

City of Northville
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
January 11, 2010

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Northville City Hall Council Chambers, 215 West Main Street, Northville, Michigan.

Present: Mayor Christopher Johnson, Mayor Pro Tem James Allen, Councilmembers Douglas Bingham, Nancy Darga (arrived at 7:13 pm), and Michele Fecht

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Patrick Sullivan, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director Nicolette Bateson, Director of Public Works James Gallogly, Fire Chief James Allen, Police Chief Gary Goss, Housing Director Sherry Necelis, Parks and Recreation Director Traci Sincock, DDA Executive Director Lori Ward, City Clerk Dianne Massa, Northville Youth Assistance Director Sue Campbell, reporter from the Northville Record and one citizen.

CITIZENS COMMENTS None

FY 2010-2011 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PRIORITIES

CITY STAFF GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

City Staff responded to questions from City Council on their previously submitted goals, objectives, and priorities. Key items from the goals, objectives and priorities included:

Building Department

- Continue monitoring the implementation of the Building Department reorganization by developing an improved system for recording and tracking various inspections, reviewing the Building Department fee schedules to ensure fees are fair and sufficient to cover costs, revision of the permit applications for uniformity and clarity, and explore contracting with another community for code enforcement.
- Continue to support the boards and commissions by reviewing and revising applications, reviewing the fee schedule, and holding an annual joint meeting of the boards and commissions and the Building and Planning Review Committee.
- Improve the Building Department Record Management by exploring options to back scan street files and plans, and integrate the Assessing and Building Department databases on a regular basis.
- Maintain professional certifications of the Building Official and inspectors.

City Clerk and Elections

- Continue with City efforts to collect revenues through continuation of efforts to collect unpaid parking tickets and offering passport acceptance services.
- Have all certified passport acceptance agents attend one US Department of State passport training session.
- Complete the Business Registration Program conversion, continue to be proactive in updating the Business Registration database, and request code enforcement assistance to register businesses that do not respond to registration and licensing requests.

- Administer the 2010 elections and ensure elections are conducted efficiently and in compliance with State election law.
- Continue to expand the number of official documents scanned and stored in the Document Management Imaging System.
- Continue participation in the Census 2010 Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program by serving as the LUCA liaison for the City of Northville.
- Continued attendance at the Master Academy and other relevant training to retain certification.

Comments and Questions: Questions pertained to the amount of revenue the City realizes from delinquent parking ticket collection and passport services. In response to a question pertaining to the Census 2010 LUCA program, it was noted that the City is not reimbursed for staff time dedicated to the LUCA program.

Downtown Development Authority

- Complete the design and construction of the Streetscape Enhancement including administering the MDOT Enhancement Grant and assisting in the bond issuing process for project funding.
- Complete the design and construction of the East Main Street Cut-Through Project, which would connect Parking Lot #3 (Marquis Parking Lot) with the Main Street businesses.
- Continue the successful implementation of the Downtown Strategic Plan and meet the objectives identified by the Design, Parking, Business Mix, and Marketing Committees.

(Councilmember Darga arrived at 7:13 p.m.)

- Design Committee: Implement identified signage programs as part of the Streetscape Project, revise the outdoor seating ordinance and draft platform dining design guidelines for Historic District Commission review, and develop a quality maintenance program for downtown improvements.
- Parking Committee: Continue to monitor and develop available parking to support downtown residential, office, retail and restaurant use.
- Business Mix: Continue business recruit efforts using the Business Investment Guide package, How to Open a Business brochure, and the semiannual Tour the Town event.
- Marketing: Implement the Marketing and Promotion Plan developed for the downtown in cooperation with the Northville Chamber of Commerce and the Northville Central Business Association and continue to provide high-quality special events in the downtown and Town Square.
- Organization: Expand the DDA boundaries to include additional commercial and civic properties. Continue the DDA's efforts to serve as the conduit for information to the downtown business community and the City through improved communication, educational programs, working with community organizations on collaborative projects, joint planning sessions with City Council and other City boards and commissions, and building a volunteer base.

Council Comments and Questions: It was explained that:

- "First Fridays" is a merchant-driven activity. The goal is to bring the merchants, NCBA, Chamber of Commerce, and DDA together to promote and market this event to garner more interest and participation.
- The Film Friendly website should be operational by the end of January. The City website and DDA website will include links to this website.
- The "How to Open a Business in Northville" brochure is a checklist for potential business owners to use as a reference for point of contact at City Hall as they move through the process of opening their business.

- Plans to create a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority will be coordinated with the proposed DDA Boundary expansion.
- Tour the Town is an event driven by the DDA. It is hoped that the Chamber of Commerce will become involved in future Tour the Town events.

Finance and Administrative Services

Assistant City Manager

- Completion of three personnel-related manuals. .
- Prepare for labor negotiations for contracts expiring June 30, 2011.
- Enhance website service to the public through exploration of providing utility billing information online; explore offering online payment options, and expanding the website's use as a reference tool.

Finance Director

- Address long-term revenue concerns through the evaluation of the City's tax related and non-tax related options, including monitoring impact of Headlee, General Property Tax Act, and Proposal A limitations, and the completion of the Certified Local Government program.
- Expand City's long-term planning efforts, including developing a financial policies manual.
- Assist the DDA in developing its long-term financial plan by monitoring the proposed financing strategy for implementation of the Downtown Strategic Plan and assist with organizational matters as needed.

Treasurer (Tax and Assessing)

- Automate tax processing by testing and implementing a new automatic debit feature in tax billing software.
- Continue orientation of new, part-time City Assessor.
- Minimize, to the extent possible, external costs of tax appeals by proactively addressing potential areas of concern and providing legal counsel with complete documentation.

Systems Manager

- Ensure stability of the City's information system by utilizing a contracted network administrator for diagnostic, troubleshooting, and maintenance matters.
- Continue Document Management Information System (DMIS) implementation in the City Clerk, Police, Finance, and Tax Departments, and identifying cost effective methods for back scanning documents requiring permanent or very long term retention.
- Begin DMIS implementation for Building Department and Cemetery records
- Serve as a coordinator the City Departments to access GIS resources.

Comments and Questions: Discussion ensued pertaining to the efforts thus far in securing outside assistance with collecting delinquent Wayne County personal property taxes.

Fire Department

- Convert and implement the new state requirement for paperless reporting of medical runs.
- Replace Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) with equipment compatible with that in use in neighboring departments/mutual aid.
- Provide cost effective Fire and EMS service through the employment of well trained fire personnel.
- Continue to explore grant opportunities for training and equipment replacement.

Housing Commission

- Continue to provide services to Allen Terrace residents, maintain high occupancy, increase use of City website to promote Allen Terrace, develop preventive maintenance schedules, and evaluate internal processes and procedures.
- Evaluate existing capital projects history and needs assessment, develop a five-year capital needs program in conjunction with the budget process, develop a 15 year capital needs projection, and explore additional grant funding opportunities.
- Explore additional resident activities and fundraiser opportunities with the Allen Terrace Resident Council.
- Continue administration of the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and identify qualified projects throughout the City.

Parks and Recreation

- Create a sense of community and belonging by offering family programming and providing services to residents without support services, increasing programs and services to the aging population, and increase programs and services to teens.
- Increase electronic newsletter subscriptions by 50% (to 2,225 subscriptions) and send electronic news releases to City and Township homeowner associations.
- Provide family and intergenerational programming.
- Analyze and improve universal accessibility of all recreation facilities.
- Provide opportunities that promote and encourage active lifestyles.
- Use existing community and regional resources efficiently in order to demonstrate fiscal responsibility.
- Provide for the efficient administration of the Department by maintaining upgraded computer hardware and software and monitor need for additional support staff.

Comments and Questions: Discussion ensued pertaining to the goal to increase the number of electronic newsletter subscriptions, thus reducing the number of paper recreation catalogs printed each year. A separate comment suggested sending a postcard to a sampling of about 100 homes to see if they want to be included on the Parks and Recreation email list. City Council requested that the action step to "use local cycling club resources to create a short and long range plan for community wide pathway connections" be expanded to include "regional connections."

Police Department

- Reduce costs by analyzing department activities, programs, equipment, and processes. Reduce liability by updating policies and procedures, and providing officer training. Auction or sell unused equipment.
- Improve records management through use of the Network Record Management System and the Information View to collect data. Support continued use of CLEMIS electronic ticket program, activity log, impounded vehicle, and precious metal programs.
- Develop knowledge, skills and abilities by developing a valid performance appraisal system and providing supervisory training.
- Review emergency preparedness and provide necessary training.

Comments and Questions: Discussion ensued pertaining to the size of police cars and whether a smaller police car was feasible. Responding comments voiced uncertainty that smaller vehicle models could handle the rugged use and amount of equipment and electronics placed and stored in a police car. The trend is moving toward a Chevrolet Tahoe police package for size and durability. It was also noted that while for many years, the Ford Crown Victoria has been the standard for police vehicles, Ford plans to stop making this vehicle.

Public Works

- Perform annual leak survey and repair identified leaks. Continue program to systematically reduce the City's annual winter running water accounts.
- Continue the Water Main Flushing Program and valve and hydrant repair/replacement program.
- Oversee modifications to controls in the reservoir building in an effort to control the City peak hourly demand for water from the Detroit Water and Sewer Department (DWSD).
- Continue to enhance the City's sanitary sewer cleaning program, cleaning 50% of the sewer system each year. Move forward with the City of Northville commitments in the administrative consent order with the State of Michigan.
- Comply with the requirements of the City's General Storm Water Permit.
- Proceed with GIS data collection program for storm sewer system as well as sanitary sewer and water systems.
- Continue various capital improvements through the annual street improvement and sidewalk replacement programs as approved by City Council.
- Administer the City's solid waste program, bid for new solid waste contract, provide for annual fall leaf collection, and facilitate household hazardous waste collections with other communities.
- Utilize DDA funding to provide clean downtown streets and parking facilities and snow removal, continue to assist with downtown civic events and activities, and assist as needed in the implementation of approved Capital Improvements for the Downtown Streetscape Project..
- Provide for the continued operation and maintenance of the City's two cemeteries.
- Continue the City street maintenance program through the annual Street Crack Sealing Program, annual Utility Cut Repair Program, street sweeping, snow and ice removal activities, tree trimming and planting activities, and route traffic sign replacement.
- Begin multi-year traffic sign replacement program to comply with the Federal Highway Administration schedule requiring new retro-reflectivity maintenance standards.
- Develop specification for the purchase of new equipment as approved by City Council.
- Continue tree preservation efforts in the City Hall Open Space area.

Comments and Questions: Further comments and explanation pertained to:

- The need to replace the three deteriorating benches at Oakwood Cemetery. The DDA offered to reprogram benches from the downtown to the cemetery.
- A comment voiced the belief that there are more signs in the rights-of-way than necessary. It was suggested that during the multi-year traffic sign replacement program mandated by the Federal Highway Administration, only the minimum number of required signs be placed in the right-of-way. Staff noted that it might need to engage the services of a qualified traffic engineer to review sign placement.
- Questions and discussion ensued pertaining to fuel charges and Waste Management's method of trash collection.
- Discussion ensued on the proposed reconstruction of Springfield.
- DPW may ask the assistance of an arborist to help maintain the trees in the Open Space behind City Hall that are affected with oak blight.
- A comment noted that someone (not DPW) is dumping dirt on Griswold Street, near the bridge by Mill Race Village, as a bank stabilization effort. Instead, the dirt is rolling into the adjacent creek. Griswold is a county road and Staff will contact the County on this matter.

Youth Assistance

- Maintain an emphasis on programs that serve the needs of our diverse youth population by developing programs to address areas of concern in the 2009 Developmental Asset survey.
- Seek alternate funding sources by soliciting donations and exploring grant opportunities.

- Expand social work services relative to need.
- Develop an education campaign in conjunction with Northville Parks and Recreation and Northville Senior Adult Services to provide Northville Township voters with information relative to the August 2010 Shared Services Millage. (NYA is a shared service of the City and Township. Northville Township funds its contribution to NYA through a shared services millage)

Comments and Questions: In response to a question pertaining to replacing NYA support staff, it was explained that the Township has requested NYA put on hold any plans to replace staff. It was noted that the NYA clerical person was a part-time, union position, and was subject to layoff per Northville Township's clerical union's contract. With the impending cuts facing the Northville school district, it was acknowledged that NYA may be asked to address any shortfalls in services to youths.

City Council Goals, Objectives, and Priorities for FY 2010-2011

Discussion brought out the following goals, objectives, and priorities, which were given a priority designation, and were not ranked in any order. The goals were broadly described as follows and the City Manager was directed to summarize the proposed FY2010-2011 City Council goals, objectives, and priorities and place them on a future agenda for City Council review and adoption.

High Priority

- **Long-Term Fiscal and Financial Stability:** Continue efforts to enhance the City's financial condition to achieve a fund balance minimum of 25%-35% of the City's annual budget and continued investigation of alternate revenue sources or revenue enhancements

Medium Priority

- **Water and Sewer System Improvements:** Continue efforts to improve infrastructure, control water loss, control inflow and infiltration to preserve sewer capacity, build working capital, control debt, monitor regional water distribution and sewer capacity initiatives, and minimize the wholesale water rates charged to City by the Detroit Water and Sewer Department.
- **Implementation of the Downtown Strategic Plan:** Continue to implement the Downtown Strategic Plan and its key strategies to improve the physical and economic environment and organizational structure of the downtown and continued progress by the DDA subcommittees responsible for implementation of the Plan. The Organizational Committee is presently studying potential future boundary changes to the DDA district. The discussions have lead to the creation of a sub-committee which is investigating the potential for redevelopment of areas within or adjacent to the DDA district.
- **Retaining the Retail Operation of the Northville Post Office within the Central Business District:** Continue to work with the United States Postal Service (USPS) to address the needs of the post office while preserving the economic benefits of a post office (particularly the retail function) within the Central Business District.
- **Street, Sidewalk, and Bike Path Improvement Connectivity:** Continue the annual crack sealing program and the annual street and sidewalk program approved in 1997. Continue to pursue planning and funding to expand and connect our pedestrian facilities.
- **Development and Implementation of "Follow Up" Process for Board/Commission Decisions and Establish Committee to Review Inspection Process:** Continue with the restructuring of the Building/Planning/Code Enforcement function. Continue the efforts of the Building and Planning Review Committee (BPRC) in seeking input and recommendations to provide improved administrative support to the boards and commissions, improved customer service, and a "quality

control” process to ensure that projects are built in accordance with the extensive reviews and approvals obtained.

Lower Priority

- **Development and Redevelopment Issues:** Work to continue quality development and redevelopment of the Cady Corridor, McDonald Ford property, and other locations throughout the City.
- **Mill Pond Improvements:** Continue to monitor funding opportunities and communications with upstream communities on remediation efforts, and review the feasibility of separating dredging from trapping.
- **Cemetery Build-Out:** Consideration to clearing (making more space available on a gradual basis) the Phase II area of the cemetery either as an outside effort or as a gradual effort undertaken by the Department of Public Works.

Projects On Hold

None identified

Projects to be Closed Out

None identified

COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor and Council: None

Staff: Staff wished the DPW Director a “Happy Birthday.”

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned.

Adjournment: 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Massa, CMC
City Clerk

Approved as submitted: 1/19/2010

Christopher J. Johnson
Mayor