



WALKER

City News

Fall 2007

City of Walker Ice & Fitness Center

Walker Ice & Fitness Center makes the Fun Sport of Youth Hockey Easy to Learn and Easy to Afford.

Walker Ice & Fitness Center has three Great Hockey Programs available for youth of all ages and skill levels.

- **Cross Ice Hockey** for ages 10 and under.
- **Learn to Skate** for ages 3 and up.
- **Learn to Play** for ages 5 through 10.



More information on these programs can be found on page 7.

Table of Contents

Ice & Fitness Center.....	1
Mayoral Message	2
City Commission.....	2
City Services	2
Fire Department	3
Police Department	4 & 5
Recreation Dept	6
Ice & Fitness Center.....	7
Income Tax	8
Planning Department	8
Dept of Public Works.....	9
Engineering Dept.....	9 & 10
Assessor's Office	11
"Your" Newsletter	12
Meeting Dates & Times....	12
Board Appointments.....	12



Dear Citizens of Walker,

Greetings on behalf of your City Commission.

It is my pleasure to welcome our new City Clerk Sarah Bydalek. Sarah was elected City Clerk in the August 7 primary and will take office in November. I have no doubt that Sarah will continue the tradition of excellent customer service, strong work ethic, and dedication to public service that we have enjoyed in the past.

I wish to thank our retiring City Clerk, Sandy Wisniewski. Sandy has served our City well since 1990 and we will all miss her. We often forget to thank those who do their job quietly and effectively. Sandy has run the Clerk's office on a very modest budget and without a hitch. We take it for granted when elections are conducted in an efficient and businesslike manner but there is a great deal of work that goes into running an election. The Clerk's office has many other responsibilities, which Sandy has handled very well. In addition, Sandy has introduced new programs such as the Passport service, which not only adds convenience to our residents but also generates revenue for the City. She is owed a hearty thank you by all.

I would like to share a portion of an e-mail that I recently received from a Dean at Tri-State University in Angola, Indiana. The e-mail started as follows: "I drove through Walker two weeks ago on my way from Grand Rapids to Grand Haven. To say your community made a positive impact would be an understatement. What a lovely drive along the main road!"

While we have much to do on many of our corridors it is gratifying to read that visitors enjoy our community. I have had several other positive comments on the landscaping through Standale. We are in the beginning of the process to redevelop the old fire station property from Cummings to Parkside and hope this will add additional momentum in the Standale improvement effort.

We are also pleased to see progress on the former Lear site on Alpine avenue. Much of the interior work is done and exterior work is now beginning. About 19 million dollars is being invested in this 750,000 square foot facility. This recently vacant facility is now home to Grand Rapids Spring & Stamping, Haviland Enterprises, and Amstore. In these difficult economic times it is wonderful to see new employment and vacant abandoned structures rehabilitated and once again made productive. This project was made possible by the collaborative efforts of the developer Blue Bridge Ventures, State Representative Dave Hildenbrand, Governor Granholm, the MEDC, the MDEQ, and the City of Walker. It serves as an example of what collaboration and cooperation can do for a community and we are pleased to have played a role in this success story.

On behalf of the City Commission, I wish you a safe and prosperous fall. If there is anything that we can do to assist you please do not hesitate to contact me or your Commissioners.

Best regards,

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 Smith, Assessor
Phone: 791-6862 -- ksmith@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
tmuilenb@ci.walker.mi.us

City of Walker Fire Department

CAN WE SEE YOUR ADDRESS?

If you dial 911 for an emergency, could the agency responding find your home or business quickly and easily? If addresses are not prominently posted on mailboxes, posts, or buildings, it can be extremely difficult for fire, police, or ambulance personnel to find the location of an emergency at a time when every moment counts.

If it is difficult to read your address from the street in front of your home or business, emergency responders, who may not be familiar with your area could be delayed in reaching you.

The Mayor and City Commissioners strongly encourage all Walker residents to post their address prominently on their mailbox, home, or business so it is easily seen and recognizable from the road. Although it is not often enforced, the City of Walker does have an ordinance for posting addresses. An address number, as you know, is the number assigned to a property by the City in accordance with U.S. Postal Service regulations. Numbers may be displayed in either Arabic numbers or script. According to City Ordinance, the placement, size, and visibility of address numbers should be as follows:

PLACEMENT:

- Residential buildings located 90 feet or less from the closest street must have address numbers displayed on the front of the building in a manner readily visible to emergency personnel.
- Residential buildings located more than 90 feet from the closest street should have address numbers displayed on a post or on a regulation U.S. Postal Service mailbox located on the same side of the street as, and directly in front of, the building. The post or mailbox should be located no more than 10 feet from the street's right-of-way and the address should be readily visible from the road.
- Nonresidential buildings must have address numbers displayed in a manner readily visible from the street in front of the building.
- If address numbers cannot be placed in compliance with the above guidelines, the building official will determine appropriate placement of the numbers.

SIZE OF ADDRESS NUMBERS:

- On residential buildings less than 50 feet from the street, address numbers must be at least three inches in height.
- On residential buildings more than 50 feet from the street, address numbers must be at least four inches in height.

VISIBILITY:

- The color of address numbers must be in direct contrast with the background color of the building and must be displayed in such a way that they are readily visible during daytime hours.

WE CAN HELP!

Reflective address signs, measuring 6 inches by 18 inches, can be purchased from the Walker Firefighter's Association for \$10.00. The signs can be easily attached to a mailbox post and their three inch tall reflective numbers allow high visibility in the dark. If you would like to purchase a reflective address sign, please call the Walker Fire Department office at 791-6840.

OPEN BURNING ORDINANCE

The following changes have been made to the City of Walker's Open Burning Ordinance. The revised ordinance was adopted November 27, 2006. Effective immediately:

- Fire rings are allowed in residential areas without a permit. However they must comply with the following criteria:
 1. The fire ring is used only for the burning of clean wood or other solid fuel and is not used for the burning of any waste materials or other materials including, but not limited to, garbage, rubbish, trash, grass clippings, leaves, and paper. NOTE: Clean wood means natural wood that has not been painted, varnished, or coated with a similar material; has not been pressure treated with preservatives; and does not contain glues as in plywood or other composite wood products.
 2. The maximum width is four (4) feet.
 3. There must be a noncombustible ring six inches in width surrounding the ring.
 4. The fire ring must be set back a minimum of 25 feet from buildings and overhead wires and 10 feet from adjoining lot lines.
 - Outdoor Fireplaces are still allowed in residential areas without a permit. However they must comply with the following criteria:
 1. Owners, operators and users of outdoor fireplaces shall use such fireplaces in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for safe use.
 2. To be used outside of a dwelling or residence on noncombustible surfaces including, but not limited to, brick, flagstone, or concrete, and are kept away from any flammable liquids and other combustible materials.
 3. Outdoor fireplaces shall be used only for the burning of clean wood or other solid fuel and shall not be used for the burning of waste materials or other materials including, but not limited to, garbage, rubbish, trash, grass clippings, leaves, and paper.
- NOTE: Clean wood means natural wood that has not been painted, varnished, or coated with a similar material; has not been pressure treated with preservatives; and does not contain glues as in plywood or other composite wood products.
- Effective May 16, 2007: The burning of grass clippings and leaves in residential areas was prohibited.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY REMINDER

Summer is over and I hope you have all enjoyed the warm days and sunshine. As the days get shorter and the weather begins to cool, the next yearly cycle begins of the one thing that we all look forward to...school. It's back in session. As the school year gets rolling again, I am sure that you have noticed the big yellow busses that are back on our roads again. It is your responsibility to stop for busses that have activated their flashing red lights. Many times children must cross the road when boarding or exiting the school bus. Please be very careful when the busses are stopped or preparing to stop. Many times the children are so focused on the bus that they do not notice traffic on the roadway. In the pre-dawn light these children are very difficult to see. The small stature of the children also makes them quite difficult to notice on or near the roadway. Please be very careful of these little ones.

Failing to stop for a school bus is a civil infraction violation. Vehicles that are either approaching (driving toward) or overtaking (passing from behind) the school bus are required to stop when the alternating flashing red lights are activated. You must stop your vehicle at least 20 feet from the school bus. Your vehicle must remain stopped until the school bus starts moving or the flashing red lights have been turned off. School bus violations can be issued by a police officer based upon the observation of the bus driver or any other witnesses. The officer does not need to witness the violation personally like most traffic citations. If the driver or witness records a license plate for this violation, the registered owner is responsible for the citation. There is no requirement under the statute to prove who was driving the vehicle. There are very few laws written in this fashion that hold the registered owner responsible. School bus violations, parking and littering are the few that meet this threshold.

The fines and costs associated with being found responsible for failing to stop for a school bus vary by court jurisdiction. In the 59th District Court that presides over the City of Walker, the total for a school bus violation is \$225.00 and three points on your driving record. A unique feature of the possible penalty for school bus violations is that an offender may be sentenced to perform up to 100 hours of community service. This penalty is over and above the fines and costs and is not in lieu of fines and costs. This is a violation that is not to be taken lightly.

In addition to the attentive bus drivers watching for violators we will be participating in the Grand Valley Traffic Safety Committee program that will specifically target school bus violations. Officers will be placed on the bus, in radio contact with marked patrol units. When violations are observed the offending vehicle will be broadcast and the marked units will apprehend the violators and issue a citation.

Please drive safely. Please keep our children safe. Remember that now that school is back in session, all the school speed zones are in effect and enforceable. The school bus violation statute can be located in the Michigan Vehicle Code at 257.682. If you need to report a school bus violation please contact our school safety officer, Butch Redzinski at 791-6835.

INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS AND KIDS

Ever wonder what you could do to minimize the chances of an on-line predator exploiter victimizing your child? Here are some helpful tips:

- Communicate and talk to your child about sexual victimization and the potential of on-line dangers.
- Interact with your children while they are on-line. Watch what they are viewing.
- Keep the computer in a common room of the house, not in a child's bedroom.
- Utilize parental controls provided by your service provider and/or blocking software. Monitor the chat rooms utilized by your children
- Always maintain access to your child's on-line account and randomly check his or her e-mails. Be up front with your children as to your reasons for this access.
- Teach your children to use the Internet responsibly.
- Research the safeguards in place outside of the home (schools, library, friend's homes).
- Let your kids know that strangers can look at their information on "My Space" so they should NOT put personal information on it.
- Some simple instructions for your children to follow:
 - Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they meet on-line
 - Never upload (post) pictures of themselves on the internet or on-line to people not personally known
 - Never give out personal information (name, address, school name, telephone number)
 - Never download pictures from an unknown source
 - Never respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent or harassing.

These are just a few tips to promote Internet safety for your children. For additional information, visit the Federal Bureau of Investigation's web site at; www.fbi.gov/publications. Click on the "Parent's Guide to Internet Safety" link.

HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS

Children Should:

- Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks.
- Never cross the road between parked cars.
- Never go into a stranger's house.
- If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.
- Watch for cars backing or turning.

Drivers Should:

- Drive in an extra cautious manner.
- Keep a keen eye open for children who forget safety rules

Parents Should:

- Instruct their children not to open their candy until they re
- Inspect all candy for tampering before their children eat it
- Make sure an adult accompanies children.
- Know what route their children will be taking.
- Have a set time limit for children to return home.
- Explain the difference between tricks and vandalism.

Home Owners Should:

- Have a well lit home both inside and out.
- This will prevent vandalism and injuries.
- Remove all obstacles from their lawns to avoid injuries.

Costumes Should Be:

- Flame retardant (this includes wigs & bags)
- Not have high heels or long dangling pieces to trip on.
- Be made of a bright highly visible material.
- Children should have a flashlight.
- Include reflective strips in the costume.

Safety Rules:

1. Always use common sense
2. Young children (under 10) should always go with an adult
3. Plan your entire route and make sure your family knows it
4. Don't eat any candy until a parent checks it
5. Visit only houses with lights on
6. Walk on sidewalks and driveways
7. Carry a flashlight
8. Cross the street only at a corner or crosswalk
9. Don't play around lit pumpkins
10. Always say thank you for your treats
11. Stay away from strangers
12. Never enter a house for treats



SHOPPING BUS TRIP TO BIRCH RUN OUTLET MALL & BRONNER'S CHRISTMAS STORE

The Walker Recreation Department is offering a bus trip to Birch Run Outlet Mall & Bronner's Christmas Store.

The trip will be on Saturday, October 13, 2007. The bus will leave from Walker City Hall at 9:00 a.m. The cost for the bus trip is \$30.00 per person. This will include a snack and juice to be served on the bus. Lunch and dinner will be on your own.

Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come first served basis. To register for the trip, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, along with your check or money order made payable to: Walker Recreation Department 4243 Remembrance RD., N.W. Walker, MI 49534.

For further information please call 791-6890.

CLAY AIKEN & KALAMAZOO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHRISTMAS BUS TRIP

The Walker Recreation Department is offering a bus trip to Miller Auditorium in Kalamazoo to see the Clay Aiken Christmas Show along with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra.

The trip will be on Friday, November 30, 2007. The bus will leave from Walker City Hall at 6:45 p.m. The total cost for the bus trip is \$75.00. This includes the bus ride and concert ticket. All seats will be located in the orchestra section.

Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come first served basis. To register for the trip, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, along with your check or money order made payable to: Walker Recreation Department 4243 Remembrance RD., N.W. Walker, MI 49534.

For further information please call 791-6890.

WALKER SENIORS GROUP

Come join the Walker Senior Group for a fun time!! We meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at Fire Station #3, located at 1470 Three Mile Rd., N.W. We offer free blood pressure check starting at 10:30am, bingo from 10:00am to 11:30am on the 4th Tuesday of the month, followed by a short meeting at 11:30am and potluck lunch at noon. Bring a dish to pass and your own place setting. Following the potluck lunch we have speakers or entertainment. The meeting concludes at approximately 1:30pm. We would love to have you join us!! Remember the Walker Senior Group is open to all seniors, so pass this information along to anyone who may be interested. Please call the Walker Recreation Department at 791-6890 for a list of upcoming events.

LAMBS FARM HOLIDAY ART & CRAFT SHOW TRIP

The Walker Recreation Department is offering a bus trip to the 27th Annual Lambs Farm Holiday Art & Craft Show in Rosemont, Illinois. Choose from the fine art and craftwork of more than 600 vendors at Chicagoland's largest show of its kind. Shopping for the holidays was never so easy!

The trip will be on Thursday, November 29, 2007. The bus will leave from Walker City Hall at 9:00am. The cost for the trip is \$42.00 per person. This will include a snack to be served on the bus as well as admission to the craft show. Lunch and dinner will be on your own at the event. Available in the Convention Center are concession stands, food court, and covered walkways to adjoining hotel restaurants.

After the craft show the bus will take us to a tour of the beautiful Christmas lights in downtown Chicago before returning to Walker City Hall at approximately 12:00am.

Seating is limited and reservations will be taken on a first come first served basis. To register for the trip, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers, along with your check or money order made payable to: Walker Recreation Department 4243 Remembrance RD., N.W. Walker, MI 49534.

The deadline for registration is November 9, 2007. For further information please call 791-6890.

2008 SENIOR CITIZEN'S BOWLING TOURNAMENT

The Walker Recreation Department is having their 17th annual Senior Citizen's Bowling Tournament for men and women 55 years of age and over. The tournament will be held at Lincoln Country Club, 3485 Lake Michigan Drive NW on Thursday, January 17 and Friday, January 18, 2008. The cost will be \$10.00 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 4, 2008. For further information call the Walker Recreation Department at 791-6890.

FALL ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

The Walker Recreation Department will be having its 17th Annual Fall Arts & Crafts Show on Saturday, October 27, 2007 from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

The show will be at Kenowa Hills Intermediate School, located at 4252 Three Mile Road, NW.

There will be a wide variety of finely crafted items. Food concessions will be available.

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

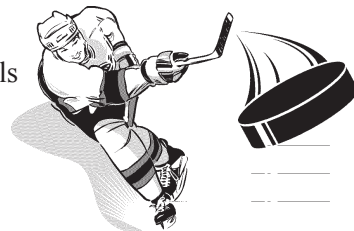
City of Walker Ice & Fitness Center

Walker Ice & Fitness Center makes the Fun Sport of Youth Hockey Easy to Learn and Easy to Afford with Three Great Hockey Programs available for youth of all ages and skill levels.

CROSS ICE HOCKEY

The Cross Ice Hockey program provides a positive environment that encourages youth to master fundamental hockey skills while developing a lifelong love of hockey. This program was created for youth ages 10 and under to accommodate the growing number of new player who wish to play hockey, and reduce those who become disenchanted and drop out. This program discourages over-emphasis on winning while participation, fun, and skill development are emphasized.

- Ice is divided into thirds with three groups working at the same time.
- Players will learn how to make quicker decisions due to the focused playing area.
- Increased time on the ice will significantly advance a player's skating and puck handling skills
- Increased amount of interaction will simply be more fun for the player.
- The focused playing area drastically reduces the cost of playing hockey.
- Program runs from October 2nd thru March 15th.
- Practice is held every Tuesday from 5-6pm and every Saturday from 12(noon)-1pm
- February 16th the program will take place at the VanAndel Ice Arena home of the Grand Rapids Griffins.
(February 16th is "Hockey Day In Michigan").
- Teams play 3-on-3 scrimmages and games.
- Cost: \$350.00. Includes jerseys, ice time, and expert instruction. (Payment schedule available).



LEARN TO SKATE

The Learn to Skate program is a great way to learn how to skate and stay physically fit. There is a fun class for everyone ages 3 and up. There are 2 sessions in the fall and 2 sessions during the winter. Each session is 7 weeks long.

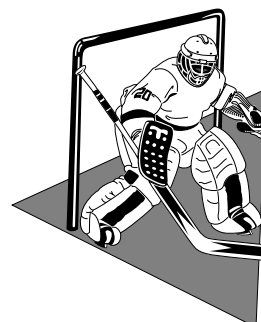
- Fall session 1 starts on September 8.
- Fall session 2 starts on October 27.
- Winter session 1 starts on January 5.
- Winter session 2 starts on March 1.
- Spring & Summer sessions will be announced at a later date.
- Cost: \$99.00 (Skate rental not included).
- Get 15% off by registering 10 days prior to the session's start date.



LEARN TO PLAY

The Learn to Play Hockey program is for youth ages 5 to 10. The program teaches the fundamentals of Ice Hockey. This program is taught in 7 week sessions, with each session being a progression from the last. Classes are held on Saturdays and are 50 minutes in duration.

- Training includes:
 - Skating: (Starting, stopping, striding, power turning, & "edge" awareness control).
 - Stick Handling
 - Passing
 - Shooting
 - Positioning
 - Stick – Checking Techniques
 - Rules of the Game
- Cost: \$100.00 per session. Equipment not included but is required. All equipment can be purchased in our Pro Shop.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE GREAT PROGRAMS:

- Call the Walker Ice & Fitness Center at 735-6286
- E-mail Hockey Director Mike Slobodnik: mslobodnik@walkericeandfitness.com
- Stop in to tour the facility at 4151 Remembrance Rd. NW Walker, MI 49544

BONUS: Parents can work out in the fitness center while their youth attend these hockey programs for just \$5.00.

City of Walker Income Tax Department

ESTIMATED PAYMENTS

The third quarter estimated payment for 2007 Walker Income Tax is due October 1, 2007 (September 30 is a Sunday). 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 think you may owe more than \$100 with your 2007 return, you must make quarterly estimated payments. The 2007 Quarterly Estimated payment vouchers with instructions can be found:

- In the 2006 Resident Forms and Instructions booklet
- On our web site at www.ci.walker.mi.us/incometaxforms
- By mail--call us at 616-791-6880

You must pay in at least 70% of your current or prior year liability (whichever is lower) through estimates, credits or withholding to avoid receiving a bill for penalty and interest for underpayment of estimated tax.

Social Security Numbers:

It is very important that all annual returns, extensions and estimate vouchers have your complete social security number legible on the form. We cannot apply payments correctly to your account without a complete social security number.

City of Walker Planning Department

STANDALE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Walker City and Planning Commissions and the Standale Downtown Development Authority (DDA) are in the process of selecting a developer to design, build and purchase almost 2 acres of City-owned property at the northwest corner of Lake Michigan Drive and Cummings. The old fire station is part of this project. The road frontage extends from Cummings to Parkside.

The goal is to review redevelopment plans from competing developers who would like to convert the site into a downtown-style project. The City and Planning Commissions and DDA initiated the process through a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) announcement in August. The RFQ will allow the City and Planning Commissions and DDA to create a "short list" of development teams. This "short list" group will be asked to submit formal proposals for the redevelopment of the property.

This course of action is a direct application of the new master plan for Standale. The City and Planning Commissions and DDA are testing the downtown redevelopment master plan through this RFQ.

If successful, this process will further the redevelopment of Lake Michigan Drive between Wilson Avenue and Kinney Avenue into a downtown-style, mixed-use area.

CABELA'S & ORCHARD PARK UPDATE

The Walker City and Planning Commissions continue the complicated process of reviewing the Orchard Park / Cabela's project. The Cities of Walker and Wyoming have approved the "425 Agreement," which sets the stage for tax increment financing and bonding for site clean-up and public infrastructure improvements. The Planning Commission is reviewing changes in the overall project phasing and layout of the commercial uses proposed around Cabela's. The City is working with a newly-arranged development team on this project.

City staff continues to partner with MDOT and the Kent County Road Commission while planning for road improvements and traffic management from Fruit Ridge Avenue to Alpine Avenue along 4 Mile Road. The extension of North Ridge Drive is an integral part of this planning and engineering project.

WEB SITE UPDATES

The City of Walker web site is located at www.ci.walker.mi.us. We continue to upgrade the planning and zoning information available to the public through this web site.

We have added new zoning and street maps under the "Maps" link from the home page. The planning department page also includes a link to REGIS, which is our main GIS mapping and database management system.

If you have ideas for ways to improve the web site, please let me know. You can e-mail me at fwash@ci.walker.mi.us.

City of Walker Department of Public Works

2007 LEAF RECYCLING PROGRAM

This year the Leaf Recycling Program will be located at: City of Walker (Behind City Hall) 4243 Remembrance Rd. N.W.

The dates will be: October 20 thru November 17, 2007, Monday thru Friday, 8:00am to 3:30pm. Wednesdays, 8:00am to 7:00pm. We will also be open on the following Saturdays, from 8:00am to 1:00pm, Oct 20 & 27, and Nov 3, 10, & 17.

Please note: We will be closed for Veterans Day, Monday, November 11, 2007.

Biodegradable bags will be made available to purchase at the Public Works office 8:00am to 4:00pm, Monday thru Friday. Also, we will sell the bags at the site on Wednesday nights and Saturdays. The cost is 10 bags for \$3.00.

To speed up the leaf drop off, we encourage the use of the biodegradable bags. No plastic will be accepted. The resident will have to dump their leaves out of the plastic bags. We will also be accepting brush at these locations and running them through a chipper. No minimum length required.

Proof of Walker residency is required. Our offices are located at 4243 Remembrance Rd. N.W. directly across from the Library entrance. Any questions, please call 791-6854.

City of Walker Engineering Department

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

The average U.S. household can have as much as 100 pounds of hazardous waste stored throughout their house and garage. Improper disposal of these materials can contaminate drinking water, harm the environment, and create health hazards for you and your family. Simple alternatives can replace many hazardous substances. However, if you choose to use commercial products, make sure to dispose of them properly!

Where Can I Take My Household Hazardous Waste?

To drop off your household hazardous waste, schedule an appointment with the Kent County Department of Public Works to participate in the free Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program for Kent County residents. To schedule an appointment, or for additional information, call 1-888-217-2850 or 616-336-2570. Appointments can be made at any of the four centers located in Kent County. For more information on this program visit www.accesskent.com.

2908 Ten Mile Road, Rockford

Fridays, 9 am – 12 pm

1500 Scribner Avenue, Grand Rapids

Mondays, 1 - 4 pm

Wednesdays, 9 am – 12 pm

5068 Breton Road, Kentwood

Tuesdays, 3 – 6 pm

2350 Ivanrest Avenue, Grandville

Call 616-261-3564 for an appointment

What Household Hazardous Waste Can I Dispose?

The Kent County Household Hazardous Waste Program accepts the following waste materials:

- Oil based paints and stains
- Pool chemicals
- Cleaners
- Gasoline & kerosene
- Paint thinner
- Weed killers
- Household batteries
- Automobile liquids
- Solvents
- Insecticides & pesticides
- Mercury & acids

Where Can I Take Recyclables?

Kent County operates two recycling drop-off sites for their residents. The Kentwood Recycling Center and North Kent Transfer Station accept plastics, paper, glass, metals, and cardboard.

For more information call -888-217-2850 or 616-336-2570.

SIDEWALK INSPECTION

The Engineering Department is conducting a city-wide sidewalk inspection. The City's sidewalk management program requires that the sidewalk network be physically inspected once every two years. Items such as shifts, gaps, cracks, and holes are identified and given a rating. Based upon the rating received, the problem area is scheduled for emergency repair, scheduled for regular repair, or scheduled to be reinspected within a year. If you would like more information on the inspection process, or if you would like to ensure that a particular sidewalk problem is addressed, please contact Staff Engineer Travis Mabry at 791-6148.

FREDERIK MEIJER STANDALE TRAIL

Planning and design efforts for the Frederik Meijer Standale Trail continue to progress. When completed, the trail will connect the Walker City Complex, to the north, with Millennium Park, to the south. Along the way, the 5.6 mile trail will also connect the Standale Business District, two elementary schools, a junior high school, local businesses, restaurants, and numerous City parks.

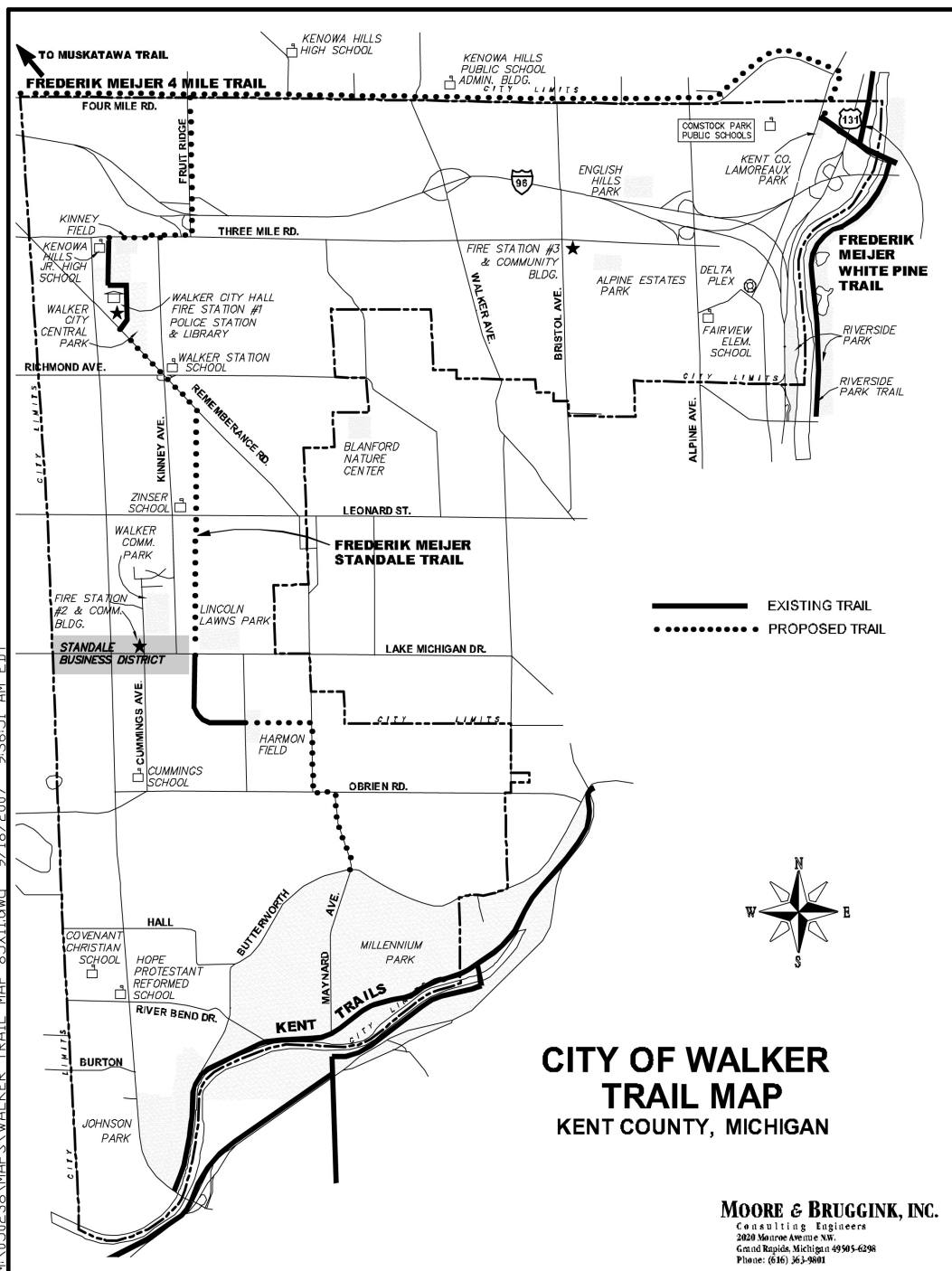
While the exact placement of the trail is still being discussed, plans are for the trail to utilize Consumer's Energy property and local street right-of-way. The trail alignment will also connect with the existing ¾ mile section of trail south of Lake Michigan Drive and west of Sunset Hills Avenue.

The proposed trail will be built at no cost to the City. It is being funded by a combination of grants and funds from such sources as the Michigan Department of Transportation, the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition, and the Fredrik Meijer Foundation.

Construction on the trail is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2009. This will include site grading and asphalt pavement along the length of the trail. Other planned future improvements to the trail include a bridge over Lake Michigan Drive and a connection to the future Frederik Meijer 4 Mile Trail to the north.

The City believes that the Frederik Meijer Standale Trail will provide a valuable improvement to the community. The trail will connect neighborhoods, encourage alternative transportation, and provide many recreational opportunities. As part of the West Michigan trail network, the Frederik Meijer Standale Trail will also provide a long awaited missing link between other regional trails.

If you would like more information on this project, please contact Staff Engineer Travis Mabry at 791-6148 or City Engineer Scott Connors at 791-6792.



M:\050238\MAPS\WALKER TRAIL MAP 85X11.dwg 9/18/2007 9:36:51 AM EDT

**CITY OF WALKER
TRAIL MAP
KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

MOORE & BRUGGINK, INC.
Consulting Engineers
2820 Monroe Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-6298
Phone: (616) 361-9801

2008 ASSESSMENTS – FOR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

In typical years when the housing market has been good, the State Tax Commission has local equalization departments and assessing offices utilize a two-year sales study to determine the amount of increase to the residential assessments of that jurisdiction. This two-year sales study utilizes sales that are lagging behind the current market – for example, for the upcoming 2008 assessments, we would have to analyze sales that occurred between the dates of April 1, 2005 through March 31, 2007. Plus, the sales that could be used in this study had to be typical sales – unrelated buyer/seller, on the open market, no undue pressure, and no foreclosures. This sales study has been completed and it indicates that the assessments in the residential class in the City of Walker should increase on average of 1.153%. Each individual neighborhood would not necessarily see this increase because it is our job to take the results of this residential sales study of the entire City, look more in-depth at these sales in each neighborhood, and adjust the assessments according to those findings – so each neighborhood would have their own individual increases.

Because of the current housing market, the State Tax Commission has made two major changes that will be utilized to determine the assessed valuations for the 2008 tax year:

1. When analyzing sales, we are now allowed to consider foreclosed properties as good sales. In the past, foreclosures were few and far between – they were not the “norm” in the market place, so they were not considered to be good sales and were excluded from our sales studies. Unfortunately, foreclosures happen much too often now and we must consider these sales in our analysis, as long as the home is typical of the rest of the homes that are being sold (not in a deteriorated state).
2. Assessors are allowed to use a one-year sales study as opposed to the two-year study that we normally use. We have always had the option of using a one-year sales study in the past, but only in a declining market. Also in the past, this one-year study had to include sales that occurred in the calendar year – for example, for the 2008 assessments we would have to use sales that occurred between January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007. We have to have our assessment change notices out by the end of February. That just does not give us a lot of time to do our jobs efficiently. This year we are allowed to do that one-year sales study, but the sales must occur between October 1, 2006 and September 31, 2007. This is the best for all: the most recent sales and plenty of time for us to do our analysis effectively.

So, we will be looking at all of the foreclosure sales and we will be applying the one-year sales study. It is too early to tell, but I presume that for the first time in many years, most if not all of our residential assessments will be decreased. However, you also have to consider the rules set forth in Proposal “A” of 1994. While you may see your assessed value (or state equalized value) decrease, the taxable value may still increase. When Proposal “A” came into effect, we had to start dealing with “taxable value”. Assessed value has always been the assessor’s estimate of 50% of market value. Taxable value is a simple calculation and is used to determine the amount of taxes to be collected. Taxable value is last year’s taxable value multiplied by the Consumers Price Index or 5% (which ever is less). We also have to add any new construction or remove any losses, but that is the calculation in its simplest form. If a property should sell or transfer, then the taxable value “uncaps” or catches up to the assessed value. Taxable value can never increase to more than the assessed value. So while you may see your assessed value go down, your taxable value will go up or increase. It is a good thing when the housing market is doing really good, but now that the market is on the decline, it is hard to see values decreasing while your taxes are still increasing.

Remember that in the end when you receive your 2008 assessment change notice, if you are not happy with the valuation, if you feel that you cannot sell it for twice the assessed value, please follow that instructions on how to appeal your assessment. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to call our office at 791-6862.

CITY OF WALKER
4243 Remembrance Road NW
Walker, MI 49534



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

“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 49534
Phone: (616) 791-6860
E-Mail: newsletter@ci.walker.mi.us

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

Thank you!

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 may find an application on our web site, www.ci.walker.mi.us.

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 of every month at 7:00PM (City Commission Chambers) to discuss museum displays and preservation of artifacts for the Edison House Museum.

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.