



Good Afternoon Everyone.

This is the City Manager's week in review for the week of February 22, 2021.

COVID – City Hall continues to be open by appointment only; however, staff are in the building. 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 and most City staff won't be eligible to receive the vaccination until late summer / fall based on the State's timeline.

Audio / Video Installation – A vendor was at City Hall this week for the installation of audio / video equipment for the City Council chamber that will better accommodate recording and live streaming of meetings in the Council chamber once COVID restrictions ease up.

DDA Meeting – I attended the DDA meeting by Zoom on Monday where the Douglas Parks Project presented their MEDC crowd source funding grant application and proposed playground layout for Beery Field. The DDA also discussed their budget and economic development goals for the coming year.

Preliminary Center Street PUD – At Wednesday's Planning Commission Special Meeting, the developer of the property on West Center Street discussed their Planned Unit Development (PUD) application and presented the plan for the site. The Planning Commission reviewed and accepted the proposal as a preliminary PUD plan. The next step is for a full PUD hearing on June 9th. The development will be a mixed-use development and is intended to provide attainable housing to the community.

Sign Ordinance – The Sign Ordinance Committee has continued to meet and reviewed a draft ordinance that is scheduled for consideration by the Planning Commission on April 14th.

Point Pleasant – The new closing date for the Point Pleasant purchase is March 10th.

Tri-Community Manager Meeting – Tuesday I met for lunch with the managers of Saugatuck Township (Joe Frye) and Saugatuck City (Ryan Heise). This was our initial meet and greet. We plan to continue to meet on a routine basis.

Recycle Meeting – Several of us participated in a meeting with Jack Brown from Republic to discuss his review of local recycling, leaf collection, and community spring clean-up event. Councilwoman North was on the meeting as well and will take the information back to the Tri-Community Recycling Committee. Jack provided a set of guidelines for the spring clean up from another community that we will review and potentially use in Douglas. The guidelines limit the size and weight of debris allowed to be collected and is intended to avoid unnecessarily large and bulky items from being handled by DPW crews—thus less potential for injury.

Surplus Property – In the course of reviewing the purchasing ordinance to understand how to dispose of surplus property, it was discovered that the City doesn't have a surplus property disposal policy. The Treasurer has found a variety of examples from other communities, and we are planning to craft a new policy for Douglas.

Douglas Parks Project – The Douglas Parks group is working diligently on their fundraising effort to install new equipment at Schultz Park and Beery Field. Donations can be made on their Facebook page.

Facility Study – Staff continue to work with our facility vendor to discuss future facility needs. I have a meeting late this afternoon to go over scope of work items.

Soil Vapor Extraction System – In a Zoom introduction meeting with EGLE this week, I learned that EGLE has grant funding available to decommission a system at 200 Blue Star that was put in by the DEQ. The grant is approximately \$300,000 and will be used to abandon a soil vapor extraction system that is installed on the north and west side of the facility. The system has not been operable for several years. Additional funds are available to abandon a number of monitoring wells that are north and west of the site. I will contact the City's environmental engineer to discuss the proposal.

Blue Star Highway Trail – I met with the other community managers and members of the Friends of the Blue Star Trail group to discuss how the three communities can work together to move the trail process forward. There was discussion about whether the committee should be converted to an authority and allowing the Allegan County Community Foundation to act as the fiduciary. There is a regular trail committee meeting on Friday.

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.

Document Scanning – The City Clerk's office continues the process of scanning and documenting City Hall records. The scanned documents will make for more efficient document retrieval as well as provide a digital copy of municipal records retained by the Clerk's office.

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

Rich LaBombard
City Manager