



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

March 2021

Baldwin Public Library

The Library reopened to the public on February 8 for Grab and Go service. [Curbside Pickup](#) and Grab & Go services are both available seven days per week and [virtual programs](#) for all ages are ongoing. The Baldwin Public Library Board named Karen Rock as its newest trustee at a Special Board Meeting on February 23. Ms. Rock will serve a partial term that ends on November 1. The Library is in the process of hiring a new Head of Adult services after Maria Williams, the former Head of Adult Services, resigned on February 26. A public budget hearing was held on Monday, March 15 at 7:30 p.m. to consider the 2021-2022 budget for the Baldwin Public Library.

The Birmingham Museum

Usually, March is the time of year when we are preparing for 2nd grade students to make their annual site tour of the museum. We generally host almost 500 students, teachers, and parents in guided tours geared toward local history curriculum requirements.

Due to the COVID crisis last year, the museum created a seven-part video tour of the Hunter House to provide a virtual experience for students. This year, we have expanded our student virtual tours with a companion video series that takes an in-depth look at selected artifacts in the Hunter House that relate to Birmingham's early days. The videos will be launched on the museum's YouTube channel the last week in March and will be promoted to teachers and students through the schools, the Baldwin Public Library, and through the museum's social media.

Birmingham Shopping District

The Birmingham Shopping District is pleased to report that they had an overwhelming response to the Birmingham Restaurant Week promotion. Although they initially budgeted \$20,000, due to high demand, they reallocated funds and distributed over \$40,000 in Birmingham Bucks to members of the community. This money will be spent with local retailers and restaurants.

The BSD is also proud to have partnered with the fire department and Oakland County to distribute over \$100,000 in restaurant relief grant money and equipment. They are also providing PPE to Birmingham businesses. A new website for the shopping district is scheduled to be unveiled this month.

Building Department

The [Building Department's monthly report](#) provides an update on the following construction activity: building permits issued, building inspections conducted, trades permits issued and trades inspections conducted.

Clerk's Office

Greenwood Cemetery

Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions & Regulations

The GCAB is planning on reviewing the entire document over their next few meetings to update language and make sure the rules and regulations of Greenwood Cemetery fit the cemetery's current needs.

Data Entry for GIS Mapping

The Clerk's Office and Museum Director met and spent several hours with Cheri Arcome on Wednesday, February 10th to study the various cemetery records we keep and to develop a deeper understanding of the records and naming conventions to help with the data entry for the GIS map.

This meeting sparked some ideas for ways the Clerk's office can update our records to more current formats. Currently a lot of our records are still kept with books that include handwritten data entry and mapping. We will be looking for more digital solutions that work alongside our BSA-Cemetery Management database that will be more current with technology and easier to preserve. We will work toward linking documents such as deeds and lot maps to the BSA records. The old books that we currently use alongside the BSA software are showing obvious signs of wear/aging and need to be handled carefully.

This will be a very intense and time consuming project for the Clerk's office and Museum staff and will likely take several months.

Future Landscaping Plan

The Clerk's office is in communication with DPS to schedule a meeting date (weather permitting) with Cheri Arcome and an arborist to evaluate the cemetery, stay tuned!

Cemetery Fee Schedule

The Clerk's office is working with Cheri Arcome of Creative Collaborations & DPS to update the current fee schedule, which will be reviewed at the next GCAB meeting and coming to a City Commission meeting soon. Conversations are also happening with the finance department to structure online payments so families and owners in Greenwood Cemetery can have more convenient options to pay for plots and services.

Greenwood Cemetery Website

Since the last GCAB meeting the City Clerk's office realized that although there is some information about the Cemetery on the City's website, the majority of the content is linked to a third party site. Instead of sending our visitors to a third party site we have moved all of the content from the old <https://greenwoodhistoriccemetery.org/> site and now all of the information is housed and maintained through the City's website at bhamgov.org/cemetery.

Ground Penetrating Radar

The Clerk's Office needs more time to gather research and information before bringing this issue back to GCAB for consideration and direction.

March is Cemetery Cleanup Month!

Creative Collaborations coordinates time with the City of Birmingham's DPS staff to clean up all grave blankets and Christmas decorations that will get picked up along with any other debris.

April & May

Creative Collaborations and the City of Birmingham's DPS staff schedule time with respect to the weather to top dress, seed or reseed and complete any additional cleanup in the spring. Markers and memorials can start being delivered and installed on April 1st. Creative Collaborations and the City of Birmingham's DPS staff schedule the regular spring fertilization.

Turf Improvement

Cheri Arcome of Creative Collaborations suggested and has been working closely with the City of Birmingham's Department of Public Services to improve the turf on cemetery grounds beyond the regularly scheduled maintenance and fertilizations.

Ethics Board

The Ethics Board has met to hear two cases so far this year and will be reviewing their draft opinion on case 2021-01 on Monday, March 15th. Case 2021-02 was dismissed.

Hybrid Meetings

The IT Department and City Clerk's office are working together to structure hybrid public meetings as a more accommodating option for the future.

Liquor Licenses

The pending liquor licenses will be reviewed at the March 22nd City Commission meeting. Ten of the pending restaurants have resolved their violations and one establishment has an outstanding violation. All issues need to be resolved by March 15th. After the March 22nd meeting, all Liquor License applicants that were approved will be sent invoices for their annual liquor license renewal fee of \$350 with the City of Birmingham. Once payment is received the license will be issued by the City Clerk's Office.

Pet License

Pet license renewal post cards are being sent out at the beginning of each month now and have shown to be very effective. The Clerk's office has been receiving a ton of pet license renewal applications in the mail and online. We are working on updating our postcards to have the pet license website link for online renewals.

Outdoor Dining

The deadline for outdoor dining licenses was at the beginning of March. Licenses are now going through the approval process and will be issued by April 1, 2021. License application fees are

being charged on schedule. The City will begin charging for the use of City property for outdoor platforms beginning July 1, 2021.

Special Events

A lot of Special Event applications are being turned in to the Clerk's office right now. At the March 22nd City Commission meeting, the Common Ground's Art Fair will be asking for approval. At the April 12th City Commission meeting The Michigan Parkinson Foundation's walk and the City of Birmingham in the Park Concert Series will be asking for approval.

Board Vacancies & Upcoming Appointments

There are upcoming board appointments on the following boards at the March 22nd Meeting:

- Parks & Recreation
- Multi-Modal Transportation Board
- Cablecasting Board

Government Day

The City's annual Celebrate Birmingham Hometown Parade is a beloved tradition that regularly occurs in May. The celebration serves in part to recognize residents who give their time and talents as members of City boards and commissions. In light of the current statistics and progression of the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person gathering of the celebration is canceled. The City still wishes to show gratitude for its volunteers and has an alternative way to celebrate Birmingham. The City Clerk's Office would like to celebrate our board members in a safe way with an appreciation video that includes each board/commission's accomplishments and photos of members with a scheduled release date of May 16, 2021. We encourage everyone to view the appreciation video on our website: www.bhamgov.org/parade.

Department of Public Services

Below are some noteworthy happenings in the Department of Public Services (DPS).

- Due to the rising temperature the past few weeks, water main breaks have been plentiful this year. DPS crews have been very busy between road patching and water main break repairs. Both issues dominate our time once the weather begins to warm up. After the winter freeze and thaw begins, it affects the roadways and underground infrastructure. So far, there have been sixteen (16) water main breaks during 2021. The total number of water main breaks during 2020 was twenty-four (24).
- Spring is official on March 20, 2021 and the golf community is anxiously waiting to return to Springdale and Lincoln Hills Golf Courses. The three-year golf cart lease ended last season. We have provided used golf carts for the golf members at both courses, which has been the standard for over twenty years. For the next three or five years we are exploring other lease opportunities to provide the members newer more reliable equipment. We have evaluated our best options for leasing golf carts in the most effective and efficient means. These findings will be part of a recommendation from staff at the March 22, 2021 City Commission meeting.

- Andrus Architecture has finalized the design drawings for the Ice Sports Arena Renovation/Additions project. The Parks and Recreation Board reviewed and accepted the design at their March 2, 2021 meeting and the Architectural Review Committee reviewed and provided input on the design for this public improvement project at their March 4, 2021 meeting. The General Contractor request for proposals (RFP) are out on the street and bids for the construction project are due on March 31, 2021.
- Birmingham Golf Course Season Opening Soon! We anticipate Lincoln Hills Golf Club (GC) to open on April 1st, contingent on the weather. Springdale GC should follow a few days later. Our Early Sign-Up Bonus starts on March 15th to March 19th and again on March 22nd to March 26th at Lincoln Hills GC. Clubhouse hours will be 10:00 am until 6:00 pm for this membership renewal. Residents will receive a Complimentary Green Fee (valid through May 31, 2021).
- We anticipate scheduling an invasive species controlled prescribed burn at Barnum Park later in March or early April. This is all contingent upon the weather, the drier the better. This will be the third scheduled burn that continues the maintenance and management of the natural grass areas.

DPS has engaged the services of David Borneman LLC to conduct a prescribed ecological burn at Barnum Park this spring. David has over 30 years of professional experience conducting prescribed, ecological burns. All trained personnel assisting David for this work have prior burn experience and are able to conduct this burn safely.

The purpose of a burn is to stimulate native species to grow more vigorously, and to discourage non-native plants from forming. Non-native (or invasive species) have not adapted to be able to withstand the heat from fire. The prescribed burn is safe. The burn is done in cooperation and with approval from the Birmingham Fire Department. The crew brings water, works in a slow, deliberate manner as to minimize the amount of smoke, and to direct smoke away from any smoke-sensitive areas with safety equipment on hand.

Signs cautioning the public about smoke are placed in appropriate areas. Due to prescribed burns being weather-dependent, it is impossible to predict exactly when it will occur, though it is likely to take place between 12 p.m. and 7 p.m., on a weekday or Saturday. The City will give as much notice as possible as to the date of work, and post to social media outlets and the City website. Neighborhood notification letters are sent out in advance, describing the project and contact information.

Engineering Department

Engineering Department is now scheduling for lead water service replacements for this summer and fall. The City is committed to replacing at least 52 lead water services each year, and we have developed a two-step process for scheduling this work. The first step is to have an initial meeting with the homeowner to conduct an inspection of the existing water meter located in the home, review the temporary entry agreement, discuss schedule openings for the contractor, and answer any questions. After the initial meeting, the work for the contractor is scheduled,

and they will return at that later date to complete the work. We want to get the word out that if any residents have a lead water service, and would like to take part in the replacement program this year, to contact the Engineering Department, or their consultant Hubbell, Roth & Clark who is assisting with this effort.

Finance Department

The Finance Department received seven responses to the RFP for investment consulting services for the retirement and retiree health care system. The Retirement Investment Committee will be reviewing these RFP's and conducting interviews with selected respondents over the next couple of months.

The City Manager has conducted budget meetings with department heads. The budget requests are being further reviewed and compiled into the recommended budget. The recommended budget is tentatively scheduled to be delivered to the City Commission on April 16th.

Board of Review meetings are taking place this month. This is an opportunity for taxpayers to appeal their tax assessment for the upcoming summer and winter tax bills.

Payroll Office Coordinator Ruth Rowland is retiring after 28 ½ years of service. Her last day will be April 1, 2021. She will be missed!

Fire Department

In the month of March, the Fire Department will be recertified at Emergency Vehicle Driver Training. This is an annual emergency vehicle drivers training course that is both classroom and practical based. Ice and water rescue training will also be ongoing this month on Quarton Lake. This time of year the ice can be unpredictable and its a good time to practice safe ice rescue techniques and procedures.

The Fire Department will continue to apply for various CARES act and Public Assistance grants related to COVID-19. Oakland County officially declined the Fire Department's request for vaccines due to the lack of other Oakland County fire departments willing to participate in the program. Chief Wells continues to explore other options for receiving the vaccine directly from the government.

Information Technology

The IT department is currently working on modifying our video production system to allow for Hybrid Meetings. This will allow the continuation of Zoom communication once we go to live meetings.

We are also currently working on upgrading the equipment in the DPS conference room to allow for live streaming from that room and are working on securing a grant to help cover the cost of those upgrades.

Manager's Office

Communications

The website team is reviewing bids received from the City's Website Redesign & Hosting RFP. We will be meeting with select vendors in April.

Residents will receive the spring newsletter around April 1, 2021. This edition includes updates about spring events, the Citywide Master Plan, child safety seats, construction projects, the Parks & Recreation Bond, Junior Golf and more.

Stay In Touch postcards promoting the Citywide Email System and the City's social media accounts are being mailed to all residents in the March, April and May water bills.

Earlier this month the communications team published a new [animated video promoting the Citywide Email System](#). The video was included in the March Around Town e-newsletter and posted via the City's social media channels.

The communications and website teams are developing the City's new public engagement tool, Bang the Table, which is expected to launch in April.

Human Resources

MERC Election Process

The Teamsters Local 214 now represent employees in the Department of Public Services. The Technical, Professional & Officeworkers Association of Michigan (TPOAM) have filed with the Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC) to represent this group. MERC calls this a Certification of Representative election.

There has already been a telephone conference with all parties establishing the election process. The City provided all the names of eligible employees working on February 11, 2021 along with their addresses to MERC and both unions. Notice of the election and a copy of the ballot were posted in all buildings where these eligible employees work on 3/4/21.

MERC will mail the ballots out on March 12 and they are due back to them by March 31. On April 1, the ballots will be counted and the union that has 50% plus one vote wins.

The Teamsters current labor agreement with the City expires June 30, 2021.

Miscellaneous:

American Rescue Plan

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) recently published an article about the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and what it means for local governments. Unlike the CARES Act of 2020, every county, city, village, and township will receive funds under the plan. The article addresses how and when funds will be distributed, in addition to how and when the funds may be used. SEMCOG provides a [spreadsheet](#) showing the City of Birmingham will receive \$2,111,917. Access the article and complete spreadsheet

at <https://www.semco.org/blog/what-the-american-rescue-plan-act-means-for-local-governments>.

Code Assistance Officer

At the direction of the City Manager, Code Enforcement has been renamed Code Assistance.

The word enforcement connotes more of a police function when the purpose of this division of the Building Department is to work with residents, builders and developers, and to make sure City ordinances, which focus on safety concerns, are addressed.

Code compliance is a very important issue in the City. Working with residents rather than punishing them is always preferable.

D48th's Michigan Indigent Defense Commission (MIDC) Grant/Indigent Defense Program

Nicole M. Smithson, a Regional Manager for the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission, recently presented to local communities regarding a grant between the State of Michigan, MIDC, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, and the 48th District Court. The grant would enable a new process for appointing defense attorneys for indigent individuals. Download the [presentation](#) and [meeting notes here](#).

DTE Update on Moving Electrical Infrastructure Underground

A recent correspondence from a DTE representative in regards to moving electrical infrastructure underground states, "I have done some preliminary research into other municipal requests to bury electric infrastructure. We believe that based on current equipment and labor costs, it would cost approximately \$3-5 million per mile to underground electric service. However, this does not include the costs that would be incurred by the City to bury cable or communication providers along those same routes. We would be happy to study this further for you to provide a better estimate to underground electric service in Birmingham for locations that are looking to pave unimproved roads."

Highway Noise Barriers

Visit <https://undark.org/2017/12/27/highway-noise-barrier-science/> to read an article regarding the effectiveness of highway noise barriers.

Virtual Meetings

On Monday, March 15, the City received the following message from Senator McMorrow's office regarding virtual meetings:

Good Morning All-

We wanted to check in regarding the extension of virtual meetings in OMA.

As we discussed in our meeting on this issue at the end of last year, the conversation around changes to the OMA is a broader one that needs to happen in the legislature.

Our local governments and our residents have expressed how virtual meetings have increased access and public participation to their local councils, commissions, and boards- this is something we should be encouraging. We remain committed to working with our colleagues in the legislature and with MML to have this broader conversation about how we need to adapt the OMA to reflect what we've learned and experienced over the last year during this pandemic.

That being said, I know that there is a more immediate need for an update to the bills from last year. Governor Whitmer has expressed to legislative leadership that she would like the legislature to extend the ability for local governments to meet virtually. Unfortunately, as of last week, Republican leadership has not been receptive and right now it is unlikely that bills will move to extend the virtual meetings provision past the end of the month.

I'll be keeping in touch with MML on their conversations with in the House and Senate and if we get any further updates I will be sure to share them.

Sincerely,

Molly Korn
Chief of Staff
Office of State Senator Mallory McMorrow

Woodward Avenue Tunnel

Following the discussion regarding the Woodward Avenue tunnel last month, the City received the following photos from Joe Valentine showing the inside of the tunnel.



Planning Department

The Hawthorne Building at 361 E. Maple is being reviewed at the Historic District Commission for a 3-story addition proposed on the 1-story historic building. The applicant has previously sought the de-designation of the building as a historic resource. The HDC is now considering the addition's potential effect on the historic resource in relation to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Police Department

1. Detective Sergeant, Mike Simpson has been selected by the Birmingham Optimist Club as their "Respect for Law Enforcement" recipient for 2021 for his service and dedication to the students and community of the Birmingham Public Schools. Det. Sgt. Simpson is currently assigned to the Investigative Division and acts as the Department's school liaison officer.
2. Officer Jeff Whipple, currently assigned by the Department to the FBI's Financial Crimes Task Force, was the lead investigator on a major case involving unemployment insurance fraud. Off. Whipple's investigation led to the arrest of a Detroit resident responsible for defrauding the State of Michigan out of \$180,000 worth of false unemployment benefits. The defendant was charged with wire fraud, fraud in connection with devices and aggravated identity theft.
3. After successfully completing the mock assessment for MACP Accreditation, the Department is addressing concerns raised during the mock assessment and has been assigned April 20 and 21st for the Department's final assessment. The final assessment includes two days of ride-alongs by assessors, a dedicated open phone line for residents to comment on the Department and an in-depth analysis of department policies, procedures and proofs of compliance. If successful, the department will receive its accreditation in June of 2021 from MACP.
4. The joint Mental Health Co-Response Program with the City of Auburn Hills, Bloomfield Township and the Oakland County Health Network continues to move forward. In joint meetings, the following took place: an interlocal agreement was written and will be submitted shortly for legal review; policies and procedures for the social worker were developed for operations; the records management system was developed and is now being reviewed by I.T. professionals for suitability. Training classes in advanced crisis intervention are in the planning stages for both July of 2021 and October of 2021.
5. The police department has reached out (voicemail message and email sent to Ms. Manoogian's Legislative Aide/Constituent Services Erin Panter) to State Representative Mari Manoogian in reference to the May 2020 letter we sent her seeking clarification on Michigan Vehicle Code Section 257.707c(3).
6. Birmingham Police Chief Mark Clemence prepared a report for Commissioner Brad Host regarding Woodward Avenue vehicle noise concerns. The report includes information regarding: traffic, pedestrians, parking and the towing of vehicles, and the needs of the police department. [Download the report here.](#)

Future Agenda Items

Download a summary of [future agenda items](#).

Future Workshop Items

Download a summary of [future workshop items](#).