



Weekly Update to City Council from the City Manager June 20, 2010

Loss of Corrections Officer Jerry Bowman

I am very sad to report the passing of Corrections Officer Jerry Bowman. Jerry previously retired from AK Steel before joining the City in August of 2000. Jerry was recently named 2009 Corrections Officer of the Year and was a great asset to our organization. Jerry was entertaining the idea of retiring from the city in January of 2011. He passed away at home on June 15th.

RR Crossing Improvements

We are working on scheduling an informational open house in the next several weeks with residents and businesses near the Wanetta, Grand and Woodlawn RR crossings. The Ohio Rail Development Commission and Norfolk Southern will also be present to discuss possible closures of these three RR crossings due to safety issues. If we choose to proceed with any or all of the closings, we will bring legislation before Council.

Background on the issue: the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) approached the City in December of 2008 to discuss safety improvements to the Norfolk Southern "CJ line" which accounts for nine at-grade crossings within the City. The project aims to improve safety by upgrading circuitry and software for traffic signals with railroad preemption. While examining the comprehensive safety of the CJ line, redundant crossings were identified and considered for closure. Standard policy for ORDC is to close redundant crossings because "the safest crossing is a closed crossing." The Wanetta Street crossing is of particular interest to Norfolk Southern because of multiple accidents that have occurred there over the years. The crossings at Grand Ave. and Woodlawn Ave. have also been identified due to redundancy. Grand Avenue was determined to be a more viable closure after conversation with Cohen Brothers and examination of the traffic pattern.

As an additional incentive to close the crossings, ORDC and Norfolk Southern will commit funding for highway safety improvements, neighborhood amenities, and improved crossing surfaces.

As you are aware, we have been working with Norfolk Southern over the past two years to construct smoother crossings, and through negotiations with ORDC and NS funding will be secured for premium surface treatments at five crossings. This will include either concrete or full-depth rubberized crossing surfaces. We will review the process at the next Council meeting.

Middletown Police and Fire Communications

The 800mhz system is up and running in Middletown as of a couple of weeks ago. Monroe came on-line shortly after us, so now all of Butler County is using the 800mhz system. This greatly increases inter-operability among all the emergency units in the county.

Pioneer Cemetery

The complaint filed with the State of Ohio regarding the cemetery was dropped last week prior to the hearing. We will have more information in the future about this issue.

Sutphin Street Resurfacing

We have run into a snag on the concrete work. The project plans and budget were to repair concrete as necessary, not to replace all concrete. Unfortunately, when the contractor began the work, they discovered that most of the existing concrete needed work. In retrospect, it would have been great if we could have replaced all of the curb and gutter, but in an attempt to save limited dollars and stay within the ODOT grant, we chose to replace only as necessary.

Usually a contingency budget is set aside for the unknown portions of the project. However, ODOT does not allow us to build contingencies in projects. Mr. Duritsch and his staff are working on the solution over the next couple of days, after which time we will determine the recommended course of action for the July 6th Council meeting. I advised Dave that if we needed to approach council prior to July 6th, we could request a meeting of Council the night of the 29th prior to the MPHA meeting.

This is an example of issues we routinely work through on projects. Most of our projects are retrofitting over existing work and usually have some extra work involved. Typically we are able to strike a balance between controlling costs and maintaining quality. As soon as we determine the recommended course, I'll advise.

Division of Fire Grant

Our Division of Fire was recently awarded a \$10,000 grant of the Fraternal Order of Eagles (FOE) of Marie Drive. In 2009 the FOE awarded \$10,000 for a new cardiac monitor placed on Reserve Medic82. This has assisted MDF respond to increasing Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls for service.

This FOE grant will be used to purchase a power-cot for Medic 86. These power-cots have been proven to improve patient care while reducing back injuries. Thanks to Fire Marshall Hess for securing these grants two years in a row.

From the Int'l City Management Newsletter: Toledo Successfully Reinventing Itself As A Solar-Energy Hub

USA Today (6/15, Keen) reports that the city of Toledo "is trying to swap its Rust Belt image for a new identity as a hub of solar-energy research and production." Through "an unusual partnership of business, academia and government that could be a model for other aging industrial cities," the city is taking the "pieces of its past as the glass capital to create a new future in solar energy." Among the successes are an expanding solar workforce and solar energy-related startups, some of which have sprung from the business incubator at the University of Toledo. "Owens Community College, which had 13 students in its first solar class in 2004, has trained 255 solar installers." An official with a solar trade group "compares Toledo's solar commitment to that of New Mexico and California," which offered tax credits and other incentives to make "expanding clean-energy jobs and exports a priority." *(Note: we continue to investigate ways in which we can diversify our Middletown economy and take advantage of incentives offered; this is one example).*

Durham, North Carolina, Places Road Repair Measure On Ballot

WRAL-TV Raleigh, NC (6/14) reported, "Drivers in Durham say they are hitting far too many potholes, and city leaders agree that a fresh campaign to smooth over roads is needed." City Manager Tom Bonfield stated "he has no doubt that a major effort to repair roads is needed. More than half of city roads are rated in poor condition, he said." Durham's Council has already approved a referendum for the November ballot that "would raise property taxes by three-quarters of a cent. The tax increase would raise about \$20 million that would be used strictly to fast-track repairs on the city's worst roads, the city manager said." He said if the measure is passed, "the city would quickly tackle 325 miles of its worst roads. The remaining money would be set aside to manage the rest of the city's roads, keeping repairs from falling behind again." *(Note: once again, we are not alone in our pothole plight. I'm not advocating any tax increase, but simply providing information on what measures other cities are taking.)*

Middletown Regional Airport News

Great things are happening at the airport. Rich Bevis, airport manager, is very excited about the future of the Middletown Regional Airport. The Airport hosted the National Aeronca Convention (formerly known as the Aeronca Fly-In) this past weekend- June 18-20. The event has a strong local connection because the Aeroncas were built here in Middletown at Aeronca, Inc.

The Airport calendar is full of such events this summer:

- **June 20-24 — National Short Wing Piper Convention:** This event is similar to Aeronca in that it involves pilots and their specialized planes. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.
- **June 26-27 — IMAC Giant Scale RC* Airplane Aerobatics Competition:** This event, which is new to the airport, is like the NASCAR of radio-controlled plane flying. Pilots arrive to compete with planes that measure 8 feet or more, and fly them for points. The show runs from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. \$2 admission.
- **July 23-25 — “Thunder in the Sky” RC Jet Aircraft Show:** This event returns to the airport for the third year. “We’re starting to get known as the place to come fly these planes,” Bevis said. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$2 admission.
- **Aug. 6-7 — Giant Scale RC* Aircraft Fly In:** This event, involving larger radio controlled aircraft, has been expanded from one to two days this year. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$2 admission.
- **Sept. 1-6 — Team Fastrax “Work Stinks” Skydiving Boogie:** A “boogie” is a sky-diving party with multiple jumpers and multiple planes over several days, said David Strobel, spokesman for Team Fastrax. “People from all over the region come to jump with us,” Strobel said, saying that more than 30 divers could jump from a plane at once. The event will also include fireworks launched from the ground and pyrotechnics attached to sky-divers. The date of the fireworks is to be determined.

Independence Day Parade

The Independence Day Parade begins near Rosa Parks Elementary School and travels north on Verity Parkway to Smith Park. Groups are invited to participate in the parade. Please contact Deb Morrison at DA120757@YAHOO.COM or phone 513.425.6017 for details.

Census Information

The Census Helpline is 1.866.872.6868, select “2”, then select “0” to speak directly to a Census helper. Although all mailing of forms has ceased, citizens are able to submit information to a Census employee at this number. The home interviews will continue through July 10 for the 2010 Census. Please encourage all to participate in the program.

Upcoming Events

- June 19 & 20 Keep Middletown Beautiful Garden Tour 11:00 a.m-4:00 p.m. daily
- June 21 United Way/ Community Health Fair Downtown YMCA on Manchester
11a.m. – 1:00p.m. *Lunch is available on site.
- June 21 Middletown Board of Education meeting 1515 Girard Avenue 6:30 p.m.
- June 25 Farmers Market @ Governors Square 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- June 26 & 27 Middletown Arts Center 6th Annual Garden Tour 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- June 30 Broadstreet Bash Governors Square 5:00 p.m. The Menus 6:00 p.m.
- July 1 Chamber Monthly Luncheon MASC at 3907 Central 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- July 2 First Friday Concert Series featuring Steel Drum Dave @ Manchester Inn in
the Little Miami Ballroom 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
- July 2 Farmers Market @ Governors Square 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- July 2 American Watercolor Society Exhibit and Opening Benefit
Middletown Arts Center 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- July 6- August 15 MAC 143rd American Watercolor Society Exhibition” July 6- August 15, 2010.

Links for additional information:

City Manager’s Weekly Update: www.cityofmiddletown.org

Middletown Community Calendar: <http://www.calendarwiz.com/middletowncalendar> (copy
and paste in your web browser)

Pothole Patrol: www.cityofmiddletown.org or call 727-3691 (Option 2)

Have a great week! Judy