

To: City Council
From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator
Date: August 29, 2014 Weekly Council Update

- **Johnson County Supervisors Coming to West Branch - Tues. Sept. 2nd:** The West Branch City Council will hold a joint meeting with the Johnson County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday September 2nd at 6:00 p.m. Discussion topics will include the Herbert Hoover Highway/West Main Street Traffic Study, potential improvements to Herbert Hoover Highway and potential area trail projects.
- **Dog Park Now Open:** A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the newly constructed Dog Park on Thursday, August 28th at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Mark Worrell and Animal Control Commission Member Amy Lynch recognized the following entities for their donations to the development of the Park: The Groom Station, Lynch's Excavating, Hillshire Brands, Dale & Conni Lynch, Catherine Tudor, Double C Kennels, Bruce & Peggy Jeffries, Norm Bickford, The Don Kessler Family, Doris Lynch, Boy Scout Troop 156, Girl Scout Troop 2080, the West Branch Lions Club, the West Branch Animal Clinic, and the West Branch Fire Department. The Park opening was well-attended, and volunteers will be on hand this weekend to issue Dog Park tags on Saturday, August 30th and Sunday, August 31st from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. each day. Volunteers will also have City tags on hand as needed. The Park registration form can be found on the City's website at: <http://www.westbranchiowa.org/sites/default/files/Dog%20Park%20Tag%20Application.pdf>
- **Community Center Design Charrette – Wed. Sept. 3rd, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.:** Please [CLICK HERE](#) for more information on the all-day open house community center design charrette that will be held on Wednesday September 3rd from 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Community members are encouraged to stop in anytime during the day to give their feedback to the design team. Presentations will be given at Noon and 7:00 p.m.
- **REAP Grant:** REAP Grants awards are scheduled for Thursday September 4th. West Branch applied again this year for a grant to fund the West Branch Village Trail. This trail project would include a pedestrian bridge over the creek adjacent to the Hoover Nature Trail in the vicinity of the West Branch Village Storm Shelter. The trail would allow access between the West Branch Village Mobile Home Community and the Hoover Nature Trail. The number of REAP City Grant Applications received this year is reported to be 25% higher than the past few years. Due to the increased number of applications, the City Grant Selection Committee has agreed to provide preliminary scoring no later than Noon on September 3rd. We are hopeful that so that we score towards the top of that list so that we are invited as a finalist to attend the Selection Meeting on Sept. 4th.
- **Oliphant Street Sidewalk Project:** All American Concrete is expected to begin work on the Oliphant Street Sidewalk Improvements – Phase 2 Project on Monday September 8th. Affected residents were contacted to provide notice of the upcoming work and were encouraged to contact City Staff with any questions or concerns. All thirteen easement agreements have been recorded. Copies of these agreements were provided to the homeowners.

- **Updates to Water Rates and New Stormwater Utility Fee:** Water and sewer rates have been increased to \$6.51 per thousand gallons effective this billing cycle per City Council Ordinance 685. The new stormwater utility fee also appears on this month's utility bills. Staff noticed an error on a small number of utility bills for customers who live in multi-family housing. Most of the errors range from six cents to one dollar. Staff will make corrections to these accounts next week. Otherwise, our transition to fiscal year 2014-2015 utility rates went smoothly. Residents with questions regarding the rate increase or stormwater utility fee are encouraged to contact the City Office at (319) 643-5888.
- **Park & Rec News:** It will be a busy fall season for the West Branch Parks and Recreation Department. Fall park and rec registrations wrapped up this week. The numbers of participants look comparable to previous years for flag football and volleyball. There are a couple of new programs added this year including Yoga, Run to Your Potential-Kids Couch to 5K, and Powerhouse Dance Classes. Yoga will start in mid-September and will be instructed by Michele England. Powerhouse Dance classes will be instructed by Tracey Hartz and Paula Lichtenstein and offered in Town Hall on Wednesday afterschool. Run to Your Potential, a running group for 3rd-5th graders, will take place on Tuesday afternoons for ten weeks. The group will plan to run a 5K in the late fall or early winter.
- **Clean Energy & Casey's General Stores:** There is some good news and some bad news in regards to development in the West Branch Industrial Park. The City received news this week from Sacaba LLC that Clean Energy has cancelled their contract to develop a liquefied natural gas (LNG) refueling station at the current time, due to concerns with the demand for LNG. Sacaba will be preparing an official communication to the City Council on this matter and that will be provided once it has been received. On a positive note, we have had some recent contact with Casey's that we believe will lead to that project moving forward. We expect to have a meeting with representatives from Casey's in the next couple of weeks. We hope to discuss receiving approval from IDOT on the traffic plan for the area, a potential tax increment financing agreement to fund the infrastructure improvements, and the future of the current Casey's location in West Branch.
- **Traffic Issues on Fawcett Drive:** City staff will be meeting with Procter and Gamble next week to discuss traffic issues on Fawcett Drive. Initial research on the project has produced documentation of a deceleration lane on Fawcett Drive that was planned in 2003 but never constructed, as well as planning documents for the Council Street Project.
- **North Downey Street Improvements Project:** Plans were distributed to three local excavation companies this afternoon for a stormwater infrastructure project on the west side of N. Downey Street, south of Oliphant Street and north of the driveway to the apartments located at 518 and 528 N. Downey Street. There is concern that without the completion of this project, that the edge of N. Downey Street would slough off into the ditch on the west side of the street. An intake and a manhole will be installed and the ditch will be filled-in to make the slope off the side of the road less severe. Both the city engineer and the public works director have identified this as a priority project that should be completed before winter. Sealed bids will be accepted and opened on Thursday September 11th at 2:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. A public notice inviting other contractors to participate in the bidding process will also be published in next week's West Branch Times.

The information provided is one-way communication and should not be discussed among you as this would be a violation of the open meeting law.