

City of the Village of Clarkston
City Manager Report
January 25, 2021

Main Street “Your Speed” Sign Activation

As previously reported, installation of the new electronic “Your Speed” signs on North Main Street is complete and the signs are now running in “silent” mode, capturing the current speeds of drivers. Our plan to light-up the signs on January 18th has been pushed back to January 25th to ensure we have captured a sufficient sample of the “before” speed data. MSU student CJ Sivak will take a snapshot of the “before” data on the 25th, followed by a few weeks of “after” speed data. We’re targeting late February or early March for CJ to present her findings and conclusion to City Council and Oakland County Sheriff Lieutenant Todd Hill.

Buckthorn Burning Event in Depot Park

Also as previously reported, the City’s invasive specie contractor Cardno has begun the eradication of Buckthorn trees in the Depot Park wetlands, as approved by City Council in August. The next step in the eradication process, is to burn the individually cut Buckthorn trees. This burning has been scheduled for Saturday, January 23rd, with both the DPW team and a group of volunteers working to burn as much as possible. A second burn day may be required. The Independence Township Fire Marshall has approved the burn, walking the site and discussing the necessary precautions in advance.

City Plow and Salting Truck

This week, during one of his rounds of plowing and salting the City streets, DPW Director Jimi Turner noticed that a hydraulic line that controls the heavy “belly blade” on our large International truck had broken and the blade was dragging on the pavement. Jimi was able to limp the truck back to the City garage where he identified and removed the broken line, took it to a facility in Pontiac that is capable of making custom hydraulic lines, brought back the new part, installed it, adjusted the hydraulic operations, and then returned to road plowing/salting - - all at a cost of less than \$100 and in less than three hours’ time. I estimate this saved the City as much as \$2,000 and two weeks’ time compared to having the truck towed to a truck repair facility. Mechanical breakdowns on vehicles, equipment, appliances, etc. always seem to go in waves; for the wave we’re currently experiencing, we are fortunate to have Jimi’s mechanical skills. In the last 10 months, we have experienced a dozen or more mechanical breakdowns.

Bisio v Clarkston Facilitation

On Monday, February 1st, retired Judge Ed Sosnick will be facilitating a virtual session with all of the parties involved in the Bisio v Clarkston lawsuit in an attempt to reach a settlement on attorney fees in advance of a hearing with Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Leo Bowman.

Construction Project Approval Flowchart

A renewed effort is now underway to revise the City's out-of-date Construction Project Approval Flowchart designed to help our residents navigate the required steps. With the expertise of ZBA Board Member Bill Basinger, Planning Commission Chair Rich Little, and Historic District Commission Chair Jim Meloche, I hope to have a draft ready for Council review in the next 30 days.

MSU Citizen Planner Course

Michigan State University is once again offering an online version of their highly acclaimed Citizen Planner Course, "Fundamentals of Planning and Zoning". The course is strongly recommended for Planning Commission and Zoning Board members as well as for City Council members and City Administrators. I am considering registering myself for the next course, which runs from February 18th through April 1st, from 6 to 9 PM. Let me know if you might be interested in joining me.

Finance Committee Meetings

Meetings of the Finance Committee will soon be resuming as we work to address the City Auditor's recommendation to replenish the Sewer Fund after paying for the Oakland-Macomb Interceptor Repair cost through four (4) quarterly Sewer Bills rather than establishing an expensive Special Assessment District. The Committee will also be initiating meetings to prepare and discuss the budget for the upcoming 21-22 Fiscal Year. The Finance Committee members are Eric Haven, Al Avery, Joe Luginski, Treasurer Greg Cote and myself.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Smith,
City Manager
January 21, 2021