



Monthly Activities Report

Department of Engineering and Public Services

August 3, 2018 Department of Public Services

The following items are designed to present information on Public Services Department work items recently completed, those expected to occur during the upcoming month, and other items of potential interest to the public. Information is subject to change at any time due to staff availability, weather events or other emergency situations, or numerous other factors. Items are not necessarily in order of importance, and may not be repeated in their entirety from month to month unless there is a need for continued reporting.

1. Citizen Request Module items – In total, 112 requests for service (out of a total of 167 for the entire City organization – for 65%) were logged into the City's new online citizen request module (My Civic) requiring some level of service from the Engineering and Public Services Department during the month of July. Requests included 67 forestry items, 13 pothole concerns, 12 garbage / recycling / yard waste issues, 12 street light outages, 6 signs requests, and 2 dead animal pickup requests.

As per the Department operations manual, all code enforcement items where property owners will eventually be billed are entered by staff and tracked within this system for record-keeping purposes, and other non-emergency requests for service received via phone call are logged into the system as well. Since the new web site launch on February 1, we have been using a new program associated with our web site upgrade, though City Council has directed a change to a different platform for better citizen interaction, and this will occur later this month.

2. Forestry Activities – Forestry Activities – in the month of July the Forestry work group completed the removal of 59 trees, trimmed 177 trees, trimmed 121 shrubs, and planted 14 shrubs. Additional work completed includes the removal of approximately 20 logs from the river, cutting of approximately 8000 square feet of brush along the river, and weeding of landscape beds.
3. Vactor Truck / Storm Cleaning – At present, the tank on our unit has deteriorated severely and thus the equipment is presently unusable and must be replaced. A recommendation to purchase a new unit has been placed on the August 6 City Council meeting and if approved, the new unit should be ready sometime in September.
4. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity throughout the year, even now that the weather conditions have stabilized. Citizens should feel free to contact Public Services staff via the citizen request module, phone, or email to report potholes, and we will do our best to handle complaints as quickly as possible. We typically try to address any complaints within 48 hours most of the year.

5. Monroe Multi-Sports Complex assistance – Public Services staff have been assisting with numerous tasks for the eventual repurposing of the Monroe Multi-Sports complex, and is nearing completion of our required tasks. Staff has been spending significant time during July continuing to dismantle the remaining larger items including the dasher boards and glass, scoreboard, and bleachers, and these items have now been given to the respective purchasers. Staff still has some remaining work in the locker room areas.
6. Property Maintenance Assistance – the City has recently been acquiring a number of residential dwellings for eventual incorporation into the River Raisin National Battlefield, and in some cases, for general blight remediation. Public Services staff has been assisting other City departments as needed on a number of tasks, including securing / boarding up, gaining entry, re-keying locks, remediating residual blight issues, and some lawn maintenance, depending on the property. It is expected that this assistance will continue until the current group of 28-30 homes are demolished, and then occur more sporadically for the foreseeable future.
7. Street Sweeping – we are presently running one sweeper for our maintenance level until October, when multiple units are used for the heavy leaf season. Again for the 2018 season, once the early season sweeping is completed, we will be focusing less on street sweeping and more on vector operations (once a new purchase is secured), both of which will be charged to the Refuse Fund, as we feel that this change may have an overall more favorable effect on storm system maintenance and street flooding prevention.
8. Parks staffing – As with past seasons, one (1) DPS Maintenance Worker has been transferred under the Parks Maintenance Supervisor again this year. The temporary assignment began April 2 and will run through October 27 this year as per the adopted budget and approved organizational structure. Should the Parks Supervisor require additional assistance or for heavy projects, DPS staff will assist as able at their request, otherwise full responsibility for all parks items other than forestry issues, the grass cutting contract, and contracted capital projects will again fall under the Parks and Recreation Department.
9. Mowing Contract – we are in the fifth year of a five-year mowing contract, and mowing activities started in late April. The regular contract work was divided into 5 groups this contract, with US Lawns of Southgate handling mowing in Woodland Cemetery and Memorial Place, along with monthly weed trimming along more than a mile of riverbank, and Ron Noel Lawn Service of Monroe handling all other City properties. In total, the City contracts for mowing 613 gross acres (nearly 1 square mile), which is roughly 9% of the entire area of the City.
10. High Grass Enforcement – US Lawns of Southgate will again be performing our ordinance mowing, also in the fifth year of a five-year contract. The annual policy statement on Noxious Weed and Grass Procedures was issued April 24 and posted on the City's web page. Lot sizes have been grouped, so that the pricing will be the same for all lots of the same size (for example, under 0.25 acres, 0.25-0.50 acres, 0.50-1.00 acres, and per acre for 1 acre or more). The authorized start date of ordinance mowing was May 1. As with 2017, the Building Department will handle review and enforcement, whereas the Public Services and Engineering clerical staff will handle billing.
11. Memorial Place Floral Display – we again have worked with Ruhlig Farms in Carleton to supply flowers that have been placed in the traditional "MONROE" display by our staff as in past years. This work was completed in time for the Memorial Day parade, and staff will continue to maintain the display through September.

12. Downtown Planters – at the request of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Public Services staff removed a large number of concrete planters in the downtown area that were in poor shape and consolidated the remaining ones to more visible gateway-type locations. The units in poor condition for display will be stored at the old DPS property on Winchester Street for eventual sale. Public Services staff has agreed to water the remaining units left downtown on behalf of the DDA this summer now that flowers have been planted.
13. Special Events – the months of July and August typically bring a fair amount of staff effort toward special events. The Monroe County Fair Parade occurred on July 29, and typically involves between \$2,000 and \$3,000 in staff overtime. Most importantly, the River Raisin Jazz Festival will be occurring between August 11-12 with the DMBN Art Fair occurring downtown on August 11-12 as well, and the majority of our staff typically takes the opportunity to spend the two weeks leading up to the festival performing some “once a year” tasks in addressing aesthetic deficiencies in downtown parking lots, the Riverwalk, and downtown Monroe in general. All told, staff efforts are substantial in this regard, as is the City’s overtime contribution during the event, which can be as high as \$10,000 from the Public Services Department alone, depending on which work items are considered. The Labor Day Bar-B-Q and Parade, Battlefield Foundation’s Rally by the River, and Monroe High School and SMCC Homecoming Parades will also be occurring in September and early October as well. While these events do not require quite as intense a level of staff involvement, nonetheless significant overtime costs will be expended in total. Also in July, staff assisted with the River Raisin cleanup on July 21 and the Ducky Dash on July 26.
14. Road Closure of East Front Street – the City was notified by Canadian National Railroad that they needed to repair a rail at the crossing of East Front Street that was scheduled to be closed later this year following the demolition of the adjacent houses. To save in replacement costs for the roadway crossing surface for only a short time, DPS crews provided concrete blocks and signage to facilitate the permanent closure of the roadway now rather than in October.

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