

**City of West
Branch
Office of the
City
Administrator**

To: Mayor and Council

From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator

Date: April 13, 2012

Weekly Council Update

- **Nuisance Abatements:** Mayor Kessler, City Administrator Matt Muckler, City Attorney Kevin Olson, City Prosecutor Doug Simkin, the entire Police Department staff and Public Works Director Matt Goodale met this week to discuss nuisance abatements in the City. More than two dozen properties have been identified as being in violation of the ordinance and staff is working to address these issues with property owners.
- **Public Works Update:** Cy's Tree Service and John's Crane Service took down the tree in front of Town Hall on Wednesday April 11, 2012. The street was closed for most of the day but motorists were able to detour. Public Works Staff have been working to install a sidewalk on the west side of the College Street Bridge to 2nd Street. The new sidewalk will be five feet wide, provide some space between College Street and pedestrian traffic and reduce the grade of the sidewalk in this area. Future improvements in this area include repairs to the handrail on the bridge, improvements to the sidewalk and approach on the east side of the bridge and new signage cautioning drivers to be aware of pedestrians in the area. Staff will also be working to remove the old sidewalk and do some grading along the ditch by College Street. The parking lot on the west side of 2nd Street is going to be graded and rolled. Posts will be placed on the edges of the park area to define its boundaries.
- **Grant Eligibility for Wastewater Projects:** At the April 2, 2012 Council Meeting, the topic of grant funding for wastewater projects was discussed. City Engineer Dave Schechinger and representatives from the East Central Intergovernmental Association have confirmed that the City of West Branch would not be eligible for the two most common sources of grant funding for these projects: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD) program funds. To be eligible for CDBG funds, the City would be required to have at least 51% of our residents qualify as low-to-moderate income residents. The most recent information from the Iowa Economic Development Authority shows West Branch at 30.7% low-to-moderate income. While in rare cases, cities in the low 40 percentile have surveyed at 51% low-to-moderate income, it is unheard of anyone as low as 30% surveying at this percentile. USDA RD funds have even more stringent eligibility guidelines. USDA RD would only be available if the City has exceeded its loan capacity and if the City's average monthly residential sewer bill was in the \$40-\$50 range per month.

- **Library Public Input Forums:** As part of an ongoing Building Program project, the West Branch Public Library held three public input forums on April 3rd and 4th with a total of 44 attendees ranging from young children to senior citizens. Community attendees generally commented appreciation of the forums, allowing them to provide input on the future of the library services and facilities rather than such direction coming from the library to the community as to what they need. Draft copies of the completed Building Program will be reviewed by the library board of trustees and staff prior to its formal presentation to the board at their regularly scheduled meeting in June. Copies of the building program will be provided to the city council and staff and be available to the community after the official presentation.

- **Park & Rec Update:** Spring programs are well underway. Soccer participation has seen an increase this year. In fact, it has nearly doubled from the Spring 2011 season. All games and practices are played at Lions Field on Monday evenings at 6:15 p.m. Track and Field for 5th and 6th graders starts this week. West Branch will be hosting a track meet on Sunday May 20th. Park & Rec will need many volunteers to make the day successful. If you are interested in volunteering on the 20th, please contact Park & Rec Director Melissa Russell via e-mail at recdirector@westbranchiowa.org or by phone at (319) 643-5888.

We have started taking registrations for summer programs. Tball will be played at Lions Field on Saturday mornings in June. Several registrations have already been received for Summer Tball. Staff anticipates numbers to be comparable to last year’s registrations. Swimming lessons will be held from June 18th-June 29th in Tipton. We will be using a school bus to transport the registered participants. Usually there are between thirty and fifty children who take advantage of the bus service to swimming lessons. Lunch Bunch presenters have been scheduled. The ISU Bug Zoo, Grout Museum, Renee’s Ceramic Café, and a representative from the Cedar County Conservation Board will be just a few of the groups visiting on Tuesdays.

- **Upcoming Events:**

▪ Monday April 16, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
▪ Monday April 23, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.	Joint Meeting of the City Council and West Branch School Board
▪ Saturday April 28, 2012	City Wide Garage Sale
▪ Saturday May 5, 2012, 7:00-11:00 a.m.	City Wide Clean-Up
▪ Monday May 7, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
▪ Tuesday May 8, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.	Animal Control Commission Meeting
▪ Thursday May 10, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.	Library Board of Trustees Meeting
▪ Saturday May 12, 2012	West Branch Kids Safety Day
▪ Monday May 21, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.	City Council Meeting
▪ Tuesday May 22, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.	Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting
▪ Monday May 28, 2012	Memorial Day – City Offices Closed

The information provided is one-way communication and should not be discussed among you as this would be a violation of the open meeting law.