

Mayor's Column for the November 28, 2012 Review

There are a number of informational updates of significance to our citizens and community. This week's column is a partial summary.

Budget- The 2013 city budget was passed at the November Common Council meeting. The mill rate for the 2013 city portion of the property tax is \$6.81, down a penny from 2012. The Common Council voiced its commitment to enhancing quality of life and improving infrastructure during Committee of the Whole meetings this year. We are pleased with the inclusion of a number of components in the new budget, including Garfield Avenue street/infrastructure project, utility electrical upgrades (year 1 of a multi-year plan), additional restoration of the Allen Creek drystone walls, completion of the bathroom/shelter at Westside Park, video cameras for police squad cars, replacement of a 1980's plow truck, recommencement of our deferred sidewalk program, and an overdue City Hall exterior project focused on the building entrance and front lawn.

Tax Bills-Property tax bills are expected to be mailed during the second week of December.

Community Development Director-Three interviews for the new Evansville Community Development Director will occur this week. We received 21 resumes from around the world—that's right, we received one from Australia. There were also applicants from Florida, Maine, Iowa, and California.

This new position is possible because of ongoing streamlining of functions and duties at City Hall. The realignment of positions actually provides an annual budget savings of more than \$10,000. It will also provide better service. We will have onsite planning service available daily and a "go-to" staff person to work with current and prospective businesses, provide staff support to the city economic development committee, develop relationships with regional economic development organizations, and pursue new development opportunities.

Social Host Ordinance-A Social Host Ordinance was adopted at the November Common Council meeting. This ordinance holds individuals who knowingly provide a location for underage drinking accountable in municipal court. Adults who allow or facilitate an underage drinking party can be ticketed even if they are not present at the party. This ordinance supplements state laws against purchasing or providing alcohol to youth.

The fines in the new ordinance are substantial and meant to be a deterrent. Violators must appear in municipal court and are "subject to a forfeiture of not less than \$750 nor more than \$5000, together with the costs of prosecution."

Community Marketing-In recent weeks Evansville has received substantial media notice. Our community was selected as the only Wisconsin finalist in the "America's Prettiest Painted Places" contest sponsored by the Paint Quality Institute, which garnered

our mention in the New York Times and Wall Street Journal. The Wisconsin State Journal featured our Olde Fashioned Christmas celebration. A recent article in the Janesville Gazette interviewed an Evansville musician, who likened us to Mayberry and mentioned our appealing small town characteristics and charm. A Sunday Gazette article, entitled “Evansville’s winter hotspot”, described the great winter fishing expected at Lake Leota. Recent Discover Wisconsin television episodes included our Olde Fashioned Christmas and this week’s Holiday Craft Show in the highlighted calendar of events. Our community activities are included in the Discover Wisconsin and Wisconsin Department of Tourism website calendars. We are making strides at showcasing what our community has to offer.

Ice Age Trail-We recently received information that the National Park Service has refined its options for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail through our area of Rock County. Evansville has been included in one of the two options. It was reported that “the historic districts, parks, and available services figured prominently in the discussions.”

There will be another round of public meetings next spring. We have offered to again host a meeting at Creekside Place. Evansville citizen support and comment will be important in the coming months.

Farmland Preservation- I am serving as the municipal elected official on the Rock County Farmland Preservation Technical Advisory Committee. Last week we approved a draft County Farmland Preservation Plan. The draft plan includes current agricultural resources maps from the twenty towns in Rock County. The County Plan must be consistent with all of the town plans. It will now be sent to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for review and comment. It is expected that the Rock County Planning and Development Committee will act on the draft plan in January and forward it to the Rock County Board for consideration.

The County Farmland Preservation Plan will serve a dual purpose. It will be the agriculture chapter of the Rock County Comprehensive Plan. It will also meet the requirements of the DATCP Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Program.

Elected officials coffee- In the next few weeks, a number of mayors and village presidents from WPPI Energy member communities in our area will meet at Creekside Place. It will be a good opportunity to build relationships and learn about programs and activities in nearby communities. We will also discuss a number of issues critical to municipally-owned electric utilities that are currently financial “fodder” for federal and state legislators.

Community Announcements

The lighting ceremony for the AWARE Love Light Tree will be held on Friday, November 30, at 6:00 p.m. at Evansville Manor, 470 Garfield Avenue.

Evansville Community Theater will present “A Christmas Story” at the Evansville High School Performing Arts Center this weekend. Performances times are Friday, November 30, at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, December 1, at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

The Evansville Holiday Craft Fair is Saturday, December 1, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the J. C. McKenna Middle School Gym, 307 South First Street.

The Evansville Ecumenical Choir Christmas Concert is scheduled for Sunday, December 2, at 7:00 p.m. at the Congregational United Church of Christ, 112 West Church Street.

Community Thanks

Evansville thanks the generous local bakers that donated pies for the Friends of Eager Free Public Library’s Thanksgiving Pie Sale. The sale raised \$450 that will benefit our well-loved library.

Our community deeply appreciates the commitment of Evansville Fund contributors and volunteers through the years. The annual grants to local projects and organizations enhance and enrich our quality of life and place.