



STATUS & INFORMATION REPORT

WEEK OF MARCH 3, 2008

CITY MANAGER

- ✓ The *Your City Newsletter* is mailed to homes in Cedar Rapids every other month. Recognizing that all City employees do not reside in Cedar Rapids and therefore do not receive one, the *Your City Newsletter* will now also be emailed to employees as an attachment with the S & I report. If you print and post the newsletter as well as the S & I Report, all employees have the opportunity to read it. The newsletter is also available on the City website. The March / April 2008 edition is attached today.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ A special City Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for March 10th from 10:00am to 2:00pm in the Council Chambers, 4th Floor of City Hall, for a training session. This is an effort to provide continued education for the Commission members on their roles and responsibilities. The course is an audio/video conference on CD-ROM produced by the American Planning Association and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Sessions include:
 - Introduction to the Concept of Planning
 - The Comprehensive Plan and Planning at Different Levels
 - The Tools of Planning
 - Decision Making by the Planning Commission
 - Planning as a Dynamic Process
 - Plan Implementation
 - Engaging Citizens
 - Resolving Conflicts
 - Forging Relationships
- ✓ Housing Services is looking to expand its annual Section 8 landlord meeting to include all landlords. It is hoped an "Information Fair" including a cross-functional team of City Staff working on the development of the Information Fair for all landlords can be developed from this meeting. While the Information Fair would highlight housing-related City services, it would also expose more landlords to the benefits of participating in the Section 8 Housing Program and create a greater diversity in the available, affordable housing stock. The event is tentatively scheduled for mid-April. This effort is meant to offer landlords another tool in the community's work to Enhance Our Neighborhoods.
- ✓ The City Council's goal of implementing smart growth and sustainable principles is moving forward with the formation of committees to consider environmentally sensitive areas and infill development. These two working committees will review the City's existing policies and procedures, identify challenges, gather data and best practices, and provide options for City Council consideration. Applications for the committees are available on the City's website and are being accepted through noon on Wednesday, March 5, 2008. Based on City Council's new selection process for Boards and Commissions, the applications for the committees will be distributed to City Council via e-mail on March 5th. The City Council's recommendations for applicant interviews are due to the Mayor by Monday, March 10th. The proposed interviews will be held prior to the City Council Work session on Wednesday, March 19th starting at 4:30pm. Formal action on appointments is slated for the regular City Council meeting, Wednesday, March 26, 2008.

- ✓ The City has received numerous requests from individuals and organizations to use the building formerly home to Quality Chef Foods at 1100 3rd St SE. Acquired in 2005 as part of the Brownfield Redevelopment Program, the building was retained for potential reuse. Since acquisition, the building has experienced structural issues including a water pipe burst and mold remediation. In an effort to analyze the current condition of the structure and provide a response to a recent request for reuse of the building, a local architect is in the process of assessing the condition of the building. In addition, this assessment will also address the feasibility of reuse of the structure. That information will be available in the next several weeks.
- ✓ On February 28, 2008, staff met with a representative group of the Home Builders Association (HBA) called the "Developers Council." Staff shared the proposed objectives, goals and charter for the Land Development Review Process LEAN Event. In addition, the group discussed the potential dates and length of the event. The event will likely be held the week of March 17 or April 7. The Developers Council shared concerns about committing five days for the business improvement process. In addition, the Developers Council requested that a Saturday be included in the five-day event. Staff requested that the HBA provide, by March 5th a short list of volunteer members to participate in the event.

LIBRARY

- ✓ ISAIC is collaborating with Partnership for Drug Free Iowa to promote the March 5th statewide campaign, **Take 5: Take Five Minutes to Talk to Kids About Drugs**. A five-minute conversation now and then can make a huge difference toward keeping kids away from drugs. Governor Culver has signed a proclamation, and the Partnership for Drug Free Iowa is sending printed flyers to all Iowa schools to be sent home to parents of 5th graders by March 5th. Many communities across the state have been running media ads to promote **Take 5**, referring people to contact ISAIC's toll free number or visit the website for additional information. ISAIC is distributing the *How to Be a Better Parent* pamphlet that is used in the campaign, and the drugfreeiowa.org website has additional information for parents and grandparents about helping kids make healthy lifestyle choices.
- ✓ The final event for the 2008 Linn Area Reads program will take place in Beems Auditorium March 18th at 7:00pm. It will be a Gazette-sponsored forum titled "What Can We Learn from Life Stories." Featured panel members include Mark Hunter, Cedar Rapids historian; Loren Glass, UI English professor; Ann Struthers, Coe writer-in-residence; and Bill Shuttleworth, Cedar Rapids attorney who was acquainted with Paul Engle, the author of *A Lucky American Childhood*. Engle grew up in Cedar Rapids and his book brings to mind many facets of the older, smaller city.

POLICE

- ✓ The police hiring process continued with 28 applicants taking pre-oral interviews on February 28th. The next step will be the Minnesota Multi Personality Test on March 6th and Oral interviews on Friday, March 7th.
- ✓ The first Neighborhood Enforcement Action Team (NEAT) meeting was held last week. NEAT brings the District Service Officers from the PD together with the Code Enforcement Disciplines (Housing, Zoning, Building). This was an organizational meeting to develop processes and time frames in an effort to create a coordinated and comprehensive approach to serving neighborhoods. NEAT is working with neighborhood associations and other city departments as well as outside agencies.
- ✓ Officers Glenn Kieler and Shannon Stokesberry assisted students last week at Kaplan University in mock job interviews. This process allows students the opportunity to experience the interview process for police officers.

PUBLIC WORKS

- ✓ The City has been working with the Corps of Engineers to finalize the cost estimate, scope of work, and Federal Cost Share Agreement (FCSA) for the Time Check Area Flood Study. The Corps of Engineers is also preparing a cost estimate for a feasibility study of the Cedar River from the Time Check Area south to the Sinclair site. These documents are anticipated to be complete mid-March 2008. The Time Check Area study is expected to commence in 2008 and be completed in 2010. The study will provide a preliminary design and recommendations for reducing the flood risk in the Time Check Area. Anticipated costs will be included to aid in developing budgets for proposed improvements in the Capital Improvements Plan.
- ✓ As of February 29th, roughly 11,300 tons of salt, over 12,500 tons of sand and 12,000 hours of overtime were expended in response to 34 snow events. These events have accumulated about 59.3 inches of snow or ice.

- ✓ The city has been successful in the removal of the ice and snow pack with the use of motor graders. The equipment has been in use with additional overtime to expand the use. This may cause thick piles of ice (or windrows) in front of driveways. Maintenance crews strive to not cause excessive piles of ice and snow in front of drives, but they may occur as the roads are cleared.
- ✓ The warming weather after a period of 19 of 20 days below has left several drainage issues and pot holes. Staff will be scheduled to patch and clear the drainage problems as soon as they are reported by both staff and the public. Residents should contact the Public Works Department anytime at 286-5826 to report pot holes. Concerns can also be emailed to street@cedar-rapids.org for follow-up during regular working hours.
- ✓ The city set a new record of going over 50 days with no city caused sanitary sewer back up. For comparison, 2003 had 103 sewer backups compared to only 18 in 2007. This is directly contributing to the quality of life of our residents.
- ✓ Planning for the future, the storm water program is continuing to prepare for possible flooding in late March or early April. The city has 9,100 sand bags and over 100,000 empty bags. Additional sand was moved into the Solid Waste building to start drying out for additional sand bags. The inventory of storm plugs has been completed and additional items have been ordered. A draft Flood Manual has been completed with final revisions to be completed this week. Public Works is looking at the future public safety and keeping the roads open as it still meets the needs of one of the worst winters on record.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' CALENDAR

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

Wednesday, March 5	6:00pm	Council Work Session, <i>(Council Chambers)</i>
Thursday, March 6	1:30pm	Chief Klappholz' retirement coffee, <i>(CRPD, 505- 1st St SW)</i>
Saturday, March 8	10:00am	Mound View Neighborhood Association meeting, <i>(Central Park Presbyterian Church, 1700 B- Ave NE)</i>