

In This Update:

- **From the City Manager:** Street Conditions, Cigan Rental Properties Update, Going Above and Beyond, Boards, Committees and Commissions, Cultural Immersion, Manager Evaluation and Strategic Planning/Goal Setting Updates, Update on Fireworks for 2023, MLK Day Staff Training
- **Council Calendar**
- **Employee Spotlight:** Kimberly Kohls

From the Manager

Street Conditions: As you have no doubt heard from constituents and experienced for yourselves, we continue to struggle with bumpy streets. The freezing/warmth/rain/freezing/warmth/rain (repeat cycle many times) has caused the rutted terrain. The weather this year is unprecedented and abnormal.

Streets Manager Aaron Nicholson passed along to constituents this update:

“Over the weekend and through yesterday we had much more favorable temperatures in the city. Sunday was a great day because the sun also decided to shine for most of the day. Our original plan was to try to plow the streets today after the warmth and rain. However, the rain and temps just didn’t cooperate enough to help the pack ‘pop’ or ‘fluff up’. There has been significant melting of the ice pack on the roadways. Due to the melting, this also created some additional ‘snow-potholes’ (as Councilmember Emily Anderson appropriately named). Most places have about two inches of ice pack, some less, some more. As stated in previous emails and messages, mother nature is really the real trouble maker in all of this. The ever-changing temperatures and rain instead of snow continues to challenge us in our operations.

This week we will have the four loaders and one grader out as much as we can continuing to try to scrape off ice pack and smooth out the roads. Temperatures are trending cooler throughout the week, with another potential significant snowfall coming Wednesday and Thursday. I am optimistic that if we get this snow later this week that when we plow, the snow will fill in some of the ruts and snow-potholes and really smooth things out. I know that sounds weird to be excited for something like that but, at the end of the day, the residents want smooth roads... and a significant snowfall will help accomplish that goal.

Thank you all for your support. ...We care deeply about the road conditions and we want to make a difference.”

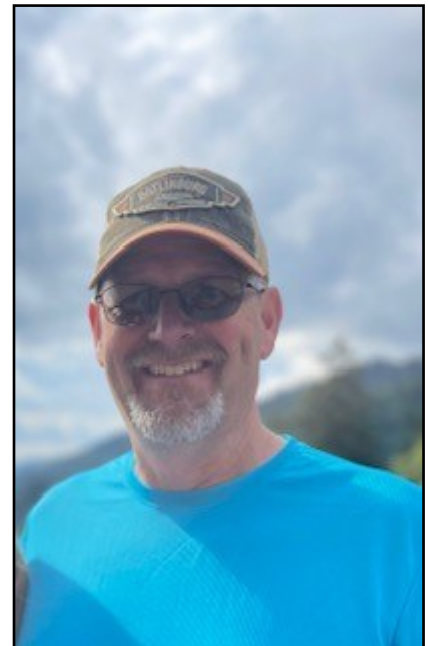
Cigan Rental Properties Update: The City of Eau Claire recently received documentation showing significant investments in rental properties that were the subject of a prior code enforcement lawsuit filed against landlord Karen Cigan. The lawsuit was filed because many of Ms. Cigan’s rental properties did not meet minimum health and safety standards, and Ms. Cigan’s rental properties have been a recognized problem for many years. As part of an initial settlement Ms. Cigan agreed to pay a \$25,000 judgment, agreed to allow biannual inspections of all her rental properties, and agreed to permit a receiver to be appointed to oversee her properties if the properties once again fell into disrepair. Subsequent litigation resulted in Ms. Cigan relinquishing ownership rights to her rental properties and relinquishing the ability to manage or otherwise exercise any operational control over rental properties in the City of Eau Claire.

During the pendency of these enforcement actions, the properties were brought into compliance with minimum health and safety standards. No residents were displaced, and no buildings were demolished (excepting one building destroyed by an unrelated fire). Ms. Cigan paid tens of thousands of dollars in fines and inspection fees, and new ownership invested significant resources in improving the living conditions in these units. Follow-up questions regarding this enforcement matter can be directed to Deputy City Attorney Doug Hoffer.

Going Above and Beyond: Transit Administrative Staff, Laurie Mittlestadt, passed along these words she heard from a constituent:

“I received a call this morning from a resident. The resident expressed that she has been riding the bus system since she attended college at the UWEC (1969 to be specific as she said). The reason for her call was wanting to let all of us at Transit know the outstanding job one of our bus drivers is doing and the graciousness of his going above and beyond what he needs to do.

Mike Steinke, who drives the #12 bus, which she takes every morning at 6:45 am to work at the Senior Center, goes out of his way to make sure she gets off at the stop safely. At the bus stop she gets off of, he parks the bus, gets off first and then takes her hand and helps her safely off and onto ground that is not snow covered or icy, as she is terrified of falling.



She has known Mike for quite some time and thinks that he needs to know that there are many passengers of his that appreciate him and commend him for his caring and thoughtful ways of making sure that passengers are taken care of safely.”

Thank you to Mike and all our Bus Operators for our care for our community!

Boards, Committees, and Commissions: At last week’s Council Work Session, Council members and staff raised the following questions, which we will work on investigating and then (tentatively) will discuss at our February 14th Council meeting.

- How much staff time do we want to allocate to the groups?
- What is the connection for the more policy-oriented commissions? What is their relationship to the Council?
- Committees with work plans produce something specific. How many don’t have work plans, and if they don’t, are they more reactive?
- Are we planning on getting feedback from boards, commissions, and committees? Some people feel frustrated since they don’t interact with the Council.
- Could policy-oriented Committees set up frameworks for Council to review projects?
- Could we reengineer Boards, Commissions, and Committees so that their work is more integrated with the Council’s work?
- Councilmember Gragert’s requests:
 - City representation on community groups/greater involvement with community groups
 - UWEC representation on BPAC and SAC.
- With limited resources, what does engagement look like? Is a model of committees a barrier to full participation and would other models be better?
- Engagement is always worth it, but are we doing it in the best way possible?

Experiential Learning: Dr. Ka Vang is still transitioning from UWEC to the City, and this month, she wraps up her work doing immersion learning at the UWEC. She spent time in California this month and is now in Hawaii leading a group of students. She has been sharing thoughts on how we might replicate some aspects of those programs work with the City of Eau Claire. She sent us this video clip of some of activities she and the student group experienced this month in Fresno: [video story](#). Take a look and join me in daydreaming about how we might replicate some elements in learning experiences for Eau Claire residents.

Manager Evaluation and Strategic Planning/Goal Setting Updates: The manager evaluation subcommittee, made up of President Weld, Council Member Felton, Vice President Berge, Colleen Schian, and I met this past week. We decided on the following. For the first-year Council evaluation, which we tentative scheduled for the first meeting March, the subcommittee decided to do the following:

- Carry out a 360 evaluation, meaning that different stakeholders will provide feedback on the Manager’s performance. We thought that, in this first year, we could poll the Manager’s direct reports and Council Members, and in future years, we can add to that group polling of

employees and community partners. My current task is to draft questions that could be included in the 360 evaluation.

- Have a closed session (without the manager not present) with Council members reviewing compiled feedback. Follow that session by a closed session (with the manager present) sharing feedback with the manager.
- Report out in a public letter the summary of feedback.
- On a separate date, work on refining the detailed goal list/work plan which folds into the strategic plan discussion. We have been tracking down a complete list of goals that had been prepared in 2019 for review and update.

Please reach out to President Weld with any thoughts or suggestions!

Update on Fireworks for 2023: Here's an update from Lane Berg on 2023 Fireworks Planning...

"Our 4th of July Planning Committee has been working on a new, permanent location for the 4th of July fireworks for some time now. We came up with a solution that the entire group supports and we would like to share information with the Council.

We would like to propose doing the Fireworks Display off the High Bridge for the following reasons:

- Safety (we had a mortar misfire last year that struck some bleachers that fortunately were not occupied);
- Fire Dept supports the move to prevent the risk of a major fire in the pine trees;
- Police Dept support the move for terrorist potential;
- Traffic in and out of Carson is very limited and, in an emergency, poses difficulties;
- Risk Manager supports the move to minimize City liability;
- The location will reduce required mandatory OT for Community Services, Police, and Fire;
- The High Bridge can be easily isolated from the public with minimal staffing;
- The fireworks vendor likes the High Bridge option;
- The fireworks can be viewed from many areas throughout the City (Downtown, Carson Park, Forest St Gardens, Owen Park, Parking ramps, Phoenix Park, Mt Simon Park, North Riverfront Park, Wilson Park), to name a few;
- It is desirable to launch over water;
- The High Bridge allows for cascading fireworks; and
- Spectators will not be concentrated in one area, they will be spread out.

The Eau Claire Express have indicated a strong desire to have the fireworks remain in Carson Park. The City has had a desire to move them out of Carson Park for some time now for the reasons listed above and perhaps more. A possible compromise might be to allow the Express to conduct their own mini fireworks show that leads up to the City show. We will discuss this option with the Express in coming weeks.

MLK Day Staff Training and Day of Service: Yesterday, we had a very full day of training for staff. We'll share more later, but for now, take a look a picture from one of the activities...

Council Calendar (With Tentative Work Session Dates)

- Monday, January 23rd: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
 - Public Discussion on No Mow May
- Tuesday, January 24 Council Meeting
 - Brief Study Session on Zoning Code and Housing Needs Assessment projects
- Monday, February 13th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, February 14th: Council Meeting
 - Fiscal Stability Work Session #2:
 - Refinement of Community Values
 - Continued presentation of 2023 goals.
 - Boards, Committees, and Commissions Work Session
- Monday, February 27th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, February 28th: Council Meeting
- Monday, March 13th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, March 14th: Council Meeting



- Closed session: Manager Annual Evaluation
- Monday, March 27: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, March 28th: Council Meeting
- Monday, April 10th: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, April 11th: Council Meeting
 - Last meeting for President Weld

Additional Dates:

- Friday, January 20th: Eggs and Issues – State of the County
- Wednesday, January 25th: Eau What a Night
- Friday, February 17th: Eggs and Issues – State of the City
- Wednesday, February 22nd: 29th Annual Chippewa Valley Rally

Employee Spotlight:

Here’s our next spotlight. (Give a shout-out to a City employee using this form: [Spotlight Form](#)).

Today we highlight **Kimberly Kohls!**

A coworker said this about Kim: “Kim is my team member and she makes my life so much easier. Kim is reliable - I can give Kim a task and know it will get DONE. Kim is courteous and kind to coworkers and customers and constantly receives compliments for her work such as: ‘Many thanks for all your help, especially Kim who was a godsend and angel all wrapped up in one’ (from a customer) and ‘I wish we could clone her’ (from a coworker). Kim always has a positive can-do attitude and is looking for ways to improve things and build people up. She is customer focused and takes pride in her work.”



- Your Position: “I am a Circulation Assistant at the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library. I have worked for the City for 21 years”
- What people may not know: “I love chocolate and cheese. (After all, I am from Wisconsin 😊)”

- Favorite activities: “I love to go snowshoeing and skiing during the winter months, and kayaking, boating, and fishing in the summer. I also love playing board games with my family and taking long walks on warm, sunny days.”
- Best part about working for the City: “I like knowing that I have actually made somebody's day better.”
- Life philosophy: “Always have something to look forward to!”
- Anything else? “I have been married to my husband, Pete for 28 years. I have two sons: Hayden (25) and Jonas (23). I also have two dogs, Sonar (golden retriever) and Jenny (brittany spaniel), and a cat named Sahara.”