

MARK KIBBY – UNITY WALK 2016

Good afternoon, and thank you to everyone for participating in the 2016 Unity Celebration.

Since our last Unity Walk & Celebration one year ago, our City has seen many positive changes.

Last month, the Receivership Transition Advisory Board (RTAB) voted to recommend to the State of Michigan Treasurer and Governor Snyder that significant restoration of local control be given back to the City of Allen Park. This change will allow the City to operate more efficiently, while still maintaining minimal oversight from the State of Michigan. Also, last month, the City was able to close on the refinancing of \$16,750,000 bonds related to the former movie studio project. Hopefully, these significant changes will allow us to close one chapter in our past and begin the process to move forward.

It is my belief that we need to have peace with our labor unions so we can continue to take positive strides forward. Last summer, we reached 4-year agreements with both of our Police Unions and our technical professional group. We are currently in negotiations with our Fire Union, and I am confident we will reach an agreement with them in the next few weeks.

It is because of some positive changes to the Police Contracts related to starting wages and healthcare premiums, that the City was able to hire four new police officers. I would like to welcome officers Waara, Winger, Vitale and Marshall.

Our community continues to make positive strides because of our dedicated employees. During my career, I have worked with some very good department heads, and the department heads we have here in Allen Park are some of the best. I would like to thank them for helping to make Allen Park a better place. I am very proud to be part of such a great team.

Last November, the voters in Allen Park entrusted the elected officials and Administration and approved the Street Improvement Millage. The funding has been used to rebuild Garfield Avenue from Rosedale to Allen Road. Just a few blocks away, the City contractor is working on Niver from Engelwood to Wick. In the next few weeks, the contractor will be moving over to work on Shenandoah between Ecorse Road and Pinecrest, and on Kolb off of Van Born Road. Next year, the tentative schedule includes portions of Horger, Balfour, Regina, and Reeck. Additionally, contractors have been doing concrete sectioning throughout the City. Over \$4 million dollars in work is being completed in 2016. Again, none of this road work would be possible without the support of the residents of Allen Park.

The City continues to seek grant funding to assist with our street improvement projects. While we were not successful in receiving funding for Moore Avenue, we did receive a \$900,000+ Surface Urban Transportation Grant for Enterprise Drive – I-94 to Oakwood Boulevard. This project will likely occur in 2018.

The City has been notified that Pelham Road from Ecorse to Wick will be resurfaced in 2017. Additionally, MDOT will be replacing the I-75 bridge over Goddard Road and the creek. These projects will have an impact on our residents.

With the assistance of our new City Engineer, C.E. Raines Company, we are not only working road projects, but we are seeking bids for new water mains on Arlington and Warwick Streets—areas that have had over 35 main breaks on each street. We are also rebuilding sewer pump stations, addressing long overdue work at the sewer basin, and completing rehabilitation work on a portion of the sanitary sewer system.

The City received a \$270,000 Distressed Communities Grant from the State of Michigan. A portion of the grant is being used to replace the HVAC system at the Fire Station. Fire Chief LaFond was able to secure a \$65,000 grant for an exhaust removal system that will be installed at the Fire Station in the next few months.

With the assistance of DTE Energy, the City is replacing a large number of costly Mercury Vapor Streetlights and replacing them with energy and cost efficient LED Streetlights. The DTE contractor is set to begin work to replace the lights on Southfield Road this week. The City will also be asking the State to allow us to use the remaining funds from the Distressed Communities Grant—approximately \$100,000 – to begin changing the streetlights in some of our neighborhoods.

Parks and Recreation Director, Pat Hawkins, continues to work with Wayne County to receive Grant funding for our parks. Most recently, Grant funding was used to install a new play structure at Boccabella Park. This was a Community Build project that was successful with the assistance of the Allen Park Citizens Civic Fund, Lowe’s of Allen Park, C.E. Raines, Buccilli Group, Great Lakes ACE—Allen Park, and Pentiuk, Couvreur and Kobiljak.

This past May, the City changed our solid waste collection contractor to Advanced Disposal, and the use of 96 gallon trash carts and 64 gallon recycle carts. While I am the first to admit that there have been a number of issues with this change, we will continue to work with Advanced Disposal to get this operation running as smooth as it has in the past.

Probably the most visible sign that the City is making positive strides to move forward involves the Police Department and City Hall. We are no longer operating in a building that leaked with every sprinkle. In fact, the old City Hall and Police Department have been approved for demolition and the property listed for sale. The Municipal Complex Committee has been working with the City Engineer and an Architect to narrow down the best location for a new Police Department and City Hall. They hope to have a few options presented to City Council in the next few weeks, with hopes of being in a new facility by April 2018.

And finally, the City continues to use Allen Park Connect—the SeeClickFix program that allows residents to report issues throughout the City directly to various departments. We are also using the Facebook page, “City of Allen Park—Government” to distribute information to the residents.

I would like to thank our residents for attending and our volunteers for making this program possible. Good night and God Bless Allen Park and God Bless America.