



## MEMORANDUM

TO: St. Joseph City Commissioners

FROM: Richard I. Lewis, City Manager 

DATE: August 27, 2013

RE: UPDATE

Knowing there is a significant amount of time between Commission meetings, we thought an update before the next meeting would be helpful.

### **Fall Construction Projects**

Construction is scheduled to commence on September 3<sup>rd</sup> for the 2013 CSO and the St. Joseph Drive Reconstruction Projects. You may recall that B&Z Company is the Contractor on both of their projects.

The purpose of the 2013 CSO Project is to separate downtown roof drains from the sanitary sewer with the work predominantly located on the 200, 300 and 400 block alleys east of State Street and the 600 block of Elm Street. City staff has spent significant time meeting with building owners over the summer to determine the location of the roof drains and coordinate the work between public and private property. B&Z Company will start on Elm Street and work their way north.

The St. Joseph Drive Reconstruction Project involves replacement of sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water main in addition to the roadway reconstruction. The section of St. Joseph Drive that is currently asphalt roadway will be replaced with concrete pavement. The curb and gutter section will be extended slightly to the west, however most of the new pavement

will terminate in a shoulder to address downstream drainage concerns. Sidewalk will be added on the north side of the street to connect the existing sidewalks on St. Joseph Drive and Niles Avenue. St. Joseph Drive at Nile Avenue will be closed until project completion which is expected to be November 8<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, Kalin Construction has informed the City that they plan to begin work on the West Highland Reconstruction Project on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Sidewalks & Plantings**

Our code enforcement officer has begun going through the city to identify places where plantings—whether trees, bushes, flowers, decorative grasses or even lawn grass—is infringing on the public sidewalk. Trees in the public tree lawn are the responsibility of the city and will be addressed by our Department of Public Works. Trees on private property and other plantings are the responsibility of the property owner.

We want to make certain the public sidewalk is completely clear of plantings, up to a height of 6'-8" above the ground. Our community is blessed to have many miles of public sidewalks and to be compact enough that our residents can walk to many destinations. We also realize the effort many residents put into keeping the sidewalks clear and this is an effort to try to make sure our sidewalks are consistently clear throughout the community.

### **Water Plant Strategic Capital Improvement Plan (SCIP)**

The Request for Proposal for the Water Plant's long range Capital Improvement Plan was mailed on August 23<sup>rd</sup> and posted to the City's web site. Twenty three engineering firms have been solicited. Firms were invited to bid based on demonstrated expertise and experience in water plant/water distribution. To date inquires have already been received from five firms and plant visits have been scheduled with two firms for the weeks of September 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for September 26<sup>th</sup> with the bid opening will be held on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Detective Position-Department of Public Safety**

The promotional process to fill the vacancy in the detective position in the department of public safety has been completed. Officers Herbert, Elliott and Sysko all applied for and went through the entire process. Officer Herbert achieved the highest score and was promoted to detective as of Monday, August 26, 2013. We are confident that Officer Herbert will serve the City, its residents and visitors with enthusiasm and dedication.

### **Hose Testing-Department of Public Safety**

For the first time in several years, the hose at the fire station is undergoing testing to ensure it will not fail in the field. The department is incorporating the testing into its weekly training giving the new public safety officers experience with the testing procedures and hose lay in the engines.

### **Preliminary Breath Test Grant**

The Department of Public Safety is making a grant application to the Michigan Department of State Police for a Preliminary Breath Tester (PBT). If the application is accepted, the department will receive a PBT worth approximately \$800. The PBT is used by officers on patrol to test the breath alcohol content of suspected drunk drivers. There are no strings attached to grant.

### **Fairplain Water System / WSJOB**

At last week's WSJOB meeting there was a discussion of the status of the Fairplain water system. The agreement indicates that there should be one metered interconnect between Fairplain and either the Benton Harbor or the Benton Charter Township water systems. At present there are four interconnects. The WSJOB representatives from the City and the Townships felt there could be mutual advantage to all the water systems in preserving more than one interconnect in case of emergency and is investigating what interconnects make the most sense in providing the greatest benefit to the systems. When the investigation is complete, we will make a recommendation to the City and the Townships to consider amending the agreement to allow the appropriate interconnects.

### **2014 Public Art Project**

Susan, Commissioner Goff and I will meet with the SPGA for a second time to submit our proposal to incorporate a golf theme into next year's public art. We will share the results from our September 16th meeting at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting.

### **MML Community Excellence Award**

A viewing of the final video will be shown on Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12:30 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers. If your schedule allows, please join us. The segment is 7 minutes long. As an FYI, both David Knight and Patrick Bosse have worked on this project pro bono. A special shout out to them, as well as Susan, for all of their hard work. We will attempt to bring home the Cup for a second time.

### **City Newsletter, 'City Connection'**

The newsletter has gone to the printer and will be delivered to residents' mailboxes on Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>. As a side note, through our web site, over 2,000 people from all over (not just residents) have signed up to receive the newsletter electronically. The newsletter will be posted to the web site today, which will in turn, automatically generate it to those email addresses.

### **"Taps" on the Bluff**

Just wanted to share that Silver Beach Pizza has installed an automated audio system near their restaurant and each evening at sunset, they play "Taps". Much positivity being noted by this gesture. They play the audio exactly at sunset each night (currently around 8:24 p.m.)

**Annual Audit**

The field work on the 2012-2013 financial audit is now complete; auditors are in the process of creating the financial report for presentation to the City Commission at your regular meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>. We are also going to provide highlights during the Community meetings in early October.

**Pension Ordinance**

Members of the Pension Board met with Attorney Tom Michaud on Wednesday to review a draft restatement of the Pension Ordinance. The Pension Board sought Attorney Michaud's expertise to review the ordinance for compliance with applicable state and federal laws, and regulations, collective bargaining agreements, as well as general practices of public pension systems. The intent of this review is not to modify or amend the retirement benefits, but to simplify the ordinance and remove any redundancies or unnecessary language. Certain changes may require the concurrence of union representatives. The final draft will be presented to the City Commission for consideration.

**Security Committee**

Staff members met on Thursday to consider security upgrades to the current access control system and cameras. Over the past two years, the Water Services Joint Operating Board has undertaken to install fencing, security gates, and is now looking at cameras and an access control system to the facility. The City Hall access control system is failing and needs to be upgraded so we are looking to purchase one new access controller that will serve the water plant, city hall, public works and the fire station. At the same time, staff will also investigate the possibility of replacing and/or locating security cameras in several locations around these same facilities.

**Lake Park Place Lot**

I have been in touch with the owners of this lot and will be setting up a time to meet with them within the next week or so. I hope to learn more about their plans for the development and will share my findings with you following that meeting.

Have a great and safe holiday weekend.