



WALKER City News

Fall 2008

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Walker Festival

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Are you, your organization, or your business looking for new ways to interact with your local community? If so, please consider volunteering at the next Walker Festival 2009 event held June 19th and 20th, 2009 at City Central Park. This is a great team building and community awareness activity for everyone involved.

Don't have the time to volunteer but still want to be recognized throughout our community? No problem! Your company can be recognized as a "Company that Cares about their Community" by making a contribution or sponsoring an event for Walker Festival 2009.

If you are interested please e-mail sbydalek@ci.walker.mi.us, or call the City Clerk's office 791-6865, and a representative from the Walker Festival committee will contact you! Start early and plan Ahead!

See page 9 of this newsletter to see all the companies that were involved with their local community as part of the 2008 Walker Festival.

Walker Ice & Fitness Center

WALKER ICE & FITNESS CENTER'S 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

In November 2008 the Walker Ice & Fitness Center will be celebrating its 10-year anniversary in the Walker community. To help us celebrate our anniversary we would like to invite you and your family to join us on Sunday November 9th from 1:00-3:00 p.m. for FREE open skating. We will have prize drawings, cake, punch and free skate rental.

Also on Monday, November 10th we are planning a member appreciation day. The Walker City Commission will be on hand at 6:00 p.m. that night to officially recognize our 10 year anniversary and to thank WIFC staff and the community for all their support.

We will have a membership special in November featuring a \$10.00 initiation fee and \$10.00 for your first month. All you would need is \$20.00 to start! Our facility has new cardiovascular equipment, a full line of Cybex resistance machines and free weights, locker rooms complete with steam and saunas, free towel service, childcare and aerobics classes such as PowerFlex, SPINNING and Yoga. Please stop by Walker Ice & Fitness Center and take a tour of our fantastic facility.

Walker Ice & Fitness Center is located at 4151 Remembrance Rd. You can contact us at 616-735-6286 or visit us on line at www.walkericeandfitness.com.



Dear Citizens of Walker,

Best wishes from your City Commission. There are a few items I wish to share with you in this newsletter.

First, I encourage each of you to participate in the election on November 4. We are blessed to live in a country where the people are able to select their government. We are in times of economic and world upheaval. Those elected in the November elections will be making decisions that will impact our future and the future of our children and grandchildren. It is both our privilege and responsibility to participate in our democracy and I urge each of you to study the issues, the candidates, and cast your vote.

Second, I want to thank you for your patience and understanding with respect to a number of road projects that we have done. We know that construction activity is a major inconvenience. However, we also believe that we must continue to invest in our infrastructure and maintain our roads. We do everything we can to minimize the inconvenience and greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Third, just a comment on The Rapid, the public transportation system operated by six cities including Walker. I occasionally receive comments from residents who see nearly empty busses operating on our streets. This is due, in part, to our location at the end of routes and the fact that the system does not serve our area in a way that makes public transportation a viable option for our local transportation needs. However, The Rapid does contribute to Walker in ways that we may not always consider. I received data from The Rapid and Grand Valley State University indicating that on the second day of school (August 26) approximately 9,000 riders used The Rapid to reach either the Allendale or Downtown campus locations. Virtually all of these riders went through our Standale Business District. Over a 12 hour period this would be 750 riders per hour. The obvious benefit of this program demonstrates why we continue to support public transportation in Walker even though taking a bus may not be a good option for many of our residents. We will continue to identify means by which our residents and those traveling through our City can reduce the environmental and traffic safety costs of transportation. Whether this is sidewalks, bike paths, or public transportation we are committed to finding options that enhance the quality of life in Walker.

Fourth, just a quick note regarding two problems that continue to persist. We have received complaints regarding burning and yard and home maintenance. As a City Commission we are opposed to imposing additional restrictions on the liberty of our residents. On the other hand, we can not ignore residents who report that their neighbors are creating environmental and health problems with their burning practices or who refuse to maintain their yards and property. We encourage all residents to be sensitive to these concerns and be good neighbors. Please familiarize yourselves with our burning ordinance and comply with its provisions. If we all try to be good neighbors we all benefit and avoid the adoption of ordinances which restrict the liberty of the majority of good citizens in an attempt to regulate the minority.

On behalf of the City Commission I thank you for the opportunity to serve our community. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me or your City Commissioners.

Best Regards,
Rob VerHeulen, Mayor
City of Walker

City Commission:

CITY HALL
453-6311

MAYOR

Rob VerHeulen - 791-6860 Office; 453-2201 Home
rverheul@ci.walker.mi.us

FIRST WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Al Parent - 262-1204; aparent@ci.walker.mi.us
Dan Kent - 784-5591; dkent@ci.walker.mi.us

SECOND WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Barbara Holt - 634-0916; bholt@ci.walker.mi.us
Chuck Deschaine - 453-4032; cdeschai@ci.walker.mi.us

THIRD WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Cynthia Stek - 791-9381; cstek@ci.walker.mi.us
Steven Versluis - 791-9247; sverslui@ci.walker.mi.us

City Services:

CLERK'S OFFICE

Hours: M-F -- 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sarah Bydalek, Clerk
Phone: 791-6865 -- sbydalek@ci.walker.mi.us

TREASURER'S OFFICE

Dan DeVries, Treasurer
Phone: 791-6861 -- ddvries@ci.walker.mi.us

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Kelly Smith, Assessor
Phone: 791-6862 -- ksmith@ci.walker.mi.us

BUILDING/ZONING DEPARTMENT

Jeff Nelson, Building Official
Phone: 791-6858 -- jnelson@ci.walker.mi.us

CITY MANAGER

Cathy VanderMeulen
Phone: 791-6859 -- cvanderm@ci.walker.mi.us

DISTRICT COURT -- 59TH

Hours: M-F -- 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Judge Peter P. Versluis -- Phone: 453-5765

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Scott C. Conners, P.E., City Engineer
Phone: 791-6792 -- sconners@ci.walker.mi.us

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Cindy Mielke, Finance Manager
Phone: 791-6799 -- cmielke@ci.walker.mi.us

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief: William Schmidt
Phone: 791-6840 -- bschmidt@ci.walker.mi.us

INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT

Julie Blok, Income Tax Director
Phone: 791-6866 -- jblok@ci.walker.mi.us

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Marcy Kneibel, Recreation Director
Phone: 791-6890 -- mkneibel@ci.walker.mi.us

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Frank Wash, Planning Director
Phone: 791-6787 -- fwash@ci.walker.mi.us

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Catherine Garcia-Lindstrom, Police Chief
Phone: 453-5441

PUBLIC WORKS OFFICE

Mark Koning, DPW Director
Phone: 791-6854 -- mkoning@ci.walker.mi.us; or
tmuilenb@ci.walker.mi.us

COMMON TYPE OF CAR CRASHES IN WALKER

The most common type of car crashes occurring in our city involves rear end collisions, which account for over half of the crashes at intersections. One way for a motorist to avoid causing a rear end crash is to leave plenty of room between you and the vehicle in front of you. You must also use caution when traveling down busy roadways. Try to avoid distractions such as making cell phone calls and changing radio stations, and keep your eye on the vehicle in front of you in case they stop abruptly.

In the City of Walker the location that had the highest number of crashes was at Four Mile Road and Alpine Avenue. In 2007 there were a total of 46 crashes at this location. Lake Michigan Drive and Wilson Avenue was the second highest crash location with 41 crashes. These two locations are the second and third highest crash locations in Kent County.

While it is disappointing to know that Walker has two of the highest crash locations in the county, it is good to know that certain changes in the traffic flow on Alpine have made a significant reduction in the number of crashes on Alpine between Three and Four Mile Road. Walker Traffic Engineer (Scott Connors), working in concert with Walker Police Department and MDOT personnel, installed a left turn lane and traffic signal at Alpine and North Center. In addition, they eliminated the ability to turn left into the shopping mall from southbound Alpine just south of that location. These changes have reduced the number of crashes in that region by almost 21% since the changes were made.

It is important to remember, however, that the best way to reduce the number of crashes is to pay attention, don't try to beat the red signal, and leave plenty of room between you and the vehicle in front of you.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE IN KENT COUNTY'S DEER HERD

With the recently discovered outbreak of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Kent County, the Department of Natural Resources has identified a "hot zone" of nine townships in the county. Two of these townships, Alpine and Plainfield, border the City of Walker. The DNR has mandated several changes as a result of CWD. Since deer hunting is allowed in Walker, and due to the close proximity of Walker to this identified "hot zone," hunters and the general public need to educate themselves with regard to CWD and the provisions set forth by the DNR.

Among the provisions is an immediate ban on all baiting and feeding of deer in the Lower Peninsula. DNR conservation officers will step up surveillance and enforcement efforts on baiting. Baiting and feeding unnaturally congregate deer into close contact, thus increasing the transmission of contagious diseases such as CWD and bovine tuberculosis. Bait and feed sites increase the likelihood that those areas will become contaminated with the feces of infected animals, making them a source of CWD infection for years to come.

Additionally, the provisions include a mandatory deer check for hunters who take a deer within Tyrone, Solon, Nelson, Sparta, Algoma, Courtland, Alpine, Plainfield, and Cannon townships, which contain the surveillance area or "hot zone." All hunters who take a deer during any deer hunting season this fall within the "hot zone" will be required to visit a DNR deer check station so that their deer can be tested for CWD. The DNR currently is seeking locations for additional deer check stations in the area to make it more convenient for hunters. To prevent unintentional spread of CWD, the only parts of deer harvested in the surveillance zone that will be allowed to be transported out will be boned meat, capes, and antlers cleaned of all soft tissues.

Furthermore, the DNR is asking that the issuance of car/deer kill permits be suspended. As a result of this request, the City of Walker Police Department will not be issuing car/deer kill permits at traffic crashes involving deer, until the DNR advises differently.

More information about CWD is available on the State of Michigan's Emerging Diseases Web site at www.michigan.gov/chronicwastingdisease, and at the Department of Natural Resources web page <http://www.michigan.gov/dnr>. (Information for this article was taken directly from the DNR web page.)

City of Walker Police Department Continued...

CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS

Starting on October 8, 2008 the Walker Police Department will be presenting it's first ever Citizens' Police Academy. This unique experience will provide a realistic look into some of the many functions the police department staff performs on a daily basis. The format of the academy is designed to be very conducive for the busy schedules of all, with the academy starting on October 8th and running for the following six Wednesday evenings from 6pm until 8:30 pm.

Some of the topics to be covered include: An overview of the department and it's history, a tour of our facility, what the required standards are to be a police officer, an overview of patrol functions, investigative division, explanation of the Special Response Team's (SRT) function. These are just a few of the topics to be explored and instructed by expert members of the department.

If you are interested in participating in this adventure, there is no cost other than your committed time for the duration of the academy! Applicants must be 18 years of age and of good morale character to be considered for acceptance. If this opportunity sounds intriguing and you would like to be part of a one-of-kind experience, please contact Officer Redzinski at 791-6835 for additional details and an application or visit our website at www.ci.walker.mi.us

City of Walker Fire Department

BACK YARD RECREATIONAL FIRES

In recent years the Walker City Commission has amended the Open Burn Ordinance to allow for recreational fires. The ordinance allows for either a manufactured outdoor fireplace or a fire pit. The fire pit can be no more than four feet in diameter, it must have a six inch noncombustible ring around the outside of the pit and must be a minimum of 25 feet from a structure and 10' off the lot line. You must burn solid dry wood. No burning of garbage, yard waste, or leaves. Your fuel should not hang over the edge of the pit or fireplace. If your fire creates a lot of smoke and is determined to be creating a nuisance or health problem for your neighbors, as determined by a fire officer responding to a complaint, you may be asked to extinguish your fire.

The fire department has responded to a number of complaints over the last couple of years concerning people burning in fire pits or outdoor fireplaces. In some cases the resident burning was asked to extinguish the fire and in others the responding officer determined that they were in compliance with the ordinance and were allowed to continue. This is a judgment determined by the fire officer when he arrives on scene.

In recent weeks there has been much discussion regarding residents with health issues that are affected by other residents burning. This is a difficult situation for a responding fire officer to deal with. On the one hand he has the concern of a resident who may have asthma, or some other kind of health issue to consider and on the other he may find a resident who is having a camp fire or even just a cooking fire in a pit who is in compliance with the ordinance. Both residents have rights. It is difficult to require a resident who is following all of the rules to extinguish their fire because a neighbor is bothered by the smell of burning wood.

We are asking those residents who choose to have a fire pit or an outdoor fireplace in their back yard to be aware of the affects of their fire on their neighbors. If you are aware that you have a neighbor with health issues that could be aggravated by the smell of your camp fire please be compassionate and make sure your pit is as far away from that neighbor allowed by the rules. Be aware of wind conditions that could blow the smell or smoke in your neighbor's direction. And if you cannot have a campfire in your back yard without affecting your neighbors, then please consider some other form of back yard entertainment.

By being aware of your neighbors and considering them when planning a camp fire we are confident that we can reduce our complaints and continue to allow the use of fire pits or outdoor fireplaces.

City of Walker Fire Department Continued...

SILENT NIGHT MEMORIAL SERVICE AND PARADE

Walker Fire Department will again host the Silent Night Memorial Service and Parade of Fire Apparatus. The week of October 5, 2008 is National Fire Prevention Week, and as part of that week, West Michigan Firefighters will remember those fellow firefighters who have died with a Silent Night Memorial Service and Parade of Fire Apparatus. This year's event will take place on Thursday, October 9, 2008 beginning with the Memorial Service at 7 p.m. followed by a silent parade of apparatus. This year's ceremony will again be held at the City of Walker Public Safety Memorial Site located at Wilson and Remembrance Road. Last year we had 16 fire departments and 23 fire vehicles participate in this event.

The Silent Night Parade has its origin in the Chicago Suburbs. In 2002, the Grand Rapids Fire Department learned of this ceremony and brought it here and has hosted previous ceremonies with participation by many West Michigan Fire Departments.

The purpose of this ceremony is to recognize and remember any firefighter, active or retired, that has passed away or "answered the Last Alarm" in the past 12 months, no matter whether it was a line of duty death or not. A bell is rung once for each name. After the roll call of Fire Departments is completed, the bell is tolled 5, 5, 5. Upon completion of the memorial service, the Silent Night Parade begins with the blessing of any fire apparatus that is less than 12 months old, which will lead the parade. When the parade begins, all emergency lights are turned on but no sirens or air horns are activated. It is truly a "silent parade". The apparatus will follow a route that will proceed east on Remembrance Road to Kinney and will travel south on Kinney ending at the Walker Fire Station on Lake Michigan Drive and Kinney where the apparatus will be on display for the public to view. Refreshments will be served. The public is encouraged to attend the ceremony and/or line the parade route.

City of Walker Income Tax Department

ESTIMATED PAYMENTS

The third quarter estimated payment for 2008 Walker Income Tax is due September 30, 2008.

If your employer does not withhold Walker Income Tax or you have non-wage income (rental income, capital gains, premature pension distributions, etc.) that is subject to tax and you think you may owe more than \$100 with your 2008 return, you must make quarterly estimated payments. The 2008 Quarterly Estimated payment vouchers with instructions can be found:

- In the 2007 Resident Forms and Instructions booklet
- On our web site at www.ci.walker.mi.us/incometaxforms
- By mail--call us at 616-791-6880

You must pay in at least 70% of your current or prior year liability (whichever is lower) through estimates, credits or withholding to avoid receiving a bill for penalty and interest for underpayment of estimated tax. If you need help calculating safe estimates, please call us for assistance at 616-791-6880.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

It is very important that all annual returns, extensions and estimate vouchers have your complete social security number legible on the form. We cannot apply payments correctly to your account without a complete social security number.

City of Walker Recreation Department

2009 SENIOR CITIZEN'S BOWLING TOURNAMENT

The Walker Recreation Department is having their 18th annual Senior Citizen's Bowling Tournament for men and women 55 years of age and over. The tournament will be held at Lincoln Country Club, 3485 Lake Michigan Drive N. W. on Thursday, January 15 and Friday, January 16, 2009. The cost will be \$10.00 for 3 games of bowling. Pre-registration is required. Entry blanks will be available at all area bowling centers. Deadline for registration is Monday, January 5, 2009.

IRVING BERLIN'S "WHITE CHRISTMAS"

The Walker Recreation Department is offering a bus trip to the fabulous Fox Theatre in Detroit to see the classic holiday tradition, Irving Berlin's "White Christmas"!!! Full of dancing, laughter, and some of the greatest songs ever written, make "White Christmas" part of your holiday season. The show is Thursday, December 11, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. The bus will leave from Walker City Hall at 4243 Remembrance Road N. W. at 3:30 p.m., loading will begin at 3:15 p.m. The cost for the trip is \$88.00 per person. Seats for this fantastic show are on the main floor, center section. The cost also includes a box dinner and drink to be served on the bus. Dinner will be a sub sandwich from Subway, a bag of chips, a cookie, and a can of pop.

Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come first served basis. Deadline for registration is Friday, November 14, 2008. To register for the trip, send your name, address, business and/or home phone numbers, along with your check or money order made payable to:

Walker Recreation Department, 4243 Remembrance Road, N. W., Walker, Michigan 49534

LAMBS FARM HOLIDAY SHOPPING TRIP

The Walker Recreation Department is offering a bus trip to the 28th annual Lambs Farm Holiday Art & Craft Show in Rosemont, Illinois. Choose from the fine art and craftwork of more than 600 vendors at Chicagoland's largest show of its kind. Shopping for the holidays was never so easy!

The trip will be on Thursday, December 4, 2008. The bus will leave from Walker City Hall at 9:00 am. Cost for the trip is \$50.00 per person. This will include a snack to be served on the bus as well as admission to the craft show. Lunch and dinner will be on your own. Available in the convention center are concession stands and a food court.

At approximately 4:30 p.m. the bus will leave the show and go to the beautiful Woodfield Mall where you can continue to "Shop Till You Drop". At 9:00 p.m. the bus will leave the mall and arrive back at Walker City Hall at approximately 12:00 am.

Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come first served basis. To register for the trip, send your name, address, business and/or home phone numbers, along with your check or money order made payable to:

Walker Recreation Department, 4243 Remembrance Road, N. W., Walker, Michigan 49534

The deadline for registration is Friday, November 7, 2008.

For additional information on any of these activities please contact the Recreation Department at 791-6890

City of Walker Engineering Department

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STORM WATER SYSTEMS

The July 2nd storm put the city's public storm sewer system and many private storm sewer systems around Walker to the test. At City Hall we had 4" of rain in just under 6 hours. Rainfall totals seemed to vary around town with over 5" being reported from several locations in the south part of the city.

Please remember that our sewers are not designed to handle every conceivable storm. In west Michigan most communities design storm sewers to a 10 year storm. That means that sewers are designed to handle approximately 3.52" of rain over a 24 hour period. We require developers to design neighborhoods and buildings that are protected from the 100 year storm which equates to 6.15" of rain over that same 24 hour period. During very intense rainfall events the sewers in the street often run at capacity and water is temporarily impounded in the street as the pipes try to catch up. As the most intense period of a storm subsides, the storm sewers and catch basins will quickly catch up and any impounded water in the roadways will enter the system.

City of Walker Engineering Department Continued...

When we anticipate a storm like the July 2nd event we mobilize our public works staff to make a quick check of various areas around the City that are prone to problems to ensure that critical pipes are clear and unobstructed. Unfortunately, we have over well over 100 miles of storm sewers and culverts and we cannot possibly check every catch basin, culvert and pond outlet. We must rely on residents to help keep us informed of any obstructed storm sewers.

Back yard sewers are even more difficult to monitor. If you have a public sewer catch basin in your back yard with debris gathering around it we need you to take an active role in keeping that area free from potential obstructions. If you can safely remove debris like sticks and leaves please do so. If you are unable to help out or if water is already gathering around a plugged inlet please contact the city so that we can dispatch an employee with the necessary safety equipment to remove any obstructions.

In back yard areas it's even more critical to watch for potential obstructions to the drainage way. Changes in elevations or flow patterns caused by fences, sheds, pools or even raised landscaping or gardens can impact the back yard drainage design. For these reasons most back yard drainage areas are contained within easements that do not allow grade changes or any permanent obstruction. When property owners block these designed pathways it can raise flood elevations and negatively impact adjacent homes and structures. Remember that minimum building openings (basement doors & windows) are carefully designed to coordinate with the elevations of the storm sewer and backyard surface drainage.

Private storm systems can also contribute to storm damage if they are not properly maintained. Businesses and property owners that have detention ponds need to remember that maintenance is a key component of the successful operation of those ponds. Section 67-15 of the storm water ordinance requires that the owner of a private storm water runoff facility maintain it and prevent the accumulation of debris. If sediment accumulates in the bottom of your detention pond you are obligated to remove it. That sediment takes away valuable capacity and may have an impact on your neighbors upstream and downstream. If your pond becomes overgrown or tends to gather trash or debris, that material must also be removed to ensure that the delicate operation of the outlet structure is not jeopardized. Ponds designed over the last 15 years often have outlets that are restricted with small holes to allow water to be released slowly over time. A plastic bag or a small amount of natural debris can completely plug these structures causing ponds to fill up and overflow. If your pond is holding water several days after a storm then it is definitely time to have a contractor come out and visit the site to maintain the outlet and ensure that the pond is operating properly. Don't wait until you have a costly failure that could result in property damage to you and your adjacent property owners. We recommend that you inspect the pond at least once a year to ensure proper operation as well as keeping an eye out for debris with every rainfall event.

As an individual property homeowner, one of the best things you can do is to look at your house and ensure good fundamental drainage. If you have a sump pump that runs during rainfall events make sure that the grade around your house slopes away from the home. Also, ensure that your roof drains and sump pump outlet don't outlet against your foundation. This can result in pumping the same water over again. Direct your water to the street (in front) and to dedicated drain easements in back yard areas. In older neighborhoods without formal drainage designs, the natural drainage course is the rule. Direct your water towards that natural drainage course and avoid creating dramatic slopes that will redirect or accelerate your water towards your neighbor.

If you have questions about drainage please feel free to contact any member of the Engineering Department at 453-6311. Request for maintenance can be directed to the Department of Public Works at 791-6854 from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. After hours emergency calls should be directed through Walker Police dispatch at 791-6700.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDS

For 2008, the City of Walker has allocated Community Development Block Grant Funds to programs designed to help low to moderate-income homeowners in Walker. These programs provide funding for weatherization, home improvements, home rehabilitation, and home repair services. These services are available to Walker residents who meet income requirements. For information on how to participate or to schedule an appointment with a program representative, please contact Bonnie Broadwater at 791-6327 or visit the City of Walker Website at www.ci.walker.mi.us.

City of Walker Public Works Department

A NOTE OF THANKS

Over the past few months, the City has completed a number of road maintenance projects in many of our residential and business neighborhoods. In order to complete the projects in a timely manner and to minimize the duration of the inconvenience, it was necessary to temporarily restrict non-emergency access to streets and driveways. The City would like to express thanks and appreciation for your patience and understanding during this summer's construction period. We will continue to provide you with as much advance notification as possible, of any City road project that may be planned for your neighborhood. If you have any questions concerning any of our road projects, please feel free to contact our DPW at 791-6854.

WINTER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

This would be a good time to check the condition of your mailbox and post. Make sure the post is sturdy and that it will hold up to the heavy snow load that comes off the snow plow blade. If the post or mailbox is not in good condition, the heavy snow load will take a mailbox down easily. Occasionally, our operators will hit a mailbox. If you feel that the plow hit your mailbox and damaged it, call the Department of public works at 791-6854.

The City of Walker Mailbox Replacement policy is: Any mailbox damaged by snow as a result of plowing or scraping the roadway, is the responsibility of the property owner. When the mailbox is damaged by direct contact with our equipment, the Department of Public Works will:

(a). Repair, if possible or, (b). Replace with a standard mailbox and post, or (c). Compensate owner for damage at \$15.00 for the box and \$5.00 for the post. Owner responsible to repair and replace.

Repair and/or replacement of mailbox by Department of public works may take several days depending on storm conditions and workload.

2008 LEAF RECYCLING PROGRAM

This year the Leaf Recycling Program will be located at: City of Walker (Behind City Hall) 4243 Remembrance Rd. N. W.

The dates are: October 25, 2008 thru November 22, 2008. Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Plus 5 Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.: October 25, 2008, November 1, 2008, November 8, 2008, November 15, 2008, and November 22, 2008.

PLEASE NOTE: We will be closed for Veterans Day, 11/11/08

Biodegradable bags will be made available to purchase at the Public Works office 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Also, we will sell the bags at the site on Wednesday nights and Saturdays. The cost will be 10 bags for \$4.00/ or/.40 each.

To speed up the leaf drop off, we encourage the use of the biodegradable bags. No plastic will be accepted. The resident will have to dump their leaves out of the plastic bags.

We will also be accepting brush at these locations and running them through a chipper. No minimum length required.

Proof of Walker residency will be required.

To purchase leaf bags: Our offices are located at 4243 Remembrance Rd. N. W. directly across from the Library entrance. Any questions, please call 791-6854.

LOW HANGING BRANCHES

If you have a low hanging branch hanging over the sidewalk, we encourage you to trim it.

Trees and bushes located by City sidewalks need to be trimmed back to allow safe access for bikes and walkers. An 8-foot overhead clearance is a good general guideline for trees.

City of Walker Festival Committee

THANK YOU WALKER FESTIVAL 2008 CONTRIBUTORS!!

The 2008 Walker Festival Committee wishes to recognize the following companies that graciously contributed to our successful Walker Festival 2008 event. Let's continue to show our appreciation towards these companies that give back to their community by patronizing their businesses!

COMPANIES THAT CARE ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY

PLATINUM SPONSORS

Meijer
Grand Rapids Press
Advance Packaging

GOLD SPONSORS

Chemical Bank
Bissell
West Side Beer

SILVER SPONSORS

Trim Quest
Green Valley Disposal Service
Flagstar bank
Home Depot
Option One Credit Union
Advantage Health Physician Network
Kamps Pallets
Law Weathers & Richardson
Ridgeview Industries
Huntington Bank

BRONZE SPONSORS

Home Depot
Paradigm Design, Inc
Betz Industries
Moore & Bruggink, Inc
SVS Vision, Inc
Top of the World Granite
West Michigan Precision Machining, Inc
Mol Belting Company
Walker Tool & Die
Macatawa Bank
Baker Tent Rental
Standale Lumber
Dr. Laura L. Fogle DDS
Edward Jones, Lisa Rios
Edward Jones, Nick Grizinger
Edward Jones, Mike Rios
Edward Jones, Glenn Kimmel

GENERAL SPONSORS

Van's Delivery Service, Inc
Sign Comp
River Run Press
On Stage Services, inc
Work Safe
Elks Lodge, Highlands
Melrose Pyrotechnics, Inc
Pop's Restaurant
Sobie Meats
Edward D. Young
Great Clips
First Wok Restaurant
Dietool Engineering Co., Inc
Rodenhouse Body Shop
Eccentric Entertainment
Heartwood Construction, Ins
Schmitt's Animal Hospital
Parker Tooling & Design, Inc
Pro Collision of West Michigan
Daniel A. Arsulowicz O.D.
Ace Hardware
PRS Manufacturing Company
Jarob, Inc.
Wolverine Special Tool
Ironwood Self Storage LLC
Studio 3 Salon
Amy Nails & Spa
Eggerding Realty
Saugatuck Brewing Company
Walker Child Care
Wilderness Expression
Miracle Tanning
Life EMS
Russ' Restaurant
Custom Profile
D&K Construction
Papa Murphy's of Standale
Perkins
Star Bucks

Thank you for your support in 2008! We look forward to working with each of you again in 2009!

PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATES

NORTH RIDGE PRECISE PLAT

I'd like to clear up some confusion about this subject. A recent newspaper article made it sound like this project is primarily about the City restricting the ability of citizens to sell their land. However, the focus of the North Ridge Precise Plat is to officially plan a route to connect the current dead-ends of North Ridge Drive. This public street now exists as two long cul-de-sacs; one starting on Walker Avenue north of I-96 and extending west; and one starting on Fruit Ridge north of Dykstra Drive and extending east. The North Ridge Precise Plat is an amendment to the Walker Zoning Ordinance that shows the proposed location of the road connection. The four affected property owners have been part of this planning process since the beginning and appear to be in agreement with the roadway alignment, subject to their on site needs being met. The North Ridge Precise Plat will ensure that this important public street gets connected sometime in the future.

ORCHARD PARK & CABELA'S

Here are three important facts: 1) The State of Michigan recently approved a package of tax incentives for the project – subject to performance standards on the part of Cabela's regarding sales tax generated from out-of-state sales; 2) The Cabela's Board of Directors had a meeting on August 28th to decide whether to move forward with the project or not; 3) The Orchard Park Preliminary Area Site Plan received a one-year approval extension by the Planning Commission on Sept 3. City staff continues to work on this complicated project in a manner consistent with its approval status. We also continue to partner with MDOT, the Kent County Road Commission and the City of Wyoming. The latest I have heard is that Cabela's hopes to open for business in Spring of 2011. However, nothing is set in stone yet.

STANDALE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT ZONING ORDINANCE

The draft zoning ordinance for "Downtown Standale" is undergoing review by a committee of City Commission, Planning Commission and DDA members. The ordinance consists of three main parts: 1) The zoning text; 2) Illustrative graphics; and 3) A "regulating plan" map. This is not a traditional zoning code. Rather, it is a precise "form based" zoning ordinance. This means it requires certain physical improvements as part of a site plan submittal. Buildings, parking lots, service drives, signage, street trees, sidewalks and lighting are some of the items prescribed in the ordinance. The committee will be the sounding board for tolerance of and sensitivities to this style of zoning code. However, it will take something like this to ensure the "Downtown Standale" master plan gets implemented between Kinney and Wilson along Lake Michigan Drive.

BILLBOARDS

Representatives from local billboard companies have approached the City, seeking amendments to the zoning ordinance to allow new billboard technologies. They are asking for two specific technologies to be permitted: 1) Tri-Vision, three-sided boards that mechanically change copy; and 2) Digital/LED boards, which are similar to large computer screens. The Walker Ordinance Committee forwarded the issue to the Planning Commission for review. Two public discussions have taken place so far. The Planning Commission has tabled the issue for a second time to allow the billboard representatives to submit examples of other zoning ordinances that regulate these new technologies. Walker staff has completed a billboard inventory report as part of this process. This report can be viewed on the Walker website. For what it is worth, City planning staff has recommended not changing the zoning ordinance to allow these new technologies, which staff suggests would add to visual clutter along I-96 and US-131 while increasing potential distractions to drivers.

AVASTAR PARK COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (Former Lear/GM Plant)

Following a tabling and on site design workshop, the Planning Commission recently approved the Preliminary Area Site Plan for this project. Amendments were made to buildings at the corner of Alpine Avenue and Avastar Parkway to better meet the standards of the new master plan. The project will now move to the City Commission for rezoning and then back to the Planning Commission for Phase 1 construction plan review, which should include an insurance office building. This very important project includes the successful redevelopment of the former Lear/GM plant and will hopefully trigger reinvestment in the South Alpine Avenue corridor.

For more information, contact Frank Wash, City of Walker Planning Director at 616-791-6850, or fwash@ci.walker.mi.us

City of Walker Clerk's Department

THE COUNTDOWN IS ON....

Attention Registered Voters in the City of Walker, absentee ballots are now available at the City Clerk's office. We are open Monday thru Friday from 8am – 5pm, and Saturday October 4th, and November 1st from 8am to 2pm to also serve you!

The deadline to register to vote for the Presidential Election is Monday, October 6, 2008. Don't miss your opportunity to vote for the next United States President!

Reminder: Don't forget to apply for your passport! Your City Clerk's office is open Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm for passport processing.

Sarah Bydalek, City Clerk

Walker Firehouse Café for Seniors

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE WALKER FIREHOUSE CAFE SENIOR NEIGHBORS IN OCTOBER?

We are open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30 am to 2:30 p.m. with a hot lunch provided at noon. On Friday we are serving a soup and salad bar complete with all the toppings. We suggest a \$2.00 donation for lunch.

Activities at the center include exercise, wii bowling and wii fit, bible study, live music on Wednesday and bingo and crafts on other days, a complete schedule can be picked up at the Walker Firehouse Cafe 4101 Lake Michigan Dr. Our phone number is 735-3240. Call anytime and we would love to answer any questions you may have. We are looking forward to meeting with any one in the community 60 years and older. Stop by and enjoy the fun and fellowship you could be missing.

Sherri Meines, Walker Firehouse Cafe Center Coordinator, Senior neighbors

Walker Lion's Club Pancake Breakfast

THE LIONS WILL SERVE YOU BREAKFAST!

Breakfast includes: Pancakes, Sausage, Juice, Milk, & Coffee.

Date: Saturday, October 4, 2008

Time: 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Place: Fire Station # 3, 1470 - 3 Mile Rd. NW

Family: \$20.00

Adult: \$5.00 per person or donation

Children: \$3.00 per child 6 to 12 yrs, 5 yrs and under - free!

In preparation for the holiday season we ask that you please donate a non-perishable food item. The donations will be distributed to the local food banks.

Please bring any unwanted eyeglasses for those less fortunate in 3rd world countries.

Gypsy Moth Update

The City of Walker, along with the cities of Wyoming, Kentwood and others are working collaboratively with Kent County staff to develop a treatment plan in response to this past summer's gypsy moth outbreak. By working together, administration of the program will be streamlined, resulting in reduced costs. Kent County will hire a gypsy moth program coordinator to work with interested communities to conduct a fall egg mass survey, and to plan treatments next spring. Over the course of the next few weeks, the City of Walker will be reviewing the costs of participation and evaluating survey and possible treatment options. Initially the City will concentrate its efforts in those areas where complaints were received (Wards 1 and 3). If you live in Ward 2 and you experienced any problems last summer, please contact Bonnie Broadwater in the Engineering Department at (616) 791-6327. Look for further updates in the Grand Rapids Press, the Advance, as well as the City website.

CITY OF WALKER
4243 Remembrance Road NW
Walker, MI 49534



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“Your” Newsletter!

We value your communication. You may contact us with your comments or suggestions for “Your” newsletter at any time.

CITY OF WALKER
Attn: Newsletter
4243 Remembrance Road NW
Walker, MI 49534
Phone: (616) 791-6860
E-Mail: jkozmins@ci.walker.mi.us

Also let us know if we need to correct your mailing address or need to add a new resident or business to our current list of recipients.

Thank you!

City of Walker Board Appointments

The City of Walker is looking for citizens interested in volunteering their time by serving on various boards and commissions. Most groups meet only once per month in the evening. If you would like to be considered for an appointed position on one of these boards, please stop by the City Clerks office and fill out an application or you may find an application on our web site, www.ci.walker.mi.us.

Meeting Dates & Times

City Commission Meetings:

8:00 p.m. - 2nd and 4th Monday of each month.
Walker City Hall/Commission Chambers

Board of Zoning Appeals

7:00 p.m. - 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month to hear appeals on the City's zoning regulations.
Walker City Hall/Commission Chambers

Planning Commission

7:00 p.m. - 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month to make recommendations regarding land use planning and zoning concerns.
Walker City Hall/Commission Chambers

Historical Committee

Meets 1st Tuesday of every month at 7:00PM (City Commission Chambers) to discuss museum displays and preservation of artifacts for the Edison House Museum.

Community Relations / Volunteer Committee

Meets 3rd Thursday of every month to identify individual & community needs. (Veterans, seniors, etc.) Also recognizes and awards special achievements in the community.

International Relations Committee

7:00 p.m. - 2nd Wednesday of each month to discuss Sister City school exchange program with Colac, Australia

Mineral Mining Review Board

Meetings as needed. Reviews applications for mineral extraction in the City. (Permit renewals in February of each year).

Traffic Committee

Meetings as needed. Discussion on transportation and traffic related matters. Contact Scott Conners at 791-6792 or sconners@ci.walker.mi.us.