

## Report and Recommendations of the 2017 City of Berkley Citizens Advisory Committee

In December 2016, the Berkley City Council appointed fifteen Berkley residents to the 2017 Citizens Advisory Committee for Infrastructure Improvements (CAC). The CAC was charged with the job of developing and presenting recommendations to City Council regarding a variety of infrastructure challenges facing the City and its residents, at its March 20, 2017 meeting. Specifically those challenges include the City's aging water system, which can no longer meet our capacity and safety needs, our deteriorating local roads, our inoperable Ice Arena coupled with the Community Center, as well as recommended improvements to City Hall, and the Historic Fire Hall.

In order to meet our goal, the CAC held six public meetings to review and discuss the City's infrastructure challenges. The CAC also toured the Ice Arena, Community Center, City Hall and Historic Fire Hall. The CAC would like to thank the City staff that throughout this process, have been extremely helpful and forthcoming in providing a wealth of information and have been responsive to our requests. This allowed the CAC to gain an in-depth understanding of the City's infrastructure challenges, as well as the financial impact on current and future residents, of addressing or not addressing, these issues. While it would have been preferable that an investment in these infrastructure issues would have been made in years past, the recession of 2007-2010 and the lengthy recovery period thereafter, certainly contributed to the challenges of doing so.

We would like to make specific note that our recommendations took a number of different considerations into account beyond the declining physical state of our infrastructure. They included the financial impact that any funding of infrastructure improvements would have on residents, with specific consideration for our seniors and single parent households. There was also concern and consideration given to maintaining Berkley as an affordable city to live in, and not "taxing" current or future residents out of our community. The CAC's recommendations are based on a combination of input from residents, subject matter experts and City staff, along with what the CAC members feel are efficient and prudent actions that must be taken to preserve the foundation that our city is literally built upon.

It is with all of these considerations in mind, and by majority vote, that the CAC makes the following recommendations:

### **Water System**

The CAC recommends that City Council take the appropriate action to add a Capital Improvement Component to future water bills, and specifically:

1. To do so using the funding method to be recommended by Plante Moran in its upcoming report on our water system, likely a formula based on usage.
2. That the initial Capital Improvement Component rate be set using a calculation to achieve an annual collection not to exceed of 110% of the water main replacement cost of the 2017 Harvard Rd. water main & road replacement project.

3. That that rate be the same for all future years.
4. That such funds collected through the Capital Improvement Component shall be used only for capital improvements, and not maintenance and repair which are funded in other ways.
5. That capital improvements to water mains should coincide with capital improvements to roads, whenever possible.

Furthermore, we support DPW Director Derrick Schueller's recommendation that capital improvements be made on at least 0.5 miles of water mains per year, and more when possible.

### **Local Roads**

The CAC recommends that City Council take the appropriate action to place on the ballot, a Capital Improvement Millage for roads in the amount of 2 mils, and specifically:

1. That such millage be for a period of 10 years.
2. That if approved by the voters the Capital Improvement Millage be added to resident's winter property tax bill.
3. That such funds collected through the Capital Improvement Millage shall be used only for capital improvements, and not maintenance and repair which are funded in other ways, which should be continued.
4. That capital improvements to roads should coincide with capital improvements to water mains, whenever possible.

### **Facilities**

The CAC recommends that the City Council extend the term of this CAC for an additional period of 90 days, so that sufficient information to make a recommendation can be gathered. We understand a study is underway by Stantec, which will be helpful in this regard.

The CAC found that the information it was provided related to improving, repairing and/or replacing our Community Center, Ice Arena, City Hall and Historic Fire House, was inadequate for the CAC to make a thoughtful, considered and legitimate recommendation. The CAC also believes that in order to make any legitimate recommendation, the committee would need significantly more, and meaningful, input from residents than that provided through the recent survey. While the CAC supports the idea of a new survey, it should include the options contained in the Stantec study, reasonably estimated costs for each, be limited to city residents, and be communicated to each household in a timely and effective manner.

### **Ballot**

The CAC also recommends that any ballot proposal related to its recommendations be placed on the November 7, 2017 ballot. It is our position that doing so would be a more efficient option as voter turnout is traditionally higher for a November election. Additionally, we feel that this option would also be more economical and responsible than incurring the unneeded cost of an August election, which would likely only include our local matters. Such ballot proposal(s) could easily be added to the November ballot at no additional cost.

In closing, the CAC would like to thank the City Council for this opportunity to have a positive impact on our city and its future. The CAC also would like to recognize and commend the City employees for their impressive efforts to maintain our city's infrastructure and facilities. The DPW's efforts to do the best possible job with limited resources, to patch our crumbling roads and keep our water system from failing, all the while maintaining its high level of other services, is a credit to that department. Also, the Parks & Recreation Department's implementation of new meaningful community programs, and its creative use of available space, as well as City Hall employees commitment to performing their day-to-day duties in an outdated, failing building, is all truly impressive.

Respectfully submitted,

2017 Citizens Advisory Committee for Infrastructure Improvements

Tim Gaudet, Chairman  
Melanie Stevens, Vice Chair  
Gary Borg  
Josephine Brewer  
Tim Cany  
Ross Gavin  
David Hurst  
Dan Mihaescu  
Kaylyn Ann Milan  
RoseAnn Nicolai  
Carla Osborne  
Roman Przekop  
Lori Robertson  
Paul Shkreli  
Nicole Smithson

Dated: March 20, 2017