



*The Village of Friendliness – Since 1870*

Good Afternoon Everyone.

This is the City Manager's week in review for the week of February 15, 2021.

**COVID** – City Hall continues to be open by appointment only and most staff are working remotely to reduce their potential exposure to COVID until at least February 21<sup>st</sup> in accordance with the MDHHS Emergency Order, updated on February 8, 2021. If you need assistance or would like to schedule an appointment, please call 269-857-1438.

I am closely monitoring the State's COVID website for information on the new variant of COVID that has the potential to spread more aggressively. Cases of the new variant have surfaced not far away in Ionia County. Most employees won't be eligible to receive the vaccination until late summer / fall based on the State's timeline.

**Point Pleasant** – I toured the building at Point Pleasant this week and reviewed the building systems with the current owner in anticipation of the purchase of the property by the City. The closing date scheduled for February 16<sup>th</sup> was postponed so the State could review paperwork. A new closing date has not been set.

**Saugatuck City Manager** – The Saugatuck City Manager and I toured Douglas today and reviewed common projects between the two municipalities. We were joined by the Saugatuck DPW Director. We reviewed this summer's Campbell Road watermain and resurfacing project, we discussed aquatic weeds and our success with the program, and we talked about the harbor.

**Douglas Parks Project** – The Douglas Parks group is working diligently on their fundraising effort to install new equipment at Schultz Park and Beery Field. This week I joined the meeting, and we discussed the playground grants, fundraising efforts, and playground layouts.

**Facility Study** – I've been working with the firm ABM to review the City's facility needs. Several meetings took place this week to outline project budgets, possible timelines, and financing options. We also discussed the current DPW site and the public works storage needs. Currently, public works equipment is stored at three locations around the City.

**DDA Chair** – I had a meeting with the DDA chair this week and we covered a lot of topics. I stressed the greatest tool at the DDA's disposal is the ability to direct revenue to projects that improve the downtown. We talked about Beery Field and the ongoing playground improvement project, potential social districts for the summer of '21, right-of-way seating, the DDA signage project, and many other topics.

**Beery Field** – I spent some time this week researching the history of Beery Field. The City purchased Beery Field in 1925. I understand the field is named after a long-time public works employee, Harold J. Beery. The field has been used for ball games long before the city purchased the property, according to the Douglas Dutchers' website. The Douglas Parks Project is raising funds for new playground equipment at Beery Field, and

the DDA is considering their future Tax Increment Financing projects that may also make improvements to the park. The renewed interest in Beery Field improvements prompted my research to understand the history of the property. Beery Field is within the DDA district and, as such, the DDA may elect to include improvements cited in their TIF plan.

**Douglas Beach Stairs** – City Hall continues to work on a solution for access to the public beach. Our design firm is working with three vendors to get quotes and schedules prepared. We're pressing for an April start to the stair access project so that it's completed by the start of summer. But it is all dependent on the selected vendor's availability and access to construction materials which, unfortunately, are in short demand.

That's all I have for now. Have a good weekend.

Rich LaBombard  
City Manager