee is writing grant applications to cover the expenses associated with the 2010 Carnegie Centennial Celebration, which is shaping up to be a community-wide, year-long celebration in collaboration with NAG, NHS, the Vintage Band Festival, NDDC, and the bookstores.

The Financial Resources Committee and the Friends of the Library are exploring ways for donors to contribute gifts for ongoing library needs and the library expansion and endowed funds for long-term support of the public library's resources and services.

The Planning Committee is currently interviewing fundraising feasibility consultants who will help the Library Board and the City Council determine how much could be raised in a capital campaign to supplement the City's tax levy. The Board anticipates that a realistic answer should be available late spring or early summer 2010.

### **Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use**

*Submitted by Joan Janusz and Susan Sanderson, Co-Chairs*

- Provided support to the planned Town Hall Meeting scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on November 8, 2009, at the Main Street Moravian Church (713 Division Street). The event will feature a panel of local speakers sharing their personal stories of addiction and recovery in Northfield. The event is free and all are encouraged to attend.
- Coordinated the Task Force's monthly column for the *Northfield News*. The October piece was written by guest Pastor Amy Gohdes-Luhman, who is leading the November 8 event. Pastor Amy was also interviewed on KYMN's Morning Program on October 26.
- The "Take It to The Box" medication disposal program has been in operation for a full month, with exciting results. 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. Throughout the month, an average of one grocery bag per day of medication has been deposited in the boxes. The Mayor's Task Force would like to thank Northfield Police Chief Mark Taylor and Faribault Police Chief Dan Collins for their leadership in this local effort.
- Partnering with the Northfield Middle School to launch 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.
- Continued to offer encouragement and support for the creation of a halfway house in Northfield for women in recovery from alcohol or drug addiction
- 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.

### **Mayor's Youth Council**

*Submitted by Zach Pruitt, Co-Adult Advisor*

The Mayor's Youth Council continues to work on its new website, which will provide information about upcoming events/activities for Northfield youth, as well as ways for young people to get involved in the community. The creation of the website was funded by a grant from the Minnesota Alliance With Youth and State Farm Insurance that the Mayor's Youth Council received last year (in conjunction with hosting the local Youth Summit).

The Mayor's Youth Council is also meeting with a number of community groups to assist with developing the outcomes for the National League of Cities' "Mayor's Action Challenge for Children and Families." The Mayor's Youth Council hopes to bring this Challenge (with potential recommended outcomes) to the City Council in early 2010.

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*

This past month, the Park & Recreation Advisory Board approved two recommendations for the 2010 – 2014 CIP, the allocation of \$15000 to each of the 3 priority items that they identified: connectivity, greenway corridor, and unforeseen opportunities. The PRAB also voted to recommend and request that up to \$50,000 be spent to begin landscaping of Old Memorial Park; providing a trail from 5th St. to 7th St. (pool entrance) and that up to \$25,000 be spent on Way Park to begin landscaping of the park. The PRAB also approved of the community garden advocates efforts and encouraged to them to continue.

cc: Board & Commission Chairs  
Department Managers