



WALKER City News



Winter 2006

City of Walker Building Department

The owner or occupants of any property located within the City are required to clear any accumulations of ice or snow from the public sidewalks adjoining the property within 24 hours of accumulation or placement of snow or ice on the sidewalks, per section 70-68 of the City of Walker Ordinance.

If you have a neighbor who is unable to clear their sidewalks in the allotted time it would be appreciated if you could assist them. Your efforts will be appreciated not only by your neighbor, but also from everyone who uses the sidewalks.

City of Walker Department of Public Works

WINTER REMINDERS

Occasionally, our operators will hit a mailbox. If the post or mailbox is not in good condition, the heavy snow load will take a mailbox down easily. If you feel that a City 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 (\$15.00 for box, \$5.00 for 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.

We would also like to remind the parents of school age children of a safety issue with the snow plow trucks. When the children are waiting for a bus by the road, or playing in snow banks, please have them stay back and give the snowplow driver plenty of room. When the snow is coming off the plow, it may throw ice chunks and other debris that was in the road. Our concern is for the children and we watch out very carefully for them. Most of our drivers have children too. We do not want any of the children to get hurt.

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING LOCATIONS 12/26/05 – 1/16/06

- Walker City Hall ~ 4243 Remembrance Rd. N.W.
- Walker Community Park ~ 650 Cummings N.W.
- Walker Fire Station #3 ~ 1470 Three Mile Rd. N.W.

TREES ONLY- NO PLASTIC BAGS

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Dear Citizens of Walker,

Best wishes from your City Commission. We hope that you had a pleasant fall and wish you the best as we enter the Holiday Season.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve a second term as your Mayor. During the campaign, I had the pleasure of meeting many of you face to face and hear your comments and concerns. I take these comments very seriously and will address the issues that were brought to my attention.

During my visits to various neighborhoods throughout the City, I was often asked to replace burned out streetlights. I was happy to do so, but I want to remind residents that Consumers Energy is responsible for replacing streetlights. If you notice a streetlight out, please call Consumers at 1-800-477-5050.

I also heard many concerns about traffic. While we are not able to dictate what should be done on state roads such as Wilson (M-11), and Lake Michigan Drive (M-45), I was made aware of speeding issues in our residential neighborhoods. We are looking at measures to address this concern, but in the meantime, I simply urge everyone to drive safely and remain in compliance with the speed limits.

Finally, I would ask that as the winter weather is upon us that we do everything we can to assist one another. Please shovel your walks to allow safe passage for pedestrians. If you have a neighbor who, for any reason (medical, elderly, disabled) cannot remove the snow, please extend a helping hand. If we experience a storm or power outage, please make sure that your neighbors are safe. We are a community and as such we should all be willing to assist those who are in need.

Thank you again for the privilege you have given me to serve as your Mayor. Please feel free to contact any of the City Commissioners or myself if you have questions, comments, or concerns.

Best Regards to all, and many wishes for a safe and happy holiday season!

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 - 784-2860; aparent@ci.walker.mi.us
Dan Kent - 784-5591; dkent@ci.walker.mi.us

SECOND WARD COMMISSIONERS:

Barbara Holt - 784-5327; 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.
Sandra A. Wisniewski, CMC
Phone: 791-6865 -- swisniew@ci.walker.mi.us

TREASURER'S OFFICE

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

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Kelly Gibbs, Assessor
Phone: 791-6862 -- kgibbs@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: 791-6812

PUBLIC WORKS OFFICE

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

Commissioner's Corner

My name is Al Parent and I am your 1st Ward Commissioner along with Dan Kent. We are writing to you in this newsletter to inform you about the part of the City of Walker that we represent.

The 1st Ward is the northeast side of our City. It includes the Alpine Avenue business district from 4 Mile Road south to Ann Street. I jokingly tell people that we live in the best part of Walker, which is why it is called the "1st Ward".

Seriously though, we do seem to have it all here. Our Ward consists of shopping, dining, entertainment, medical facilities, great schools, a university and even the one and only TV-13 Weather Ball!

One of the advantages to living in this area is that we are only minutes away from all of the great businesses! We also have a wide variety of housing opportunities in the 1st Ward. They range from modest to upper-end homes, condominiums, apartments and a mobile home park as well.

Residents sometimes ask, "What's happening in the area?" or "What's new in the 1st Ward?" The answer is "plenty". Recently traffic signal improvements were made on Alpine Avenue in front of Keller/KIA. We also had sidewalks constructed on 4 Mile Road and south on Alpine. Demolition crews will also be busy taking down the Clock Restaurant and a new restaurant will take its place. Also, a new Walgreen's will be taking the place of the Bell Tire Store on the corner of Alpine and 4 Mile Road, with Bell Tire moving down the road a little ways. A new apartment complex (for limited income and disabled residents) will be constructed behind Steak & Shake and the Millennium Car Wash will be expanding to include a detail shop. On 3 Mile Road, a new medical facility will be constructed near the fire station, further west on 3 Mile, a new office was recently built by the W.S. Reed Company, and across from their location, a new mortgage company is planning to open soon.

Lastly... with winter now upon us, Commissioner Kent and I would like to remind you to keep your sidewalks clear of snow and ice for your safety as well as others.

That's all for now from the 1st Ward.

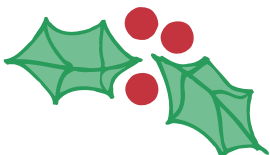
Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!



Commissioner Al Parent



Commissioner Dan Kent



City of Walker DDA

“Downtown Walker” Study Announced

The City of Walker Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has commissioned a two-part study of the Standale central business district.

The first part, now underway, includes a survey of businesses within the City of Walker. The survey will provide the DDA with updated information and feedback from local business owners and operators. This will be an important part of the redevelopment plan for Standale.

The second part of the study will focus on the creation of a new zoning ordinance for Standale. This may include a shift from traditional zoning rigidity to a more flexible and design-driven “form based” ordinance.

Standale is a fortunate downtown area. It is well served by two State of Michigan highways (M-11/Wilson Avenue and M-45/Lake Michigan Drive). It is also becoming a public transportation hub for Grand Valley State University students, as they bus between the Allendale and downtown Grand Rapids campus sites.

The combination of highway visibility, mass transit and educated young people makes Standale unique in western Michigan. The Standale study will offer short- and long-term strategies to capitalize on the uniqueness of Walker’s downtown.

The City of Walker Downtown Development Authority is funding the study.

City of Walker Fire Department

WINTER SAFETY ALERT

Many people this time of year will look for just about any means available to stay warm. The Walker Fire Department would like to pass along some basic fire prevention tips to help you remain safe and warm during the rest of the winter.

HOME HEATING EQUIPMENT

Wood burning stoves and fireplace chimneys should be inspected and cleaned. Your space heaters should carry the label of an independent testing lab and they should be equipped with an automatic shutoff. Combustible materials should be kept clear of all heating appliances.

When using kerosene heaters, the following safeguards should be followed:

- Kerosene heaters should be equipped with a primary safety control furnished as an integral part of the appliance by the manufacturer to stop the flow of oil in the event of flame failure.
- Provide adequate ventilation
- Do not place on carpeting
- Keep at least three feet away from combustibles, furnishings, or drapes.
- Use only approved Water-clear, 1-k kerosene.
- Wait for burners to cool before refueling.



NEVER USE YOUR OVEN AS A HEATING DEVICE!

If you use an electric blanket, make sure the wire is in good working condition, turn the blanket off and unplug it when not in use. Using electric blow dryers, torches, or other similiar devices to thaw out frozen pipes is extremely dangerous. Lives have been lost and property destroyed by not taking proper steps to thaw pipes. Prolonged continuous use of a blow dryer will cause it to overheat, and could easily start a fire. If you have a problem with frozen pipes, seek help from a professional to thaw them. If your pipes are susceptible to freezing, get advice from a plumber on how to protect them against freezing. Finally, as always, make sure your smoke detectors are in good working condition, and practice your escape plan.

I thought it might be useful to present some questions and answers regarding land use in the City of Walker. The questions have been sent my way by Walker citizens in recent weeks. The answers combine fact with my professional opinions and recommendations.

Question: Is Cabela's coming to Walker?

Answer: As of November 1, 2005, the City has not received an application or site plan for Cabela's or any other major development project near I-96 and Walker Avenue. At least two real estate developers are trying to put together the pieces to make a large "village center" happen. However, at this point, the Cabela's and village center rumors are still just rumors.

Question: What is going on near the new Meijer in Standale?

Answer: Applebee's recently opened next to Arby's. Independent Bank is under construction at the corner of Ferndale and Lake Michigan Drive. 5/3 Bank has been approved within the Meijer property, along with an O'Charley's restaurant. City staff worked with the developers to design attractive buildings that offer safe and efficient access for vehicles and pedestrians.

Now about the land east of Meijer, across Wilson Avenue: The land is being cleared and graded. The properties are zoned commercial and have been for many years. However, as of November 1, 2005, the City has not received an application or site plan for a development project.

We are also working with The Rapid and Grand Valley State University to improve the public bus stops and routes through Standale. The presence of young people and public transit opens up great City planning opportunities as the redevelopment of Standale continues.

Question: Why can't we require all new residential developments to have a minimum lot size of 2 acres?

Answer: Large lot zoning makes sense in parts of South Walker, where public water and sewer lines are distant and very costly to extend. However, even in South Walker, I'd prefer to see a creative clustering of homes with significant open space preservation as opposed to just chopping up large parcels into 2-acre lots. Contrary to popular opinion, large lots do not necessarily equal the preservation of rural character. Creative design is the solution.

Within the more urbanized areas of Walker, large lot zoning does not make sense. Large lots require much more sewer and water pipe to serve a smaller number of people. This is economically inefficient and increases system costs in the long run. This means we all pay more through higher user rates and steeper connection fees.

Large lots also require much more roadway to serve a smaller number of people. Whether the roads are public or private, this leads to higher construction and maintenance costs. In addition, longer streets lead to more stormwater runoff and increased impacts on streams and wetlands.

Finally, large lots within a growing City like Walker consume large amounts of land compared to the number of people eventually living on the property. Cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets overload the main roads with peak hour traffic. School buses must travel more miles to transport students. These are the negative costs of sprawl...a combination of economic, social and environmental inefficiencies.

Question: How does the Lear plant closing on Alpine Avenue affect the City of Walker?

Answer: The plant closing will affect the City in many ways, both directly and indirectly. The most direct impact is obviously felt by the Lear employees. The plant closing also directly hurts the City budget. Losing well-paying jobs means less income tax revenue. This means there will be less money for road and park improvements, drainage projects, trail and sidewalk extensions, etc.

However, the indirect impacts may be worse. The closing of an enormous industrial building creates a potential "white elephant" situation in a mature, urban part of the City. Who can re-use the building? Who can afford to retrofit the plant for a different use? Large, vacant buildings can drag an entire area down. If the plant closing triggers a loss of South Alpine commercial businesses, then the domino effect could creep into the local housing stock. This scenario has played out time and again across the country.

City of Walker officials are working with area businesses, developers, citizens and design professionals to update the master plan for the South Alpine neighborhood. We need a progressive and visionary public-private partnership to keep South Alpine sustainable. Mature urban neighborhoods need a great deal of support from the public and private sectors.

As always, those who work together and plan together will be successful. Opportunity always favors those who are prepared. A community divided will never stand the test of time, or the challenge of a rapidly changing economy.

Frank Wash, AICP, PCP
City of Walker Planning Director

At the Walker Library

Lots of good things are coming to the Walker Library this winter!

SATURDAY, DEC. 31 at 11:00 a.m. The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe – We're heading to Narnia and you're welcome to come! Complete with trivia, crafts and games for ages 6 and up – registration required.

JANUARY 1 – Let it Snow Reading Club for Adults – Read Books. Play Bingo. Win Prizes. January 1 – March 31.

JANUARY 3 – One Book , One County – Check out the book that all of Kent County will be reading and discussing.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21 – HAWAIIAN LUAU – Shake off the winter blues with some Hawaiian crafts and games – even some hula dancing! Ages 6 and up – registration required please.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26 at 6:00 p.m - NEEDLE FELTING – learn one of the fastest growing crafts! Registration limited to 15 – hurry!

TEEN POETRY CONTEST – February 15- March 15

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16 at 6:30 p.m. – WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT THE GOOD OLD DAYS – travel back with Mannie Gentile to Grand Rapids 1905 as he discusses the stories and people of that time. Registration required.

LEGO UNDER CONSTRUCTION – FEBRAURY 1- 17 – for all ages – registration required please.

To learn about additional programs of interest for all ages (storytimes, book discussions, etc.) please pick up a programming calendar at the Walker Library or check our web page at www.kdl.org.

The Walker Library is open 6 days a week Monday thorough Saturday. Please call 647-3970 for more information or visit the Walker Library at 4293 Remembrance Road

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 can obtain an application on our website at www.ci.walker.mi.us.

City of Walker Recreation Department

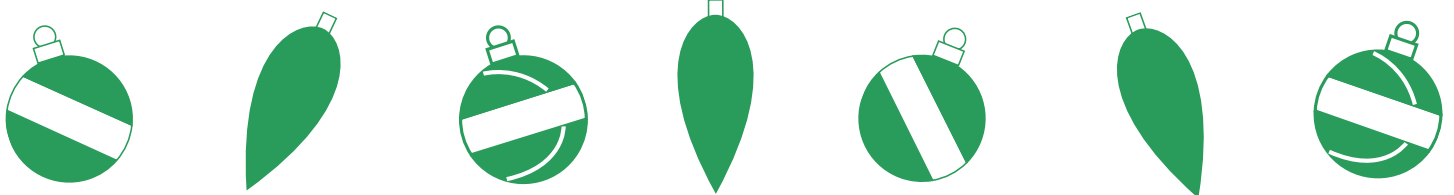
SENIOR CITIZENS

The Walker Recreation Department invites all senior citizens to come and join the Walker Senior Citizens. They meet every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at Walker Fire Station #3, located at 1470 Three Mile Rd. NW.

Social hour and blood pressure clinic is from 10:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. The meeting is from 11:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon.

Potluck lunch begins at 12:00 noon followed by entertainment or guest speakers. Field trips are planned throughout the year. Come join the fun!

For more information contact the Walker Recreation Department at 791-6890.



CARDIO COMBO CLASSES

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering cardio combo classes for men and women. The next 10-week session of classes will begin the week of March 6, 2006.

Classes will be held at the Community Building/Fire Station #3, located at 1470 Three Mile Rd., N.W.

Cardio combo, which includes hi/lo, kickboxing, step, toning, and pilates will be offered on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Cost for a 10-week session once a week is \$27.00, twice a week is \$43.00, three times a week is \$59.00 and four times a week is \$75.00.

Pre-registration is required for the classes. To register, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, choice of class, along with your check or money order payable to: Walker Recreation Department, 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W., Walker, MI 49534.

The deadline for registration is Monday, February 27, 2006. For further information call 791-6890.

2006 CO-ED SPRING YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAM

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering a Co-Ed Spring Soccer Program for boys and girls 7 through 12 years of age. Cost is \$23.00 per player. Practices will begin the week of April 10th and games will begin on Saturday, April 22, 2006. Registration forms will be sent home with the students at area schools and will also be available at the Recreation Department. Registration will be at the Recreation Department, located at 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. during the following dates and times:

- Thursday, February 2 3:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.
- Tuesday, February 7 3:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.
- Thursday, February 9 3:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.

For further information, please call 791-6890.

2006 GIRL'S SOFTBALL PROGRAM

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering a Girl's Softball Program for girls 7 through 12 years of age. Cost is \$25.00 per player. Practices will begin the week of April 10th and games will begin on Tuesday, April 25, 2006. Registration forms will be sent home with the students at area schools and will also be available at the Recreation Department. Registration will be at the Recreation Department, located at 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. during the following dates and times:

- Thursday, February 2 3:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.
- Tuesday, February 7 3:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.
- Thursday, February 9 3:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.

For further information, please call 791-6890.

2006 ADULT SOFTBALL REGISTRATION

Softball teams interested in joining the Walker Recreation Department's Adult Men's, Women's, and Coed Softball Leagues should contact the Recreation Department at 791-6890 after March 1 for an information packet.

All leagues will have an eight game schedule beginning the week of June 5, 2006. Registration will be on March 27, March 28, and March 29, 2006. Team entry fee is \$280.00 per team. There is also a \$10.00 non-resident fee for any player that does not live or work in the City of Walker.

2006 SENIOR CITIZEN'S BOWLING TOURNAMENT

The Walker Recreation Department is having their 15th annual Senior Citizen's Bowling Tournament for men and women 55 years of age and older. The tournament will be held at Lincoln Country Club, 3485 Lake Michigan Drive NW on Thursday, January 19 and Friday, January 20, 2006. The cost will be \$8.00 for 3 games of bowling. Pre-registration is required. Entry blanks will be available at all area bowling centers. Deadline for registration is Friday, January 6, 2006. For further information call the Walker Recreation Department at 791-6890.

EGGSTRAVAGANZA--EASTER EGG HUNT

On Saturday, April 15, 2006, the Walker Recreation Department will be having its 16th Annual Eggstravaganza (Easter Egg Hunt). The event will begin at 11:00 A.M. and be held at the Walker City Hall Complex, 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. The event is for boys and girls 7 years of age and younger. There will be three different age groups for boys and girls. They will be hunting for wrapped candy and plastic eggs, some of which may be redeemed for various prizes. Bags of goodies will be available for children under 2 years of age. The Easter Bunny will be available before and after the hunt for pictures.

FREE REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE!!

IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER, THE CANDY WILL BE GIVEN AWAY AT 11:00 A.M. FROM THE DPW GARAGE.

For further information, please call the Recreation Department at 791-6890.



City of Walker Assessor's Office

Zip Code Change: For those of you affected by the July 1st zip code change, shifting a large portion of the 49544 zip code to the new 49534 zip code, please pay close attention to your winter tax bill. We believe that we have made all the necessary changes to update our assessment system with the correct zip code, but it is always possible that some fell through the cracks. If we still have the wrong zip code, please give us a call (791-6862) and we can fix that oversight.

Digital Photos: As mentioned in a previous newsletter, we are updating our property record cards, in an attempt to eventually be a paper-free office. Part of that process is to draw all the buildings using a program called Apex (a CAD system), so that we will have a sketch of the structure on the computer. Another part of that process is taking photos of all the houses with a digital camera, so that we can post a picture of every home on the computer. So if you happen to see a City of Walker marked car driving slowly down your street, taking a picture of every home – that will be your friendly local assessor's office. Please keep in mind that we started this process last year and we do not anticipate being finished for three or four more years, so the times that you see us taking photos will be spread out here and there.

5-Year Reappraisal: Also mentioned in a previous newsletter was the fact that we were about to start a 5-year reappraisal of all the property in the City of Walker. This last spring, we hired a seasonal person to help us with this reappraisal. Our seasonal is done for the year and will start work again in the spring. He has done a great job and was able to cover more ground that we had anticipated. We have a large stack of property cards to go through as a result of the reappraisal – all of which merit some kind of change. These changes are either removals (the homeowner took down a pool, garage, deck, etc) or something new needs to be added to the record (the homeowner finished their basement, put up an accessory building, etc). Once we discover that we are assessing something that is no longer there or if we are missing something that needs to be assessed, we must correct our records for the next year's assessment. Please keep in mind that if you are not in agreement with your new assessment, as always it is your right to appeal it to the City of Walker's March Board of Review.

Assessment Notices and March Board of Review: 2006 is just around the corner and we are currently working on the new assessments. Tax Day is December 31, 2005 and we must assess every property in the City as of that date. Expect to see your yearly assessment notice sometime in February, as early as we can get them finalized and mailed. Please look them over carefully. We know that they can be a little confusing and that they have way too much information. Look specifically at the name and address (any errors?), the Principal Residence Exemption (if you own and occupy your home, it should be 100%), your 2006 assessed value (do you think it would sell for 2X the assessment), and finally your 2006 taxable (barring any new construction or transfer in ownership, the taxable value should be equal to the 2005 taxable value plus the Cost of Living). If you have any questions regarding your assessment notice, please do not hesitate to call our office, the number will be on your notice. If you would like to appeal your assessment, please call us to schedule an appointment before the Board of Review. We plan to wrap up March Board of Review sooner than we normally do, so do not hesitate to call. We will still have plenty of appeal dates and times available, we just will not be keeping it open through the entire month. March Board of Review will meet on the following dates: Monday, March 13, 2006 (from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM); Tuesday, March 14, 2006 (from 3:00 PM to 9:00PM); Wednesday, March 15, 2006 (from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM); and if you wish to appeal by letter, we must receive the letter appeal by Monday, March 13, 2006.

City of Walker Clerk's Department

New Information Regarding Passports!

As always, the City Clerk's office is continuing the service of issuing passports. As a convenience to those who choose to utilize this service, there is now an added benefit – passport pictures! Now you can apply for your passport, and for an additional charge of \$8.00, we can provide your required passport picture!

There are also some new requirements for passports:

- By December 31, 2006, you will need a passport when traveling to the Caribbean, Bermuda, Panama, Canada or Mexico. This requirement applies to all air and sea travel to or from these countries.
- By December 31, 2007 you will also be required to have a passport for all land border crossings in addition to air and sea travel.

When applying for a passport from the City of Walker you will need to bring a certified birth certificate, valid Michigan driver's license, and two separate checks. One check is sent to the U.S. State Department and one is paid to the City of Walker for processing of the passport.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Clerk's Department at 791-6878, 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Monday through Friday.

Be a Crime Stopper

The Walker Police are asking for your help in curbing an increase in criminal activity in the Standale business and residential areas. Throughout this past summer and continuing into the fall, numerous acts of vandalism and vehicle break-ins have plagued the Standale area. Most of the acts of vandalism involve both windows being shot with BB guns and buildings being shot with paintballs. The break-ins involve mostly vehicles and garages left unlocked.

We ask that you keep your vehicles and garages locked and your valuables inside those vehicles out of sight. Furthermore, if you have any information of who may be involved in any of the aforementioned acts, please contact the Walker Police Department at 453-5441.

Michigan Motor Vehicle - Deer Crashes

Michigan had 62,707 reported motor vehicle-deer crashes during 2004. 1,647 people were injured and 3 people were killed as a result of those collisions. Of the 62,983 vehicles involved, 40,254 (63.9%) were passenger cars, 15,098 (24.0%) were pickups, and 4,747 (7.5%) were minivans, vans, and motor homes. All other vehicle types (including motorcycle, snowmobile, ORV/ATV, large truck, moped) totaled 2,884 (4.6%). Contrary to common belief, motor vehicle-deer crashes are happening most often in Michigan's southern, heavily populated counties; Kent County had the highest number with 2,433 such crashes in 2004. The Walker Police Department responded to 91 car deer crashes in 2004.

Data obtained from the Michigan State Police and the Walker Police Department.

Traffic matters and more...

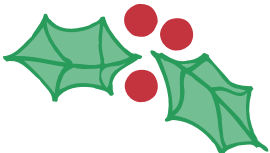
Traffic issues continue to be a major concern from our residents. Please contact the Sergeant on duty at the Walker Police Department if you have a specific traffic complaint that needs to be addressed. It is very helpful to include the time of day the problem is occurring or a particular vehicle that may be continually violating the traffic laws in your neighborhood. The Sergeant can assign a directed patrol activity to address your concern. If a particular individual is involved, let the officers confront the violator. You never know how people will react if you try to address this issue on your own. We have addressed numerous problem driver complaints by simply stopping at the violators home and telling them that we are aware of their driving habits and will be specifically watching their neighborhood to issue citations.

Please be mindful of your own driving habits as well. With the technology in today's vehicles you have to purposefully drive 25 in the residential neighborhoods. It takes effort. When you are sitting in the driver's seat, going 25 seems painfully slow compared to standing on the curb watching the same vehicle pass by. We all have a responsibility to keep our neighborhoods safe for our children and other pedestrians.

The Walker Police Department continues to participate in the State's "Click It or Ticket" and "You Drink & Drive You Lose" programs in an effort to increase the safety level of our community.

Please remember to always buckle up when driving. You never know when someone may run a light or cause you to crash. We have numerous fatal and serious injury accidents year after year. In some of these crashes a seatbelt would have made a remarkable difference.

If you choose to drink alcohol and you are not sure if you are 'OK' to drive, then you are probably not 'ok' to drive. Never operate a vehicle if there is any question in your mind. The life you save may be your own.



City of Walker Income Tax Department

Walker Individual Income Tax returns for residents, non-residents who work in the city and part-year residents for the tax year 2005 are due April 30, 2006

Estimated Payments

Tax Year 2005: If you owe more than \$100 with your 2005 return due April 30, 2006 and you have not paid in at least 70% of your current or prior year liability through estimates, credits or withholding, you will be receiving a bill for penalty and interest. The fourth quarter payment for 2005 is due on January 31, 2006.

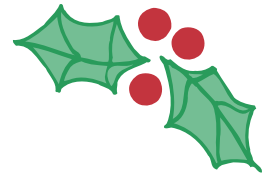
Tax Year 2006: If your employer does not withhold Walker Income Tax or you have non-wage income (rental income, capital gains, premature pension distributions, etc.) that is subject to tax and you will owe more than \$100 with your 2006 return, you must make quarterly estimated payments. The 2006 Quarterly Estimated payment vouchers with instructions can be found:

In the 2005 Resident Forms and Instructions booklet

On our web site at www.ci.walker.mi.us/incometaxforms

By mail--call us at 616-791-6880

The first quarter estimated payment for 2006 Walker Income Tax is due April 30, 2006.



Who Must File

Every resident or part-year resident of Walker (this includes renters) who has taxable income in 2005 of \$750 or more must file a return. Married persons may file either a joint return or separate returns. There seems to be quite a bit of confusion, especially among renters, over whether or not they are Walker residents. All Walker addresses have Grand Rapids mailing addresses. Visit the following link on the Walker website to check whether your address is within the city limits of Walker.

Walker street directory: <http://www.ci.walker.mi.us/Services/Assessor/StreetDirectory.html>

Turbo Tax Information Session

The Income Tax Department is planning an information session for citizens that use Turbo Tax to complete their Walker returns. It will be held on Wednesday, February 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers. Please call 791-6866 to register.

Required Attachments

During the 2004 filing season, a large number of returns that were completed using tax preparation software designed for home use (TurboTax, Tax Cut, etc.) were missing required attachments. Please read the face of the form carefully--frequently the requirement to attach a federal form, schedule or other city form is shown on the return itself and not listed in the instructions. The required attachments may not automatically print.

A worksheet printed by the software will not satisfy the requirement to attach a form or schedule. For example, if you are a resident taking a credit for tax paid to Grand Rapids, the worksheet printed by the software to calculate this credit must also be accompanied by a copy of page one of the Grand Rapids non-resident return.

Please see page two of the Walker resident return for a list of required attachments. Missing attachments will delay the processing of your return. If the missing attachment relates to credits or deductions, we will not send a request for the missing document, but will disallow the credit or deduction and send a notice of proposed assessment. For example, if you take a credit for tax paid to another city and fail to attach a copy of the other city's return, we will disallow the credit and send a notice of proposed assessment. After receiving a notice of proposed assessment, you have 30 days to file a written protest with the income tax administrator. If you do not file a written protest, the assessment will become final 30 days after you receive it. You will not have another opportunity to provide the missing information or to reduce the assessment after this time period has elapsed. Please respond promptly to all correspondence from the Income Tax Department.

Employer Withholding

A company is required to withhold Walker income tax from an employee's pay if the company has a location in the City of Walker. A company must also withhold Walker tax if they are doing business in the City of Walker even though the company has no location in the city. Companies outside of the City of Walker are not required to withhold Walker tax but may voluntarily do so as a convenience to their employees. Call Nancy at 791-6869 or visit the following link on the Walker website to request a New Employer Package.

New employer package request:

<http://www.ci.walker.mi.us/Services/IncomeTax/DepartmentOverview.htm>

Business Taxes

In addition to filing and paying withholding taxes on employees working in Walker, businesses are also subject to Walker income tax. Sole proprietors that file a Schedule C for Federal income tax purposes must also report this income on their individual Walker returns if the business is located in Walker or has activity within the city limits. Corporations located in or doing business in Walker must file form W-1120 to calculate tax due on the income apportioned to Walker. Partnerships located in or doing business in Walker must file form W-1065 to report the amount of partnership income apportioned to each resident or non-resident owner. Partnerships have the option to pay the Walker income tax on behalf of all owners as well. If you have any questions regarding filing requirements for businesses, please call Julie Blok at 791-6866 or e-mail for more information.

City of Walker Historical Commission

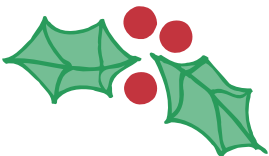
Over the spring and summer months, the Edison House underwent a detailed renovation that gave the one hundred and fifteen year old house a new roof and exterior siding. This was all made possible by the incredible generosity of our business neighbor to the west of the Edison House, Quality Edge. Quality Edge is a custom-manufacturer of various finishing products for homes and businesses. The Historical Commission decided after meeting with the team at Quality Edge that the material to be placed on the exterior of the Edison House would be aluminum. Aluminum has long been a preferred exterior product due to its high-quality appearance, and its relatively non-existent maintenance. Because of its physical and chemical make-up, aluminum is fairly easy to form and fabricate. With all of the detail on the Edison House, aluminum became the obvious choice. It should be noted that the Historical Commission debated the merits of replacing the old wood siding for some time. A couple of items that were considered were: One, the existing siding was so deteriorated or damaged in a number of areas that it could not be repaired; Two, the substitute material had to match the historic material in size and profile so that there was no change in the character of the Edison House. As you pass the house on Three Mile, it is obvious that the job and materials provided by Quality Edge have done the job.

Interior renovations continue to move forward as well. The most recent efforts continue to be the repair and restoration of the walls and floors on the main level, as well as the water and sewer hook-ups to the Edison House itself.

Don't forget that you can still purchase your limited edition Edison House drawing, available at the Walker City offices, Walker Library, or Macatawa Bank at 3 Mile and Walker.

Macatawa Bank will match the money raised from sales of the Edison House drawing.

These would make a great Christmas or Birthday present!



"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 49544
Phone: (616) 791-6860
E-Mail: newsletter@ci.walker.mi.us

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

Thank you!

CITY OF WALKER
4243 Remembrance Road NW
Walker, MI 49534

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT #1



Walker Ice & Fitness Center

FREE
14 Day Trial
Membership! *

We're Proud of Our Facility...
and we stand behind it by letting you try the Walker Ice & Fitness Center for 14 days FREE.

Try Before You Buy.

This is the best fitness facility in the area and you can prove it with no obligation.

No Risk, No Cost, No Excuses.

No hidden costs. Nothing to pay.
Simply bring in this coupon with your workout clothes.



- * To Qualify You Must:
- Live in the Grand Rapids Area.
 - Be at least 18 years of age.
 - Show a valid Michigan I.D.
 - Not have applied for this offer within a 1 year period.
 - Not have previously had a membership with W.I.F.C.
 - Limit 2 trial memberships per household

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

Recreation Committee

Meets one Wednesday of each month.
Walker City Hall Conference Room

Historical Committee

Meets 1st Tuesday at 7:00 pm each month in the City Commission chambers to discuss museum displays and preservation of artifacts.

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.

Traffic Committee

Meetings as needed. Discussion on transportation and traffic related matters.