

JACKSON

Issue XVI • Mar/Apr 2018

BIMONTHLY

CITY OFFICIALS ENVISION SAFE, VIBRANT AND ECO-FRIENDLY CITY

Roughly 200 City of Jackson citizens and area residents turned out for the first State of the City address late last month, which included keynote presentations from Consumers Energy President Patti Poppe and Mayor Derek Dobies.

Jackson School of the Arts Executive Director Kim Curtis and Vice Mayor Arlene Robinson spoke during the event as well.

Speakers chose to touch on a long list of projects and proposals during their time within the historic Masonic Temple, highlighting everything from new businesses and lofts moving into City limits to crime within the community.

“We have every tool at our disposal, every opportunity, to foment a new renaissance,” Dobies said Feb. 20. “We’re here tonight because we believe **it’s time to turn a page on the perceptions of the past**. It’s time to set a new tone.”

Dobies spoke on six key topics during his speech, including arts/culture, economic development, neighborhoods, public safety, infrastructure and poverty.

“As a City Council, we’ve committed ourselves to fos-



Jackson Mayor Derek Dobies speaks during the inaugural State of the City address Feb. 20. (Courtesy of Clay McAndrews, Consumers Energy)

tering a vibrant downtown,” Dobies said, illuminating a City priority to rebuild Jackson’s core. “Our downtown is the beating heart that provides our metro area with the lifeblood it needs to grow.”

In the last six years, City officials have invested more than \$9 million in the downtown metro area, including work within the site of the State of the City event itself - a 36,000 square foot Masonic Temple on Cortland Street in downtown Jackson,

currently under renovation to house the Jackson School of the Arts.

Speakers also said while downtown growth is of paramount importance, it is also important to spread improvements out into City neighborhoods.

“We’re excited and we want to see the community get excited,” Robinson said. “We are working to bring improvements out into the neighborhoods and see all of Jackson thrive.”

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Metro Building Set for a Rebuild
- 2 Council Creates Eco Commission
- 3 City Looking to Revamp Website
- 4 I-94/Cooper St. Roadwork on Tap

NEW PROJECT BEGINS DOWNTOWN

After purchasing the vacant downtown Jackson property next door to City Hall in August, Dave Lammers and his wife Denise said they were well aware of the “urban myth” regarding working with City officials.

“We’ve heard it all the time,” Dave Lammers said. “The City is hard to work with. I’m here to say that is a myth - one we couldn’t disagree with more. I can’t say enough about how wonderful City staff have been in helping us prepare for this project.”

The area couple plans to convert the property at 159 W. Michigan Ave. into a **salon on the first floor and five loft-style apartments on the second.** At the Jackson City Council meeting last month, council approved its second “Downtown Investor-Owned Rehabilitation” project grant to help the plan become a reality.

With three of the five proposed lofts offered to low-



Contractors work within 159 W. Michigan Ave. earlier this month.

moderate-income tenants, Dave and Denise Lammers were able to leverage up to \$450,000 in funding for the project through the City’s Community Development Block Grant program. As a match, the salon and spa

owners will provide no less than 30 percent of the total renovation costs.

“We’ll be able to expand our salon staff from five to 13 with the new space,” Dave Lammers said. “In addition, we’ll happily provide a

beautiful, revitalized asset to downtown Jackson. We want to be a part of this City’s renaissance.”

Before sitting vacant, the property was home to Huron Camera until 2005 and Image Gallery until 2008.

CITY COUNCIL CREATES ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION, NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS

Jackson is positioning itself for a cleaner, greener future.

Last month, Jackson City Council voted to establish the Jackson Environmental Commission, a 12-member board set to begin operating in March. Of the 12 commission members, five are nominated by the mayor and confirmed by City Council appointment.

The commission will develop comprehensive, integrated environmental policies for the City to protect

and enhance its air, water and land quality, the ordinance adopted Feb. 13 reads. As an advisory body, the commission cannot enact policy, but rather advise and make recommendations to the Jackson City Council for review.

Jackson City Councilwoman Colleen Sullivan, 6th Ward, said the new commission emphasizes the City’s commitment to sustainability and a cleaner community.

“It’s time we enhanced our recycling and waste systems

throughout the community, work toward green infrastructure and become more efficient,” she said. **“The new environmental commission is a necessary step toward a greener, cleaner future in Jackson.”**

Consumers Energy President Patti Poppe spoke about the Jackson utility’s commitment to green energy during the State of the City address this February..

“We (recently) announced that our company has committed to reduce our

environmental impact,” she said Feb. 20, “by reducing our carbon emissions by 80 percent and eliminating coal from our fleet by 2040.”

City officials are currently accepting applications for vacant commission seats, including the five seats up for appointment on the environmental commission. Those interested can pick up a copy of an application on the 14th floor of City Hall, 161 W. Michigan Ave., or on the City’s website: www.cityofjackson.org.





CITY TO REBUILD WEBSITE

NEW SITE SET TO GO LIVE IN 9-12 MONTHS

City of Jackson employees will work to redesign the City’s website in the coming months after officials closely reviewed their contract with the site host CivicPlus, and found a surprising stipulation buried inside.

“Upon reviewing the contract with CivicPlus we found that we had the option to rebuild our website from the ground up at no cost, since we’ve been under contract for four years this month,” Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said. “Just like we did four years ago, we’ll look to increase the site’s functionality and offer easy, user-friendly services on-line. Only this time, it will come free of charge and at no taxpayer expense, which is exciting news.”

The current website, located online at www.cityofjackson.org, was last redesigned in 2014, after City Council voted unanimously to contract with CivicPlus.

“We’ve been very happy with CivicPlus as a host since switching to them in 2014,” Forgrave said. “They’re helpful when we need help, and the site is easy to navigate

and update from the administrative side of things.”

Forgrave said the ultimate goal is to build a site with updated graphics and services citizens and area residents can

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Email the City of Jackson at website@cityofjackson.org with your ideas for the new site.

easily find and use.

“It’s about making the user-side of the site more accessible and functional,” he said.

Those interested in sharing their ideas for updates to the City’s website, can send an email to website@cityofjackson.org.

Officials are scheduled to begin working with CivicPlus to update the website this month, with a final product likely taking 9-12 months to complete.

“Anyone is welcome and we encourage people to email their tips and ideas,” Forgrave said.

MAYOR

Derek Dobies

COUNCIL (Ward)

- Arlene Robinson 1
- Freddie Dancy 2
- Jeromy Alexander 3
- Craig Pappin 4
- Andrew Frounfelker 5
- Colleen Sullivan 6

CITY MANAGER

Patrick Burtch

MEETINGS/EVENTS

Mar. 27 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

Friday, Mar. 30
City Hall Closed
Good Friday

Apr. 10 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

Apr. 24 • 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor

Apr. 30 • 5 p.m.
Tax Filing Deadline
City Hall, 1st Floor

For more information about City programs, visit the City’s website at www.cityofjackson.org



The City of Jackson’s current landing page for its website at www.cityof-jackson.org. City officials will update the website in the near future.



CITY GATEWAY TO GET UPDATE

Jackson officials recognize first impressions make a big difference, and in that spirit have resolved to help fund a new entranceway at the I-94/Cooper Street off ramp and bridge into the City.

City Council voted unanimously last month to help the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Jackson County Department of Transportation fund a roundabout at the location, complete with aesthetically pleasing properties.

“We want to create a sense of place and a key focal point for commuters and travelers coming into the City,” Jackson City Councilman Freddie Dancy, 2nd Ward, said.

The City will pay for a stamped concrete logo on the proposed roundabout as well as electric and water feeds to maintain lights and



A rendering of the new bridge over I-94 and Cooper Street roundabout, with construction set to begin this year.

plants. City contributions are an estimated \$123,000.

The gateway treatment is a small part of a much larger, state-funded project, which includes an estimated \$90 to \$100 million, nine-mile construction update planned for

I-94 in Jackson County - one of the largest such construction projects in decades and one of the largest projects in Michigan this year.

Road and bridge work will span from M-60 to Sargent Road, according to

MDOT officials.

“Any time a municipality or government can work with other government entities to help enhance infrastructure, it’s a great thing,” City Manager Patrick Burtch said.

From the Desk of Mayor Derek Dobies

The following is an excerpt from Mayor Derek Dobie’s speech during the State of the City address Feb. 20, highlighting future road improvements in Jackson.

The City has already investing more in our roads than we have in years.

Last year we spent \$5.8 million dollars in street reconstruction and engineering projects alone. Adding in water and sewer investments makes that total \$8.5 million.

In 2018, you are going to see a very busy engineering department and a lot of orange barrels.

We’ll essentially be doubling the amount of construction projects and

expenditures on street milling, resurfacing and other engineering projects.

Our estimated street project expenditures this year are \$11.5 million, nearly double last year. In total, we’ll be doing \$17.2 million in infrastructure work (See Pg. 5).

We’ll upgrade our infrastructure within our enterprise funds as well, beginning a \$1.4 million dollar construction project for UV disinfection at the Waste Water Treatment Plant to modernize our processes, improve worker safety, and better protect our environment.

With feedback from our citizens, we’ll also continue to improve street lighting.

We’re excited to begin a number of projects to improve neighborhood lighting and safety, among them the Morrell Street, Adrian Street, and lights along the MLK Trail and at Loomis park, Exchange Park and within Partnership Park.

While we plan for a comprehensive street light plan, we’ll also work on a comprehensive plan to adequately fund, repair, and maintain our streets.

That’s why I’ve asked Councilwoman Colleen Sullivan, 6th Ward, to lead a task force of City and community leaders to bring a long-term road solution to City Council.

We’ll work diligently to



fix our streets now as well as have a plan to fix them in the future.

Sincerely,



DID YOU KNOW?

What the City Plans to do About Potholes

With consistent cold weather and snowfall in the rearview mirror, it unfortunately isn't just warmer weather that Michigan drivers are noticing again this spring.

Potholes are back, and this season has been especially bad for roadways all over the state, Jackson included.

"We recognize there are a number of roads in Jackson that are in poor condition, and we're working

diligently and around the clock to fix them," Public Information Officer Will Forgrave said.

Last year, the City spent just under \$6 million in street reconstruction and engineering projects.

This year, officials plan to spend an estimated \$11.5 million on road resurfacing and repairs alone - an increase of \$5.7 million.

"It's a problem that is increasingly difficult to keep

up with," Forgrave said. "But there are things City residents can do to help us fix our streets."

City residents are encouraged to report any severe potholes to the City. Residents can do this two ways. The first is through email, by visiting the City website at www.cityofjackson.org and clicking the "Report a Concern" link. The second is calling the DPW Department directly at 517-788-4170.

ART EXHIBIT OPENS IN CITY CENTER

"The Art of Nature" has come to downtown Jackson in a new exhibit that features two Michigan artists - sculptor Roger Smith and local painter Michael Palmer.

The gallery is located on the opposite side of the Glidden Parker Mural and is a unique space that invites viewers to have an outdoor art experience, one of the exhibit organizers Kim Curtis said.

The bronze sculptures are the work of Smith, whose training in taxidermy is evident in his work.

"His knowledge of anatomy and his love for his subject adds a magical quality that brings the sculpture to life," Curtis said.

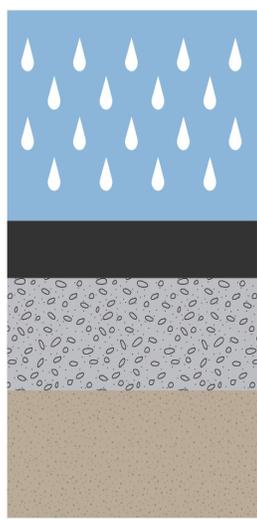
Smith uses clay to mold his subjects before casting them in limited edition bronze sculptures.

Palmer, a self-taught artist who finds inspiration from walks in the woods and observations of wildlife, is also included in the exhibit.

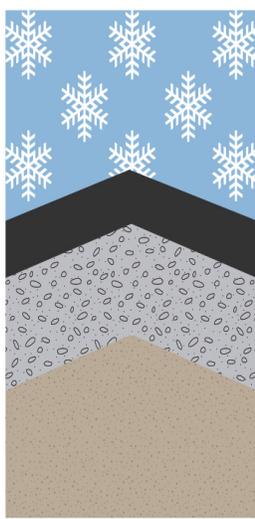
"I approach all my work with the intention to stir your imagination, make you slow down and explore the painting," Palmer said.

The exhibit was curated by Janet Meyer-Jackman of the Jackson Public Arts Commission, and **is set to be on view until May 2018.**

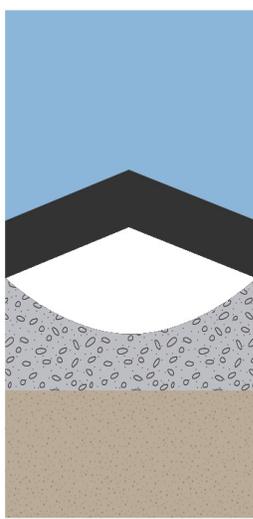
How potholes form



Water from melting snow and ice seeps into the pavement and softens it.



During repeated cold spells, the water in the pavement refreezes and expands, breaking up the pavement, on and below the surface.



When the ice melts, it leaves gaps inside the pavement, and the moisture further softens it.



The soft, fractured asphalt cannot support the weight of passing vehicles, and begins to break up, creating the hole in the highway.



"Like" the City of Jackson's Facebook page for up-to-date information on what's happening in your community!

www.facebook.com/cityofjacksonmi/

