

**Date:** April 19, 2011

**To:** Mayor and Council Members

**From:** John Archocosky, Manager

**RE:** Monthly Activity Report

I recently attended the MML Legislative Conference in Lansing. As you might expect, the general outlook for municipalities from the State of Michigan is not good. As we all know, the State has begun planning its next fiscal year's budget which contains many provisions that will directly impact the City. Some of the proposed changes will result in a reduction to the City's current allocation of Revenue Sharing funds. The City Treasurer and I have been trying to account for these changes as we prepare the City's 2011-12 annual Budget for the Council's consideration. Although the City's fiscal year begins in July, the State's does not begin until October. This, coupled with the uncertainty of all the potential changes, has made the budget process extremely difficult. A draft of the proposed City Budget will be available prior to May 1<sup>st</sup>.

At the recent evening Special City Meeting specifically held for public comment, very few issues were raised by those present. The vast majority of questions and comments were regarding the Washington/Lay Avenue Streetscape Project, which is in the final stages prior to being released for bids. Most of the concerns were addressed and the public seemed to appreciate the time that was spent on this issue. In addition to the Streetscape Project, there was also some concern regarding the City's efforts to deal with the ongoing blight issue. The public was reminded that the City has spent almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a million dollars in the past 5 years on two major blighted parcels of property. In addition, it was estimated that between \$20,000 and \$25,000 dollars is spent annually from the City's General Fund trying to resolve several smaller but persistent blight issues. It was pointed out by City Attorney Tousignant that often times the owners of blighted property live outside of the local area or State of Michigan, which makes it very difficult and expensive to force compliance with the ordinance. It was further discussed that the City does not wish to assume ownership of these properties, as it would place yet a greater financial burden on the City's taxpayers. The public was advised however, that a new code enforcement officer had just been hired, and the City will begin taking a more aggressive approach to dealing with the blight issue.

In conjunction with the blight discussion, City residents are reminded that the Annual Spring Leaf Pick Up days have been scheduled to take place from May 2<sup>nd</sup> through May 6<sup>th</sup>. During this time, properly bagged leafs and garden waste will be picked up curbside. In addition, May 14<sup>th</sup> has been designated for the Annual City Clean Up day. Tru-Recycling will have dumpsters available at the Public Works Garage from 8:00 a.m. until noon for metal and white goods.

Both the Police and Department of Public Works Union Agreements have finalized, signed, and are in effect. These contracts will remain in place until June 30<sup>th</sup> 2012. Both Union and non-union staff employees have accepted reductions in current and future benefits, which will assist the City with balancing the budget, as we continually strive to cut costs.