

Memo

To: City Council
From: Bryan Myrkle, Director of Community Development
Date: April 11, 2014
Re: Roles and Responsibilities

City Manager Guetschow asked me to update the Council on the current responsibilities I have at the city, and I am happy to do so.

My chief responsibility is to be the city's primary staff person supporting business development activities. I am always available to local business owners and/or prospects if they have questions or concerns, or if they desire help or assistance.

As an example -- the City Council is aware that it was the guidance and assistance from my department for securing an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act approval that helped the Chamber of Commerce sell 224 S. Cochran Ave to Precedent Properties and Anthony Falkner. Through the relationship we developed during that process, the city continues to work closely with Mr. Falkner as he pursues other projects here in the city.

Another example the council would be familiar with from the year before is the work I did to secure assistance in the form of tax relief for Citizens Elevator as they recovered from a damaging fire.

This past week, I provided help to a downtown business working toward the creation of a sidewalk café, which is not an uncomplicated process along the state highway. And, I have provided similar assistance to other local businesses, big and small, over the years and could offer many more examples.

I also make a special point of engaging with all of our industrial employers several times each year. At least once a year, I visit our industries with a representative of the MEDC on an official 'retention call.' These visits often provide valuable insight into the larger economic climate in which our businesses must compete, and also give the business an opportunity to strengthen its relationship with the city and state, and tap into special programs and resources they may not know about. In the past year, there were significant positive outcomes from official retention calls to Linn Products, Spartan Motors, Alro Steel and St. Regis Culvert. In addition to these official retention calls, I also make less formal visits to our manufacturers on a regular basis, to ensure they know who I am and that they realize there is a specific person at City Hall they can reach out to when they have a concern.

This past week, I spent several hours promoting Combs Industrial Park to a prospective new user. This time included responding to the site search request with project-specific information about Combs. Working with the agency handling the information (LEAP) to be sure it was presented accurately, and then hosting the potential new park users during an on-site visit. This was a very positive visit, and the prospect seemed suitably impressed with our industrial park and its location. Should the deal eventually come to fruition, it would mean several hundred new manufacturing jobs for Charlotte. Of course, I work on many new business prospects and potential deals that don't get fulfilled, but it's important to work each one seriously.

I provide assistance when necessary to **non-commercial local organizations**, as well. For example, I am working on a new initiative to develop apartments in the Masonic Temple. The Masonic Temple is one of Charlotte's most important historic structures, but with the recent loss of its only paying tenant, the Masons faced the unfortunate prospect of having to divest themselves of the building, which was quickly becoming an unsustainable liability.

I suggested that we contact the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to see if we could fill that space with 3 or 4 apartments; potentially increasing the Masons rental income, and eliminating its dependence on a single tenant. As a result, I am now working with the Masons and MSHDA to secure a grant to accomplish this. Once completed, the project will allow the building to sustain itself, and also

allow the Masons to maintain their ownership, thereby preserving an important local historical resource.

Other responsibilities of mine now include significant **planning, zoning and code enforcement** duties. It's been a primary goal of this and past City Councils to preserve and improve our housing stock, and to strengthen our residential neighborhoods. And, the city's primary tool for doing this is through the administration and enforcement of its zoning code.

Since the construction of the West Side Fire Station and the subsequent re-organization of the fire department, much of the responsibility for carrying out this zoning administration and code enforcement has been assigned to me. This is very time-consuming but important work. I must now personally address nearly every project in the city that requires a permit, and the time spent on each one ranges from a few minutes for a simple fence or sign permit, to several hours if a full-blown site plan review is required. I also assist with Code Enforcement activities, including making, taking and tracking code complaints, along with several other members of the city staff.

I am also the person responsible for the administration of **Beach Airport**. For the past six years, I have worked to reclaim what was a derelict and neglected city facility; and transform it into a great small airport the city can be proud of. Furthermore, we are getting very close to reaching a point of financial self-sufficiency at this airport – something almost no other municipal airport in Michigan can claim.

Beach airport is part of the regional air transportation network, and is highly regulated. The volume of paperwork and reporting necessary to stay in compliance with state and federal law is significant, as is the day-to-day work necessary to professionally manage a facility with its activity and infrastructure.

Airport Manager Todd Cotter provides a great deal of help and support at the airfield, but many hours of my time each month remain devoted to the facility.

I am the person responsible for supporting the **Downtown Development Authority**. This includes preparing its budget and managing its spending, as well as personally coordinating nearly all its

activities. This is especially challenging as the DDA Board is dedicated to doing the most it can with its very limited resources. Throughout the year, I am directly involved in all DDA activities, including things like the summer concerts, the farmer's market, and any streetscape items (flower planting, tree replacement, etc.). The concerts, in particular, require several hours of work each week while they are underway. I am also asked to address quite a number of day-to-day items that crop-up in relation to downtown. Virtually every day I am working with someone to address a downtown-related issue – from parking lot use and abuse, to helping coordinate sidewalk snow removal, to one-off complaints and issues for which residents or business owners have reached-out to me for help.

Perhaps the most visible part of my job, and the one people outside of City Hall are most familiar with is my role as the city's primary staff liaison with **local and regional community development agencies**. This includes all the support I have given to Can Do! and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce over the years, but also the important relationships the city needs to maintain with organizations like the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, the Community Assistance Team, and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, to name a few.

There are also quite a few odd-jobs around City Hall that I help with each day, from trying to operate and maintain the city's Cable Access system, to answering the second floor phones, providing community information to the media and general public, and helping with counter traffic.

If you have questions or concerns about anything I am working on, please feel free to call me at any time.