

Memorandum

DATE: October 6, 2006  
TO: Mayor & Council Members  
FROM: Al Roder, City Administrator  
RE: Friday Memo for the week of October 2-6, 2006

Here is a list of city activities for the week of October 2-6, 2006:

**Administration**

- The NLC conference in Reno is rapidly approaching. We need to start booking flights for those who are registered. Kathy Fredrickson will be taking care of those details this year. Please contact her to let her know if you have a special request. For example, if you have a specific day you want to fly out on, etc. The opening ceremony is on Wednesday evening, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. For those council members not registered, there is still time! Let Kathy know if you want to go so she can take care of getting you registered.
- A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Northfield Dog Park is scheduled for next Thursday, October 12 at 4:30 pm. Please see the attached flyer for details.
- Please see the attached Regional Meeting information from the League of Minnesota Cities. Please let staff know if you would like to attend one of these meetings.

**City Clerk**

**Transit**

- Deb Little attended the 2006 Minnesota/Wisconsin Public Transit Conference in LaCrosse October 2 – 4, 2006. There were many educational and general sessions that provided information on a wide variety of topics including, regulation and law changes, customer service in the public sector, and innovative marketing and revenue generating ideas to name a few. The conference provides a good opportunity to learn from each other and network.

**Motor Vehicle**

- In response to a question that was raised by the council, procedures for obtaining a disability permit are attached. Discussions with staff on how to better serve our customers have produced some great ideas. Additional one page “how-to” sheets are being created that will address frequently asked questions that customers may have regarding some of the more complicated transactions that involve the Department of Motor Vehicles. These sheets will be given to customers that may not have all the required documentation for or questions about complicated transactions. While there is no latitude in dealing with the established state procedures and laws, we will continue to look for ways to help our customers more easily navigate the process.

- Monday, October 2, was a record day for total fees collected and 187 transactions processed. To-date, Motor Vehicle has completed 22,315 transactions compared to 19,639 during this same time period in 2005.

## **Library**

- Sunday open hours resumed at the library this week. The library is open Sundays from 1-5 from October – April.
- The “Adventure Girls” book group resumed. Adventure Girls is led by St. Olaf students who are part of the “Story House” – one of several special-project honor houses at St. Olaf. Adventure Girls is a discussion group for girls 9 and up. Each girl is able to receive her own copy of the book thanks to a grant from the Healthy Community Initiative.
- Launch date for the new Carleton/NPL Chess Club is October 24. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders who are interested in learning and playing chess will gather in the library’s meeting room from 4 to 5 on Wednesday afternoons. It’s free but space is limited. Sign up via email at [tmckinley1@charter.net](mailto:tmckinley1@charter.net) or call the library at 645-6606.
- The SELCO (Southeastern Libraries Cooperating) Advisory Committee met on October 3. The Advisory Committee advises the SELCO board and executive director on policy and operational issues facing SELCO. SELCO is undertaking the development of a new technology plan AND a study of its operational structure.
- Since Booker is in very tough shape right now, the bookmobile will be off the road for the next couple of weeks until we can get the newer bus here. The Friends of the Library were able to provide more than \$20,000 towards the newer bus. The Gifts Committee of the Library Board has proposed using \$4500 from the general library gifts fund for the bus with an additional \$5000 loan from the gifts fund to complete the purchase.

## **Community Development**

### **Building Inspections**

Permit and inspection volume remains very high. To date 1725 roofing permits have been issued since the hail storm. On average the staff is conducting between 60 and 70 inspections per day and the number of permits issued daily is now averaging 73 permits. This workload is consuming significant amounts of staff time of all Department staff.

The inspections staff has been working 10 to 12 hour days for several weeks. Additional outside inspection support will be called in to relieve city staff of this heavy non-stop inspection and permit load.

### **Community Development**

Staff met with Greenvale Township Board to obtain their acknowledgement of the application that the City of a Northfield will submit for the Bioscience Zone designation. Greenvale has provided their acknowledgment of the application of the City.

A letter has been sent to every property near the city of Northfield in Northfield Township asking about their interest in annexation after January 1 of 2007. This letter has been sent to assist in determining how much land area and where property owners maybe interested in annexation. This will help the City determine how to administer the annexation agreement in Northfield Township and also give the city an awareness of annexation related to infrastructure extension needs.

### **Economic Development**

Staff attended the 11th Annual DEED Development Conference in St. Paul.

Staff is working with EDA representatives and Brandon Sun, a Carleton College Student / College Board of Business Consultant, on preparing a Northfield presentation that will be used to market Northfield to local, regional, and national developers.

Staff met with the Lynda Grady, Executive Director of the Northfield Enterprise Center (NEC) to continue discussions on the NEC's role in helping with the economic development plan implementation. These meetings will be occurring with all partner organizations.

### **Housing**

Staff met with representatives from ReNew Northfield and Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. to discuss the grant that has been awarded to GMHA from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation. The grant is for planning dollars to help plan a model neighborhood that incorporates safe and affordable housing with "healthy initiative" components. The HRA will discuss their role in the project at their October meeting.

Staff attended the CDBG annual training conducted by Dakota County CDA. CDBG applications for FY07 funds are due on December 15, 2006. Similar to past years, communities are limited as to the percentage of dollars (40-percent) that can be used for "public service" activities. In addition, new performance measures and monitoring controls will be implemented starting immediately. (Currently, the City of Northfield has \$187,000 in CDBG funds.)

Staff met with Dakota County CDA officials to discuss the possibility of reallocating some of the CDBG funds to the County's homeowner rehab program. This would allow low and moderate income families the ability to access rehab funds to help offset repair costs associated with the hailstorm. Homeowner rehab is an eligible use of CDBG funds, and CDA will be working with Staff to transfer dollars.

### **Planning**

Prepared Zoning Board of Appeals/Planning Commission packets for next Tuesday's meeting. The Zoning Board will be reviewing a variance request, and the Commission will continue their review of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff also worked on finalizing a draft Public Property Encroachment ordinance that the Council will be discussing at next Monday's work session.

Staff attended the presentation on bicycle planning with Steve Clark on Thursday. Also, Staff met with the two HPC grant recipients and a representative from the Dakota County Community Development Agency to discuss the next steps in the grant disbursement process for the exterior remodeling projects in the downtown area.

### **Police**

- An attempted abduction of two young girls has kept everyone working extra hours to attempt to locate the suspect vehicle and individual. Several reliable tips have come in and investigators have been following up and are making this case a priority.
- Two preschool groups got a tour of the Police Department this past week. Approximately 50 youngsters got to see the inside of the department and vehicles and meet some real live police officers. Thanks to CSO Kris Wilson and members of the Fire Department for conducting the tours.
- Resolution was reached with picketers of a local company to make sure all parties were following the rules and still maintaining the integrity of the right of self-expression and public safety.
- Chief Smith attended a meeting to coordinate the latest Safe & Sober waves of increased police presence in the following two areas. Wave 1 will be aimed at Child Seat/Seatbelt compliance and Wave 2 will be focused on DWI. The Police Department receives grant money to pay for the officer's overtime costs associated with these areas of concentration.
- Oct. 1 was the start date of the Rice County ZAP program, targeting the underage accessibility of alcohol. With the colleges back in session, it has sparked dialogues between the students and colleges and the police department. Chief Smith has scheduled a meeting with both Carleton and St Olaf Deans of Students next week to discuss these issues.
- Officer Scott Johnson has been working with the mobile data users' group, examining new software under consideration for the consolidated dispatch center. Initial information indicates that there may be a cost involved to all the member agencies. This would be an unbudgeted item for 2006 and 2007 budgets and could run as high as \$20,000 per entity.

- Chief Smith attended a memorial service in Faribault commemorating the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Officer Kapernick who was shot and killed by a guard who was keeping watch over the captured members of the James/Younger Gang who had earlier tried to rob the Northfield First National Bank.

Criminal Investigations Information:

- Investigators reviewed and contributed to 42 new files.
- 12 cases were cleared by arrest
- 14 new felony complaints were signed this month
- 4 new burglaries were reported
- 6 new theft from vehicles were reported
- 1 attempted child abduction

Gang /Drug Events:

- Officer Cordova gave 2 gang presentations, one in Northfield and one in Owatonna.

Other Information:

- Officer Jody Spinner resigned to accept a position as an investigator with the State of MN Insurance Fraud division. Officer Spinner had most recently been serving as the Community Resources liaison and had played a major role in the CALEA accreditation process.
- Chief Smith attended a meeting called by the Rice County Court Administration Office regarding the complaints by Rice Co. law enforcement departments on the Court's scheduling process and possible solutions to mitigate some of the havoc and stress it causes with officer schedules, overtime and personal time. Officers may have to appear in court day after day waiting to testify. What was learned is that the situation is not likely to get better given the exponential increase of court cases and no prospect of additional judges being assigned to the district. If no resolution is accomplished, the various law enforcement agencies in Rice County will experience substantial increases in overtime for court and substantial strain on staff to meet mandatory court appearances, work schedules and still find time to spend with their families and rest.

**Public Works**

**Wastewater Primary Clarifier Switch Successfully Completed**

The main project for this week was switching primary clarifiers. There are two primary clarifier systems at the facility. Only one system is in service at a time and they are switched every 3 months or so. Each system has three rapid mix tanks, a flocculation tank, and a settling tank. About 120 gallons of ferric chloride and about 1.5 gallons of a polymer are flow proportionally added in the mixing tanks to the 2 million+ gallons of influent flow and 900,000 gallons return flow generated by the backwash from the biological filters every day. The ferric chloride is used for phosphorus removal and the polymer is a coagulant that forms larger floc particles to aid settling. After mixing the flow enters the floc tank where mixing is slowed and floc is allowed to form. From here the flow enters the settling tank. This is a large tank with inclined plates (60 degree angle) across it every 4 inches. The plates greatly reduce the short-circuiting of the flow thru the tank which improves settling. Sludge collects on these plates and slides to the bottom where it is removed for processing.

After about 3 months of operation sludge tends to gather in places where it should not be and the system begins to lose efficiency. Flow and chemical feeds are switched to the other clarifier system and the tanks (total volume of about 180,000 gallons) are pumped out. The tanks and 20,000 sq ft of inclined plates in the settling area are thoroughly cleaned with fire hoses. All systems are inspected and maintenance performed in preparation for next time. The process takes two operators about 2 days to complete.

**Water Emergency & Conservation Plan Submitted to DNR**

The Water Division recently completed and updated the DNR's Water Emergency and Conservation Plan. All public water suppliers in Minnesota that serve more than 1,000 people must have this plan and have it approved by

the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This plan must be updated and submitted to the DNR every 10 years. After DNR review of the plan it will be brought to the City Council for approval.

The first plans were required to be completed by January 1, 1996 with the updated plans due in 2006. Bolton and Menk, Inc. prepared Northfield's original Water Emergency and Conservation Plan in October of 1995. Water Division staff completed the 2006 updated version.

The plan is divided into 3 basic sections: Water Supply System Description and Evaluation, Emergency Planning and Response Procedures and the Water Conservation Plan. Some of the data incorporated into this plan was gathered from the Comprehensive Water Plan, the Wellhead Protection Plan, the Emergency Response Plan, and Water Division Year-end Reports.

Implementing a DNR approved water emergency and conservation plan satisfies contingency plan requirements for wellhead and source water protection plans and State Drinking Water Revolving Fund application requirements.

To help in the conservation of water, the Water division has reduced the hydrant-flushing program down to once a year, saving approximately 3 million gallons of water each year. A new addition regarding the installation of rainfall sensors on sprinkler systems will be added to the Water Ordinance/Code, which is in the process of being updated.

Articles related to water conservation have been submitted to the Northfield News in the past. The News began charging for this type of article, so articles have not been submitted recently. We plan to begin including water conservation articles in the City Commons in the future.

Since the first plan was completed in 1995, the Water Division completed many of the recommendations of the plan, including a water leak survey, an educational video presented on NTV cable, purchased and installed additional backup generators for wells 3, 4 & 5, interconnected the water system with Dundas and investigated software for doing water audits.

### **Highway 3 Construction**

We have continued to request construction schedule updates from MnDOT but have been unsuccessful in getting any detailed information. The latest schedule information remains that the railroad will install their signals at the end of October, at which time the contractor can finish the road construction work in the area of the rail crossing, following which the Highway 19 detour can be removed. All city utility work is complete.

### **New IT Director Office in City Hall**

Construction on the 2nd floor of city hall is underway to prepare an office for the IT Director and associated IT infrastructure. Public works staff is completing this work.

### **Resource and Park Planning**

- **ArtsPlan06:** City Council work session with ArtsPlan Committee is scheduled for Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup>; attended DEED (Economic Development) Conference in St. Paul with Dixon Bond – discussion was on the 'Rise and Evolution of the Creative Class' by sociologist Richard Florida, as a powerful economic driver and determinant of place...applicable to ArtsPlan06 initiative
- **Greenway Corridor Action Plan:** (Greater Northfield Area Greenway Corridor System). Public Open House and Forum is scheduled for Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup> in the Council Chambers from 5:00 – 7:00PM. Staff to communicate and meet with Township representatives, as well as Dundas officials.
- **Misc:**
  - Staff organized and attended Steve Clark discussion on biking and pedestrian transit; City Staff and elected officials were in attendance.

- **Downtown Streetscape Projects:**

Downtown Streetscape Task Force meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss 5<sup>th</sup> and Water Gateway project and Signage, Wayfinding, Identity campaign.

- *Parking Lot Edge Treatments* – City Attorney is refining agreement; Staff will proceed with edge treatment on the West Side – Highway #3 parking lot.
- *Riverwalk Gateways* – work at project sites could happen as early as the week of October 16<sup>th</sup>, pending agreements and notifications.
- *Bike Racks* – Staff has recommended four additional bike rack locations on the West Side; Division Street bike racks have been installed.

cc: Department Managers