



Week of February 24, 2020 – Friday Memo

Good afternoon. This is the City Manager's week in review.

Vacancy – We are accepting applications for the Treasurer position. If you know anyone interested with local government experience, please send them to City Hall.

DPW Position – Myself and the DPW director interviewed an individual last week and made an employment offer to fill the vacant DPW position. Hopefully in the coming days we will receive a response indicating their interest in the position.

Michigan Township Services – I met with Tasha from Michigan Township Services about adding onto their contract to include some of the workload currently housed under the Planning Department. With the departure of the Planning and Zoning Administrator, I'm proposing to outsource some of the work and plan to re-evaluate the workload later this year to determine what the best process is for the residents and the City. With MTS proposed to take on more of the work, they could serve as a one stop location for all zoning and construction questions. Tasha has presented a proposal and I will be bringing that to Council at the March 16th meeting.

Recycling – I spoke with the Republic representative on Wednesday and we reviewed the contract amendment. I have the amendment scheduled to be on the Council's agenda on March 16th. We will begin to get information distributed to the community in the coming weeks. When individuals are ready to have their cart delivered, they will call a dedicated phone number provided by Republic and the cart will be delivered. The first pick up is proposed to be in April. There are still some dates and process to work out, but we are getting closer.

Special Assessment District – I have a meeting scheduled next week with Prein and Newhof to review the Special Assessment District budget calculations. The contractor has booked the project starting in the August / September 2020 timeframe.

200 Blue Star – Thursday I met with the developer who wants to develop 200 Blue Star. We stressed with him the need to get the project moving in order to meet the State deadlines to obtain funding at the beginning of the State's fiscal year. We agreed on several key dates that need to be met to keep the project on task. By April, the environmental assessments need to be complete. In the month of May, introductory conversations need to be held with the Planning Commission, Brownfield Authority, and EPA, No later than June 1, the introductory meeting needs to be completed with the State Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy.

Point Pleasant – I've continued sharing information with the attorney to bring him up to speed on the Point Pleasant project. I have not heard of a date to have the negotiations.

Root Beer Barrel – The Deputy City Clerk continues to hand out proposal packets for the Root Beer Barrel. This seems to be generating a good deal of interest.

Cleaning Contract – The cleaning proposal came back higher than anticipated and we've rejected all the bids. The City is currently evaluating other options.

Grateful for the Police Department – I received a call from a resident in the Felker's Neighborhood who was very appreciative of the Douglas Police Department and the "House Watch" program. As a seasonal resident, the caller was very happy to know that her property was being watched. In fact, when she showed up unexpectedly, a police officer noticed a car in the driveway and ran the license plate to make sure she was connected to the property. Thanks Douglas PD!!! If you would like a House Watch Request Form you can find it on our website under Forms and Permits.

Erosion – County Commission Chairman Jim Storey recently testified before the Natural Resources and Environment Subcommittee regarding the toll the erosion is having on lakeshore communities. I've attached Chairman Storey's statement.

COVID-19 Coronavirus – The City website has information from the County Health Officer regarding the COVID-19 Coronavirus. There are some good preventative measures people can take included in the literature.

Blue Star Bike Path Meeting – I attended the first meeting of the tri-community group. The meeting was mostly organizational in nature and Councilperson Mooradian was selected as the recording secretary. The group plans to come forward with recommendations to the respective governing bodies in July.

Upcoming Events – Winterfest is Saturday, February 29th, from 12:00-3:00 at several Douglas locations. The event flyer is attached for more information.

That's all I have for now.

Rich LaBombard
City Manager

Statement of Chairperson James Storey, Allegan County Board of Commissioners
before the
Natural Resources and Environment Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
February 25, 2020

Good Morning, Chairman Bumstead and Senator Members of the Natural Resources and Environment Subcommittee.

I am Jim Storey, a member and currently chair of the Allegan County Board of Commissioners. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you on the serious emergency faced by the Great Lakes shoreline counties of our state.

The near-historic rise of the Great Lakes and the high winds which buffeted our Allegan County shoreline late last year exacted a telling toll on our communities and the residents who live there.

This emergency has been talked about for several months. Except to speed up a too-slow permit process for shoreline property owners, precious little action has taken place to alleviate a shipwreck on the horizon for our fast-approaching summer tourism season.

In Allegan County, our Lakeshore Drive county road has suffered serious damage that needs attention immediately and long term needs re-location. Currently, some 12 homeowners are isolated because the roadway has been eroded to a dangerous passage level. Fire, sheriff and ambulance services are prevented from accessing the area.

Temporary repairs would cost our road commission \$800,000 while a permanent relocation has been estimated at \$5,000,000. We are not the only county in this situation.

I am advised the County Road Association of Michigan is surveying its members for a list of roads in similar situations as our Lakeshore Drive.

While this cost is daunting, of even greater concern is the ugly condition of our shorelines littered with flotsam and jetsam tossed against our Lake Michigan shore by the wind-driven high water beating against our shores.

I have attached a few photos taken recently of certain sections of the Lake Michigan shoreline in Allegan County. I think you will agree summer visitors will be shocked when they attempt to access the lake from littered beaches. They may well abandon our state as a place to spend their summer vacation.

With the 2020 navigation season officially just a few weeks away, this is a serious threat to our extremely vital tourism industry which employs hundreds if not thousands of Michigan residents.

Can you imagine the beating Pure Michigan will take if this trash is not removed? Will Michigan's image be bolstered if a commercial or recreational vessel hits debris in our waters and sinks, perhaps injuring those on board?

Current emergency disaster funding is tied to a mechanism that was never designed to address our current Great Lake emergency. Among the many stop points that require emergency managers to document the start of a disaster and an end to said disaster.

This disaster is ongoing and if Corps of Engineers and NOAA predictions come true, it will continue for the year ahead.

Action is needed now, not after a so-called action task force meets and discusses the situation.

So, what is to be done?

Allegan County needs and deserves an emergency appropriation from the state to relocate our tourist-oriented Lakeshore Drive. Our county and 23 of our 24 townships already tax themselves in addition to state-shared revenue to maintain our county road system. We are among only a handful of Michigan counties that do so.

In other words, we don't ask you first for funds; we do our job before we ask for help, but we need the help of our State Government now.

Our beaches need immediate attention to remove the wreckage. The Governor of Indiana has already tasked his reports to assess damage to that state's Lake Michigan shore to document the need for emergency funding.

In comparison to that state, our endless Great Lakes shoreline in both peninsulas are much longer and the threat to our tourism economic is many times greater.

Our state government should take same action as the Hoosier state while at the same time getting the two natural resource agencies, DNR and EGLE, in gear to engage those with the skill and knowledge to remove that debris.

Some have suggested this task – removing beach debris which consists of torn-off decks, stairways, barbecue grills, large trees, and docks among other things – could be a training exercise for engineering units of the National Guard.

With the 147 vetoes of funding for various projects this fiscal year freeing up millions of dollars, we need to utilize the remaining frozen funds to attack this natural disaster.

When Katrina hit the gulf coast and the 2012 Atlantic coast storm hit New Jersey and other nearby states, the Congress appropriated emergency funds to help those states rebuild. This was in addition to funds triggered by the current legal mechanism.

Michigan counties need that same spirit of response to this emergency that hit our shores, our communities and our residents.

We need Michigan's state government to engage in this emergency, now, not some years ahead.

A DOUGLAS COMMUNITY EVENT

Winterfest

Saturday, February 29
12:00-3:00 pm

HORSE-DRAWN WAGON

Ride to each location during Winterfest. Sponsored by Kim Neuens Design.

SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT

Make s'mores with the Fire Department, explore fire trucks, and enjoy other activities at Beery Field. Thanks to Brian Butler and the South Haven Walmart for contributing.

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

Meet Siberian Huskies and watch them pull a sled. School House will be open for exhibits.

DOUGLAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Winter-themed carnival games, prizes, and a cake walk.

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS DISTRICT LIBRARY

Complete a scavenger hunt to earn a candy prize and a brand new book. Design your own button or magnet.

DOUGLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Meet and greet officers all around town.

Back Alley Pizza will be selling pizza by the slice: \$1 per piece!

Respite Cappuccino Court will be selling hot chocolate.