



STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 11, 2008

CITY MANAGER

- ✓ City offices will be closed Monday, February 18th in recognition of President's day. The S & I will be distributed on Tuesday, February 19th.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ A team of University of Iowa Urban Planning Graduate students is conducting a neighborhood forum at the Oak Hill Jackson Neighborhood Association meeting February 11th at 6:00 pm in the Jane Boyd Community Center. The planning team is seeking input from neighborhood residents and interested citizens on the following elements that enhance the City's activities in the Oak Hill Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Program:
 - Connectivity – What is critical to achieving connectivity to employment centers, existing and future amenities, and throughout the neighborhood?
 - Neighborhood services – What is the scope and nature of services that will enrich the neighborhood and meet anticipated needs of new residents?
 - Sense of Place – What are effective strategies to build upon the neighborhood identity and create a distinct sense of place?

The students chose the City's comprehensive revitalization effort in the Oak Hill neighborhood as a class project and have been examining the issues since September. The feedback received at the forum will be incorporated into the planning team's Oak Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Implementation Plan to be presented to the City Council this spring.

- ✓ Staff continues work to complete environmental hazard assessments and clean-up for the City-owned brownfield properties. Staff is researching best practices for brownfields redevelopment as reflected in successful projects in other communities and is preparing alternatives for City Council review and direction.
- ✓ City staff and representatives from the Downtown Business District met with Sherman Associates, the preferred downtown housing developer selected on January 9, last week to review potential downtown housing sites. City Council will meet with Sherman Associates at the February 20th work session. This session is intended to provide an opportunity for City Council to review objectives and expectations to proceed with the downtown housing project.

FIRE - PUBLIC SAFETY CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION:

- ✓ The Code Enforcement Division will hold feedback forums for the next five weeks on Wednesdays from 1:00 – 2:00pm at the Public Works Building, Traffic Engineering south conference room, 2nd floor. The meetings were scheduled to begin last week, but were revised due to inclement weather. The updated schedule is:
 - February 13 – Trades Professionals (electricians, plumbers, mechanical contractors)
 - February 20 – Architects
 - February 27 – Fire Alarm Companies
 - March 5 – Fire Sprinkler Companies
 - March 12 – General Contractors

This is an opportunity for customers who regularly do business with the Code Enforcement Division to share their concerns and provide valuable feedback.

LIBRARY

- ✓ The library has received word that a grant proposal for the ALA-sponsored reading series, "Let's Talk About It: Jewish Literature" has been funded. This series of book discussions, led by Rabbi Stephanie Alexander, will take place this summer/fall. Additional information will follow later.
- ✓ Several new links were added to the ISAIC website in January, including the site [WHY 21](#) addressing the current national debate on the 21 minimum drinking age law. This site and additional resources can be found in the **Find Information** section, **Teen and Youth Resources**, on the [drugfreeinfo.org](#) website. The website also reached a record high of over 400,000 hits during the month of January 2008. The most frequented page was the [Training Calendar](#), providing addiction professionals with details about upcoming trainings and conferences. ISAIC staff members daily enter information in the calendar to provide current information for Iowa addiction professionals.
- ✓ The five heat pumps above the upper children's lobby ceiling are all installed. The control circuitry is expected to be completed next week. Work in an office area and the children's story hour area has begun and will continue for several weeks.

PARKS & RECREATION

- ✓ At the Parks and Recreation "All Staff" meeting the City's vision was deployed to staff. Each staff member was given the vision (for the second time), broke into small groups to discuss how the department furthers the vision and how individually people support the vision.

POLICE

- ✓ The week of February 4th, Harding Middle School held a "Dollars for Dogs" donation in which 2 giant dog dishes were set out for kids to donate money for the Cedar Rapids Police K9's. This is part of an ongoing project that Harding MS Leadership took on as a community project.

PUBLIC WORKS

- ✓ On January 31, 2008, MSNBC did a nationwide report on delinquent bridge inspections nationwide. The report listed 153 bridges that were delinquent in Iowa with 2 of those being jointly owned by Cedar Rapids and Linn County. The 2 bridges, East Post Road SE over Indian Creek and Edgewood Road SW over Prairie Creek, are required to be inspected every 12 months, rather than the standard 24 months, because of their age, structural deficiencies, sufficiency ratings, postings, and traffic counts. They were last inspected in April and May of 2007, and are due for inspection again this spring. The most recent inspection data was updated directly by the inspector in the State's new web-based system. Previous inspections have been performed routinely, but incorrect data may have resulted from multiple parties handling the data, including Linn County and Iowa DOT. PW staff has contacted the IDOT personnel in charge of the Federal bridge inspection program, and they have recommended the City increase the frequency of inspections because of the structural condition of the bridges. PW maintenance staff has already been performing weekly unofficial inspections of the Edgewood Road bridge. These inspections are what lead to the January 28th closing of the Edgewood Road bridge for repairs.
- ✓ In cooperation with the Cedar Rapids School district, the City purchases salt under the State bids and is reimbursed for the actual amount used each year. In this year of high usage, the school system has bought additional supplies which are being stored at the PW salt dome. In a joint effort with the IDOT to minimize capital equipment, the City transfers salt to their local site in exchange for brine. This reduces unique equipment for the City and ensures a consistent mixture that is used by both entities.
- ✓ Residents have 48 hours after a snow or ice storm to clear or treat with salt and sand. Inspections for compliance are done on a complaint basis. When a complaint is received, a letter is sent to the property owner. When a 48 hour period occurs, the site is inspected and tagged if in violation. The site is then inspected the following day to see if the property owner has cleared the issue. If it is still not compliant, a crew clears or treats the sidewalks and the resident is billed. The normal bill between labor and administrative charges is approximately \$120. The notification letter, upon receipt of a complaint, is a process change this year and has cut the non-violations in half the past month. In comparison, the 2006/2007 season which was slightly below normal snowfall had 120 violations compared to 60 so far this year with over 1.5 times the normal snowfall.
- ✓ With the significant snowfalls, PW is planning ahead for spring river flooding. The Flood Control Manual is under revision and will be completed by March 1st. All of the pumps were test operated for starting ability and

will be wet tested when the river thaws. The plugs used for storm drains to prevent flooding from the river have been tested in the last three weeks. Pump suction and discharge hoses have been inventoried and additional hoses are being purchased.

- ✓ The snow and ice season is at a double the average rate with 48 inches as of February 8th. This is the largest snow fall since the 1999/2000 season and may be the largest season since the 1961/1962 season level of 58 inches. Additional salt orders have been placed to replenish reserves. Over 9,000 tons of salt and 5,000 tons of sand have been used. Last week PW crews hauled in over 500 tons of additional sand.
- ✓ On February 4, 2008, the City received notice of “Findings of Violation and Order for Compliance” from the Water, Wetlands and Pesticides Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This notice is a follow-up action resulting from a compliance inspection conducted by both the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the EPA in August 2006 on the City’s waste water and storm water permit requirements. City staff is reviewing the notice and in particular the alleged violations and will prepare and submit a response in accordance with the timelines specified in the “Order for Compliance”, or as subsequently amended. Updates will be provided as action items are completed to address the concerns noted.

UPDATES

Housing Concerns - 1307 6th St NW - A demolition permit was taken out by Lakeside Company last Friday for this property that was damaged by fire on December 9, 2007. This was one of the properties that was listed in the Gazette article of January 27th as "red"-triaged (high concern-demolition recommended). Although the fire was fairly recent, the property was included because of the extensive damage to the property and the need for it to be demolished.

Legislative News - The recently formed Metropolitan Coalition with city membership of Iowa City, Council Bluffs, Cedar Rapids, Ames, Des Moines, West Des Moines, Sioux City and Davenport has been busy formulating its legislative priorities. They are Alternative Revenue Sources; Brownfield Policies & Funding; Automatic Red Light Traffic Enforcement; Local Control of Smoking; and Increased Liquor License Enforcement. Mayor Halloran is a member of the executive committee. The Coalition has hired a lobbying firm to represent its members at the Statehouse. The Coalition’s lobbyists work in concert with the Iowa League of Cities and the various member cities lobbyists.

City Council members and staff are conducting meetings, using PowerPoint presentations and written materials, with citizens, legislators and business people on the subject of Cedar Rapids’ and the State’s challenges. Cedar Rapids and other urban cities are in need of revenue diversification to remain fiscally sound for the future. If cities are not strong economic centers then the State of Iowa will feel the effect with decreased tax and other revenue. In addition, cities and the State must address the loss of our young educated people to other states, referred to as brain drain. To attract and retain individuals Iowa must have competitively paying jobs and amenities that they are looking for.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' CALENDAR

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

Monday, February 11	6:30pm	Harbor Neighborhood Association meeting, (<i>Time Check Recreation Center – 1131- 5th St NW</i>)
	7:00pm	Kenwood Park Neighborhood Association meeting, (<i>Kenwood Park United Methodist Church, 175- 34th St NE</i>)
	7:00pm	Oak Hill Jackson Neighborhood Association meeting, (<i>St. Wenceslaus Church Gym Building, 1224- 5th St SE</i>)
Tuesday, February 12	7:00pm	Wellington Heights Neighborhood Association meeting, (<i>Paul Engle Center, 1600- 4th Ave SE</i>)
Wednesday, February 13	6:00pm	Formal Council Meeting, (<i>Council Chambers</i>)
Thursday, February 14	11:30am	Dedication of the new Linn County Courtroom/Law Library, (<i>Courtroom 3F, Third Floor Linn County Courthouse</i>)
	4:30pm	Budget Meeting, (<i>Council Chambers</i>)
	7:00pm	Noelridge Neighborhood Association meeting, (<i>Noelridge Park Church, 1147- Clifton St NE</i>)