



TO: Village Council
FROM: Debbie Powell, Village Manager
DATE: July 27, 2020
RE: July 2020 Manager's Report

Since the last Manager's Report in June, there has been more Village Council and Commission meetings, and our activities are slowly starting up again. Attendees are practicing social distancing and asked to wear masks. Please allow this report to update you on recent activities.

Zoning Ordinance Update

The Planning Commission met on July 15, 2020 to review a draft of the Zoning Ordinance. Jill Bahm, our consultant with Giffels Webster, presented to the Planning Commission the new and digital clearzoning version of our existing Zoning Ordinance with minor changes to update language (i.e. referencing churches now as places of worship, etc.)

The Zoning Ordinance will be updated in two (2) phases. The first phase is to update our existing and outdated (2002) ordinance; and the second phase will be to incorporate changes recommended by Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Planning Commission, Village Council, businesses, and residents. Phase 2 is already started with an ad hoc committee of the Planning Commission. They will be working concurrently with Giffels Webster on Phase 2 while the work to seek community engagement, approval, and finalize Phase 1 of the clearzoning version of our Zoning Ordinance continues.

As you may recall, the cost for the new Zoning Ordinance is shared 50/50 between the Village and the MEDC Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) program. These grant funds are available to assist communities in achieving "best practices" for economic development. The Village will be in a much better position to attract new businesses to our community with an updated Zoning Ordinance.

SCMCCI – Zoning Permits

The Village was recently informed that SCMCCI will no longer be providing zoning review services and issuing zoning permits on behalf of the Village. The SCMCCI Inspector who issued zoning permits recently retired and the new inspector will not be handling zoning permits. The Village did not receive any advance notice of this change and we are currently evaluating our options. In the meantime, zoning permits will be issued by the Village. As Village Manager, I am also the Zoning Administrator. I have been working with Police Chief Haynes on the few requests we have received to date.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Presentation

The Village is compiling data concerning the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and our water and sewer rates. The plant has been well maintained, but at 40 years old it has surpassed its useful life of 35 years. The WWTP has required over \$285,000 in equipment replacement in the past few years. Staff has been working with contractors to gain information on processing, budget, utility rates and options for our wastewater treatment plant.

One of the contractors we have been working with, Johnson Controls, will be presenting at the July 27, 2020 Village Council meeting. Their presentation will help to inform and educate the council and general public on our options. At a previous Committee of the Whole Meeting, the Village Council advised staff to pursue renovations to the existing plant as opposed to building a new wastewater treatment plant. Johnson Controls presentation will incorporate renovations and upgrades to the existing plant along with a recommended change in processing waste from anaerobic to aerobic.

Water and Sewer Rate Study

Village staff has been working with contractors from Michigan Rural Water Association (MRWA) on a rate study. Primary considerations were to simplify the rate structure, consider future revenue requirements for the wastewater and water treatment plants.

We are close to sharing the information with the Village Council. A meeting is scheduled in August to review the final draft. Afterwards, our consultant with MRWA, plans to meet individually with village trustees to explain the analysis. Subsequently, this information will be provided to the public and a public hearing will be held before any changes are made to the utility rates.

Harvest

It is still summer and not yet Harvest time; however, as I see the fruits of labor from the Village Council and Staff taking shape around the Village, I think all the hard work earlier in the year is paying off. As we are challenged during this pandemic, take time to enjoy our beautiful village and all that it has to offer.