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# City Manager's Report

AUGUST 17, 2009

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## Administration & Finance

- Budget & Accounting - Budget directives, inclusive of the budget calendar, a cover memo and spreadsheet containing key schedules was distributed to the Cabinet and support staff.
- Pension Administration - The Annual report is posted on the website and has been mailed to all who have requested a copy.
- Purchasing/Risk Management - The Purchasing Director presented at the Minority Business Alliance of Southwest Michigan July 15 Business Opportunity Forum. This opportunity was used to communicate how to do business with the City and to reach out to the City's vendor community.

Requisition training was held on August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> - train attendees on using the City's financial system for looking up purchase orders, requisitions, and vendors.

- Treasury - Tax billing detail is now available on the website via a link to BS&A for years 2001 through 2009.

The Special Assessment module was implemented 7/3/09. The Delinquent Personal Property Tax module is scheduled for implementation on 3/1/10.

Options for online tax payments are being discussed with software vendor.

## Community Planning & Development

- Planning:

At the July 7<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting, the Commission held a public hearing on proposed changes to the Downtown Design Review Guidelines. It was voted to continue the hearing to the August meeting. Three site plans were reviewed and processed in July including site changes to Weller Auto on Douglas Avenue, new buildings for the ARK on Pleasant Avenue, and a building addition for Exteriors of Kalamazoo on S. Westnedge. Draft Wind Energy regulations were developed for final staff review.

There have been two public input sessions for the Master Plan Update, otherwise known as “Plan Kalamazoo,” on July 21<sup>st</sup> at the NACD Offices and July 28<sup>th</sup> at the Maple Street School. During both well attended sessions, participants were allowed to weigh in on land use issues as they relate to Neighborhoods and Housing, Quality of Life, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Region and the Economy. Feedback on the process has been overwhelmingly positive thus far. Further input is being accepted on Facebook at Plan Kalamazoo, on our website at <http://www.kalamazoocity.org/plankalamazoo>, or by sending an email to [plan@kalamazoocity.org](mailto:plan@kalamazoocity.org).

➤ Zoning:

At the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Board granted a variance to extend the temporary sale of flowers from the grass lot east of Boonzaaijer Bakery from two months to four months annually (May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>).

➤ Anti-Blight:

During the next several months, members of our community will notice increased house demolition activity. At least forty (40) buildings are proposed to be demolished with funds provided through the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The primary objectives for this initiative include removal of blighted and dangerous buildings and creation of open space or opportunities for redevelopment. The City of Kalamazoo purchased several of these houses from the State of Michigan after tax foreclosure. However, most are privately owned. Hearings for these privately-owned properties were conducted by the Dangerous Buildings Board and owners were given time to correct conditions in violation. Unfortunately, most of these owners abandoned all interest in resolution of the blight and danger and demolition is now necessary.

➤ Building & Trades:

In the month of July there were 222 permits issued, representing \$24,601 in fees and \$4,152,951 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 1,399 representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$24,860,310 bringing in nearly \$210,093 in revenue.

➤ Neighborhood Development:

To date, the City has received four grant agreements from HUD for PY2009 CDBG, HOME, Emergency Shelter Grants and the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing program. These four programs total \$3,422,685. The City is still awaiting grant agreements for the PY2009 CDBG-Recovery funds for \$495,533.

The PY2008 end-of-year report, the Consolidation Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER) is due to HUD by August 31, 2009. Preliminary calculations indicate that the leverage for CDBG and ESG funds is approximately \$16.28 for each dollar of City investment in the community.

On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Field Environmental Officer from HUD-Detroit conducted a monitoring of the City of Kalamazoo's compliance with the applicable Environmental Review process for CDBG, HOME, and ESG. The documentation was all present, and the auditor will recommend that newer versions of selected forms be used, and that a more centralized filing system be implemented.

## **Economic Development**

### ➤ Riverfront Area:

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority has purchased at 838 East Gull.

The riverfront corridor improvements were held August 3<sup>rd</sup> to review revised proposed solutions based on stakeholder interviews and additional information from the traffic study.

A kick-off meeting was held with LKF regarding the branding component of the corridor improvement study.

Work has begun on the mural at 621 East North Street. Staff has made suggestions regarding possible sponsors for funding.

### ➤ Davis Creek Business Park:

The proposed demolition of the last two former Lakeside Refinery buildings located at 2705 East Cork Street is substantially complete. MDEQ-led contaminated soil and former refinery foundation removal activities are scheduled to begin in mid/late summer.

Discussions with a development prospect for the site have been put on hold due to current market conditions and other factors, while another developer has shown some interest and a Prospective Developers Manual was provided to the entity for further reference.

The first two rounds of methane sampling have been completed, and draft reports have been submitted to staff and are currently under review.

➤ Brownfield Redevelopment:

Staff has held discussions with several interested parties over the last two months to discuss issues relating to potential brownfield redevelopment projects. These projects are in various stages of planning, and the discussions were intended to assist in information gathering and understanding of the process necessary to realize a project, along with what support the brownfield program may be able to offer.

At its July meeting, the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority approved a term sheet for Mavcon's redevelopment project in the 100 block of East Michigan Avenue.

The development of survey, title work and easement information related to the BRA's acquisition of the former Panelyte property has been completed. The boundary survey has been completed and the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment has been substantially completed. Next steps are to identify data gaps in the historic sampling activities and develop a site specific sampling plan for EPA review prior to conducting the sampling activities.

Staff has been working with the MDEQ on an application for federal funding to complete remaining demolition and Portage Creek relocation activities at the former Performance Paper property now owned by the BRA. The application that was submitted in mid-April was not approved. The MDEQ has indicated that another funding source for the project may have emerged, and a workshop to explain the opportunity will be held in early August. Staff is planning to attend.

Selections have been made for the realtor carousel for both the BRA and the City overall. Staff is now negotiating contract terms, with the goal of making a recommendation to the BRA at the August 20<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

Proposals are being solicited for the development of demolition specifications for the former Superior Cleaners property.

EPA grant-funded site assessment activities are in motion for two projects, and one project that was slated to begin has now been terminated due to the inability of the developer to secure redevelopment financing. Staff recently requested a grant extension for up to six-months to complete grant-funded activities.

Staff has been asked to present, be part of a panel discussion, and participate in a MDEQ/MEDC-sponsored BRA workshop to be held in Lansing on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

The MEDC will be visiting the City of Kalamazoo to review the status of historic brownfield projects to aid in revising the state program. Planned activities are to tour some of the projects and discuss TIF, incentives, and project-related outcomes sometime in mid-August.

➤ Economic Development:

Staff submitted the City's application for \$762,000 in Energy Efficiency and Community Block Grant formula funds, along with the necessary strategy to spend the funds on projects deemed acceptable by the Department of Energy. The application package is currently being reviewed by the Department of Energy.

Staff participated in and presented at the Minority Business Alliance's Small Business Assistance Forum held at the WMU Fetzer Center. The forum was attended by approximately 75 people, primarily African-Americans.

Graphic Packaging has requested staff's help in orchestrating the grand opening of their Carton Plant. They would like to have national and Michigan dignitaries attend, if possible. Staff will work with Southwest Michigan First and Graphic Packaging to coordinate the event.

Staff is working with three companies on possible tax abatement applications.

Staff conducted six business retention calls with companies throughout the community.

Staff responded to various information requests from seven business prospects interested in starting or expanding a business in Kalamazoo.

A small business revolving loan has been approved for Zoorona, LLC, but closing on the loan has been postponed to resolve some liquor license issues.

## **Human Resources**

- The City University is offering classes in "Personal Finance" in August. These classes are the final versions of a pilot that was offered in February. *Getting a Handle on Your Money* deals with making a budget, savings plans, and the pro's and con's of borrowing money and using credit cards. *Protecting Your Finances and Your Future* deals with protecting yourself with the right kinds of insurance, as well as investing for the future. Each class will be offered four times during the week of August 17<sup>th</sup>. Employees are encouraged to attend and to bring their spouses. ICMA-RC is providing the training at no cost to the City.

## **Information Technology**

- ESX/VMWare Upgrade – Staff has upgraded the city's VMWare environment with multiple new ESX hosts. This upgrade increases the available resources for multiple applications including the City's finance, tax, and payroll systems. The upgrade will also minimize the city's future server costs.

- Storage Area Network (SAN) Replacement – Staff installed a new mirrored 15 Terabyte Storage Area Network (SAN). This replaces the old 6 Terabyte SAN and provides data storage for multiple projects moving forward such as the Exchange upgrade and the ESX/VMWare upgrade.
- Network Switch Replacement – The network switch replacement bid was awarded to MOSS in the amount of \$244,828.09. The project is currently on track to be completed in November. This involves a complete upgrade of the underlying switched TCP/IP network for the City.

## **Parks & Recreation**

- The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Friends of Recreation Golf Classic was held July 17<sup>th</sup> at Eastern Hills Golf Course. Over 65 golfers participated in this year's event. We also had tremendous support from over 80 businesses donating door prizes, auction items and hole sponsors. The event was successful, bringing in over \$15,000 in revenue. The proceeds from the event will be used to help fund the Youth Development Center in 2010.
- Staff sent out the Request for Proposal for the master planning of Milham and Blanche Hull Parks. Proposals are due July 24<sup>th</sup>, after which staff will evaluate and make a recommendation of award for the project.
- A meeting to discuss the next steps for the development of the Youth Center on the Eastside was held on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to a grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Organizational Development Solutions LLC will be leading community program providers to develop programs, outcomes and evaluation tools.
- Staff participated in the Arcadia Common West planning for a downtown arena. The meeting was to solicit comments and questions from the public on how a regional event center might be planned, budgeted for (constructions and ongoing operations) and the types of uses (housing, retail, office space, etc.).
- Staff participated in the City of Kalamazoo's public meeting on updating its Master Plan for Land Use. Public input included topics such as housing, neighborhoods, transportation, economic development, and the quality of life in Kalamazoo.
- Maranda's Park Party was held at Upjohn Park on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. This event is part of the collaboration with WOOD TV 8 and the Parks and Recreation. Over 4,500 citizens were able to enjoy a variety of rides and activities, ice cream, giveaways from vendors, tour a fire truck and a Life EMS ambulance, and interact with other KDPS officers.

- The campers at the MLK and Upjohn Park summer mini camp sites participated in swim lessons at KIK pool. Each site had 35 kids participate in the two-week swim lessons. These lessons were funded from a grant received in 2008 for the “Strokes for Life” program.
- A new partnership this summer with the Kalamazoo County Parks Department allowed the Spring Valley and Douglass mini camp sites to have a scavenger hunt on the newly renovated Kal-Haven trail. Spring Valley campers had a "wheels" day and brought in bikes, rollerblades, scooters, and skateboards to travel down the trail with Kyle Lewis, Program Director for the Kalamazoo County Parks Department. The children also participated in a scavenger hunt put together by Kyle. The kids from the Douglass site spent two hours with Kyle walking on the trail and participated in a scavenger hunt.
- The six Parks and Recreation Summer Mini Camp sites participated in three “fun days” at Upjohn Park to celebrate the City of Kalamazoo’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These days were filled with a variety of activities such as dodge ball, tag games, water games, and relay races. Their day finished with a cookout at the park and a trip to KIK pool. A visit from Mayor Hopewell was one of the highlights of the days, as he took time to talk with each site.
- Kalamazoo Public Safety Officer David Juday provided a fishing program with the campers of Spring Valley Park summer mini camp. He met with them four times over the summer and discussed life lessons with them; as well as, teaching them the basics of fishing.
- Art Hop took place at the Youth Development Center, with artwork by participants ages 5 - 12 from the summer mini camps on display. Work was presented in a variety of media that represented the themes of each site, Nature/Outdoors, Creative Writing, Performing Arts, Water Wonderland, Martial Arts and Alternative Sports. The displayed items included poems stretched on frames, a giant paper mache’ fish; a musical city and drawings of kids participating in their favorite sport, to name a few. Fifty people attended the event.
- The six summer mini camp sites completed their performing arts activities with talent shows at their sites. Youth sang, danced, performed skits, did gymnastics and more. Woods Lake Performing Arts Camp, “Poetry as Performance”, completed their work writing and performing their own poetry in a night club style setting with dim lights and microphone. This program, for 9-12 year olds, met one day a week for six weeks, and was designed to introduce youth to writing and performing their own poetry and prose. Each camper received a copy of the Power Point presentation, which captured the youth at Woods Lake Mini Camp throughout the six weeks.

- Staff attended the interview with Michael M. Kaiser, President from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This event was sponsored by the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo and focused on his work in sustaining the arts in communities; as well as, fundraising for the arts. The presentation was both informative and encouraging.
- The Kalamazoo Math and Science Center outreach program completed five weeks of activities at the six summer Mini Camp sites. Over the six weeks, kids do fun science and math projects for two hours, once a week, on a variety of topics. Prevention Works provided a program called “TAR” to our mini camps, where youth ages 9-12 were able to learn about the dangers of smoking.
- Youth at the Arcadia Creative Writing Mini Camp completed the “Writing Together” program, taught by O’Neal Ollie and Teri Benton Ollie. This program helped kids discover themselves through the art of writing. It finished with the compilation of statements and pictures in book form given to all participants. The children also received rhyming dictionaries.
- The youth in Future Chefs received their certificates for completion of the six week program that includes training in preparing food, safety and nutrition, along with field trips to the kitchens in area restaurants. This year’s instruction was by Chef Channon Mondoux of Renaissance Cuisine.

Staff spoke about the Future Chefs program and the collaboration with Fair Food Matters at a dinner fundraiser that was held at the Kalamazoo House. DeRon Adler, three time participant in the program, attended and spoke as well. The Future Chefs assisted Chef Channon Mondoux in preparing Baklava and other snacks that were served to the guests at this five course event.

- This year’s Plays in the Parks program, an extension of the Act Out program that introduces youth to theatre and acting, completed five performances of “The Velveteen Rabbit”, an adaptation of the book by Margery Williams. The play is adapted by Scott Davidson and produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Services. The performances were held at Frays Park, Bronson Park, Spring Valley Park, Upjohn Park, and the final performance at LaCrone Park. Nine youths, ages 7-14, performed and created their own costumes and props for the plays.
- The staff at the Youth Development Center (YDC) is working on a proposal for Kalamazoo Public Schools to allow student participation at the YDC for the Extension Suspension Program. The program will be for students who are suspended, but willing to work on getting partial credit during the time they are absent from school and/or possibly an early return to school if approved to do so.

Students will report to YDC to approved school representatives while absent. Students will be signed in and out of program by Youth Development Center staff. While attending, the students will do assigned work from school and turn the completed work into Victor Taylor, who will turn the student work in to the assigned school representative.

- The Youth Development Center will be taking a field trip to the Black Arts Festival Children's Day at the Arcadia Festival Site. Victor Taylor will be attending meetings for the fall Youth Forum through the Black Arts & Cultural Center; as well as, transporting youth to attend the forums.
- Several staff attended the Kalamazoo Communities in Schools 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers Celebration. This was an informative celebration to support the roll-out of the after-school 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers. This celebration also provided future opportunities this grant could provide for the children attending these Learning Centers.
- The Frays Park Improvement project has been completed to the delight of the neighbors and residents who frequent the park. The new hard surface pathway allows barrier-free access across the park, to the new barrier-free playground and to a new barrier-free drinking fountain.
- Bids were received to replace the scoreboard at the Soisson-Rapcz-Clason field. A recommendation is being made to award the contract to the lowest responsive bidder, with the plan to have the new scoreboard in place before the high school football season begins this fall.

## **Public Safety**

- A crime fighters meeting was held in the month of July. Discussions were about the recent bank robberies, a shooting on the City's northside, and breaking and entering/home invasion cases occurring throughout the City.
- Operations personnel, including CPO's, conducted the first Youth Leadership Academy during the week of June 15<sup>th</sup>. This academy, an intense week-long program, included 31 area youths, boy's age 13-16, and was highly successful. In 2007 KDPS began summer youth academies and participated in the Michigan State Police Leadership academies. A second leadership for girls is scheduled for the week of August 16<sup>th</sup> through August 21<sup>st</sup>. The SRO assigned to Loy Norrix is temporarily assigned to patrol functions during summer break. Officers continue to mentor youths in the Explorer program.

- Directed and saturation patrols are implemented to address noted crime trends; as well as, neighborhood concerns and quality of life issues. Directed patrols have been deployed recently to address crowds that are beginning to gather due to more mild weather conditions. CPO's and KVET personnel continue to support Operations officers by adding resources through weekend patrols.
- CPO's, in collaboration with Public Services and Community Planning and Development, have completed 2 rounds of "blight enforcement teams" to address quality of life issues in various neighborhoods beginning in the Edison, Eastside and Northside neighborhoods. These occurred on April 21-22, June 8<sup>th</sup> and July 27<sup>th</sup>. This initiative, which addresses such things as unsafe homes, junk automobiles, trash, and the trimming of overgrown trees along the roadways and sidewalks to enhance lighting, is continuing during summer months.
- 71 methamphetamine labs have been investigated by KVET to date for 2009.

### **Public Services**

- Received over 250 calls from residents regarding tall grass concerns in June, with over 125 received in July. Weed Inspector sent out 188 notices. Our contractors mowed 186 properties, many of which had already been mowed once in June. Additionally, 124 properties were abated.
- Continue to investigate outsourcing burial operations. Coordinated 15 burials and one disinterment. Of the 15, 5 were full burials, 9 were cremations, and one was an FIA.
- Major Streets Projects - Concrete work on Lovell essentially complete. Cold milling and chipping were performed the week of July 27<sup>th</sup> with leveling the following week. American Reinvestment Recovery Act streets project is out for bid by Michigan Department of Transportation to be opened on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Transportation**

- Combined Paratransit Service Contract - With the approval of the City and the County, both the Metro Van and Care-A-Van contracts have been extended through the end of the year as the bid process continues. Due to a need to clarify the impact of federal regulations on the combined program, the bid opening was delayed again until August 7<sup>th</sup>. Staff recommendation's to award a single contract for the combined program will be prepared for City Commission action in the next several weeks. The target start up date remains October 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Metro County Connect - With input from various advisory groups; as well as, members of the KCTA, staff has selected a name for the new combined demand/response service. The new program will be called Metro County Connect and will include both the Metro Van ADA service; as well as, the countywide Care-A-Van demand/response service. Staff is in the process of making appropriate changes to all logos, literature, signage, and telephone numbers for the new program. Information regarding the new name and program will be sent out to all certified users of these two programs prior to implementation.
- Diesel Fuel - On July 31<sup>st</sup>, Metro Transit purchased 18,000 gallons of ultra-low sulfur B5 blend diesel fuel at a cost of \$1.82 per gallon. The average year-to-date price per gallon for 2009 is \$1.58. Metro Transit budgeted \$2.80 per gallon for diesel fuel in 2009.
- Project Updates:

The Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) is on track with the selection of a professional consulting firm by the review team for this program. The first element of the project will be rider on/off counts that will be tentatively conducted the week of October 5<sup>th</sup>. The expected completion date for this project has now been moved to January 2010.

The farebox replacement program is also moving forward as we have now received required documents from GFI Genfare, our sole source supplier, that are necessary for contract award by the City Commission. We anticipate bringing this agenda item forward at the first meeting in September.