



TO: Mayor and City Commission  
FROM: Kathie Grinzinger  
SUBJECT: Status Report – August 2006

It has been a great month in Mt. Pleasant, Ladies and Gentlemen! Thank you for your support and advice. What follows is a brief recap of where we stand with some of the projects, issues or concerns that may be of interest to you. If we can provide any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

### **1. Welcome Back CMU Students!!**

Classes at Central Michigan University begin Monday, August 28, 2006, and students and their parents have been toting and traveling throughout the community all week.

Beginning this Thursday, Code Enforcement Officers and Police Officers will begin knocking on doors throughout the neighborhoods that typically house high concentrations of students. Our "walk-about" teams leave a packet of materials with renters providing them with numbers to call for help and information, data on renters' rights and responsibilities, and information on City services and ordinances. Primarily, our employees are welcoming students to the community, reminding them that they are now part of a neighborhood, and working to establish a rapport that will encourage our new residents to call before they act.

Members of the Fire Department's rental inspection teams are logging many hours in face-to-face meetings with students and parents as well. They are often called upon to explain rental licensing procedures and to assist new renters and landlords in mediating settlements.

Mt. Pleasant Police Officers have joined with other law enforcement officials throughout the county to write and act in a play that will be performed for new on-campus students. Based around a newly-birthing CMU message campaign, "Take Care", the play presents scenarios encouraging students to take care of each other in risky situations and providing them with the means to do so.

On the other side of the coin, MPPD officers have logged several hours of overtime this week, most of it covered by an alcohol prevention grant, and Code Enforcement employees have shifted their workweek to include Saturday and Sunday so that they may increase enforcement activities through early Fall.

## **2. Construction Projects**

Work on University Street should be winding down this weekend and by Monday everything should be back to normal, at least at this intersection. Curb repair work on Broadway Street, however, should continue for at least another week. The company that has the contract for University Street also has the contract on Batson Street. Once University Street is complete the downtown crew will shift to Batson and work in that area will undoubtedly speed up.

The replacement of 12" water main on Pickard Street between Bradley and Cooley is going very well. The lines are being relocated from beneath the street to the north side right-of-way.

Wednesday, Public Works Division Director Duane Ellis and Airport Manager John Benzinger were in pre-construction meetings regarding the apron expansion project at the airport. Just weeks ago you accepted bids and grant funds for this activity. Thanks to the Michigan Aeronautics Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration, the City's cost for this \$195,223 project will be only \$4,880.

## **3. 2007 Budget Process**

The Budget Committee met with Finance Director Nancy Ridley and me on Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup> to review a few topics prior to initiating the compilation of the budget document. The budget will be presented to you at your meeting of September 11<sup>th</sup> and we hope to gather your preferences for scheduling work sessions at that meeting.

The 2007 Budget will be provided in the same format with which you are already familiar. Many of the significant trends included in this document were introduced to the Commission during their review of the 2006 Budget.

## **4. Borden Building Updates**

We are now expecting that demolition of the chimney and the ell on the west end of the building will not occur until later in September. Additional environmental research needs to be conducted regarding asbestos levels. Once the asbestos inventory is conducted by our contractor, Peerless Environmental, and the samples are transferred to the laboratory, it will take at least another week to 12 days to receive the necessary reports. Those reports must be available to the DEQ prior to the contractor filing the mandatory 10-day notice which will set the date for demolition activities.

Detailed information regarding the date and time of the clearance work, street closures required for the safety of the neighbors, and the location of safe viewing zones for the public and the media will be provided well in advance.

## **5. Brush Pick-up**

Street Department crews are still heavily involved in picking up brush throughout the City. Several hundred letters were mailed to residents over the last two weeks providing information about the options available through the City's brush chipping program or at the Isabella County Material Recovery Facility.

While there were no excess funds available in the Solid Waste Fund to finance clean-up after this summer's windstorm, we are aware of the interest in the community to investigate what options might be available to deal with storm damage in the future. We hope to begin research in the next few months around what alternatives might be available to reduce costs, set tighter criteria, and/or raise revenue so that storm clean-up services might be offered more often. We do not expect to bring you a recommendation for change until much later in the year, however.

## **6. Downtown Activities**

As sure as the students return to campus, Mardi Gras comes to Downtown. Mardi Gras is scheduled for September 15<sup>th</sup> this year. The best place for details is Downtown's new e-newsletter "Downtown Dispatch". If somehow you have missed becoming a subscriber, please contact Downtown Development Director Michelle Sponseller at 779-5348.

The City Commission established the Downtown Development Board to fulfill the role of a Principal Shopping District committee and to be the primary advisory board to the Commission on issues impacting the Central Business District. The DDB has made tremendous strides in this last year organizing management of its various interests, establishing roles and responsibilities, and formalizing communication and meeting strategies. Within the very near future the Commission will begin to see products of these reorganization efforts. The City's Traffic Committee will be meeting shortly to consider a number of parking and traffic control issues illustrated by the DDB and its sub-committee. The Board's sub-committee on special assessments has sent a recommendation to the City's Finance Division suggesting alternatives to the CBD parking and maintenance assessment which will eventually be presented to the Commission. (You may remember that the special assessment process was changed from a three-year cycle to a one-year cycle with the 2006 budget year to give all parties time to suggest alternatives.)

And, speaking of assessments...City Assessor David Rowley will begin field work downtown shortly to collect all measurements and data necessary to prepare for the downtown special assessment process.

## 7. **Master Plan Progress**

For nearly three years the Planning Commission has been working diligently to produce a Master Plan that accurately reflects the current environment of our community and constructs a road map for Mt. Pleasant's future. As we said when we called our citizens to action for "Vision Fair 2020", there is no document more important or with greater impact that a community will produce, than its Master Plan. Because of the critical nature of this manuscript the City Commission reserved over a month between its receipt of the draft and a public hearing to receive the community's comments.

To ensure that the community is sufficiently aware of their opportunity to comment, we will be using several tools to inform residents including:

- An article will appear in the September edition of Connections
- A direct link to the Plan draft has been established on the City website home page
- Copies of the draft plan are available at Veterans Memorial Library
- Postcards will be mailed to every resident who attended Vision Fair 2020 and/or the two planning meetings held thereafter
- Postcards will be sent to other community members who were invited to Vision Fair 2020 or who represent other agencies, organizations, boards or public entities
- Notices and releases will be provided to members of the local media

If you have any other ideas, please feel free to let us know.

## 8. **Schedules and Conferences**

Just a note to remind you that Mayor Bradley Kilmer will be serving as your Delegate to the Michigan Municipal League Annual Meeting in September in Marquette. Commissioner Moreno has expressed an interest in attending the conference as well and can be credentialed as your Alternate. There is still an opportunity to sign up to attend this very worthwhile learning experience. If you are interested in the MML conference, please contact Jana Ervin as soon as possible.

I will be attending the International City/County Management Association Conference in San Antonio and will be away from September 8<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup>. Duane Ellis will serve as Acting City Manager while I am in Texas and will be available to assist you with whatever you may need. You will be ably assisted on the dais Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, by Nancy Ridley. I will be available by phone or email throughout the conference as well. Feel free to check in with Ms. Ervin if you need to reach me.

KSG/je