



City Manager's Report: December 17, 2020

COVID-19 UPDATES

- City Hall will be closed to the public until at least January 11, 2021 to limit exposure to staff. The Customer Service line is answered Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Please see the Continuity of Operations document, as of December 7, 2020, available: [here](#).
- Please see the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, as of December 9, 2020 available: [here](#).
- Vaccine Deployment: We are working closely with partners at the Ingham County Health Department regarding vaccine deployment for eligible employees. It is likely we will begin vaccinating first responders in January. The City's current position is that vaccination will be voluntary. These vaccinations will be staggered to allow for recovery time for those with reactions.
- Virtual Public Meetings:
 - At the [July 6, 2020](#) meeting, City Council agreed to meet electronically as long as legally permitted or until Council determines otherwise.
 - Effective December 31, 2020, the current legislation restricts the ability to meet virtually unless there is a declared State of Emergency. Currently, the City falls under the Emergency Order declared by Ingham County that expires on January 31, 2021. This allows the City to meet virtually until that time with no additional action.
 - As the date of this report, it is likely that legislation will be passed to allow the continuing of meeting virtually for no reason until the end of March. As long as certain gathering restrictions are in place, the City's public meetings will be required to meet virtually. If gathering restrictions are lifted prior to March 31, the Council would need to make a motion to direct staff to meet in person. Otherwise, if the legislation passes, the City would only be able to meet virtually until March 31, 2021.

ACTIVE PROJECTS STATUS UPDATES (PROJECTS NOT COORDINATED BY THE CITY)

Project Name	Status
BUILDING PERMITS – COMMERCIAL PROJECTS UNDER CITY REVIEW	
118 W. Oak St. – Arcade/Nail Salon PENDING	Two permits pending. 1. Change of Occupancy permit has been filed for Nail Tech in small office space. 2. Change of Occupancy permit has been filed to proceed with opening of the Arcade on the first floor only.
205 S. Cedar - DSN PENDING	Two building permits pending for this address. Both filed after code enforcement violations were noted. 1. Sign permit. 2. Installing door on front of building.
624 S. Cedar – EXIT Realty PENDING	Building permits pending to install illuminated sign on building and for a change in occupancy (former daycare to office).
790 E. Columbia PENDING	Building permit is pending for interior renovations.
124-136 W. Ash St. ACTIVE	Building permit active for 2 nd story interior renovations and replacement of all 2 nd story windows.
202 N. Mason St. – Doberman Technologies ACTIVE	Building permit is active for demolition of 3 residential structures. A temporary fence will be installed to prevent anyone from using the space.
204 N. Cedar – Westside Deli ACTIVE	Building permit is active for tear off and re-roof of building.
230 S. Cedar – Outpost ACTIVE	Building permit is active for change of occupancy of commercial space from laundromat to tack shop.
230 Temple St. – Sparrow ACTIVE	Building permit is active for tear off and re-roof of building.
600 Buhl – Ingham Animal Control ACTIVE	Building permit is active to construct a 14' x 24' pre-fabricated mini-barn.

700 Buhl – Ingham County Justice Complex ACTIVE	Second Permit is active for demolition of part of the building. Building permit is active for interior remodeling of existing storage facility to accommodate relocation of vehicle maintenance function. Part of a phased construction project for the new Ingham County Justice Complex.
1154 S. Jefferson – (former Hart Well Drilling) ACTIVE	Building permit is active for demolition of building, removal of debris, and restoration of disturbed areas.
1155 Temple St. – Paul Davis Restoration ACTIVE	Building permit is active for the construction of a new 22,500 square foot building that will be used as warehouse and office space.
525 N. Cedar- Timeless Treasures TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY PERMIT	Remaining work includes the installation of landscaping, repairs to parking lot lighting, and a site plan revision if they intend to include the outdoor flea market.
549 W. Ash- Dog Groomer TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY PERMIT	Staff is working with owner on a revised parking plan to address safety requirements and pre-existing, non-conforming layout. <i>Parking updates have been delayed until spring.</i>
301 Bush – Ingham County COMPLETED	Final inspection was approved for tear off and re-roof of building.
700 Buhl – Ingham 911 COMPLETED	Final inspection was approved for installation of antennas, microwave dishes and associated mounts on existing tower. Install unmanned equipment shelter.
1133 S. Cedar – MSU Federal CU COMPLETED	Final inspection was approved for interior renovations.
BUILDING PERMITS – DANGEROUS BUILDINGS/FIRE RESTORATION	
S. Jefferson – Private Residence PENDING	Building permit is pending after accident.
665 Hull Rd. – Cleanlites Recycling PENDING	Building permit is pending after fire; a second fire occurred on December 15, 2020 that caused significant damage to the facility. Owner has not determined how they will move forward at this point.
Private Residence – Park St. PENDING	Building permit is pending after fire.
111 Mason St. – Mason Depot ACTIVE	Building permit is active for reconstruction after fire.
ZONING	
840 E. Columbia St. – Masonic Lodge PENDING	Administrative Site Plan Application is being reviewed for changes to the parking lot for one-way traffic, and the addition of a new driveway to accommodate drop-off at the entrance to building where a new elevator is to be installed.

OPERATIONS

- On December 9, 2020, "Tamarack" was officially adopted as a Police K9 from the Ingham County Animal Control and Shelter. Director Heidi Williams was instrumental in facilitating the opportunity for the City. The K-9 Handler selection process will begin after the first of the year. Until that selection is complete, Tamarack is being boarded at a facility recommended by Mid- Michigan Police K9. Tamarack and a student handler will be enrolled in a Police K9 School in Spring 2021. The City of Mason is very appreciative for all the support from the Mason Community and welcomes to Tamarack to our team!
- City Hall operations will be closed between Christmas and New Year's, as in previous years to allow our employees to spend time with their families. This continues to be one of our most appreciated benefits and after this stressful year, it is even more deserved. Essential operations will continue and members of our leadership team will be available to respond to any urgent issues.
- No Senior Without Christmas – On December 9, 2020, our police and fire teams delivered (29) packages to seniors in Mason as part of the Annual "No Senior without Christmas". This is an event put on by TRIAD, a partnership between law enforcement, fire agencies, senior citizens and community members.

Staffing Updates:

- Internal Open Position – Part-time Permit Administration Specialist (Community Development) position was posted internally and closed Wednesday, December 16, 2020.
- Open Position – Seasonal Crossing Guard position posted and is open until filled.

LARGE CITY PROJECTS

FY 2019-2020			
Project	Project Name/Description	Status	Completed
UTILITIES: SANITARY SEWER, STORM WATER, AND WATER DISTRIBUTION (U)			
2017-U11	Turbine Aeration Blower at POTW	Estimated time of arrival of April 2021.	
FY 2020-2021			
Project	Project Name/Description	Status	Completed
STREETS, SIDEWALKS, SIGNALS(S)			
2017-S17	Center Street-Walnut St to N. Bush St	Completed	October
2017-S18	Brookdale St- W. South St to Willow St	Completed	August
2017-S19 2020-U2	Cherry- McRoberts St to Henderson St	Completed	October
2017-S21	Eaton Drive- All	Completed	June
2017-S22	W. Elm St- McRoberts St to Lansing St	Completed	October
2019-S9a	E. Maple– S. Jefferson to S. Barnes	Completed	June
2019-S9b	Signal at E. Maple & S. Jefferson	Delayed traffic study due to COVID-19.	
2019-S5a	Henderson Street– Entire length	Completed	October
2019-S5b	Alley- W. Columbia to W. Sycamore	Completed	October
2018-S1	Temple Street Pedestrian Crossing	Confirming with MPS, still priority project.	
UTILITIES: SANITARY SEWER, STORM WATER, AND WATER DISTRIBUTION (U)			
2017-U8	Replace PLCs on 3 Wells	Anticipated start date Spring of 2021	
2017-U23	Well No. 6 Rebuild	Anticipated start date Spring of 2021	
2017-U25	Gutters for Water Treatment Plant	Approved; expected to begin January 2021	
2018-U32	South Water Tower Repair	Staff reviewing report from Dixon Engineering	
2019-U1	Wastewater Treatment Plant - Design	Staff is drafting Request for Proposal for work.	
2019-U4	Study - Wastewater Solids System	Staff is drafting Request for Proposal for work.	
PARKS/ CEMETERY/ FORESTRY/ NONMOTORIZED (P)			
2017-P8	Laylin Park - Phase II	Anticipated start date Spring of 2021	
2020-P2	Columbia St Bridge Ped. Crossing Design	Anticipated Spring of 2021	
2020-P5	Jefferson St – RR Pedestrian Crossing	Feb Construction Meeting; start Spring 2021	
2020-P6	Lee Austin Park- Plan/Design	Staff is drafting Request for Proposal for work.	
2020-P7	Non- Motorized Prog: NE Quadrant	Completed	October
2020-P8	Rayner Park- Master Park Plan	Staff is drafting Request for Proposal for work.	
MOTOR VEHICLE POOL (MVP)			
2017-MVP15	Vehicle No. 16 Replacement	Anticipated purchase Spring of 2021	
2017-MVP16	Mower No. 77 Replacement	Anticipated purchase Spring of 2021	
2017-MVP17	Vehicle No. 85 Replacement	Vehicle ordered; expected Spring 2021	
2017-MVP20	Vehicle No. 18 Replacement	Anticipated purchase Spring of 2021	
2017-MVP21	Mower No. 66 Replacement	Anticipated purchase Spring of 2021	
2017-MVP29	Mower No. 69 Replacement	Anticipated purchase Spring of 2021	
2018-MVP1	Vehicle No. 22 Replacement	Anticipated purchase Spring of 2021	
BUILDING, PROPERTY, EQUIPMENT (B)			
2017-B12	IT New Servers	Anticipated start date Spring of 2021	
2017-B17	Fire SCBA units	Anticipated purchase Spring of 2021	
2018-B14	Fire Rehab 815 Replacement	Anticipated purchase Spring of 2021	

2018-B22	Police Body Worn Cameras	Approved; Order has been placed	
2018-B23	Masterplan/Zoning Update	Staff is drafting Request for Proposal for work	
2019-B16b	Election Tabulator Machines	Completed	October
2019-B2a	City Hall - Phase I Design and Security	Security approved. Design is still pending.	
2020-B4a	DPW- Design	Staff is working on refining design.	



Agenda Report: December 21, 2020 City Council Meeting

AGENDA ITEM:

Update on City Resuming Late Fees and Continuing a Moratorium on Shut Offs

RECOMMENDED ACTION

No action is required at this time

HISTORY

On March 18, 2020, Governor Whitmer issued Executive Order 2020-28 which restored water service to occupied residences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On April 6, 2020, the City Council suspended applying late fees for water and sewer services to the citizens of the City of Mason any utility late fees for the duration of the State's declared State of Emergency.

Specifically, the ordinance noted:

- All late fees as charged pursuant to Chapter 82-Utilities of the City of Mason are hereby waived, commencing with April, 2020, billing, until the end of the first full month after the sunset date of this ordinance, as set forth hereinafter. This provision shall survive the rescission of this Ordinance unless specifically referenced.
- Unless rescinded earlier, the provisions of this ordinance shall expire upon the date of the termination of Executive Order No. 2020-21, or any extension or successor Executive Order thereof.

While a State of Emergency still exists at the County level, the restriction on turning off water was eliminated when the Governor's Executive Orders were determined no longer effective as of November (30 days following the ruling). This means that late fees would start accumulating on January water bills.

When comparing the delinquent water bills with last year, we have not seen a significant increase. They appear to be in line with the previous years, with some months seeing larger amounts, as is common with past years. However, since March of 2020 we have waived close over \$22,000 in late fees that would have normally been collected by the fund. This change does impact the fund, provides no incentive for a consumer to pay on time, and a may create a penalty for those that do pay on time based on time value of money.

Staff recommends moving forward in the following way:

- Staff intends to continue a moratorium on water shut offs until at least July 2021. Shut offs are allowed by ordinance, but staff has the flexibility on policy related to when this occurs. As of this report there appears to be support for legislation that would continue the water shutoff moratorium until at least March 2021.
- Resuming late fees as of January 1, 2021. By waiving late fees, we have faced the issue of some residents noting there is no advantage to them to pay their fee on time. The result is the City covering their costs until they can be collected through taxes. Staff believes late fees are essential to ensure prompt payment and not punish those residents that are paying on time.

If the Council would like to continue removal of late fees, staff would request a motion to do so at this meeting and an Ordinance can be drafted to be considered in January. That action would specifically address a public health concern for the City of Mason on the declared emergency and would justify the use of the emergency ordinance option within our Charter.

SUMMARY

Authority:

- [City Charter 7.4](#): “It is provided, however, that an ordinance which is declared therein to be immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, or safety may be enacted before publication of the proceedings of the meeting at which it is introduced, or may be given earlier effect than twenty days after the enactment, or both, by the affirmative votes of not less than five Councilmen if six or seven Councilmen are present at the meeting at which it is enacted, or by the affirmative vote of not less than four Councilmen if four or five Councilmen are present at the meeting at which it is enacted.

Urgency: Due to the status of the Emergency Orders, late fees will begin in January. Staff can draft an Emergency Ordinance continuing the suspension of late fees at Council’s January meeting, if desired.

Relation to Other Actions: None

FISCAL IMPACT

Current/ Future Budgets: Impact on revenue due to the collection of penalties.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

None