

Mayor's Column for the August 22, 2012 Review

One outcome of the recent Committee of the Whole meetings is a rededicated City focus on maintenance, reconstruction, and building of quality infrastructure within budget parameters and City financial policies.

The City annually develops a 5-year Capital Budget that includes projects, facilities, and equipment that are expected to last at least 3-5 years. The Capital Improvement Program is an important planning tool, developing priorities, funding sources, and timing. Annually, the Capital budget is updated to consider unforeseen changes in priority, changes in funding opportunities, and corresponding changes in timelines. During this year's budget process, and going forward, the City intends to better utilize the Capital Plan as policy and planning document.

The Common Council has voiced its interest in improving infrastructure by including needed street projects in the Capital Plan. The Public Works Committee and the Water and Light Committee, with the assistance of the City Engineer, have worked together to develop a prioritized list of needed street projects that are being incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan. Projects of high priority are those needing new water main and sewer main, with poor current pavement condition. An additional factor considered is the traffic load of a given street.

At a special joint meeting of the two committees, it was decided that reconstruction of Garfield Avenue, from Madison Street to Third Street, will be placed in the 2013 Capital Budget. As the overall City budget is fine-tuned, the street project will need to meet the financial and budget parameters followed by the City.

The next street project identified, to be included in either year 2014 or 2015, is South Fourth Street, from Lincoln Street to Main Street. Our capacity to finance the project within our guidelines will determine the timing.

It is important to understand that an unexpected circumstance, such as a major main break, may alter the priority list of projects. A street project not included on the priority list may suddenly rise to the top for a currently unforeseen reason.

The Water and Light Committee has spent the past few months developing a new 5-6 year improvement plan for our electric utility. Year 1 improvements will also be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan for 2013.

The water tower is scheduled for inspection to determine whether it needs internal and/or external painting. Before the inspection, the tower will be pressure-washed to remove mildew. A preliminary cost estimate for internal and external sandblasting and painting is \$160,000. Following inspection, painting costs will be included in the Capital Plan.

The pace of our infrastructure projects slowed the last year or two as we absorbed impacts of the economic downturn. However, we have made continuous significant

infrastructure investments the last six years. A partial list includes the reconstruction of Main Street, infrastructure development and street improvements along County Highway M, partial reconstruction of Madison Street, improvements to the intersection of Madison Street and Water Street, construction of the new Marsh Road substation, a major wastewater treatment plant upgrade, repaving of County Highway C from First Street to the north city limits, the recent reconstruction of the East Main Street bridge, extensive electric line rebuilds, dredging of Lake Leota, and completion of portions of the multi-year restoration of the Allen Creek drystone walls.

The importance of undertaking regular maintenance of infrastructure was also a discussion at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Future budgets will also include focus on appropriate maintenance measures for infrastructure and equipment.

As our city continues to grow, quality infrastructure is necessary to meet resident and business needs. The Common Council is committed to undertaking infrastructure maintenance and improvements, working diligently to secure needed funding.

Community Announcements

The Wisconsin Department of Administration estimates City of Evansville population as of January 1, 2012, at 5,051. (This is an increase of 18 residents from January 1, 2011.) 3,587 residents are estimated to be of voting age.

Our public safety personnel, including police, EMS, and fire department, have had instances where there are delays in their service delivery because there are no street numbers on buildings and properties. We request that you make sure that your property is numbered; it is important for safety.

The Office of the Commissioner of Railroads will hold a hearing on September 6th at 10:00 a.m. at Evansville City Hall. The City will present evidence that the Main Street crossing is not in good condition and repair. Testimony at rough crossing hearings are usually given by the City Engineer or Public Works Superintendent but can also be given by local elected officials and individual residents.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism will hold two free workshop sessions on customer service in Evansville. The identical 90 minute workshops will be held on October 3rd at 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Businesses are encouraged to send their “front counter” employees to one of the sessions. Please call Creekside Place at 882-0407 to reserve a spot.

Community Thanks

Evansville thanks Ruth Ann Montgomery for a contribution from the Phil Montgomery Memorial Fund and Kopecky’s Piggly Wiggly for their generous donation to enable the purchase of a second thermal imaging camera for the Evansville Fire Department.