

Hello Residents and Council,

Here is my report of recent activities and my calendar of planned Dexter activities looking ahead:

Update on Pedestrian Safety efforts with Dexter Community Schools

Our next meeting with representatives of the Dexter Community Schools (DCS) is tentatively set for March 12, 2019. At our latest meeting with school representatives on February 12, 2019, we had another productive discussion. We discussed a broader view on how to improve the overall safety at crosswalks in the City, including those that the schools had identified in their report. We also discussed some next steps that Council would be discussing at our next Council meeting on February 25th. (please see agenda item L-1 for more information). There is more work and cooperation to come on this between all agencies.

Goal Setting Sessions

As a reminder, February 23rd be the first Council Goal Setting Session. This goal setting session will be our first and will be held at the Senior Center at 9 am.

Mayor's Thoughts on the Need for upgrading our current City Offices and Fire Station

As City residents are aware, our current City offices are too small and inadequate in many ways. Our staff are operating in cramped conditions, and we need to find new space to rent or build new space. Our employees deserve better conditions and more modern facilities in order to serve our residents and businesses. We also lack adequate meeting space that is our own. I believe that the cramped appearance of our current office space and conference room (while clean and as organized as possible) presents an image that is not reflective of the very professional and positive attitude that our staff project daily. Whenever we bring visitors, guests, residents, etc. into our current space, people are amazed at how our staff do so much with so little functional space. My reason for writing this article today is to increase public awareness of this problem, to seek input from residents on this topic and to notify you that we will have two upcoming public information meetings to discuss this very important facility topic, as well as options for improving our fire station, which is also in need of some upgrades. We will announce those dates and times as soon as we have them scheduled.

As part of sharing my thoughts, I would like to also encourage feedback. I would like to know how other residents feel about this situation. Do residents know we operate in a cramped space? Do residents feel we need a larger space? Do residents feel that the condition of our City offices is an important reflection of who we are as a community? As a Council, I believe that we are supposed to be making decisions that are reflective of our residents' thoughts and that improve the quality of life and image of the City. We also have a responsibility to spend within our means as we solve these types of problems. I believe that finding a better place for our City Office should be a top priority. City Council has been working for the past couple of years to develop a list of options and we are getting close to presenting that information, however we have many priorities competing for our General Fund dollars.

With regard to our Fire Station, there has been plenty of recent Council discussion about moving the fire station. The majority of the recent Council discussion has focused on the vacant property at Meadowview and Dexter Ann Arbor Road. This property is currently owned by MAV Development and is across from Mill Creek Middle School. The City's Master Plan identifies this property for commercial uses like the day care that was recently built next door or the University of Michigan Medical offices across Meadowview. While this site is

certainly big enough to build on, I am not in favor of moving the fire station to this property for two primary reasons:

1. The first reason I am not in favor of moving the fire station is that it does not improve the service or response times for our community if we move the station further down Dexter Ann Arbor Road. The City of Dexter is partners with Dexter Township and Webster Township and together we participate/operate the Dexter Area Fire Department. In 2018, over 70% of the runs by our fire department were in the two Townships. Moving the City station further down Dexter Ann Arbor Road means that the response times for those runs will increase. It simply will take longer for trucks and response vehicles to get from Meadowview and Dexter Ann Arbor Road through town and into the district, whether they are heading under the viaduct to Island Lake Road or through our older portion of the Village to Mast Road. Response time is very important when responding to a fire or medical emergency and it just doesn't make any sense to build a new station that adds time to our ability to respond to those in need. I am also concerned about taking the station out of our historical downtown. If we have a fire in downtown (and we have had 2 in the last 20 years), it is critical that our firefighters can get there to prevent the fire from spreading. It would be very hard to rebuild our historical downtown. We need to protect it by minimizing the response times to downtown.
2. The second reason that I am not in favor of moving the station is cost. We have been working with a knowledgeable architect for a few years and the projected cost to build a new station are over \$6 Million, including construction costs, design fees and contingencies. This projected cost is anticipated to be over \$7 Million if you include the cost to purchase the land. I feel that this is simply too costly, especially when it doesn't improve our overall response time to serve the community. We can spend significantly less to modernize our current station and add the additional space we need. Our architect has shown us several plans to accomplish that as well.

I appreciate the comments that I have received since my last report on these topics and am interested to hear what other City residents think. I welcome your input and participation in the discussion of any of these topics. Please look for the upcoming meeting notices and feel free to contact me at the number or email below with any thoughts and questions. Thank you in advance for your input on this process.

Recent Activities & Meetings

We have received 7 applications from students interested in serving as non-voting members on our various Boards and Commissions. I am reviewing those applications and in the process of speaking with them/setting up opportunities to speak to them. I hope to have some initial recommendations for appointment in March 2019.

February 12, 2019 - Meeting with Dexter Community Schools regarding Crosswalk Safety within the Community. We had another good meeting with representatives from the Dexter Community Schools. Up next is a council discussion on this topic. Please see Agenda Item L- 1 for more discussion and information on this topic.

Upcoming Activities

February 21, 2019 – Dexter Area Fire Board meeting

February 22, 2019 – Downtown Development Authority meeting (this meeting was rescheduled to Friday morning)

February 23, 2019 - City Council Goal Setting Session #1

February 25, 2019 – City Council meeting

February 27, 2019 – Meeting with Waste Management

March 1, 2019 – Meeting with MAVD Development regarding negotiation for potential property purchase.

March 4, 2019 – SE Michigan Asset Management Team meeting

March 11, 2019 – City Council meeting

March 12, 2019 – Meet with Dexter Community Schools regarding Crosswalk Safety within the Community – follow up/coordination meeting #3.

Hopefully everyone is staying warm this winter and driving safely in these frequent icy conditions. Approximately one month until Spring!

I look forward to seeing you around our town. 😊

Shawn Keough
Mayor, City of Dexter
skeough@DexterMI.gov
(313) 363-1434 (cell)