

To: City Council
From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator
Date: January 17, 2016
Weekly Council Update

Park RFQ Update: The Park & Recreation Commission interviewed five firms on January 14th who were interested in providing engineering services for the Park Improvements at Pedersen Valley Project. The three firms selected as finalist were Bolton & Menk, Inc., Fehr Graham and French-Reneker-Associates, Inc. Those three firms will appear before the City Council at a Work Session on Tuesday January 19th at 6:00 p.m.

New Signs at Dog Park: The Animal Control Commission had some new signs made and installed at the West Branch Dog Park encouraging owners to pick up after their animals. Commission members also discussed the annual effort to register animals who live within the City Limits.

School Board Discusses Future Growth Projections: David Gaus with Iowa School Finance Information Services made a presentation at the January 11th School Board Meeting on the West Branch Schools Enrollment Projection Study. In preparing the study, Mr. Gaus relied on several sources of information including Woods & Poole Economic, Inc. and the Iowa Department of Education. Mayor Roger Laughlin and City Administrator Matt Muckler also provided information that was used to compile the study, including ten years of building permit data, the City's Capital Improvement and Park plans, the Housing Incentive Plan, current and expected development information and all of the finance information provided on the City Website.

Mr. Gaus reported on many favorable trends including positive housing (increasing 3.7% or by 82 housing units) and employment (increasing 5.8% or 191 new jobs) trends expected over the next five years in the West Branch Community School District. Even more students are expected to open enroll in than open enroll out over that time period. Despite these positive numbers, overall enrollment is projected to fall about 4% over the next five years. One trend cited by Gaus is that Millennials (people between the ages of 19 and 35) are having less children and are less likely to purchase a home than Gen Xers. While the next five years may not show an upward trend in school enrollment, Gaus suggested that West Branch Schools are facing enrollment trends much better than other like-sized communities throughout Iowa.

Zoning Board Holds Annual Organizational Meeting: Craig Walker was re-elected as Chair of the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Frank Frostestad was elected to serve as Vice-Chair for 2016. Deputy City Clerk was voted to continue her service as Secretary to the Board. City Administrator Matt Muckler discussed the upcoming “Intro to Planning and Zoning Workshops” that are put on every year by the Iowa State Extension Office. The City plans to have a group attend the training again this year, which will be held in Cedar Rapids on April 6th. Anyone interested in attending this valuable training is encouraged to contact Leslie in the City Office.

2016 Pet Tags Now Available: All cats and dogs over four months of age residing within the city limits must be registered annually with the City of West Branch. Tags for 2016 are now available at City Office located at 110 North Poplar Street. Current rabies vaccination papers are required at the time of registration. The fee for registering pets is \$5.00 per animal. A \$5.00 late penalty fee will be applied if an animal is registered after Jan. 31, 2016. Reminder post cards were mailed to all current pet owners last week. Additional reminders have been placed on the January utility bills and West Branch Times. The [Annual Pet Registration Form](#) is also available on the City website.

February Council Meeting Schedule: The City Council will meet on the first and third Tuesdays of February (February 2nd and February 16th) due to the Iowa Caucuses and the Presidents Day Holiday. A Joint Work Session with the School Board is scheduled for Thursday February 25th at 6:00 p.m., which will be followed by a City Council Work Session at 7:00 p.m. featuring Jeff Schott, Director of the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Iowa. Mr. Schott will facilitate a training session on Council Effectiveness and Teamwork.

Meadows Phase 2 and Lynch Heights: The Planning and Zoning Commission will meet on Tuesday, January 26th elect a chair and vice-chair and have discussion on residential plot plans. Chris Kofoed and Brad Larson will be present to discuss a rezoning proposal and plans for Phase 2 of the Meadows Subdivision. Wayne and Steve Lynch, owners of Lynch Plumbing, Inc., will also be on hand to discuss a rezoning proposal and future development of Lynch Heights, which would create an extension of Ohrt Street from West Orange Street to Main Street and could include up to eighteen new lots.

City Government at WBHS: Mayor Roger Laughlin and City Administrator Matt Muckler were invited to speak to the Senior English class at West Branch High School on Monday January 11th by Frank Frostestad and were welcomed by Principal Shannon Bucknell, who expressed his appreciation. Topics of discussion included potential careers in local governments and the roles of the Mayor, Council and appointed staff.

City Tours for Elected Officials: Councilpersons Jordan Ellyson and Mary Beth Stevenson completed city tours on Thursday January 14th. All six elected officials have now completed tours in advance of the annual budget sessions. All elected officials were able to review the condition of various City equipment and vehicles and speak with various employees about capital needs in their departments.

Stream Team 2: The Stream Team 2 met on Thursday January 14th to discuss a scope of work and identify project deliverables and a timetable for a flood inundation model. USGS is currently compiling a joint funding agreement for consideration by the City Council.

Upcoming City Meetings & Events: Please see the Calendar of Events on the City Website at <http://westbranchiowa.org/home> for a complete list of all upcoming events. There are several Council, Board and Commission Meetings and other events currently scheduled:

- Monday, January 18th
 - Monday, January 18th, 5:30-7:30
 - **Tuesday, January 19th at 6:00 p.m.**
 - **Tuesday, January 19th at 7:00 p.m.**
 - **Tuesday, January 19th, after reg. mtg.**
 - Wednesday, January 20th, 2:00 p.m.
 - Friday, January 22nd at 10:00 a.m.
 - Saturday, January 23rd at 7:00 p.m.
 - Tuesday, January 26th at 7:00 p.m.
 - Tuesday, January 26th at 7:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, January 27th, 2:00 p.m.
 - Thursday, January 28th at 7:00 p.m.
 - Friday, January 29th at 10:00 a.m.
 - Tuesday, February 2nd at 7:00 p.m.
 - **Tuesday, February 2nd at 7:00 p.m.**
 - **Tuesday, February 2nd, after reg. mtg.**
 - Wednesday, February 3rd, 2:00 p.m.
 - Friday, February 5th at 10:00 a.m.
 - Tuesday, February 9th at 6:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday, February 9th at 7:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, February 10th, 2:00 p.m.
 - Thursday, February 11th, 6:30 p.m.
 - Friday, February 12th at 10:00 a.m.
 - Monday, February 15th
 - Tuesday, February 16th at 7:00 p.m.
 - **Tuesday, February 16th at 7:00 p.m.**
 - Wednesday, February 17th, 2:00 p.m.
 - Thursday, February 18th, 6:30 p.m.
 - Friday, February 19th at 10:00 a.m.
 - Tuesday, February 23rd at 7:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, February 24th, 2:00 p.m.
 - **Thursday, February 25th, 6:00 p.m.**
 - **Thursday, February 25th, 7:00 p.m.**
 - Friday, February 26th at 10:00 a.m.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Event at Town Hall
 - City Council Work Session #1**
 - City Council Meeting**
 - City Council Work Session #2**
 - Afterschool Program at the Library
 - Preschool Storytime at the Library
 - Family Movie Night at the Library
 - Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
 - Pajama Storytime at the Library
 - Afterschool Program at the Library
 - Preservation Commission Meeting
 - Preschool Storytime at the Library
 - Pajama Storytime at the Library
 - City Council Meeting**
 - City Council Work Session**
 - Afterschool Program at the Library
 - Preschool Storytime at the Library
 - Animal Control Commission Meeting
 - Pajama Storytime at the Library
 - Afterschool Program at the Library
 - Library Board of Trustees Meeting
 - Preschool Storytime at the Library
 - Presidents Day Holiday
 - Pajama Storytime at the Library
 - City Council Meeting**
 - Afterschool Program at the Library
 - Park & Recreation Commission Meeting
 - Preschool Storytime at the Library
 - Pajama Storytime at the Library
 - Afterschool Program at the Library
 - Joint City Council Work Session w/School Board**
 - City Council Work Session**
 - Preschool Storytime at the Library

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.