

Friday September 4, 2015

Good Friday afternoon everyone! I hope you are all enjoying the brief change in the weather. It looks like this week of cool weather is helping with the fires around the state and in our immediate vicinity. It has also, at least temporarily, eased the ongoing fire danger. It looks like we will see a return to warmer weather next week and anticipate fire season could last well into October at this rate. Please remind people to be careful as they enjoy recreational activities throughout our area.

It has been another very busy week as we begin wrapping up some projects, have a project out to bid and are right in the middle of the largest projects. The Charles Gardner multi-use path was completed last week by our contractor Knife River. Public Works staff installed a series of culverts in the nature path area just west of the duck pond to replace a walking bridge that was destroyed by a person driving a stolen vehicle. The culverts will provide a safer and more permanent structure for the creek crossing in that area. Public Works staff is out for bid on a cathodic protection project for our water transmission mains and we executed the agreement with Century West to begin final design of the South Stewart Parkway project.



We are in the process of scheduling additional paving at the airport to finish the non-FAA portion of the hanger area. We recently took over ten hangers from Jack Mathis after the expiration of his forty year lease. The paving around those hangers is the final area that needs paved on the south ramp of the airport. The Oak/Washington project is really taking shape now, and while there is inconvenience, I have heard numerous positive comments from adjoining property owners and employees who are really enjoying watching the progress being made. ODOT's contractor continues work on the 138 Corridor Project as well. I can probably quit mentioning that one every week. I will include updates as they hit milestones or begin work in new sections of the project.



Brian Davis and I met with representatives from the former Safeway/Rite-aid site this week to discuss potential redevelopment. We will schedule another meeting in the next month or so with some of the surrounding property owners to see if we can jointly identify some beneficial relationships that might help spur development as well as some of the sites that have recently been vacated as a result of the Highway 138 project.

The owners have recently contracted with a "national" real estate group to try to identify appropriate uses and opportunities for redevelopment. We are encouraged by their renewed interest in developing the property.

On Wednesday, the Parks Commission toured the Fir Grove section of Stewart Park and reviewed the initial plan for the future playground and spray park improvements that will be undertaken next year (funding permitting). The improvements will allow for



expansion of family activities in the area just north of the soccer building and east of the pavilion. We have secured over 80% of the needed funding and will work with local service clubs to determine how best to proceed with generating the balance of funding necessary to begin the project.

Parks Commissioner Diana Wales talked with us about “Swift Watch” which begins this Friday evening in Fir Grove Park. The Vaux Swift is in the midst of its annual southward migration and each Friday for the next six weeks or so, the local Audubon Society, in conjunction with our Parks Department hold gatherings to watch the swifts congregate and enter the chimney of one of the buildings. It is an interesting and entertaining site. You can see the swifts beginning about 15 minutes before sunset every evening, or join the group on Fridays. Diana indicated that there are currently between 1,500 and 2,000 swifts in the area.



The Parks Commission also toured the Betty Long Unruh Theater building. It was my first trip to the facility and they have done an incredible job of transforming the old building into a very functional and comfortable venue for local theatre. If you have not had a chance to take in a play, please consider their fall lineup! You can access information about upcoming productions and activities at <http://www.uact-theatre.com/15-16.html> .

Thursday Chief Burge, Captain Matthews and I met again with a group of business operators from the Willis House/Rose Street area to discuss appropriate law enforcement and actions the businesses should take to ensure their neighborhood is safe and people can transact business. It was a positive meeting and people were very open about their concerns and what they hoped to accomplish. We recently resolved a specific issue in the neighborhood and the residents and businesses are committing to work together to make that area more productive and safer for everyone. The Police Department is actively patrolling the area and each person in attendance was encouraged to always call for assistance if criminal activity is taking place.

The Finance Department continues to work on our computer conversion from an antiquated system to a fully integrated enterprise type software system that will update our general finance, payroll, human resource, utility billing, accounts receivable and court systems. This conversion is long overdue and staff is excited about the changes that are taking place and the opportunities this will provide for more efficient processing of financial information. The conversion will also allow each department to track information on a real time basis to better manage activities and provide more oversight. Finance has started the audit process and preparation of the City’s CAFR as well. Ron hopes to get the report out earlier this year and to begin working some new reporting tools outlined by the GFOA.

Today is the beginning of the last long weekend of summer so please be safe and enjoy your Labor Day weekend!