



TO: Mayor and City Commission

FROM: Kathie S. Grinzinger

SUBJECT: Status Report – May 2007

Several Commissioners have mentioned recently that it doesn't seem like they are getting any time off from City business lately, what with regular meetings, special meetings, committee meetings and other community assignments. I met with the Mayor and the Vice Mayor Wednesday afternoon and I do not assume our commitment to public service will slow down anytime soon. Try to get your sunshine when you can.

1. **This Week At The Borden Building**

The lead abatement contractor is well into the six-to-eight week project that must be completed before the developer's crews begin their phase of the project in earnest. To clear the lead from all surfaces in accordance with the standards required by our environmental plan, the company seals small portions of the building, one section at a time, and creates a negative air space. Large filters are then used to clean all the lead from the air as it is removed from the metal surfaces. As one section of the building is completed the "contraption" is dismantled and moved so that the next area can be cleaned. Various small scale demolition projects, also part of the grant-funded efforts, are being completed simultaneously in different sections of the structure.

Mr. Baderschneider will be bringing the Commission an update on the activity inside the building at one of the next two meetings of the City Commission.

2. **It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Summer**

The Buildings and Grounds crew has taken full advantage of the unseasonable weather and made great progress in preparing the parks system for its most heavily used season. Mill Pond Park has been particularly showy the last few weeks, by the way. We pay particular attention to the appearance of Riverside Cemetery as we get close to Memorial Day each year and work with local veterans' organizations to be sure each veteran's final resting place is adorned with a flag.

Speaking of Memorial Day...the Veterans of Foreign Wars will be holding a Memorial Day parade on Monday. The parade will begin at 10:00 a.m. at Broadway and Kinney and work its way through downtown to Riverside Cemetery.

Downtown will be especially busy throughout all the upcoming warm weather months. Planting is beginning this week and several events are scheduled for residents

and visitors. The best way to keep up with all the happenings is through the new website, www.downtownmp.com.

A police officer will be concentrating additional attention on the downtown area in the very near future as the Department attempts to strengthen its partnerships with the City's commercial residents. Officer Dave Sabuda will be on bike patrol Monday through Thursday in the Central Business District and the surrounding neighborhoods.

For those of you who travel on bike or foot through the Riverwalk Trail system, I don't have to explain how many visitors the parks draw into the middle of our community. If you think the pathway is becoming crowded, we invite you to stop down to the sand volleyball pits some weeknight. Notwithstanding the fact that we are hundreds of miles from the nearest sandy shore, our Recreation Department now carries 38 teams on our sand volleyball roster! Wednesday nights, by the way, will find our honorable Mayor and the beautiful Stephanie Joslin taking on all comers.

Park-goers will increase beyond all expectation when the Michigan Amateur Softball Association Junior Olympic State Championships come to town on June 29, 30 and July 1. Players in five age groups (18 and under, 16 and under, 14 and under, 12 and under, 10 and under) will compete for three national tournament berths in each of nine divisions. As the successful bidder for this highly sought after competition, Mt. Pleasant will host 60 to 70 teams for the weekend. Hotels are already booked for miles around so you may want to reschedule that family reunion. Good job, Eric VanHevel!

The biggest news, however, comes in the form of congratulations to the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation, the members of the City's Parks and Recreation team and supporters of all-access recreation. Enclosed is a copy of a press release prepared by Stan Rathbun, Executive Director of the Mt. Pleasant Community Foundation. As Mr. Rathbun's communication announces, we have just gotten word that Mt. Pleasant received one of only three grants awarded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation this season. The \$419,000 grant, combined with City and Foundation funds, will finance a nearly \$700,000 project to construct a universally accessible "Access Adventure Trail" extending the existing Riverwalk Trail through Chipp-A-Waters Park and into City's new wetlands property.

3. **And Like Construction Season, Too**

The sewer relining project has begun in earnest on Broadway and, as sometimes happens when the system is upwards of 100 years old, we have encountered a few surprises. The City Engineering crews have put in a few extra hours downtown this week and we are comfortable we are back on track.

The City Commission will consider bids for two major road reconstruction projects (Russell and Broadway Streets) on Tuesday, May 29th, and for the sewer relining on Pickard Street. Those projects are on the schedule for a few weeks down the road. Right now, though, all eyes are on the east water tower. The City only repaints the exterior of our large storage towers approximately every 10 to 15 years, and the interior every 15 to

20 years, so the arrival of Horizon Brothers Painting of Howell has been quite a happening! The inside of the tank is being painted first and the outside will follow. While Duane Ellis vetoed my choice of lilac, the tower will sport a lovely new hue of blue.

4. **Planning Commission Agendas**

In January the City Commission and the Planning met to discuss the prior year's accomplishments and agree upon the main issues of consideration for 2008. Because of some very difficult planning issues that faced both boards the last few months, progress on some other areas of interest was slowed.

Because of the number of agreed-upon concerns, it was suggested that receipt of the Planning Commission packets by the Commission would be helpful. We will mail duplicate packets to the City Commission prior to the meeting beginning with the upcoming Planning Commission meeting in June.

The to-do list for the Planning Commission alludes to a pretty jam-packed summer. The Planning Commission is scheduled to begin discussions on the "Historic Main Street Overlay District" and will also consider establishing a "park zone" district. The Parks and Recreation Commission expects to review the feasibility of such a zoning change as well. The City Commission should expect to hear from both its advisory boards.

5. **Millage Rate Comparison**

During the March goal-setting retreat Commissioners asked for data comparing Mt. Pleasant to other communities around the state in terms of millage rates and values. Enclosed are three charts produced by Ms. Ridley that compare the **total** rate paid by property owners and the tax revenue generated by a single mill.

6. **A Goodbye**

After 26 years with the City of Mt. Pleasant, Mary Kindig, English major turned Public Works employee, will hang up her lab coat and move to retiree status. Mary began with the City as the first female in the Street Department and has been a member of the Waste Water Treatment Plant staff for 23 years. Mary has served as a volunteer writer for the Connections newsletter for several years as well. We will miss her ready wit and unique perspective. Best of luck, Mary, in all you do.

7. **Community Connection**

This year we celebrated Public Works Week by opening the Wastewater Treatment Plant to the public and students of the community. We concentrated on students from seventh through tenth grade and hosted 130 people for eight tours. Enclosed is a letter

from Public Works Analyst Micki Smith to the teacher of the Community Based Education tour group, and pictures of their day at the plant.

8. **On The Upcoming To-Do List**

During the next two meetings the City Commission will hold a public hearing and finalize its discussion of the five-year Capital Improvement Plan. The Capital Improvement Plan is critical to the decisions a city makes to manage growth and turn a vision of the future into reality. Approval of the Plan will move the first year's projects into the annual operating budget as the 2008 capital priorities. The succeeding year's projections will establish the design and engineering priorities for the affected departments for the next year.

Within the next few weeks we will begin to schedule the second quarter liaison meetings with Isabella County and Central Michigan University. There are a few carryover items for each agenda, some of which we mentioned in the April Status Report. It would be appropriate for members of the Commission to let the Mayor and the Vice Mayor or my office know if there are other issues that need to be brought to the attention of our colleagues representing the other public entities.

Two other special committees will likely be established by the Commission at their next meeting: a study committee on the next steps to analyze the possibility of a family recreation center, and another to approach the Isabella County Road Commission on the traffic concerns at Broomfield and Crawford Roads. Each of those committees will be assigned a staff representative to assist in scheduling meetings and maintaining information from the discussions. Once members are appointed we will be in contact with each new group to initiate the process.

The Mayor has also asked that the Charter Committee be contacted to engage in discussion as to what sections of the Charter may need to be updated and proposed for amendment at an upcoming election. Ms. Jana Ervin will be in contact shortly with members of that group to synchronize calendars.

As Commissioners embark on their summer committee work, we will be moving into our in-house discussions on preparation of the Annual Operating Budget that will be presented to the Commission in September. The budget recommendations will be tied as much as possible to the goals the Commission set for 2008 in the early part of this year.

We are still unsure as to the impact the financial morass in Lansing will have on our revenues. At last report, Michigan is heading toward an \$800 to \$900 million deficit for this fiscal year and double that for the year that begins October 1. The Michigan Municipal League as well as other state associations such as the Assessors Association and the Michigan Clerks continue to keep us updated on each proposal floated by the Governor or the legislatures. It is important to keep abreast of the "Issue Advisory" notices as well as the MML Alerts to know when it will be appropriate to contact our local legislators.

Also planned for June is the interviewing and hiring process for the new Director of the Division of Community Services. We began the first phase of an internal reorganization with the appointment of Ms. Ridley as the new Assistant City Manager. Once the fourth Division Director is hired, the Department of Human Resources will slide into the Finance Division allowing for a greater level of coordination of all corporate functions. The new Director of Community Services will be expected to spark our investment energy and support our economic and community revitalization and redevelopment efforts.

KSG/je

Enclosures