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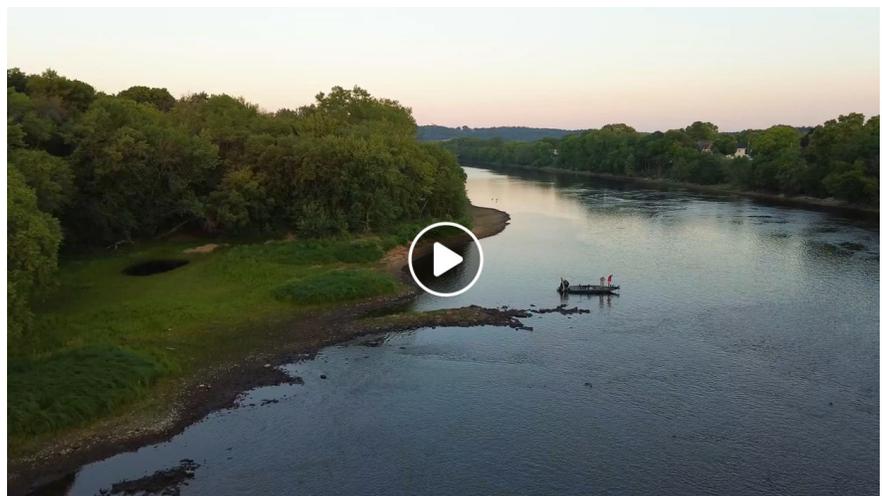
From the Manager

The Loss of Justin Vue: I shared updates on the search for Justin Vue on Thursday and Friday, as well as its heart-breaking resolution at the end of the day. The experience of being part of the group that gathered from sun up just past sun down on Friday will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Since Friday, I have been continuing to mull over reflections on...

- the strength of connections within the Hmong community and from that community to Eau Claire as a whole,
- the technical excellence of our public safety staff and their intuition, learned through decades of experience, about the right choices to make,
- the grace and compassion those same staff showed in caring for the hundreds of people who came to search and grieve,
- the care of so many corners of the community who love Justin, Kaying, Charles, and the whole Vue family and who showed up with food, tents, water, kayaks, hugs, and hiking boots to hike the shores,
- the reality that one of our most important natural assets can also be one of our most dangerous liabilities, and
- the reality that a person, parent, family, and community can do everything right and still lose a beloved person with so much potential in, literally, the blink of an eye.

A Facebook commenter shared a video that he had made as he flew his drone over the area in hopes of helping to find Justin.



Ma Maxwell Vue, August 4 at 10:48 PM: “Hey Justin, You probably don't know me, but I know you and your family. Your dad has been amazing to me and my family through the years. I woke up at the break of dawn today and flew my drone over the Chippewa for a couple hours, trying to find you. I flew again along the shores at lunch looking for you. I am glad you have been found and we can send you off properly. You and your family are loved by us all. It breaks my heart knowing what your family is going through. And to my Eau Claire peers. We grew up with the Chippewa in our backyard -- not fearing her for what she really is. I too have floated and swam with her growing up. She is beautiful, serene and gives us life, but she is hungry and selfish. The lives she has taken is unjust. She is greedy. Please be safe when out there and don't be fooled by her grace.

R.I.P. Little brother. Let’s go home.”

<https://www.facebook.com/ma.livue/videos/834411837834184>

All are welcome to join the Celebration of Life in September, as described in the image above.

Lifesaving Rescue: Deputy Chief Chad Hoyord shared this lifesaving story to recognize the heroic acts of our police officers:

“On July 26, 2023, Officer Madi Harer and Officer Ariana Down Larson responded to a community member having a mental health crisis on the West Grand Bridge. This individual called our Communication Center stating he was going to jump off the bridge and he would be in the water before officers arrived.

Officer Harer and Officer Down Larson arrived and found this individual still on the bridge near the railing. Both officers began a dialogue with the individual as they moved closer to the individual. The individual told the officers he didn’t feel life was worth it, and he began to climb over the railing on the bridge. Without hesitation, both officers approached the individual and pulled him back

Officer Madi Harer

Officer Ariana Down Larson



off the railing before he had the opportunity to jump or unintentionally fall off the bridge.

The officers demonstrated compassion as they continued engaging in a dialogue advising him that he will be ok while safely securing him so they could escort him off the bridge. Once they were off the bridge, the officers listened as this individual described his current mental crisis. The extra time the officers spent with this individual not only allowed this individual time to process his thoughts, but it allowed this individual to build trust with the officers, resulting in this person seeking mental treatment at a hospital.

In fact, this individual asked the officers if they would be willing to follow up with him at a later date to see how he was doing. It was an excellent example of officers showing compassion and professionalism as they helped save the life of an individual in crisis.”

Community Pass Pilot Update: Our ICMA Fellow, Danya Morman, shared this update on the ARPA-funded project that they are helping to coordinate:

“The Community Pass Pilot is an effort to increase ridership and encourage people to get out of their homes and into the community. Post-pandemic ridership has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, and efforts are needed to increase our residents’ sense of community belonging.

We have formed a taskforce made up of a variety of community members who bring expertise and can advocate for different populations. The group includes representatives from the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce, CVTC, United Way, ADRC, L.E. Phillips Senior Center, DHS, Department of Workforce Development, West Central WI Metropolitan Planning Organization, EC Library, City Staff, and students from Memorial High School and other resident advocates.

At our first meeting, we heard about the great need to simplify transit, citing that those who have cars often have to go out of their way to use transit. Due to our current system and route frequency, it is easier, more convenient, and quicker to simply driver. Folks discussed that going fare free could alleviate some of the inconvenience, but further changes would be needed to truly be able to compete with cars.

Next steps include analyzing the potential cost and benefits of going fare free for any portion of riders and looking through existing recommendations and options for service in Eau Claire.”

BIPOC Steering Committee: Another ARPA-funded initiative is getting underway as well. The City put out a call to invite residents as follows: A steering committee comprised of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community members, with the assistance of a City of Eau Claire staff liaison and oversight by City Council, will explore how the City of Eau Claire can be a more welcoming, diverse, and inclusive community. [BIPOC Steering Committee - Seeking Committee and Intern Applicants | News | City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin \(eauclairewi.gov\)](#)

The City received 20 applications from a very interesting and diverse group of area residents, including people who work in health care, higher education, K-12 education, businesses, and more.

The group will meet over the next nine months to formulate recommendations. We will share updates and share how the Council and community can learn more and participate in the work.

Zoning Overhaul Progress Report: Here are a few reminders about the zoning overhaul process that's underway...

- **Community engagement:** A community engagement process is wrapping up, and staff report that it has gone well. The online survey closes August 13th, and the City has pushed it out in a number of ways. At National Night Out, staff facilitated a city planner mock building block game. A Hmong outreach event will be held this week at HMAA with interpreters. All relevant boards and committees have had a chance to weigh in on the zoning code, with Landmarks and Transit as the last two to discuss this month.
- **Remaining ZPAC Meetings:** As a reminder, Council Members are part of the Joint Zoning Policy Advisory Committee (ZPAC), along with the Plan Commission. Here are the dates and times for the three meetings left in 2023.
 - September 5th, Tuesday from 4 to 6PM Library Riverview Room (306)
 - November 6th, Monday, from 4 to 6PM, Library Riverview Room (306)
 - December 18th, Monday, from 4 to 6PM, Banbury Place, Eau Claire Room (3rd floor)
- **Policy Direction:** The September meeting will focus on the community engagement summary/take-a-ways and then an important discussion on policy direction for several areas based on the direction received to date. These include:
 - Zoning vs. Future Land Use
 - By-Right Uses
 - Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Tree Preservation
 - Short Term Rentals
 - Affordable Housing Incentives
 - Commercial Design Standards
 - Downtown Development and Design Standards
 - Landscape Requirements



Based on the Council's direction, the consultant will begin analysis and testing. Results will then be shared at the November 6th ZPAC meeting for further direction for code drafting. The December meeting is anticipated to start reviewing initial draft land use districts.

Council Member Gragert sent in the above picture with the following note: “I wanted to share that is was great seeing our Planning Team at the National Night Out event spreading the word about the Century Code update survey and doing an activity with kids (and adults!) about city planning.” I like this picture because it shows both a future planner and a future firefighter in the background!

National Night Out (NNO) Kudos: And speaking of National Night Out, it was awesome! NNO was held in partnership with ECPD on Tuesday 8/1 at Carson Park. The event was a great success with well over 1,700 community members in attendance (1,700 food tickets were distributed and many people do not take a food ticket). The free family event featured big trucks and equipment on display, emergency vehicles from various local agencies, activity and information booths, many games, dance and musical performances, magic performances, prize raffles, a mascot dance competition, and free food for all in attendance. All of this is made possible through generous support from many community partners and the work of many volunteers.

Here are a few reports:

- “I was there as well and saw nothing but lots of people and families enjoying a nice evening in the park with activities, games, informational booths, dance/musical/magic performances, big trucks and emergency vehicles, and food to enjoy. All the different entities involved both internally and externally show the great sense of community that exists for it all to come together the way it does every year.”
- “This was my first time being at the event in-person and it was great to see the results of all the planning and coordination that goes into it.”
- “Thanks to Ben Anderson and crew who had the park looking pristine for the event!!!!”
- “I was at the National Night Out and wanted to commend you and your staff for putting on an outstanding event. With over 40 vendors and a ton of activities and food, there was something for everyone youth and adults alike. I went to the Carson Park this morning and was extremely pleased, but not surprised the park was left clean and everything was picked-up...Your programs and events always run smooth and I wanted to thank you for another great night for our community.”

Pictured below are Steve Plaza and Jenessa Stromberger watching the magic show. (Steve is definitely scrutinizing the show carefully to pick up tricks he can use in the future! Meanwhile, Jenessa has already figured out how all the tricks are done...); the Century Code Re-write booth, the DECI booth with Jacob Wiensch and Dustin Olsen (they showed me the ornaments they had made...); and Julie Booth and a seasonal recreation staff member open up a bag to put on their thousandth hotdog!



Customer Service Through the Decades: I got this very fun email from Kristine Hinrichs who was stopping in town. She came by City Hall because she worked in the City Manager’s office between 1982 and 1987 (with Steve Adkins and Eric Anderson). It didn’t surprise me at all, because I get to listen in on many, many awesome interactions between Tess and all different members of the public. I wanted to share it.

“I happened to be in Eau Claire today and (for the first time in 35+ years) stopped into City Hall to see ‘my’ old office. I was greeted by your staff and immediately welcomed by Tess Morgan. (She said she recognized my name from old documents.) She gave me a great tour of City Hall. I don’t know what I expected - but her welcome WAY exceeded my expectations. It’s clear that she loves her work and her interactions with the public.”



Here are two Health-related updates:

- Recent COVID trends: While COVID activity in Eau Claire County remained low in July, we are seeing indications of increasing disease spread, according to wastewater data. Right now COVID levels in our wastewater are at a "moderate" level—which is an increase from the "low" levels seen in the past few weeks. We're using wastewater data and hospitalization data to monitor the spread of COVID in our community, rather than relying on case numbers. Counting case numbers is no longer an accurate way to track the spread of COVID because many people are using at-home tests, and less testing is happening overall.
- Health Alliance Open House: Eau Claire Health Alliance is a newly rebranded coalition (formed by a merge of Eau Claire Healthy Communities and the Alliance for Substance Misuse Prevention coalitions). To learn about the work of our coalition, and how to get involved with our efforts, please join us for an Open House on **Thursday, September 21st from 4 to 6PM** at the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library. (Formal presentation at 4:30PM).

TCT Needs Volunteers: FYI and please spread the word... The Community Table is short on volunteers for the month. They wrote: "TCT is experiencing increasing numbers and serving over 100 people each meal period. This increase could be due to multiple factors, but there is correlation of increases to when the assistance programs scaled back. With increasing food and housing costs, the need is most likely higher than it has been in a long time. With families facing the costs of going back to school, need may continue to increase. [TCT Board: Volunteer Opportunities at The Community Table \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com)

Council Calendar (With Tentative Work Session Dates)

- Monday, August 7th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, August 8th: Council Meeting
- Monday, August 21st: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, August 22nd: Council Meeting
 - Additional Budget Work Session – Overview of proposed cuts and proposed service modifications
- Tuesday, September 5th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Discussion
- Monday, September 11th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, September 12th: Council Meeting
- Monday, September 25th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, September 26th: Council Meeting
- ❖ *September 29th – City Council receives 2024 Proposed Operating Budget*
- Monday, October 9th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
 - Public Hearing #1 on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 10th: Council Meeting

- City Council Operating Budget Work Session #3 (Department Directors)
- Monday, October 23rd: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
- Tuesday, October 24th: Council Meeting
 - City Council Operating Budget Work Session #4 – Amendment Discussion
- ❖ *November 3rd – City Council Budget Amendments Due*
- Monday, November 6th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Discussion
- Monday, November 13th: Council Public Hearing/Discussion Night
 - Public Hearing #2 on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, November 14th: Council Meeting
 - City Council action on 2024 Proposed Operating Budget and levy
- Monday, December 18th: Joint Plan Commission and City Council Meeting for Zoning Overhaul Discussion

Additional Dates:

- Friday, August 11th: Junior Police Academy Graduation
- Tuesday and Thursday, August 15th and 17th: New Employee Bus Tour
- Friday, August 18th: Eggs and Issues
- Friday and Saturday, September 1st and 2nd: Fire Leadership Conference
- Friday, September 15th: Council Retreat

Employee Spotlight:

Here’s our next employee spotlight!

Today we highlight **Janeen Whelihan!** (Submit your highlight suggestion here: <https://forms.gle/f1PUPpFaWStsvH458>) This is a special Employee Spotlight to us in the City Manager and City Attorney’s Offices, as Janeen will retire at the end of this month, and we will really miss her.

What coworkers say about Janeen:

A co-worker submitted this quote about Janeen: “Janeen’s institutional knowledge, procedural know how, and attention to detail are invaluable.”

Since she works with us in the City Manager’s Office, we took the liberty of adding our own quotes as well...

- “When I joined the City, Janeen’s guidance and support made a great impact on my transition and overall experience. Her willingness to answer my questions and offer valuable insights made a difference. Her patience and expertise creates a welcoming atmosphere. I am incredibly grateful for her assistance.”

- “If Janeen takes care of something, it’s done right. It’s hard to understate how useful that is in this line of work.... Plus she has a great personality – funny, kind, smart. She is the complete co-worker package.”

More about Janeen...

Job Position: “I have been the Paralegal for the City Attorney’s Office for almost 14 years.”

What people may not know about me: “I was born and raised in Wisconsin. My dad was a Soil Conservationist for the State and early in his career he received many promotions that came along with transfers. I lived in six cities along the way -- sometimes not even in a town for a whole school year, settling in the Chippewa Valley when I was in the third grade. I am the third oldest of eight children and have brothers and sisters scattered all over the US from California to Florida. Fun Fact: The 2020-2021 holiday tree in Phoenix Park came out of my front yard.”

Favorite activities: “I enjoy baking and reading a good romance novel. I spend time working in my flower gardens in the summer and making porch pots and wreaths in the winter, and I am a member of a local garden club. My husband, John, passed away this past May. He and I enjoyed golfing the courses in the area. Although we weren’t the best (or the worst), we didn’t take our golf game too seriously and most times didn’t even take a score card with us.” Janeen and John are pictured here in front of the tree.

Best part about working for the City: “I enjoy the variety of work each day. I take pride in having played a small part alongside many talented and dedicated co-workers over the years and have been on the front line of many exciting development projects throughout the City, especially the revitalization of downtown Eau Claire.”

Life Philosophy: “Live in the present and be grateful for each day.”

