



Office of the City Manager

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Patrick Urich, City Manager

DATE: June 10, 2011

SUBJECT: Issues Update

The following are issues related to the City for the weekly Issues Update. If there are additional items you believe should be included, please let me know.

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP. A Strategic Planning Workshop facilitated by Mr. Lyle Sumek will be held on Sunday, June 12, 2011 from 12:00 (Noon) – 5:00 p.m. at the Gateway Building, 2nd floor meeting room.

BUSINESS WATCH MEETING. On June 8, 2011, at Glen Oak School, City Council Member Tim Rigenbach and Planning Department staff hosted a meeting of members of the newly formed Glen Oak Business Watch District. Door to door canvassing by City staff resulted in 22 businesses joining the business watch. Businesses Watch members have posted Business Watch signs on their properties. Business representatives who attended the meeting were Dianna Howard, owner of Sparky's Bar, Ed Robbearts, owner of Ed's Chum Bucket, and Nicolas Nieto and Jose Roman, owners of La Esquina de Oro. Also attending the meeting were representatives of Glen Oak Park Neighborhood Association, East Bluff Serenity Neighborhood Association, East Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service, New Beginnings Ministries, Glen Oak Christian Church, Boys & Girls Club, Glen Oak School, the Peoria Police Department, and a WMBD Ch.31 news crew.

Officer Doug Burgess gave a brief presentation on robbery prevention. Much of the discussion focused on children and teenagers congregating after hours at Glen Oak School, fighting, some of which evolved into mob action, and questions about curfew.

Business owners were encouraged to develop the Business Watch through further communication with their fellow business owners. Ed Robbearts offered to lead the effort to develop the watch group. The Glen Oak Business Watch District includes businesses on Prospect Road from Frye Avenue to McClure Avenue, west to Wisconsin Avenue, and south to Nebraska Avenue.

Modeled after Neighborhood Watch, the primary purpose of Business Watch is to improve safety and prevent and reduce crime in commercial districts. It is a program that encourages business owners to work together, watch out for each other's businesses, employees and customers, and to call the police when something or someone seems suspicious.

NAME THE ARMADILLO. The Police Department's Armadillo program has received national and international recognition over the last 3 years and is being replicated in many places across the country. While this successful program is being recognized by the greater law enforcement community, it may

not be as well known right here in Peoria as it could be. It is the hope of the police department that more of our citizens come to know that we have this tool so that they recognize that it may be an answer to a problem in their own neighborhood. To that end, and in furtherance of strengthening the partnership between the police department and the community, the department is planning to announce a public campaign to name the Armadillos. The contest will be structured to provide a name for each of the two armadillo's, which will be displayed on the respective units. The caricature featured on the Armadillo (mascot) has become synonymous with the actual nuisance abatement vehicles but they have yet to be given a proper name.

We see this as a fun and inexpensive way to raise community awareness and ultimately increase the usefulness of the units and the program. Beyond the public announcement, all neighborhood associations and neighborhood watch groups will receive information about the contest as well as general information about summer safety. Dependent upon the number of submissions, the police department's plan is to narrow the list to 5, and then finally to the winning two. The winner(s) of the "Name the Armadillo" contest and the 3 runners up will be revealed at Peoria's Night Out Against Crime on Tuesday, August 2, 2011.

ROOF PROGRAM. The Planning and Growth Management Department received 29 applications on Wednesday, June 8, 2011 for the 2011 Roof Program, and turned away the other 35 applicants waiting in line. Over 140 applications forms had been handed out since June 1, 2011 indicating the great need for roof repair assistance.

The City Council appropriated \$150,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant funds on May 24, 2011 as item 11-208 for this activity. Eligible applicants have to be lower income owner occupants of single family homes. Applications will be processed in the order they were received, with staff anticipating 10- 15 homes being repaired.

RESPONSE TO CITIZEN INQUIRY ON CITY VEHICLE CAR WASHING. A citizen recently made an inquiry to members of the City Council regarding the frequency and cost of City vehicles being washed at Red Carpet Car Wash. Public Works Fleet Maintenance is responsible for servicing and maintaining City equipment. Included in the maintenance of a vehicle is periodic cleaning. This includes washing the vehicle to keep the windows clean, protect the paint finish, and keep all lights visible as well as vacuuming the vehicle interior. In the winter, this maintenance is especially critical to keep road salt and chemicals from degrading vehicle bodies. Furthermore, City vehicles are representatives of our community. Clean vehicles present a good image to the public and visitors. For many employees, their vehicle is their office. All car washing is done on an as-needed basis.

The City of Peoria has an agreement with Red Carpet Car Wash to provide car wash services for City vehicles at a discounted rate. The City Purchasing Division has negotiated a basic car wash at \$3.95 per car, which includes exterior wash and wax, vacuuming of the interior and hand drying of the vehicle. There is an additional charge for larger vehicles like SUVs and any additional cleaning that may be required. All departments have directed employees to only request the "basic" service. In the Police Department (the largest user of this service), anything above the "basic" requires supervisor approval.

Better management and attention to costs has resulted in considerable savings over the past few years:

2008	\$24,375.95
2009	\$18,338.75
2010	\$13,066.00
2011 (thru May)	\$ 4,643.60

The average cost of wash per car has also declined from \$5.70 in 2010 to \$4.94 so far in 2011. Also of note, through the first five months of 2011, the City has spent \$1,389.40 less than the first five months of 2010.

Red Carpet Car Wash is the City's preferred vendor because they are full service and open year-round. Most other car wash operations in the City are token-operated and often seasonal. A full-service car wash with attendant allows for better control of which vehicles are serviced. Invoices include the vehicle number. Monitoring of vehicles taken to be washed is done when the invoice is received and reviewed by the Purchasing Division. Any unusual washes or expenses are reported to the Fleet Manager. This would include excessive washes and other out-of-the-ordinary expenses.

Finally, the citizen also noted that he often sees vehicles being washed in the morning and presumed these were "take home" vehicles. The City has consciously chosen to get its vehicles washed in the morning out of courtesy to Red Carpet since they are less busy at that time. The City has 44 "take home" vehicles, down from 61 in 2008. Most of these vehicles are related to public safety employees in the Police and Fire Departments who are available for call-out 24 hours a day.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE FRONT YARD FENCE ORDINANCE. On July 12, 2011, a significant change in the regulation of front yard fences on residential property will be submitted to the City Council for action. The proposed changes were considered by the Zoning Commission at a public hearing on May 5, 2011, are described in this update, and are being copied to registered neighborhood associations.

The proposed changes address concerns that the current fence permit process is perceived as subjective and unfair, is time consuming for the applicant and the City, and is an inefficient process with an unpredictable outcome. The changes will streamline the application process, address corner side yards with thoroughfare frontage, control materials for aesthetics (chain link would be prohibited in front yards), and, allow for separation of public and private space, yet respect those that do not want front yard fences by recognizing that material is often the issue.

The proposed changes:

- 1) Allow fences with a permit in all residential front yards (unless otherwise restricted by subdivision covenant, or needing approval by the Historic Preservation Commission), subject to meeting minimum objective standards including size, openness, material, and placement. Standards include:
 - a. Allow three-foot solid fences in all front yards.
 - b. Allow four-foot front yard fences if the design is at least 50% open.
 - c. Allow fences in corner side yards along thoroughfares to be six feet solid if set back five feet from the property line (current Ordinance requires ten-foot setback).
 - d. Require decorative materials, including wood, masonry, wrought iron (or equivalent look), and vinyl.

- e. Prohibit chain link (including vinyl coated or slatted), wire or electric fences in front yards.
- 2) Eliminate requirements to send notice to owners within 200 linear feet and wait a minimum ten, maximum thirty days for final decision.
- 3) Eliminate requirement to consider input of surrounding property owners and residents.
- 4) Eliminate requirement to consider subjective impacts to other property and the established neighborhood character.

Note the changes are consistent with our review of Illinois communities regarding residential front yard fence approval processes. Please see Report on Fences, Attachment A, **(Electronic Copy Only)** an illustration on fences **(Electronic Copy Only)**, an amendment to Ordinance C **(Electronic Copy Only)** and an amendment to Ordinance B **(Electronic Copy Only)**.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (ECC) MAY 2011 REPORT. The Emergency Communications Center (ECC) May 2011 Report is included in this week's Issues Update for your review. **(Electronic Copy Only)**

MAY– JUNE WASHINGTON REPORT. The Ferguson Group's bi-monthly "Washington Report" is attached **(Electronic Copy Only)**. The report covers federal issues that might impact local governments.