

Battle Creek Current



April 2015

City Manager's Corner



City Manager Rebecca Fleury

The city has embarked on a strategic planning process to identify our mission, vision, goals and objectives. We will work over the next year to determine the services that are most important to residents and apply resources toward those. During this process, I have challenged staff to do everything possible to make sure residents are successful doing business with us. To be sure this is a possibility, it is important to review those business processes that may not be viewed in a positive manner.

One of those is our Inspections process. These services are utilized by builders, contractors, trades specialists and more as they work on new construction, rehabilitation and other projects. City staff, as the state's designee, ensures the state building codes are upheld and provide local inspections and permitting services. The concern expressed by the community is that these processes are difficult, cumbersome and often expensive.

For these reasons, it is important for the city to gather community input, which we have done. We've also traveled to neighboring communities that are considered leaders in the field. A small work group will analyze the data gathered and compare it to current city services, determining the need for any changes.

As we make progress, we will continue sharing information. We are committed to providing the best services possible to our residents in the most efficient and effective manner.

Springtime brings pot hole filling crews to the streets

We've had Field Services Division crews filling pot holes around the city since mid-March, first concentrating on state highways with high traffic volumes, like Bedford Road and Capital Avenue.

Crews are using what's called "cold patch," because hot asphalt isn't yet available for the year. Local asphalt manufacturers start up in late April or early May. The cold patch is a temporary fix that we can use to try to keep roads driveable and safe, and many agencies use it to do the same.

When we receive calls about bad pot holes, we try to address them as much as possible. Sometimes we fill them multiple times if the patch is pushed out by re-freezing water, as our temperatures continue to fluctuate.

Our procedure is to make sure the pot hole is clear of debris and possible, water as much as then shovel in the cold patch. Depending on the size of the hole, we pack it in with the shovel or roll the tire of our trucks. Supervisors check



on our crews throughout the day to ensure this process is properly followed.

The cold patch is quite sticky so, even after following our proper process, a car that drives over the patch could pull out some of the stones until the material hardens completely.

We thank everyone for their patience as we await warmer weather that will allow us to better fix the pot holes on our city streets. The cold patch is our best course of action until that occurs.

Calendar continued —

- 5/21—Bicycle Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., City Hall
- 5/25—City offices **CLOSED** for Memorial Day; NO bus or van services running
- 5/27—Planning Commission, 4 p.m., City Hall
- 5/29—Planning Commission petition deadline for June

Mayor Deb Owens holds office hours from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Monday and Wednesday in City Hall Room 202.

April/May Calendar —

- 4/1—City Manager Performance Evaluation Committee, 10 a.m., City Hall
- 4/1—Sustainable BC Committee, 4 p.m., Dept. of Public Works
- 4/2—What's Brewing in Battle Creek with mayor & vice mayor, 7:30 a.m., The Pancake House, 185 Capital Ave. SW
- 4/3—City offices **CLOSED** for Good Friday; bus & van services running
- 4/10—City Hall **CLOSED** for employee training, 1 to 5 p.m.
- 4/13—Historic District Commission, 4 p.m., City Hall
- 4/14—Zoning Board of Appeals, 4 p.m., City Hall
- 4/14—City Commission (due to spring break), 7 p.m., City Hall
- 4/16—Bicycle Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., City Hall
- 4/17—Zoning Board & Historic District petition deadline for May
- 4/21—City Commission work session, 5:30 p.m., City Hall
City Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall
- 4/22—Planning Commission, 4 p.m., City Hall
- 4/30—Police Department Crime Prevention Unit public town hall meeting, 6:30 p.m., Burnham Brook, 200 W. Michigan Ave.
- 5/1—Planning Commission petition deadline for May
- 5/2—Household hazardous waste collection, 10 a.m. to noon, Toeller Building, 190 E. Michigan Ave.
- 5/4 to 5/8—Spring cleanup, curbside
- 5/5—City Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall
- 5/11—Historic District Commission, 4 p.m., City Hall
- 5/12—Zoning Board of Appeals, 4 p.m., City Hall
- 5/15—Zoning Board & Historic District petition deadline for June
- 5/15—Children's Water Festival, KCC campus, www.bcwater.org
- 5/19—City Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall



City of Battle Creek

City Hall
10 N. Division St., Battle Creek, MI 49014

www.battlecreekmi.gov

City Manager, (269) 966-3378
Fax, (269) 966-6654

City Clerk, (269) 966-3348

Code Compliance, (269) 966-3387

Fire Department administration, 195 E. Michigan Ave., (269) 966-3519

Police Department, 20 N. Division St., (269) 966-3322

Non-emergency, (269) 781-0911

Department of Public Works, 150 S. Kendall St., (269) 966-3343

Parks & Recreation/Full Blast Fitness Center, 35 Hamblin Ave., (269) 966-3431

Transit, 339 W. Michigan Ave., (269) 966-3474

Utility Billing, (269) 966-3366

W.K. Kellogg Airport, 15551 S. Airport Road, (269) 966-3470

City Commission

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PublicInput@battlecreekmi.gov
CityClerk@battlecreekmi.gov
See our website for a full staff directory.



Learn more about city departments and services on Vice Mayor Lynn Ward Gray's AccessVision TV show, *Keeping You Informed*. It appears on Channels 17 and 917 at 6 p.m. Wednesdays and online, accessvision.tv.

April: Fleet Services/Transit fleet
May: Fire Department

Need home repairs? Check this out!



Community Action, with federal HOME funds available from the city, is seeking homes of low-income families in **Urbandale** in need of major rehabilitation. Exterior/interior repairs are eligible, including plumbing, doors, windows and electrical work. Income limits are \$33,800 for a family of two and \$42,250 for a family of four. Call (877) 422-2726 or visit www.caascm.org for more information.

City-wide, our Minor Home Repair Program provides grants of up to \$5,000 for eligible, low-income home owners to fix exterior Code Compliance orders or address other health/safety issues. You must live in the city, have owned and occupied a single-family home for at least six months and have current home insurance. Contact Matt Flanders at (269) 966-3323 or mbflanders@battlecreekmi.gov.

Get to know: Building Inspections

Administrator: Dennis McKinley
Phone: (269) 966-3382

The Building Inspections Division is responsible for enforcement of the State of Michigan building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing codes for new construction and building renovation projects.

Our office is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, in Room 117 at City Hall.

City staff currently are working on assessing this division to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our residents and developers.

To that end, we held community conversations on Jan. 14 and Feb. 26 to gather feedback on the division and its processes. You can find more information on our website by navigating to City Government, Departments, Inspections, Community Conversations.

Next, a smaller study group will work with that feedback and city staff, as we continue toward the goal of a city that is as business-friendly as possible. We're also looking at the processes in other communities—Grand Rapids, Jackson and Kalamazoo.

Also on our Inspections web page, check out the informative new **FAQ** section, which offers some great information to help inform you about the division, building permits and more.

Here's a sampling, with more at our website, under City Government, Inspections, **FAQ**.

When do I need a permit?

A building permit is required for any new building, new addition to an existing building, and any alterations to an existing building which affects: the structural design of the building, mechanical, electrical or plumbing systems, and changes the use of buildings or parts thereof. Below you will find a list of typical residential

projects that require a building permit:

- All decks, porches and three-season rooms.
- Additions, interior structural alterations, finishing a basement or a portion thereof.
- Fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, chimneys and gas inserts.
- Attached or detached garages, sheds.

What happens if I don't get a permit?

The property owner may be subject to legal action for failure to obtain a permit. If you carry out a renovation project that requires a permit without having one, city staff may issue a "stop work" and/or a "cease and desist" order, which remains in effect until you obtain a permit. If the work doesn't meet the requirements of the building code, you may have to redo the work at your own cost.