



February 20, 2015

Mayor Donald D. Lyons  
City Council Members

Dear Mayor Lyons and City Council Members:

Upcoming Meetings: Council Meeting 2/23, 7:00 PM

The following report has been prepared to provide you with an update on current issues or projects in progress:

**City Clerk**

The position of City Clerk is open. City Charter calls for vacancies in elected positions to be filled within 30 days of the vacancy. Mayor Lyons announced that City Council will be seeking applications from City residents interested in serving the community as the elected City Clerk. Eligible candidates must be qualified to vote in City elections, have lived in the City for a minimum of one (1) year, may not have a felony record and may not be in default to the City.

Applications are available at Dowagiac City Hall in the Treasurer's office Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All applications are due at City Hall no later than 4:30 p.m. on February 26, 2015.

Mayor Pro-Tem Leon Laylin and a committee of Council will interview all applicants and offer a recommendation to City Council on March 9, 2015 at the regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

If you have questions about the duties and responsibilities of this position, please contact City administration, Mayor Lyons or any of your elected Council members.

**Sidewalk snow blower**

Great news! The snow blower attachment on the MT6 Trackless machine the City purchased in 1984 has served us well. The City crews have maintained, retrofitted and reconfigured the equipment as many times as they could. Parts are no longer available to properly maintain this equipment so a new snow blower attachment is now on order.

**Wayfinding signage update**

It is amazing that new construction and installations continue in the midst of Michigan winter weather. However; due to the continuous amount of snow we are receiving and guidance from MDOT and 'Give Em a Break,' installation on the wayfinding signs has been pushed to April.

Snow banks are just too high for safe and secure free standing 'Give Em a Break' traffic routing signs and blowing snow hinders the safety of commuters and work crews.

**Help keep your pipes from freezing**

With the inclement weather and frigid temperatures that are upon us, it is very likely that you may experience frozen water lines/pipes. Help alleviate this incidents - set your toilet tank to run or leave a faucet with a small stream running. This keeps water running through the lines.

These temps won't last forever – so notify the City Utilities Office at 782-2195 so an adjustment can be made to your water bill when the frost season passes.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact your Department of Public Services Office at 782-8200.

### **Annual retreat workshop**

Each year, your City department heads and council members gather for a workshop that reviews the progress and challenges of the past year and sets focus for the next year. Over the upcoming weeks, we will share with you reports from that workshop.

A vibrant and healthy economy is always a priority for the City. Downtown Development Authority & Chamber of Commerce Program Director, Vickie Phillipson reports some of the highlights and goals in this report:

For the second consecutive year, the City's investment in the central business district, this time with the construction of the James E. Snow Professional Building, was the highlight of downtown development in 2014. The two-story building, which opened on October 30, significantly changed the hardscape of the CBD by adding a "new" city block to what was our traditional downtown streetscape. The development came on the heels of the City's renovation of the former Behnke property and its opening of the Dowagiac Area History Museum the year before. The new cornerstone property at Main and Front streets, which houses the expanded services of the Cass / Van Buren District Health Department, dates back to the foresight city leaders had some 25 years earlier, when the first parcel of this development site was purchased.

Last year also saw the sale of two downtown properties, the announcement of four new businesses, the front facade renovation of four buildings and the planned renovation of two upper-level properties into residential units.

Business recruitment remains a top priority. Staff maintains a database of available properties and stands ready to assist in the location and negotiation of rental space, and the sale of property.

In March, after several months of interior renovation, Chemical Bank opened at 114 Commercial Street. The bank had purchased the site the previous year.

Also in the spring, after 18 years of leasing his building at 118 S. Front Street, Jim Frazier, owner of Vincent J. Jewelers, purchased the downtown storefront from Larry Seuryneck. Frazier is now celebrating his 26th year in business, having moved his shop to Dowagiac from South Haven in 1996.

In June, after several weeks of interior remodeling, Kris Lamphere, owner of Who Knew? Consignment, opened her second business, Refine Women's Consignment at 210 S. Front Street. The second business venture came seven years after opening her first specialty shop in the downtown and is built on the same concept of offering her customers great pricing, while letting them also earn

In October, Cheryl Sherman sold The Red Raven building at the corner of Front & Commercial. Interior reconstruction began the following month for FitStop, the new 24-hour gym. Interior renovation included new plumbing, interior paint, flooring and plasterwork for the facility that features a full exercise gym, a men and women's locker and shower area, a day care room and upper-level area for such group fitness activities as Pilates, Zumba and yoga.

With artist Michelle Stambaugh, owner of Mud-Luscious, wanting to spend more time crafting her beautiful line of handmade pottery, school board member and employee Claudia Zebell purchased the downtown specialty shop from Michelle in August. Shortly thereafter, with its name change to Rosy Tomorrows, Claudia moved the business to the adjacent storefront at 120 S. Front Street. The new location within the Masonic Temple building provides ample room for the in-house artisan to work on site, as Claudia continues to feature refurbished furniture, home accents and resale women's apparel and accessories, which the forerunner of the specialty shop, Laurie Kinzler, made popular in Dowagiac for more than nine years.

2014 also saw the continued rehab of the former Mr. K's storefront by Ken Allen of Silver Creek Township. Forrest Fin LLC purchased the site in August 2013, with the intention of turning the property into a two-screen movie theatre. Before his passing, Bob Haas had also begun rehab to the upper front of the old bakery building.

Recruitment remains a top priority as staff continues to work with business prospects that are presently on our radar screen.

Within the central business district, the following properties are actively available for lease:

- Jeff Neumann's adjacent storefront, formerly housing Mathew's Law Office.
- Alan Fricke's three storefronts, formerly housing LPL financial, Hopman Jewelers and Weller Wireless.
- Buzz Meyer's storefront, formerly housing Oh My.
- The Haas properties, formerly housing Shirley's Flowers and Alice Swann's Tailor Shop.
- The Masonic Lodge property, formerly housing Mud-Luscious.

Properties available for sale include:

- Alan Fricke's three downtown properties.
- Buzz Meyer's property, formerly housing Oh My.
- Mark Allen's three Penn Avenue properties, housing Sew Can You and Ham-sters.
- Doug McKay's properties, including Round Oak and the former bank building.
- Kathy & George Markham's property, formerly housing Foodie's Fresh Café & Catering.

### **Please keep them clear**

Plowed, shoveled, and blown snow builds up quickly.

We never want to be in an emergency situation, however; when emergency personnel or the fire department arrives, we are grateful for their concise and swift rescue. Let's do our part to assist them when they need to assist us. Keep the fire hydrant near your home clear and accessible.

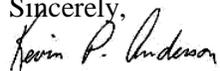
### **Dowagiac Wins #BOTF**

Who has the best fans in Michigan? Dowagiac Chieftains!!! Let's face it – we already knew that.

Dowagiac was one of five schools selected by the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) to compete in the Battle of the Fans (BOTF) 2015. The contest is sponsored by the MHSAA Student Advisory Council, who had the final vote on the champion.

Congratulations to the students of Beaverton, Buchanan, St. Johns and Yale for the spirited, fun and comradery. CONGRATULATIONS to our Dowagiac Students, families businesses and fans who stepped out and up to support their school and community!

The winner will be invited to Breslin on March 27 for the Class B Boys Basketball Semifinals and presented a championship banner at center court.

Sincerely,  


Kevin P. Anderson, City Manager

