



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

It certainly has been a fun-filled and high-energy ride as the City of Mt. Pleasant moves rapidly into the last quarter of the year. We do not expect to see a slowdown in our activities, or yours, in the upcoming weeks. Because of the amount of work that needs to be done and the number of issues the Commission is wrestling with, a bit of prioritization is in order. As you go through the following overview of issues and projects you will note that we are proposing a schedule of sorts to get us through the rest of 2006.

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. **CMU Updates**

President Michael Rao announced at the President's Mount Pleasant Advisory Board meeting on October 17th that enrollment for the 2006-2007 year stands at approximately 20,025. CMU is attempting to cap its growth and concentrate on retention. This resulted in the University turning away more applicants for fall enrollment than ever before. He was pleased to report, however, that the grade point and SAT scores of incoming freshmen are higher than in previous years. In fact, over 600 freshmen qualified for honors enrollment.

A majority of the discussion at the Advisory meeting centered around the potential of Mt. Pleasant to become a destination retirement area for Central's baby boomer alumni. A sub-committee to be chaired by former State House Representative Sandra Caul and staffed by Chamber President Jim Kostrava will be meeting to gather data and review other such developments around the country.

Homecoming went well last weekend, both on campus and in the neighborhoods. And, speaking of football, the Central-Western game is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Friday, November 10. Both CMU and Mt. Pleasant Public Safety are well prepared and expect guests to begin arriving in town by Thursday evening.

2. Construction Projects

Only a few construction projects are still underway this late in the season. Reconstruction is continuing at Pickens Field and the Airport. If the weather cooperates, we hope to get one more milling and overlay project under our belt at Main and Mosher. If all goes according to plan, that work will begin Saturday.

The Engineering Department has completed their field survey work and is beginning the design phase for the projects on next year's capital improvement list. While it may be 2007 for Engineering, the Assessor's Office is beginning the field work for all new projects completed in the last year.

As an additional note, one of those programs that only the City provides—leaf pick-up—began this Tuesday!

3. Borden Building News

It seems a waste of trees to remind us once more of the “picture-perfect” demolition of the Borden Building chimney that occurred on October 6th. We had email requests from former residents as far away as Texas for footage of the drop, which is now available on the City's website.

What some of the onlookers may have missed was the opportunity we took to train several employees in Incident Command System. ICS is a universal protocol used by emergency and municipal responders around the country to react to natural disasters and emergencies. We are much more comfortable, as an organization, in using ICS now that we have had an opportunity to field test our plans. We will be completing tabletop training with all departments in November to assure we are freshly trained for any weather emergencies that may occur this winter.

Other employees, including seven operators in the Street Department and DPW Analyst Michelle Smith, have completed compliance training under the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS was issued under the Homeland Security Directive. Public Works employees who have a direct role in emergency preparedness or response are required to complete specific course work and training hours. By increasing the number of employees who agree to upgrade their expertise as emergency responders, the community can rest assured they will continue to be well-served if disaster strikes.

You may notice activity picking up around the building next week as well. Environmental clean-up and asbestos abatement is scheduled to begin shortly as the contractors are preparing for demolition to remove several concrete slabs and the old administration building with the ell.

The City team, lead by Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Greg Baderschneider, has spent hours with the contractor and architect refining proposed prints. According to the Purchase Agreement the contractor and the City must agree on a set of “biddable and permittable” prints prior to the November 15 deadline.

4. **New Business Downtown!**

You may remember that several months ago we reported that the application for an SDM license at 222 South Washington Street, the former location of Nay’s Bamboo Kitchen, had been denied. We were notified last week that the Liquor Control Commission has reversed its decision upon appeal by the applicants.

Since a site plan had already been approved at that address, we should expect to see construction beginning very soon. That establishment will join Stone Soup as one of the new CBD merchants. Remodeling continues at the former Someplace Special site to welcome yet another retail venue.

We will be talking more about the Downtown budget and expenditures as part of the work session on October 23. While the Downtown Development Director’s job and budget are primarily devoted to hardscape issues and economic development activities, general promotion of the attractiveness of downtown remains critical as well. The Downtown Business Association will be sponsoring Girls Night Out on November 18th and A Dickens Christmas Celebration on December 1 and 2. All are welcome to take advantage of these wonderful opportunities to experience what Downtown Mt. Pleasant has to offer.

One of the items the Principal Shopping District assessment pays for is snow plowing of the public lots in the Central Business District. Much debate was held regarding whether it may be advisable to privatize that activity. In order for us to compare “apples to apples” we will be letting bids on plowing the 11 public lots within the next week using criteria equivalent to current operations on timing, cleanliness and ice removal. Depending on what we learn regarding the cost of meeting those standards, we may wish to engage in additional discussions regarding what other standards may be acceptable to our constituents and at what cost.

A final note about Downtown ... City Attorney Matthew Romashko has prepared the new ordinance language which amends the parking prohibition section of the ordinance. The Clerk will publish the new language, which will go into effect 30 days after the Commission took action, November 8, 2006. We have begun the design and will be ordering signs to be placed on the streets that enter the new “4:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.” district. We are investigating the possibility and price of including a map of the new exemption district on the signs.

5. Progress on the Proposed 2007 Budget

As the Charter requires, the Commission received an Annual Budget proposal at its first meeting of September. At the special meeting held October 10th the Commission and the public were presented with history, terms and background that would allow them to analyze the document that defines the budget. We were also able to walk through the revenues, expenditures and balance of each of the funds so that the Commission and the public could scrutinize the submittal in terms of their priorities for service.

By the last meeting in December the Commission must pass a balanced budget. The proposal that was presented is balanced and furthers the plan that was introduced with the 2006 Budget. It contains no millage increase (other than that proposed for the Borden Building condominium) and proposes no change in service levels to residents from what was activated in 2006.

What remains to be done by the Commission in the next two months is to determine what changes, if any, they may wish to make to the budget proposal so that it aligns with their priorities.

Per our discussion at the budget presentation meeting, and in answer to questions we have received since then, we are proposing the following topics be scheduled for discussion at a series of work sessions. If the collection of data requires an adjustment of the schedule, or if other issues are raised, we will supply a new calendar as soon as possible.

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| October 23 | A. Detail of the 2007 Downtown Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Assessment Formula• Targeted Uses of Revenue Sources B. Details of Fund Balances <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reserved and Unreserved |
| November 13 | A. Options for Expanded Brush Pick-up
B. Overview of Fire Service and Revenue Options <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organization and duties• Impact of the non-taxable property and history of the State fire reimbursements• Review potential commercial inspection fees |
| November 27 | A. Introduce Proposal for 2007 Fee Changes
B. Costs and Opportunities of Energy Conservation
C. A Comparable Look at Millage Rates |

Some of the topics to be discussed could increase expenditures and therefore, call for offsetting revenue adjustments. Other items being presented result from previous discussions on revenue enhancement options. Still other issues are scheduled to provide the Commission or the public with a greater understanding of the financial picture. If there are other issues, programs, services or revenue sources that the Commission wishes to review relative to adjustments to the 2007 Proposed Budget, please let us know soon so that any necessary research can be conducted.

As we mentioned before, the budget must be passed by the last meeting in December (which we assume will be the 18th). The last opportunity for work session discussion will be December 11th.

6. **Election Matters**

According to City Clerk Rob Flynn the Governor's race and the ballot issues being considering on the upcoming election are leading to an increased number of applications for absentee ballots. Over 600 ballots have already been mailed to City residents. Mr. Flynn is also estimating that returns will be tallied much later this year due to the number of write-in candidates for seats on the School Board and the City Commission. Write-in votes must be tallied by hand.

Along with the local ballot question for a senior citizen service millage are several other state-wide proposals. We have enclosed a communiqué prepared by Michigan State University Extension that may be helpful to share with your constituents.

7. **Other Topics of Interest**

Several other issues have been brought forth that will require discussion at work sessions or special meetings. Because of the demanding schedule that has been laid out to complete review of the 2007 Budget and because of the number of regular meetings remaining in 2006, we would suggest the following plan.

December (Date TBD)	New Commission Orientation
January 2 Regular Meeting	Organization & Election Meeting
January 23 Regular Meeting	Appointments to Boards/Commissions
February 12 (Work Session)	Review of PRD Zoning and the History and Impact at Broomfield & Crawford

February 26 (Special preceding Regular Meeting)	City & Planning Commissions with Zoning Board of Appeals re: joint vision of neighborhood aesthetics and joint vision for Broomfield & Crawford
February (Special Meeting TBD)	Goals and Budget Retreat
March (Work Session)	Liquor License: Types & Regulations

This arrangement is being proposed for several reasons. We are proposing the new Commissioner orientation occur before the organizational meeting in January so that any newly-elected member(s) will be prepared prior to taking their seat and so that goal-setting and the discussion of how goals are to be translated into budgeting can occur as early in the year as possible.

We are suggesting that the proposed joint meeting of the three Boards occur after the newly-seated City Commission has sufficient opportunity to review the issues and following the appointment process. The ZBA and the Planning Commission have only two meeting dates left this year and each board has three members up for replacement or reappointment. Considering the amount of change that could occur in the next two months and the demanding schedule the City Commission already has, it seems most prudent to wait until the new year.

The Commission had expressed an interest some time ago in learning more about liquor licensure and a community's impact on the process. The Commission has also been asked to re-evaluate the policy regarding quota licenses that was put into place just three months ago. It would seem reasonable to gather additional information before re-visiting such a recent decision. By scheduling a work session on the topic of liquor licenses within the next four months we would be able to inform any interested parties of when their request may be evaluated.

KSG/je

Enclosure