



## STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

### WEEK OF JULY 15, 2007

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#### **BUILDING & HOUSING**

- ✓ The City has received 170 housing maintenance issues/dilapidated home concerns through July 10<sup>th</sup>. Thirty-nine (25 percent) have been successfully completed within the first three months of the initiative. Many of the homes and/or garages have been demolished, restored, or had violations corrected.

The resolution process is often lengthy with many of the properties. For example, a recent dilapidated home complaint involved a home that sustained significant fire damage which involved an investigation by authorities and insurance investigators. As part of the settlement, the house was sold on contract after the fire. The home had joint ownership, so there were multiple legal interests. Financial institutions had liens on the property. All of these issues must be addressed before the property can be demolished. If there is resistance from the owners, then legal proceeding can further delay the process. The bottom line is the good news - the issues are being addressed.

The heightened awareness that the City is addressing such issues is evident with the number of wrecking permits recently taken out - a nearly 25% projected increase - as property owners in our community are cleaning up their properties voluntarily.

#### **CITY MANAGER**

- ✓ The City is working with Labor Leaders to organize a Labor Management Committee with the purpose to provide a forum for discussing work issues that are outside of the contract. At their first meeting this week, the group brainstormed an initial list of potential topics for discussion such as improving communication, safety, and cooperation between departments. Conni Huber has been designated as the primary contact for this committee and the unions will designate a primary contact for Labor. The City is looking forward to working together with Labor to make this committee a valuable tool for sharing ideas and resolving concerns.

#### **DEVELOPMENT**

- ✓ The Linn County Regional Planning Commission in cooperation with the City of Cedar Rapids is hosting a public information meeting for the 29<sup>th</sup> Street NE project from Interstate 380 to Oakland Road NE that is being considered. The meeting will be an "open house" format from 4:30 - 6:00 on July 19<sup>th</sup> in Council Chambers. The public will have the opportunity to view project data and issues, redevelopment improvements, and speak with the LCRPC staff and design representatives.
- ✓ The residential element of the Maxfield Research downtown market analysis has been completed and is available. The residential analysis shows a strong demand for downtown living with about 1,300 new units over the next 12 years. The report identifies a need for about 300 new units within the next 3 years and will be the basis for an RFQ that will be distributed later this month. The remaining Maxfield Research elements for commercial & office demand will be received next week with the final element (near downtown residential neighborhood) due by June 27. This information will be a key factor in implementing the JLG Vision CR report.
- ✓ Three trail projects were submitted to the IDOT for State Recreational Trails Program funds. They were the Dry Creek Trail, the Kirkwood Trail, and phase 3 of the CEMAR Trail.
- ✓ The Linn County Regional Planning Commission approved the FY08 – FY11 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which programs federal funds in the amount of approximately \$16.6 million for road projects and approximately \$1.4 million for trail projects.

#### **FACILITIES**

- ✓ **Sinclair Property update** - Bimm Ridder, one of the tenants, has requested to lease an additional 5,000 square feet of space, bringing the total amount of space they lease to over 25,000 square feet. Work continues to reroute water and gas lines around a deteriorated structure on site and should be completed by the end of the month. Major roof repairs are expected to begin shortly on Building 22 and 52 of the Sinclair property.

## **FIRE**

- ✓ Sunday evening there was a small arson fire in the old Holiday Inn structure on Williams Boulevard SW. The building is in the process of being torn down. The demolition is taking longer than the owner originally anticipated. There were unexpected delays with asbestos removal and more rebar in the concrete than thought. The Fire and Building departments are working with the owner to remove the structure as quickly as possible.

## **LIBRARY**

- ✓ The library is undertaking a major publicity push for adult reading groups. Mailings are targeted to religious centers, senior centers, senior housing, and clubs & organizations to advertise librarian-led book discussions. City employees are welcome to attend; no registration is required. Upcoming discussion dates are:
  - July 16, 10:00am - Digging to America by Anne Tyler
  - July 19, 2:00pm- Blink by Malcolm Gladwell
  - August 16, 2:00pm – Waiting for Snow in Havana by Carlos M.N. Eire
  - August 20, 10:00am – The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
- ✓ The Cedar Rapids and Marion Public Library directors have been meeting to discuss additional ways the libraries can work together.

## **PARKS & RECREATION**

- ✓ A new splash pad in Noelridge Park, near Harding School is now open. The splash pad replaces the spray pool and is the seventh splash pad in Cedar Rapids. Hours of operation are from 10:00am to 8:00pm daily, through September 16.
- ✓ Renovated tennis courts in Ellis Park are now open from 6:00am to dusk.
- ✓ The Iowa Open Tennis Tournament will be held at Veterans Tennis Center, July 18-22. The tournament is sponsored by the Cedar Rapids Tennis Association and draws more than 300 participants.
- ✓ The All City Swim Meet will be held at Cherry Hill Aquatic Center on Saturday, July 21. The meet attracts 600-700 swimmers from nine area swim teams. The meet begins at 8:00am for ages 11 and older. Ages 10 and under will complete one hour after the older age divisions finish. This is the first year to be held at Cherry Hill.
- ✓ As a result of patron input, golf customers using the on-line tee sheet may now receive email confirmation.

## **POLICE**

- ✓ Bert Dalmer, from the State Ombudsmen's Office, is still reviewing information the CRPD has provided regarding the Police Firing Range.
- ✓ Members of the CRPD have formed a team to begin implementing a timetable to develop goals and objectives, performance measures and metrics to measure and track efficiency and effectiveness.
- ✓ The truck route and speeding issues in Oakhill/Jackson neighborhood continues to be monitored using a speed trailer.
- ✓ Animal Control anticipates filling 2 replacement positions; Animal Control Officer and Kennel Maintenance.
- ✓ Several individuals have been arrested for Criminal Mischief and Trespass after a number of incidents of vandalism at city-owned golf courses.

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**The Indian Creek Nature Center** has recently been awarded \$51,750 from the Kresge Foundation. The money will be used to develop a plan to bring the Nature Center headquarters building into LEED-EB Platinum standards. This will help the Nature Center demonstrate how to build or renovate a functional, attractive, and efficient building that has minimal environmental footprint.

Rich Patterson, Director of the Indian Creek Nature Center, is the recipient of the 2007 ANCA Leadership Award. The annual Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA) is the highest honor bestowed in this country upon an individual in the nature center profession.

The dilapidated structure at 123- 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW has been demolished and is in the process of being cleaned up.

**Coe College** and their engineering firm, Hall & Hall, have worked with City staff to resolve concerns regarding the large dirt pile on A Avenue NE between 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> Streets. The dirt is to be used for a parking lot and landscaping where houses have been removed in the area. Engineering staff reviewed and approved construction plans for the parking lot and landscaping.

City staff has worked together as follows to ensure compliance with code requirements:

- ✓ City Engineering staff ensured a silt fence was in place
- ✓ Building/Zoning staff worked to ensure the dirt pile is removed in a timely manner and that it did not pose a safety concern. Coe College has erected a barrier around the dirt pile and posted no trespassing signs.
- ✓ Linn County Health Department has been contacted about the smell.

Coe College staff has agreed to remove the dirt pile on or before July 18<sup>th</sup>. Mike White, Vice President at Coe College, advised that the dirt pile should be mostly removed by July 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Square Meals Update** - John Locher reported that efforts are continuing to find a suitable alternate location for the meals program. A potential site has been identified but a final decision regarding the building sale is still pending with the owner. An update and potential decision regarding sale is expected next week and Mr. Locher will be providing an update at that time. The mutual goal is for relocation to be completed this fall.

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**COUNCIL MEMBERS' CALENDAR**      *(Not all meetings are noted. The calendar is **not** an official posting.)*

<b><u>Monday, July 16</u></b>	7:00pm	Lincolnway Village Neighborhood Association Meeting, <i>(Green Acres Storage, 5315 J Street SW)</i>
<b><u>Tuesday, July 17</u></b>	5:00pm	Key Financial Strategies, <i>(Council Chambers)</i>
	6:30pm	CR Neighborhoods Board Meeting, <i>(Cedar Valley Park, Otis Rd &amp; Memorial Dr)</i>
	7:00pm	Cedar Valley Neighborhood Association, <i>(Cedar Valley Park)</i>
<b><u>Wednesday, July 18</u></b>	6:00pm	Council Meeting, <i>(Council Chambers)</i>
<b><u>Thursday, July 19</u></b>	5:00pm	Enhance Our Neighborhoods Open House, <i>(Vets Memorial Armory)</i>