



TO: Mayor and City Commission
FROM: Kathie Grinzinger
SUBJECT: Status Report – January 2007

It would seem nearly greedy of me to ask for more as we start out this brand new year. Being given the opportunity to work in a great job supported by a group of people I respect and trust in a community I love should have been enough. But I have to confess, as I looked at those shiny yellow plow trucks day after day, all spruced up with no where to go, I had to ask for one more blessing. Happy winter, everyone!

Following are some highlights from the last few weeks, reminders or notes of future interest. As always, don't hesitate to call or contact us if you need any further information or have any questions that we have not answered.

1. **This Week at the Borden Building**

On Tuesday, January 16, Greg Baderschneider, Nancy Ridley and I attended the monthly meeting of the Michigan Economic Growth Alliance (MEGA) to present information regarding the West Broadway Revitalization Project and to support our request to use Brownfield tax capture dollars to cover a portion of our costs in redeveloping the Borden site. Gregory Saxton from J.E. Johnson and James Tischler attended the meeting as well.

I am pleased to report the meeting went very well. The Board voted unanimously on our proposal to use tax capture as a financing tool and approved the eligibility of the public relocation costs in the plan. Mr. Tischler's assistance was invaluable in preparing all the documents and exhibits for the presentation. A copy of the press release that will be issued by MEGA/MEDC is enclosed for your information. The developer will be approaching the Board on the matter of tax credits at another time.

In response to the increased cost of contamination abatement on the site, the City sent a request to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) asking for an extension of our existing grant by more than another \$800,000 during the last week in December. We have been communicating regularly with DEQ staff members and hope to have a preliminary answer to our appeal by the end of the month. If DEQ approves an expansion of our grant, we are looking for formal approval by February 9th.

We are still awaiting confirmation of the plans and design specification from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The local Historic District Commission approved plans at their last meeting, and a copy of their minutes has been provided to the City Commission in the January 22nd meeting packet. The City's team, representatives of the Developer including the architect for the project, and delegates from MEDC and DEQ met in Lansing last month with the project manager from SHPO. The Developer presented voluminous back-up information as part of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. We expect SHPO to critically scrutinize the plans for window replacement and the necessity of renovating the water tower. DEQ has also communicated with SHPO regarding the tower. In order to meet the February 15, 2007 deadline in the purchase agreement it is necessary that approval be received by SHPO within the next three weeks.

By the City Commission meeting of February 12th we should have nearly all contingencies met and should be able to provide the Commission and the public with a revised and up-to-date summary of the financial picture of the project. Stay tuned.

2. Proposal To Allow For Conditional Rezoning

The City Commission, at their November 27, 2006 meeting, considered language that would amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for certain types of conditional rezoning. The Planning Commission recommended language to the Commission that had been drafted by their consultant attorney. Prior to that meeting, as reference, the City Commission was provided copies of an ordinance that was enacted by the village of Dexter and language that was suggested by an attorney committee of the Michigan Townships Association (MTA).

Following lengthy discussion by the Commission, a consensus was reached to include language in the City's draft ordinance that mimicked the most desirable sections of the MTA model. Inclusions would: specify the time period during which development should take place; spell out that the conditional rezoning would serve as a binding contract that would remain with the property; enact restrictions on timing of resubmittal; and list penalties for non-compliance with the conditions. Once such changes were made to the draft, the Commission requested that the ordinance language be brought back for reconsideration.

Eric Williams, the attorney who drafted the language considered by the Planning Commission should provide the Planning Director with revisions by the end of January. We hope to place consideration of this item on an agenda in February. In the meantime, the Mayor has requested that Commissioners receive an additional copy of the article from the May 2005 Planning and Zoning News that contained provisions suggested by the MTA for their members. A copy of that article is enclosed.

3. Fluoridated Water and Infant Formula

After receiving information from a Mt. Pleasant resident who presented the Commission with a copy of a press release from the American Dental Association, the Commission asked for additional information regarding the City's options to inform water customers.

Because the City is required to issue a water quality report each year to all its customers as regulated by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, it seemed appropriate to contact that agency for guidance. Enclosed is a copy of an email Malcolm Fox, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent, received in response to his question to the DEQ. The communiqué refers to a statement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in response to the very issue presented to the Commission.

Each issue of the City's mandated "Water Quality Report" is reviewed by the DEQ. The agency has not changed its directive as to the information that is to be supplied to water customers on this issue.

4. Insurance Services Office (ISO) Ratings Out

Congratulations are due to the Mt. Pleasant Building Safety and Code Enforcement Department. The City has received the 2006 ISO evaluation of the building codes and enforcement activities of our department. ISO ratings around the country have a substantial impact on the insurance rates charged to residential, commercial and industrial properties throughout the community. Mt. Pleasant has been granted a "3" rating and has been placed in the 1-3 range which is the lowest (like golf scores) grade.

ISO is an independent statistical, rating and advisory organization that primarily serves the property/casualty insurance industry. ISO interviews and collects information on a community's building code adoption and enforcement services, analyzes the data, then assigns an Effectiveness Classification. While the information is used by insurance underwriters, it is also an effective management tool to benchmark our department's performance against others throughout the country.

A full copy of the report is available in the City Manager's Office for your review.

5. “Going, Going, Gone...”

As we continue to use technology to increase our service provision to residents and achieve greater efficiencies, we have entered yet another new era. This year’s City auction of excess and out-of-service equipment, vehicles and property is now appearing on E-Bay. A direct link appears on the City’s website, and the ten-day sale will be announced on Channel 26 and through an ad in the local newspaper. There are a few items that we still need to post, but each item has its own countdown based on the time of day it was submitted.

We have done considerable research on this alternative and expect greater participation and a better return on the vehicles and equipment up for sale this year. If you have always wanted your very own backhoe, watch our site first.

6. Calendar Notes

Several issues are appearing on the horizon that will require the attention of the City Commission and the employee team. Please remember to reserve February 20th for the annual City Commission retreat or goal-setting session. We will be meeting with Marilynn Semonick at 9:00 a.m. at the Comfort Inn. At that meeting we hope to schedule quarterly opportunities to meet on an informal basis to continue to touch base on our progress throughout the year.

March 21 is the date set aside by the Michigan Municipal League to provide an opportunity for local elected officials to meet with their Michigan representatives and each other to discuss pending legislation. Please contact Jana Ervin in the City Manager’s Office to reserve your attendance at this important event.

Work sessions are being scheduled for the next few meetings to supply time for the Commission to discuss programs, projects, ordinance revisions or other noteworthy opportunities that will appear on later agendas. In the near future we will be discussing energy auditing, Liquor Control Commission licensing, the Housing Licensing Code revisions, the West Broadway Revitalization Project and revisions to the Central Business District Tax Increment Financing Plan.

I will be out of the office from the afternoon of Tuesday, January 23, through the end of the week for the Michigan Local Government Management Association winter training institute. The workshop will be held in Frankenmuth this year and will concentrate on emerging trends and needs in the fields of local government management. I will travel with my cell phone and my laptop to enable me to check my email and voice messages periodically. Nancy Ridley will serve in my absence, and she as well as the other Division Directors and Mrs. Ervin will be available to you while I am away.

7. Traffic Control Orders

Two months ago the City Commission made several changes to downtown parking and authorized temporary traffic control orders to accomplish those changes. At your meeting on February 26th you will consider making the following orders permanent:

- #8-06: Remove “Taxi Parking” signs and install Three-Hour Parking signs on the east side of Court Street north of Broadway.
- #9-06: Change the parking on the north side of Broadway Street, from Pine Street to Washington Street, to Three-Hour Parking.
- #10-06: Change parking signs in downtown parking lot 10 from Permit Parking to Ten-Hour Parking.
- #11-06: Change parking signage in downtown parking lots 3, 4, 5 and 6 from Three-Hour Parking to Ten-Hour Parking.
- #12-06: Install “NO PARKING 4 a.m. to 6 a.m.” signs on streets within the boundary of Mosher to Illinois – Lansing to Pine, around Main Street to Broadway West (Pine Street).

8. A Final Note of Thanks

These past few days have been very difficult but rewarding ones for the Mt. Pleasant Police Department. The men and women of the MPPD were instrumental in solving a tragic homicide that occurred in our community last week. Within 48 hours of a reported kidnapping and assault, one of our night shifts identified a suspect, lured him back into Michigan from Indiana, and completed an arrest. Following some excellent police work, several serial car burglaries and breaking and entering cases were solved during this same time frame with the arrests of two groups of suspects. Finally, working with the BAYANET drug enforcement team, our officers’ work resulted in another apprehension this week.

Aside from the death of Ms. Babb, this kind of record is not an anomaly but what we have grown to expect on a regular basis. We don’t talk about it much but we appreciate what they do every day.

KSG/je

Enclosures