



STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

Week of April 22, 2007

*This report includes a schedule of next week's meetings for elected officials. We cannot assure that all meetings are noted, since not all meetings are coordinated through City offices. This calendar is **not** an official posting.*

MEETING CALENDAR

<u>Sunday, April 22</u>	12:30 pm	Help Keep Linn County Beautiful, (<i>Vets Memorial Stadium</i>)
<u>Monday, April 23</u>	6:00 pm	Taylor Area Neighborhood Association, (<i>Taylor Elementary School cafeteria, 720-7th Ave, SW</i>)
<u>Tuesday, April 24</u>	4:00 pm	Quillback Bridge dedication, (<i>Indian Creek Nature Center</i>)
<u>Wednesday, April 25</u>	10:00 am	Christi Vilsask presentation, (<i>Ghosh Technology Learning Center, Cedar Rapids Library</i>)
	6:00 pm	Council Meeting, (<i>Council Chambers</i>)
<u>Thursday, April 26</u>	Noon	Sexual Harassment Brown Bag, (<i>Council Chambers</i>)
	6:00 pm	Cedar Hills Neighborhood Association, (<i>St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 4700 Johnson Avenue NW</i>)
	7:00 pm	Northwest Neighbors meeting, (<i>Time Check Recreation Center, 1131 5th Street NW</i>)
<u>Friday, April 27</u>	10:30 am	Arbor Day Celebration program, (<i>Cherokee Trail Park</i>)
<u>Saturday, April 28</u>	9:00 am	Riverfront Clean-up day, (<i>Parking lot across 12th Avenue from the African American Museum</i>)

CITY MANAGER - The next *Blueprint for the Future Open Houses* are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, May 8	5:00pm – 7:00pm	Washington High School cafeteria
Thursday, May 10	11:00am – 1:00pm	US Cellular Center
Saturday, May 12	10:00am – 12:00pm	Jefferson High School cafeteria

The next "Enhance Our Neighborhoods" Open Houses will be held

Thursday, May 17	5:00 – 7:00pm	Time Check Recreation Center, 1131-5 th Street NW
Saturday, May 19	10:00am – 12:00pm	Horizons, 819-5 th Street SE

FIRE - The Linn County E-911 Executive Committee met April 17 at the Cedar Rapids Joint Communications Agency. The Committee approved upgrading the mobile data message switch for the E-911 Mobile Data system as well as other regular business. The members were given a tour of the Agency to see the new furniture and equipment, especially the new E-911 telephone equipment the Board recently purchased for the City.

Chief English and Captain Dall met with personnel from the Water Pollution Control plant about assisting them with assessing a confined space that they need to work in. Chief English and Captain Dall met with ADM personnel to plan for a HazMat drill next month. Captain Brown compiled the data related to the extrication tools evaluation and is distributing that to the committee members. Chief English was elected Vice Chair of the Linn County Emergency Management Commission. Captain Brown is evaluating some new foam application equipment. Captain Brockhohn completed his investigation of the Tan Tara apartment fire that displaced twelve families. The cause of the fire was a young person playing with matches.

Effective immediately, supervision of Building Inspections, Zoning and Housing Inspections will be transferred to the Public Safety Team. The Public Safety Team Leader is Fire Chief Steve Havlik. Chief Havlik has designated Assistant Chief Gary Jensen for overall supervision of the Inspection/Enforcement functions. Fire Marshall James Thatcher will provide day-to-day supervision of the unit. A recommendation to make this change part of the permanent structure will be made as part of the "Blueprint for the Future" reorganization which will be finalized prior to July 1.

ENGINEERING - A kickoff meeting for the Penford Products request to extend the truck staging lease for the Sinclair property is scheduled for 3:00 P.M on Thursday, April 26, 2007 in the Traffic Engineering Training Room. Representatives from Penford Products, Chamber of Commerce, Linn County, Traffic Engineering, Engineering, Development, Recreation, Parks, Police, and Fire Departments have been invited to the meeting.

Regarding the Swiss Valley Farms/Summer Street Vacation Request - City staff has contacted a local qualified traffic engineer and requested a proposal to complete a traffic study within 30 days to provide options for mitigating the impacts to businesses if Summer Street is vacated. The cost of the study is expected to be approximately \$10,000 and does not include the cost of obtaining traffic counts to facilitate a more detailed analysis of signalized intersections. Staff is reviewing the scope of services to be provided and upon approval the consultant will be authorized to begin the study work. The study will include obtaining input from the local businesses located north of F Avenue NW and Swiss Valley Farms. Options providing the best potential for improving vehicular access to the businesses north of F Avenue NW will be identified and presented with the consultant's recommendations. Upon completion, a report will be presented to the businesses and City Council for consideration in connection with the pending vacation request decision. Study results should be presented by the end of May.

FIVE SEASONS TRANSPORTATION - Staff entertained some South Korean Nationals that were viewing the onboard real time video cameras and internet capability on three buses and on three of the bus routes.

Thursday, April 19, Five Seasons Transportation and Parking added two more pre-driven low floor buses into its fleet. Eighteen buses have been replaced and three more will be delivered which the department has grant funding for. There are two additional grants pending to purchase two more buses.

FST has received two grants for the construction of the new Intermodal Transportation Facility totaling \$765,000.00. The facility has been on the drawing board for approximately thirteen years.

FORESTRY - The spring street tree replanting program has started and should be completed in May. Some trees planted as part of the spring program are only dug during that time period by the nursery industry (including River Birch, London Plane Tree, and Swamp White Oak). Other trees being planted to diversify the tree population include Hedge Maple, Serviceberry, Tulip Tree, Redspire Pear, and Tree Lilac. Goldenrain Tree and Yellowwood are being planted experimentally to see how well they perform for the intended use in this area. A \$20,000 grant from MidAmerican Energy Company will be used to help fund the street, park and golf tree replanting program. This is the fifth consecutive year MidAmerican has provided funding to Cedar Rapids, which means they have committed a total of \$90,000 to the community during that time.

GOLF - Golf Trac software updates are now complete at all golf courses. The tee time reservation system is ready for golfer patronage. Tee times can be reserved by phone or by the web from our City golf department website. Tee time reservations will be available starting April 24th for tee times on May 4th. The booking policy for tee times is 10 days in advance. Golfers will need to provide a credit card to make a tee time reservation and will be charged a nominal fee for any "no shows" on tee times. Golfers using the reservation system will be granted amnesty during the month of May to adjust to the new system without any fees being charged. Fees for "no shows" will begin on June 1st reservations.

Drain tiles have been installed at the tee area of the Gardner driving range and signs have been posted to make the public aware of fees being charged for range balls as of May 1st.

Group golf lessons begin Saturday, May 5th at Twin Pines golf course. The first series is May 5, 8, and 9th with a second session being offered beginning June 2nd.

LIBRARY - The Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library & the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation have both pledged financial support for the downtown Farmer's Market that will run five Saturdays this summer; June 2, July 7, Aug. 4, Sept. 1, and Oct. 6. They are doing this as a way of promoting both the Library and its support groups in a very visible, cost-effective way. Among other things, this support will entitle them to a banner and a booth near the main stage. The library will help provide staffing and programs for these events.

ISAIC hosted a display table this week at the Iowa School Nurse conference, in an effort to attract a new audience to use the videos, DVDs, curricula, books and pamphlets.

PARKS – With the parks opening Saturday, April 21, pavilions will be available for rent and use, the Bever Park Children’s Zoo and Shucknecht Water Fowl exhibit will officially open and all restrooms will be open. The light switch mechanism at the skate park in Riverside Park has been again repaired and will be ready to use on Friday, April 20th.

Saturday, April 14th a group of Geocachers picked up the trash on both sides of the I-380 along the outside fence from 3rd Street SW to Wilson Avenue. The distance cleaned would be equal approximately 40 blocks. Thirty five volunteers participated and amassed about 50 bags of trash which were collected Monday by the Park crews.

Also on Sunday April 15th, the mountain bike enthusiasts of LAMBA did a volunteer trash and debris pick up at Beverly Park SW. A large pile of rubbish was collected by the 42 volunteers.

The Cedar River Trail bridge at the west end of Cedar Lake NE was vandalized by fire Sunday night April 15th. The fire was set in the middle of the bridge and burned through a portion of three wooden planks. Park crews placed a ¼ inch steel plate over the affected area Monday morning in order to keep the trail open. The three planks will be replaced later in the season when there is time to dismantle the bridge edges and replace the burned bridge planks.

Crews will be putting the boat and pontoon slips into the EEE side of the Ellis Boat Harbor this week.

POLICE - New qualification standards have been established by the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) for firearms. After several meetings involving various agencies in the state, these standards are being implemented to start this spring in the CRPD basic skills training. The qualifications will be for pistol, shotgun, and rifles. Sgt. Cerruto was instrumental in the development of the revised standards.

The CRPD activities from 4/8-14/07 include 277 arrests, 2,828 calls for service, 596 reports taken, 32 warrants served, 15 traffic crashes investigated, 23 hit and runs reported, 16 OWI arrests, 46 vehicles towed, 457 citations issued, and 187 warnings issued.

There were 2 shootings in the City last week. One was a shooting in front of Legends Bar on 2nd St SE. A subject was arrested after leaving the scene. The following evening a report of gunshots was received in the 800 block of Camburn Ct. SE. There were no injuries and damage was done to the siding on a house in that area. Two days later two people were charged with multiple counts in reference to the incident in the 500 block of Cobban Ct. SE regarding vicious dogs. After a lengthy investigation by Police and Animal Control personnel, the case was brought to a conclusion. The animals involved were seized by Animal Control.

Crime Prevention activities for the week included 24 classroom presentations, four Community presentations, six tours of the PD, sixteen meetings attended, five media contacts, and eight special presentations with 388 attendees.

Officer Schmitz has been working with the science department at Kennedy High School presenting a program with the physics department. It involves a week long hands-on activities and lectures on the basics of collision reconstruction. Students gain insight into practical application of concepts and discussion of destructive driving habits that lead to serious collisions and vulnerabilities behind the wheel. The officer and teachers have worked together to develop this program that supports their common goals. About 30 students participate in this program each time it is delivered. So far about 120, 17 and 18 year old students have gone through the program. The next session is being scheduled for the end of April or early May.

RECREATION – Council Member Brian Fagan will speak on "Riverfront Development, Improvements, and Neighborhood Associations" during the Northwest Neighbors Meeting at Time Check Recreation Center on Thursday, April 26 at 7:00 PM. The community is encouraged to attend.

STREETS

STREET CLOSURES

LOCATION	RESTRICTION	ACTIVITY
Alley 2 nd & 3 rd Ave. SE between 16 th & 17 th St.	Closed	Pavement Void
12 th Ave. SW @ 16 th St.	1 – EB Lane Closed	Street Repairs
32 nd St. NE between Mound Farm & Oakland Rd.	1 – EB Lane Closed	Drain Tile
Zika Ave. NW between. 20 th & 26 th St.	Closed During Work	Street Repairs
Alley 1 st & 2 nd Ave. SE between. 1 st & 2 nd St.	Closed	Steam Leak
300 block of 30 th St. SE	1 – NB Lane Closed	Replace Hydrant
34 th St. @ Bel Air Dr. SE	1 – NB Lane Closed	Street Repairs
1 st Ave. @ 34 th St. NE	1 – WB Lane Closed	Storm Sewer
Linden Dr. SE @ Crescent St.	1 – WB Lane Closed	Water Main

1900 block of Ellis Blvd. NW	Closed	Storm Sewer
Council St. NE @ Blairs Ferry Rd.	1 – SB Lane Closed	Water Service
1262 35 th St. NE	1 – WB Lane Closed	Water Main
1550 5 th Ave. SE	1 – EB Lane Closed	Water Leak
5100 ‘E’ Ave. NW	1 – EB Lane Closed	Street Repairs
1943 Blairs Ferry Rd. NE	1 – EB Lane Closed	Street Repairs
‘J’ Ave. NE from 17 th St. to Elmhurst Dr.	1 – EB Lane Closed	Manhole Repair

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK GROUP – The following are examples of questions/suggestions generated recently by several employees. The entire Q & A will be available on the intranet under City Manager and city-wide e-mail.

Can the City implement a city-wide program whereby each employee would be required to take a furlough of one or two weeks of unpaid leave during the budget year? This program would minimize the impact of employees losing their jobs.

This is an option that can be evaluated on a department by department basis. It is not expected that this will produce savings sufficient to overcome the need for permanent changes. The City Manager believes this would be a short-term fix to a long-term financial problem. The City needs to curtail its spending in order to live within available revenues over the long run. It is our plan to balance the budget by becoming more efficient and reducing services. Being allowed to take unpaid leave shows citizens of Cedar Rapids we do not have enough work to keep us busy.

Can the City eliminate salary increases affecting all employees to avoid layoffs?

The City and Unions negotiate on a regular basis and most unions will not likely (and understandably) agree to eliminate pay increases in the contract. The City Manager also believes that paying employees a competitive wage keeps good employees employed with the City organization. If pay cuts were implemented, good employees would look for work elsewhere. Again, eliminating salary increases is a short-term fix to a long-term problem.

Can the City offer an incentive program to encourage retirement?

While it sounds like a good idea to encourage employees to voluntarily leave employment, the experience of other cities is that this often results in the loss of highly trained and more effective employees because these employees have the most “market value” for other employment. It is for that reason that the City Manager has asked all city employees to give their suggestions to make the city more efficient. If a position within the city is not justified, it should be eliminated.

What can be done to get supervisors to communicate information to front-line employees?

Supervisors and department directors should be actively seeking input from department employees regarding how to be more effective and efficient. Organizations that accept that people can disagree (in an agreeable manner) and discuss how to improve ideas are productive and healthy. Disagreements often result in a more thorough study of options and better decisions and direction. If you are unwilling to participate in organization conflict, you are less likely to accomplish the things that are important to you at work. If you have not yet had a staff meeting, employees should be asking to have a department meeting to discuss ideas and information. Employees can speak directly with supervisors, department directors or team leaders. Employees can also contact someone from the Employee Feedback Group to work with in opening the doors of communication.

Charlie Visek, Traffic Eng.	286-5176, 551-1780	charliev@cedar-rapids.org
June Schumacher, Recreation	286-5731, 981-0447	junes@cedar-rapids.org
Brian McLeod, Streets	286-5826, 350-7922	b.mcleod@cedar-rapids.org
Jon Neuwohner, WPC	286-5286, ext. 4619	jonn@cedar-rapids.org
Norma Hanse, Police	286-5454, ext. 6304	n.hanse@cedar-rapids.org
Matt Woerner, Fire	286-5200, 721-4599	m.woerner@cedar-rapids.org
Kim Greene, City Manager	286-5083, 310-8820	ki.greene@cedar-rapids.org
Deb Stalkfleet	286-5053, 573-5826	d.stalkfleet@cedar-rapids.org

I made a suggestion to my supervisor but received no response.

The department directors and supervisors should be keeping the employees abreast of the progress of their suggestions as it is more important than providing you with a quick answer. If you haven’t heard anything about your idea after 20 work days,

either talk to your supervisor or contact one of the above Employee Feedback Group members for assistance. It could be as simple as the director needing more information about your idea.

Can a financial reward or time off be awarded when a suggestion has been implemented?

The PEER program currently contains a provision for points to be awarded based on process improvements. The HR Department will continue to research incentive programs and hopes to implement something new and more substantial in FY08.