



*The Village of Friendliness – Since 1870*

This is the City Manager's week in review for the week of February 6, 2023.

**Michigan Spark Grant** – The City received word that we were not a recipient of the first round of the Spark Grant. The state awarded \$14,178,900 in grants to fund 21 projects state-wide. The City and Playground committee applied for funding to complete the playground plan at Schultz Park. There were 462 applicants for the first round totaling more than \$280 million in requests. Round 2 funding opportunity in the spring of 2023 will make \$25 million available. The grant application will be revised and resubmitted for the next round. There will also be a third round of funding for an additional \$25 million in the summer of 2023.

**Michigan Municipal Executives Conference** – Last week I attended the MME conference in Grand Rapids where I attended sessions on leading through crisis, planning and zoning, project management in crisis, land banks and brownfields as economic development tools, and a legislative session with lobbyists. A few noteworthy items came out of the legislative session. There is discussion about revising the open meetings act to modify the ability to have virtual meetings. In addition, the public notice process which relies heavily on newspaper publications is being discussed to allow other media to serve as official public notice options. This is a result of diminished newsprint publications in circulation. Also, there was discussion about the short-term rental legislation. The presenters anticipate another attempt to get short-term rental legislation introduced in another form.

**City Council** – Monday was the regular meeting of the City Council, and the following items were approved:

- Escrow policy
- Updated fee schedule
- Revised the Board of Review meeting start date to Tuesday, March 14, 2023
- PM Environmental Change Order #3 to develop a work plan to dispose of construction material located at 200 Blue Star Highway

**Water Street Concerns** – At the upcoming Tuesday (February 21<sup>st</sup>) City Council workshop starting at 6:00 p.m. the City Engineer will lead a discussion about concerns that have come forward regarding the safety of pedestrians on Water Street related to speed, road geometrics, and road width. We hope to come out of the meeting with a ranked list of objectives that the City Engineer can price out for future capital planning.

**Interurban Tour** – This week I met with Phyllis at Interurban, and we discussed some insurance and benefit items that have resulted in financial savings. While at the facility, Phyllis gave me a tour and I met some of the staff. Interurban provides a valuable service to the community. I was surprised to learn that they employ 20 people including drivers, dispatchers, and a mechanic.

**Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment training** – Staff met with the City's labor attorney on Friday to go over anti-discrimination and harassment training. We learned about the responsibilities as an employer, protected classes, reasonable accommodation, responding to discrimination complaints, and avoiding retaliation. The City has recently strengthened its policies and procedures regarding discrimination and this training complements the new policy by

providing managers and employees a basis for understanding and responding to discrimination and harassment claims. Also in attendance were staff from Interurban, the Saugatuck Township Manager, the Saugatuck Fire District Fire Chief, and the manager with several employees of Saugatuck City. In the future, the managers will attempt to coordinate with the other nearby agencies to pool resources and share training opportunities on issues that are germane to local government. This approach will save every municipality time and money if we can collaborate on training.

**Dredging of the Channel** – Next week I’ve been invited to a meeting with Senator Peter’s office to discuss dredging of the river channel. From all indications, some of the present depths of the channel are near zero feet due to siltation when the channel should actually be 9-10 feet deep. I’ll keep the community posted on progress of this item.

**Planning Commission** – The Planning Commission held its monthly meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup>. The Commission met about the Forest Gate development on Ferry Street, and sign ordinance revisions.

That is all I have for now. Have a good weekend.

Rich LaBombard  
City Manager