

(For August 2018)

Around the City with City Manager David Thayer

The Iron River Downtown Development Authority (DDA) continues its efforts to attract and retain businesses in our Central Business District (CBD). Maintaining a welcoming appearance is paramount to their efforts insuring healthy businesses and increasing customer foot traffic.

A major plank of their development plan is preparing obsolete sites for new development. This year, the Nelson Building was razed and the prepared to a shovel ready status. Last year, the Wardo Building also was razed and made shovel ready. In 2015, the Coast to Coast Building was razed. Removal of these three buildings had a major impact in improving the appearance of the CBD. The Nelson site and the Wardo site are being marketed by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation nationwide. Efforts are underway to make the Coast to Coast site a crowd gathering pocket park. This project will add to the continuing quest to improve our CBD.

Several businesses have participated in the DDA's façade grant program with the latest being Main Street Café. Other businesses are in the process of designing improvements to their building fronts and I expect their applications to be reviewed and awarded next April.

The DDA in mindful of maintaining infrastructure within its responsibility. They are currently resealing and restriping the three Maple Street parking lots. Next on the list of improvements is changing the lighting in the parking lots to LED fixtures.

The DDA's expanded flower project along Genesee St. and Washington Ave. continues into its fourth year. Multiple people have commented how the flower program has added to the overall atmosphere in the CBD.

Plans are underway to install three new Welcome signs, yet this fall, at the City's edges along the State Highways that bring motorists into our town while reminding them Iron River is "Where you are always home!" Next spring, plans are in the works to create a Wayfinding Signage system that directs people to noteworthy sites and places through uniform signs placed strategically along our major corridors and key intersections.

Next year in a collaborated manner, the City and DDA are embarking on a plan to rebuild the Cedar Ave. corridor. The street will be rebuilt, sidewalks and curbs added, and angle parking featured. Equally important is the storm water sewer system for the area will be rebuilt. This overall block is an excellent development site to be pursued.

As a reminder, the City's large item pick-up program at the DPW garage is scheduled for September 8th. Protocols will be changed to insure just Iron River residents are participating in the program. Hopefully, residents that have large items that are contributing to blight-like conditions will take advantage of this service. We will be issuing blight tickets thereafter.

Also, for those that somehow have not received the message, GAD has stopped picking up household refuse in alley's as of August 1st. For those that are affected, please place your refuse street side in front of your home.

Working together we can make progress addressing the aging complaints made about Iron River. In the last three years, we have taken major steps improving the aesthetics in and around our City, and we will continue to do so in an orchestrated fashion.