



STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

WEEK OF JANUARY 21, 2008

CITY MANAGER

- ✓ Council recently decided to change their meetings in order to allow for more interaction between Council Members on discussion issues. The first and third Wednesdays of the month will be work session meetings and the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month will be formal meetings. The work session agenda will consist of three sections: consent agenda, Council issue intake and sort, and discussion items.
 - Consent agenda – this will only be used for routine items that need to be voted on weekly (bills and payrolls) and routine, emergency items that cannot wait for the next formal agenda. If Council pulls an item from the consent agenda for discussion it will not be discussed until the next meeting.
 - Council issue intake and sort – this will be an opportunity for Council to communicate topics they would like to discuss in the future or have distributed for follow up.
 - Discussion items – this will be identical to what is under the “Council Discussion Items” on the formal agenda now. That portion of the formal agenda will be eliminated.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Staff met with a few members of the Cedar Rapids development community on January 16th to preview an analysis of the cost to provide land development services. Staff reviewed the actual cost calculations and the current City rates for services. The small group also reviewed and discussed rates charged by other eastern Iowa communities for similar land development services. Many of the City’s current rates were last adjusted in 1991. Meeting participants agreed that waiting 17 years to evaluate and adjust rates did not reflect quality business practices. In addition, the group shared interests that the rates for services link to the quality of the land development process/product. Staff will conduct some additional data collection, based upon the January 16th discussion and work with this group to gather input to share the analysis more widely throughout the City. Proposed rates was not part of this discussion.
- ✓ The Corridor MPO (CMPO) held an open house for their Transportation Improvement Program on January 11th. An article in the Cedar Rapids Gazette on January 11th incorrectly stated that the projects presented at the open house were receiving funding from CMPO. The projects **have not** received funding but are requests for funding. Funding decisions will be determined on March 6th, 2008. Staff contacted the Gazette reporter on the 14th to clarify the inaccuracies.
- ✓ In January, the City Clerk’s Office receives a number of applications for Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption which are forwarded to Council members in a manner consistent with all petitions and letters. The application forms are for projects previously approved for tax exemption by the City Council. The State Code of Iowa requires applications be filed with the City Clerk during the month of January following completion of improvements. Staff will verify the improvements are consistent with the approved Urban Revitalization Plan and advise the City Assessor to proceed with the property tax exemption. This is an administrative process that does not require City Council action.
- ✓ Point Builders has filed a request for Enterprise Zone incentives for the OSADA renovation project. If approved, this would provide the developer with a reimbursement of Iowa State sales tax and an Iowa State income tax credit. The Cedar Rapids Enterprise Zone Commission is scheduled to consider this request and, if recommended for approval, the application would be filed with the Iowa Department of Economic Development for their Board action on February 21st. City Council would consider support for this application

at the February 13th regular meeting. This action is separate from City Council consideration of direct City participation in the renovation project.

- ✓ The City has received a \$24,999 mini-grant from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to assist in clean-up of the Sinclair Meatpacking Brownfield site. These funds will be used this spring to assist in pre-demolition building contamination clean-up.

FINANCE

- ✓ The City has a position of \$2 million in commercial paper that did not pay upon maturity. This is a permitted investment per Iowa Code and the City's investment policy and is used by other cities in Iowa. This investment comprises about 1% of the City's investment portfolio. Market conditions affected the liquidity of the commercial paper issuer forcing an enforcement event. This resulted in a receiver and trustee being appointed to manage the assets of the issuer to ensure that the senior creditors, like the City, are protected. This situation is being closely monitored and the City is working with the trustee and other creditors in order to maximize the value of the underlying assets. The City has suspended investing in commercial paper at this time. A review of the City's investment policy will also occur and be presented to the City Council for approval.
- ✓ Submit all information relating to state and federal grant or appropriation requests and awards to Regina Anderson and Sue Vavroch. A grant database is being created to track all of the federal and state requests and awards. Once completed, it will be made available to all departments.
- ✓ The Treasury Operations division has implemented new internet based parking violations software called T2 Systems which provides for better tracking of citation and payment data. We will be introducing on-line payment of parking tickets in the next couple of months offering payment convenience to our customers.
- ✓ Treasury Operations and Financial Operations recently transferred monthly parking accounts receivable from McGann parking software to Peoplesoft financials. This allows for more accurate tracking of accounts receivable and has improved the process of receipting of parking revenue. In addition, if customers signed up to pay for their parking by automated clearinghouse (ACH) they received a \$5 discount on their parking. As a result we realized an increase of over 51% in ACH payments for the month of January. We continue to sign additional parkers for ACH payment. ACH allows the City to access the funds quicker, reduce non-sufficient funds checks and to minimize manual data entry, resulting in efficiencies.
- ✓ Sue Vavroch is coordinating the scheduling of city employees, selected by Springsted, for the right-of-way activity interviews related to the cable franchise litigation. These interviews will take place in early February. More information will be e-mailed to affected departments.

FIRE

- ✓ The City has taken direct steps to improve the communications plan in regards to emergency notifications. The general public, businesses and industries will now have the opportunity to receive "Emergency Email Notifications" directly to their computer or cell phone by signing up for these notices free of charge. The City's web page has a direct link to a page where users can sign up for this service. This system will only be used during emergencies and NOT for routine information. The Emergency Email Notification system will ONLY be used for situations where public health or safety is in question, such as boil orders, major weather occurrences, major police or fire emergencies. The individuals who sign up for this service will receive the information just minutes after the initial press release goes to the media.

FIRE – PUBLIC SAFETY – CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

- ✓ To clarify contact numbers for various areas throughout the department, please refer to the following:
 - Housing Inspection 286-5197
 - Building (Building, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing)Group 286-5831
 - Zoning Group 286-5836
 - Fire Inspection 286-5166
 - Code Division All departments FAX 286-5830

HUMAN RESOURCES

- ✓ The Human Resources and Parks and Recreation Departments held a LEAN event to streamline the seasonal hiring process. Every year, the City hires approximately 500 people to work in the parks, pools and golf courses. The team identified several ways to make the process go more quickly and smoothly for all parties

involved. Savings from only one of the team's recommendations will be in excess of \$3000 in hard costs. Chauncey Berry of the Golf Department led the team and members included Carolyn Hamilton, June Schumacher, Evelyn Nuehring, Sue Michel, Mary Moore, Elaina Feuerbach, and Michelle Johnson. Jan Rushford facilitated the team.

LIBRARY

- ✓ The library has received word they can expect \$62,067 in Access Plus State funds for 2008. The three Metro libraries together will receive over \$100,000. In comparison, only \$1,017 was received in 2005. Using statistical reports and IT staff reports, administration was able to count inter-library loan transactions in a way that includes items loaned to Metro libraries. Reimbursement from the State Library depends on the number of transactions counted and the Library is benefiting greatly from this change.
- ✓ Out-of-state library users with reference questions now have a simple online form to fill out and are given the option of using PayPal or sending a check/money order. Nick Trenary has done a great job of setting up this system for ease of patron use.
- ✓ *Jazz at the Brary* tickets will be available January 28th at the Library Information Desk. This year's "Ornithology" event will feature the Sax Offenders performing a tribute to Charlie "Bird" Parker. Get set for a free evening of hot jazz to warm up your winter. There will be two performances in Beems on February 22nd; 7:00pm and 9:00pm. Sponsors include KCKK radio, CRPL, the Iowa City Public Library, the Iowa Arts Council, and Bradley & Riley P.C.

PARKS & RECREATION

- ✓ Parks and Recreation, Police, and Fire will begin sending customer service cards this week. A training session will be held January 22nd at 10:30am in the River Room in City Hall for the people who will be entering and maintaining data from the customer surveys.

POLICE

- ✓ Harding Middle School Leadership has taken on a community project for the year in which they will be doing various fundraisers for the CRPD K-9 division. Various fundraisers have been planned and the grand finale will be a Kops vs. Kids dodge ball game.
- ✓ The CRPD completed an Alcohol Compliance check on January 17th. Of the 8 businesses that were spot checked, only 1 was guilty of selling to minors; Casey's Convenience Store at Ellis Blvd and F Ave NW.
- ✓ A meeting was held January 17th at Geneva Towers to meet with the tenants about safety concerns in the Towers. Approximately 100 tenants met with Lt. Mincks, Officers Sheila Cruse and Matt Magnuson. The tenants learned about District Policing and were told of many activities and work that was in progress to alleviate their concerns.

PUBLIC WORKS

- ✓ Seven capital improvement projects are scheduled for receipt of bids between January 24th and February 28th with a combined estimated value of \$4.3 million. Project specifics are available on the PW Department's website and all interested contractors are encouraged to consider bidding.
- ✓ Council Street NE reconstruction from Dry Creek to 74th Street update - PW staff received the final signature on right-of-way acquisition of property needed for the improvements. All was successfully completed through negotiation. Construction activities will begin in February or March 2008 with Alliant Energy's utility relocations. Other utility relocations will follow throughout 2008, including extension of new City sewer to serve several properties currently served by private waste disposal systems. Paving is scheduled for the 2009 construction season.
- ✓ Tree debris removal will continue into March. The continued snow events have delayed the pick up process. The removal of hangar branches is nearly completed by forestry program personnel. Forestry personnel are also removing limbs and branches on sidewalks and near intersections where they limit traffic line of sight. Residents are encouraged to bundle them into 3-foot lengths of less than forty pounds and/or use their Yardy cart which will be picked up on normal trash days. This service is available year round. Streets personnel will increase support in the efforts as the weather and potholes permit.

- ✓ Sewer Maintenance started its winter preparations for flood protection with testing of plugs used in storm pipes to prevent back flooding from high river levels. Portable pump operation is also tested for reliability and preparedness. When ice conditions including the river ice melts in late Feb or March, the pumps will be wet tested to check their ability to pump water.

PURCHASING

- ✓ Per Mar is now delivering the inner-department mail. Your cooperation is needed as the transition is made.
 - Address the inner-departmental envelopes clearly – do not use abbreviations
 - Clearly black out the previous address on the envelope
 - Kindly assist the courier with the standard operating delivery procedures for your facility

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civil Rights Department has relocated to the 9th floor of the APAC Building. Their phone number will remain the same, 286-5036.

COUNCIL MEMBERS’ CALENDAR

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

Monday, January 21	7:00pm	Lincolnway Village Neighborhood Association meeting, <i>(Green Acres Storage, 5315 J Street SW)</i>
Tuesday, January 22	4:30pm 7:00pm	Budget Meeting, <i>(Council Chambers)</i> Taylor Area Neighborhood Association meeting, <i>(Taylor School Cafeteria, 720-7th Ave SW)</i>
Wednesday, January 23	6:00pm	Council Meeting, <i>(Council Chambers)</i>
Thursday, January 24	4:30pm 6:00pm 7:00pm	Budget Meeting, <i>(Council Chambers)</i> Cedar Hills Neighborhood Association general meeting, <i>(St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, 4700 Johnson Avenue NW)</i> Northwest Neighbors meeting, <i>(Time Check Recreation Center, 1131- 5th St NW)</i>
Friday, January 25	12:00	Community Briefing, <i>(Beems Auditorium)</i>