

Memorandum

DATE: September 8, 2006
TO: Mayor & Council Members
FROM: Al Roder, City Administrator
RE: Friday Memo for the week of September 4 - 8, 2006

Here is a list of city activities for the week of September 4 - 8, 2006:

NOTE: Since there are no City races on the primary ballot, a special meeting to canvass votes is not needed on Wednesday, September 13.

City Clerk

- Staff attended the public accuracy test of voting equipment held at the Rice County Government Center on Thursday, September 7.
- Staff accompanied the health care judges to conduct absentee voting
- City Hall will be open Saturday, September 9 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. for absentee voting.
- Election equipment setup will take place on Monday, September 11
- The Primary Election is Tuesday, September 12.

Community Development

Building Inspections

- The hail damage in Northfield has been very severe. Inspections staff are very busy. It is expected that as many as 1000 to 1200 roofing, siding and window permits in the next 4 to 6 weeks will be issued.
- 158 roofing permits and approximately 100 siding permits have been issued in 10 days since the storm. Outside inspection services are being used to maintain service levels as a result of the storm.

Community Development

- Staff met with officials from Northfield Township regarding annexations issues and the need to find a workable solution to the Spring Creek Road construction issue.
- Staff met with a developer prospect exploring the potential of developing the outlot immediately south of the Arby's restaurant along south Highway 3. Issues of access to highway 3 and the need for improvements for street improvements to serve the larger areas were discussed.
- Progress on the Riverfront redevelopment project "the Crossing" was monitored. Construction of the initial 55 unit condominium is well underway and on schedule. Progress on the phase 1 office condominium is well underway and on schedule. Utilities for the phase 1 restaurant have been extended to the site but progress on building construction has not commenced as yet.

- Staff remains in frequent contact with representatives from Mendota Homes on the progress of this big project

Economic Development

- Staff is researching the State of Minnesota's BioZone program, and the possible participation in a joint application with other Dakota County communities. This information will be taken to the EDA and City Council in the near future.
- Staff is developing a draft TIF and Tax Abatement and accompanying scoring matrix. A previous draft was presented to the EDA - and their suggestions are being incorporated.
- EDA representatives and Staff had a meeting with the St. Olaf leadership to discuss their role in the implementation of the economic development plan.

Housing

- The HRA met to discuss past project finances (example: the Maple Hills project - total expenditures and total revenues), housing TIF district revenues, and the proposed FY07 budget. Finance department staff prepared summaries and was at the meeting to answer questions. There was a lot of good discussion, and thanks to the work of various HRA members and Finance Department Staff - the HRA has a much better handle of their fund balance information which will be useful when developing new housing initiatives.
- Staff participated in the review of Housing Manager position applications. Interviews will be held next week. The Housing Manger will devote 100% of their time to the HRA and the housing programs of the city.

Planning

- The Development Review Committee reviewed a site plan for Astral Technology at 1611 Riverview Lane, who is undertaking a 4,000 square foot expansion of their facilities.
- Staff completed an inspection of various signs around the city to verify if they are in compliance. Phone calls were made and letters sent to bring some signs into compliance with City Codes.
- City Planner met as part of the Steering Committee for the Greenway Corridor planning and discussed finalizing a draft corridor plan, and city-wide open houses to present the plan for comments.

Library

- Active “weeding” of the library collection continues on an ongoing basis. Weeding involves the fine art of culling materials from the library collection that are no longer current or no longer used. With fiction, it is more difficult to know what is “dated,” yet we need to make room on the shelf for new things.
- School started this week and the rhythm of life at the library changed immediately. Staff members Joan Ennis and Kathy Ness are planning visits with the faculty from each of the Northfield schools. Besides providing contact information to the teachers, Kathy and Joan will let the them know what library resources are particularly helpful for students and teachers.
- Regular children’s programming will begin again soon: lapsit story time for babies and their caregivers is held on Tuesday mornings (will begin on September 19). Preschool story times (for children ages 3-5) are held on Wednesday and Thursday mornings and a toddler story time (for children 18 months – 3 years) is held on Friday mornings, beginning Sept. 12. All programs are held at 10:00 a.m.
- Besides Loislaw (which as was mentioned in last week’s Friday memo and is provided by the Rice County Law Library), the Northfield Public Library has access to many other authoritative, accurate and user-friendly databases. Lawchek offers legal forms, Q & A, glossaries, tax forms and pre-drafted letters and allows patrons to locate an attorney in our area and to search U.S. Codes, U.S. Supreme Court Cases, and U.S. Federal Circuit Court Cases.

- Lawchek is provided to our patrons by SELCO, the regional library system of which Northfield is a member. To find these resources go to the city web page, choose the library and follow the links to online references and databases. The reference librarians can be very helpful in searching these databases and can provide search tips and strategies to new users who want to search for themselves. Future Friday memos will highlight other databases.

Police

Patrol Division:

Patrol Division Staff have been busy with preparations for DJJD. Captain Halverson has been coordinating the logistics of setting up barricades and posting streets no parking and working with the DJJD Committee. We are fortunate that Rice County Sheriff Dick Cook, Dakota County Sheriff Don Gudmundson and Faribault Police Chief Mike Lewis have committed members of their departments to help us out during the weekend. Police planning for the 2007 DJJD activities will commence one week after the end of the 2006 activities.

Criminal Investigations Information:

- Investigators reviewed and contributed to 36 new files.
- 9 cases were cleared by arrest
- 7 new felony complaints were signed this week
- Investigators logged 120 hours this week of investigation time
- 7 new burglaries were reported (last two weeks)
- 4 new theft from vehicles were reported

Gang /Drug Events:

- Officer Cordova executed 2 search warrants in Faribault that were gang related. Controlled substance and gang intelligence was recovered.

Exceptional Efforts:

- During the last few months, Northfield PD has been working with area law enforcement on a Methamphetamine, burglary, theft and forgery ring that is centered in our area. On 8/16/06, 2 search warrants were executed in Rice Co. and Northfield. Approximately \$60,000 in stolen property was recovered. Items include 2 trailers, a 4 wheeler and riding lawn mower. One person is in custody with more arrests anticipated. Assisting agencies include Rice Co. Sheriff's Office, Faribault PD, Bloomington PD, Dakota Co. Sheriff's Office, Goodhue Co. Sheriff's Office, LeSueur Co. Sheriff's Office, State Financial Crimes Task Force and South Central Drug Investigation Unit.

Other Information:

- Officer Josh Malecha started as a Northfield Police Officer this past Tuesday. Josh had been working summers with us as a temporary community service officer.
- Sergeant Ted Berg has resigned to return to his home community of Blaine. He will be working as a police officer with that department. A testing and selection process for his replacement has been started. We will be working with Elizabeth Wheeler, HR Director and the Civil Service Commission during the process.
- Chief Smith met with Heidi Hamilton and Joel Walinski to discuss 3rd Street parking issues.
- Chief Smith attended the Joseph Lee Haywood Banquet representing the police department.
- Chief Smith met with *Northfield News* reporters to discuss how to develop a family emergency plan.

Public Works

Wastewater

- The MPCA did the annual facility inspection. No violations were noted in the last year of operation. The inspector noted we need to increase our flow meter calibration schedule from once per year to twice per year.

- A company that markets thermal imaging of electrical components met with staff and demonstrated how they take infra-red photos of switch gear etc to isolate potential problem areas. The technology is being considered for part of the preventive maintenance program.
- A sludge pump failed on the weekend. The operator switched to another pump and repairs were made when more staff was available.
- The control unit for the belt press froze up during operation of the system and caused a significant mess. The unit was shut down, problem isolated (loose wire), and put back in service.

Water

- Staff replaced 3" meter at the Northfield Manor.
- Staff verified sewer trace wire conductivity from sewer main to property line in the Prairie View subdivision.
- Staff completed monthly bacteria sampling.
- Staff filled water main at new Rosewood Edition.
- Staff made repairs on telemetry system at the Hall Avenue tower.
- Staff completed 2,625 locates so far this year.
- Staff repaired one water main valve box top.
- Work on the Water Conservation Report and Standard Operating Procedures continues.
- The water pumped for the past week totaled 14,797,000, which equaled a daily average of 2,113,857. For the month of August 2006, we pumped 81,616,000 with a daily average of 2,632,774. This monthly total is approx. 9,300,000 gallons more water than in August of 2005.

Streets/Parks

- Staff continued prepping for the DJJD event of this weekend: City mowing, barricades, installation of signs, bleacher installation, street sweeping, etc. Staff will be working through the weekend to prep and cleanup in advance of coming day events.

Facilities

- Welcome to Bernie Shakal, Facility Supervisor. His first day of employment was Tuesday September 5, 2006. Bernie brings with him many years of facility maintenance with the University of Mn in Waseca. Again welcome Bernie.
- Staff completed review of storm damages to City facilities and buildings. Initial repairs to vehicles and skylights are in process. Full roof replacements of the Library, NCRC, and Water buildings are needed, a bid process and completing work on these roofs will be a priority. Other buildings, such as warming houses and park pavilion roofs will also need replacements, work on these will proceed on a "as time permits basis".
- Annual pool cleaning work was completed at the NCRC Wellness Center. This included cleaning and grout repair of pool area and locker rooms and replacement of locker room carpeting. Pool reopened on Thursday September 7, 2006 as per schedule.
- Installation of drop ceilings and retro fitting of existing lighting began Wednesday September 6, 2006 at City Hall. Ceiling work is being completed by Twin City Acoustics and lighting work is being completed by Budget Lighting Inc. Most work will be completed throughout the evenings, scope of work includes Finance area, Community Development, Human Resources, and Admin Area.

Engineering

- On Tuesday night Heidi Hamilton and Brian O'Connell attended the Northfield Township Board meeting to discuss the Spring Creek Road/Hall Avenue project. There are a number of issues related to this project that the City Council will be asked to provide direction on at the October 9 work session. Due to the increasing volume of traffic on this road, a project to pave the road and add curb, gutter and sidewalk has been included in the CIP for several years (originally planned for 2005 with the development of Hills of Spring Creek 4th Addition) but delayed due to financial and workload constraints. Between CSAH 1 and a point 580 feet south of Woodley, the road is located ½ in the city and ½ in the township except for the southern 1400 feet that is entirely within the Township. Since the city cannot assess properties located outside of city limits, staff inquired with the Township about their willingness to pay for or assess a portion of the cost of the project, or to annex in land into the city that is adjacent to the road so that the city can assess the properties. Discussions with the Township generally indicate that the Township is not interested in assessing these property owners nor is annexation likely to be of interest to the majority of the property owners until development of the parcels is imminent. The City Council will need to determine how much of the road should be constructed (Woodley to Jefferson Parkway or all the way to CSAH 1?), when construction should occur, and whether the full project with curb, gutter, sidewalk, etc. should be built or simply an improved rural section (with shoulders and ditches). The city can proceed with road construction at its cost and recover assessments at a later date when property is annexed into the city, but recovery of costs would then be based on growth rates in this area of the city. Staff will present information and options for Council consideration at the October 9 work session.

- Staff has been researching issues related to the potential construction of a road connecting Cannon Road and TH 3 located mid-way between Honey Locust Drive and CSAH 1. The question arose as part of a pre-application meeting with a developer interested in development of the site south of Arby's. MnDOT has indicated a willingness to permit access onto Highway 3 at this location if it is a public street and has expressed general concern about planning for growing traffic in the area. Staff believes an access onto TH3 is very important to the site design, and is investigating the location of wetlands in the area to determine the feasibility of a public road between TH3 and Cannon Road. If wetlands make a road connection infeasible, MnDOT may be willing to allow a private access into the site. Since the west portion of a road connection would be located in Dundas, the Dundas City Engineer has been included in the discussion and indicates support of the road if it is feasible and echoes the general concern about planning for growing traffic in the area.

Resource and Park Planning

- **ArtsPlan06:** Planning Committee meeting will reconvene at a meeting on Wednesday, September 13th; refine and prioritize the 9 identified Strategic Initiatives; Staff met with Northfield News to provide overview for newspaper story on the ArtsPlan06 initiative.

- **Greenway Corridor Action Plan:** (Greater Northfield Area Greenway Corridor System). Steering Committee (3 staff, 3 commission members) met on Thursday, September 7th to review project and discuss code, ordinance and additional 'tools' required to implement the project, as well as additional communication pieces required.

- **Way Park:** Staff continues to monitor and receive public comment(s); see Public Works/Engineering for additional discussion

- **Downtown Streetscape Projects:**
 - *Parking Lot Edge Treatments* – Staff will prepare an Edge Administration Program and related proposal for review at City Council work session on September 18th.

- *Signage, Identity and Wayfinding* – Neuger representative and Staff met with John Slack of DSU (September 6th) to review previous signage and identity programs and to coordinate the current planning effort.
- *5th Street and Water Street Gateway Project* – no work this week.
- *Riverwalk Gateways* – Staff is negotiating install pricing, as well as working with the related building owners (Reese, Ophaug, Bazan, Butler) and City Attorney to craft easement and installation agreements.
- *Library Corner* – no work this week; final lettering for the Library sign and related lighting fixtures will be installed after DJJD.

cc: Department Managers