



WALKER

City News

Spring 2008

City of Walker Festival

City Central Park

June 13 - 14, 2008

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For details about the Walker Festival 2008, please visit the City of Walker's Website <http://www.ci.walker.mi.us/Community/WalkerFestival.htm>

Every year the City of Walker's Festival Committee produces a wonderful, family oriented Summer Festival. Activities range from a petting zoo, to lots of fun kid friendly inflatables, food, carshow, games, and hospitality tent.

This event also features a variety of local entertainment from dance troupes to bands, not to mention the ever so popular appearance by Elvis! Our two-day event closes with a spectacular bang in the form of a dramatic fireworks display.

Walker Festival is a huge community draw and a great opportunity to advertise your business to a loyal, local audience.

The Walker Festival Committee would like to offer you or your organization the opportunity to become one of our "Companies Who Care" by helping to support the Walker Festival. Ours is almost a 100% self-supporting festival, so donations are a crucial part of the process for the event to take place. All individuals or companies who contribute are formally recognized in our Festival Booklet that is professionally produced and distributed to thousands of families in the City of Walker and North West Grand Rapids area. Donations of cash or your products and services are valuable to the effort and deeply appreciated.

In an era when we seem saturated daily with upsetting incidents and bad news, it is important to create opportunities for families to gather in a safe and positive environment. The Walker Festival offers the community an opportunity to celebrate together. We recognize that this event creates the bonds that make the City of Walker a place where people want to live, congregate, and raise their families.

Don't miss this opportunity to participate in one of the most successful local festivals...we hope to see you there!

For additional information on participating or donating to our 2008 event, please contact Festival Chairperson Roxanne Deschaine, 2342 Randall Ave N.W. Walker, MI 49534. Home Phone: 616-453-4032. E-mail: roxanne.deschaine@odl.com

Successful planning starts early!

Please help us make this event a success!



Dear Citizens of Walker,

Best wishes on behalf of your City Commission. I wish to use this letter to summarize a strategic planning meeting held at the A.J. Stehouwer Community Room on Saturday, February 2, 2008. Attending this session were all seven members of the City Commission, the City Clerk, the City Manager, the Assistant City Manager, and all of the Department Heads. Judge Peter Versluis was also present during a portion of the day.

The purpose of the session was to identify areas of focus for 2008 and to assign responsibility for taking action to address these areas. Five areas were identified for attention this year.

1. Consistent Revenue Source. This is a difficult challenge. Our revenue sources include state funds as well as individual and business taxes. All of these sources are subject to the ups and downs of the economy. It is important that we predict the revenue side of our operations as accurately as possible if we are to meet our obligations as they come due and maintain the strong financial rating that we currently enjoy.
2. Communication between Commission and Staff. Communication between those who establish policy (City Commission) and those who execute the policies (City Departments and Staff) is essential if we are to maintain efficient and responsive operations.
3. Prioritize and Hold Accountable. The City has limited resources and must prioritize so that these resources can be allocated to the most essential areas. We can not do everything that might be desired. Rather, we need to identify those things that are most important and be accountable on whether we are achieving our priorities.
4. Technology. Technology is an essential tool in meeting our objectives. To this end, we agreed that we will develop a plan to secure the necessary technology as soon as reasonably possible.
5. Code Enforcement. This was identified as an area in need of attention. While we have no desire to hound the residents, we do have an obligation to enforce the ordinances currently on the books. We intend to modify our procedures in a manner in which enforcement of existing codes will be given priority.

These five items were identified as areas to work on in 2008. Even though many of them may not directly impact you, I hope you find it good to know that your City is doing what it can to be a good steward of the resources you have given us.

I would also like to share with you the values that were adopted in a prior session. Every day, representatives of the City of Walker are dedicated to:

- Public health, safety, and security
- Open communication
- Fiscal responsibility
- Efficiency and productivity
- Active listening
- Dedication and honesty
- Respect for diversity
- Quality performance

It is our hope that as you interact with representatives of the City you observe that our conduct is consistent with these values. On behalf of all of the representatives of the City of Walker I wish to thank you for the trust and support you have provided.

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

HOW SAFE IS YOUR HOME?

In 2006, 80% of civilian fire deaths and 76% of civilian fire injuries occurred in residential fires. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that in the five year period from 2000 through 2004, there were an average of 372,200 residential fires each of the five years. These fires resulted in an average of 2,970 deaths, 14,390 injuries, and 5.6 billion dollars in property loss and damage.

Cooking equipment is the leading cause of fires and fire related injuries, while smoking is the leading cause of fire deaths. Heating equipment ranked second in causes of fire related deaths.

More than half of the reported residential fires happen between 11:00 pm and 7:00 am. Of all reported residential fires 24% started in the living room, family room, or den, while 23% started in a bedroom.

NFPA also reports that in 49% of fires a smoke detector operated and alerted residents, while in 65% of fire deaths there was no working smoke detector present.

The above numbers are staggering. The Walker Fire Department is urging its residents to be aware and practice fire safety. While we stand ready to respond to your emergency, we are equally dedicated to your safety and we want to help you be safe and prevent fires, injuries, and death.

Please use the fire safety home inspection checklist that we have provided to measure the level of safety in your home. If you have any questions regarding the check list or you would like assistance with your safety check, please feel free to contact the Walker Fire Department at 791-6840.

CITY OF WALKER FIRE SAFETY HOME INSPECTION CHECKLIST

YES	NO	EXTERIOR OF HOME
___	___	IS THE ADDRESS POSTED AND VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD?
___	___	IS THERE RUBBISH OR TRASH ACCUMULATED?
		LIVING AREA
___	___	ARE ELECTRICAL OUTLETS BEING OVERLOADED?
___	___	ARE EXTENSION CORDS BEING USED INCORRECTLY?
___	___	DOES THE FIREPLACE HAVE A SCREEN, GLASS DOORS, OR BOTH?
___	___	HAVE YOU CLEANED YOUR FIREPLACE OR CHIMNEY IN THE PAST YEAR?
___	___	IF PORTABLE HEATING DEVICES ARE USED, IS A SAFE CLEARANCE MAINTAINED?
___	___	SMOKE DETECTORS? NUMBER _____. HARDWIRE OR BATTERY?
___	___	LOCATION: BASEMENT ___, 1ST FLOOR ___, 2ND FLOOR ___, GARAGE ___.
___	___	ARE THE EXHAUST FANS IN BATHROOMS CLEAN?
		KITCHEN
___	___	ARE COMBUSTIBLES TOO NEAR STOVE?
___	___	DOES THE RANGE HOOD HAVE GREASE ACCUMULATED IN IT?
___	___	DO YOU HAVE THE PROPER FIRE EXTINGUISHER AND KNOW HOW TO USE IT?
___	___	** LOCATION OF EXTINGUISHER _____?
___	___	DO YOU KNOW HOW TO PUT OUT A GREASE FIRE?
___	___	ARE THE ELECTRIC CORDS ON THE APPLIANCES IN GOOD CONDITION?
		BASEMENT
___	___	ARE COMBUSTIBLES TOO NEAR THE FURNACE OR WATER HEATER?
___	___	ARE FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS IMPROPERLY STORED?
___	___	IS THE ELECTRIC CIRCUIT PANEL ACCESSIBLE AND IN GOOD CONDITION?
___	___	ARE PAINTING MATERIALS STORED PROPERLY?
		LAUNDRY AREA
___	___	IS THERE LINT BUILDUP ON THE DRYER OR ON THE DRYER MOTOR?
___	___	ELECTRICAL CORDS FOR THE WASHER AND DRYER ARE IN GOOD CONDITION?
___	___	PROPER VENT PIPE AND IN GOOD CONDITION?
		GARAGE
___	___	FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS STORED PROPERLY?
___	___	PROPANE FOR GRILL STORED PROPERLY?
___	___	IS GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING GOOD?
		GENERAL
___	___	DO YOU HAVE AND PRACTICE A HOME ESCAPE PLAN?
___	___	DO YOU HAVE A DESIGNATED MEETING PLACE OUTSIDE?
___	___	DO YOU HAVE A "CO" DETECTOR?
___	___	IS THE BABY-SITTER PROVIDED WITH EMERGENCY INFORMATION?

City of Walker Police Department

TRANSIENT MERCHANT/PEDDLER

The City of Walker requires all transient merchants (peddlers, solicitors, transient vendors) to obtain a City-issued permit to sell their products or merchandise either door-to-door or from a building or vehicle. The requirements to receive a permit are explained in Section 22.78 of the Walker Code of Ordinances, along with conditions and terms once issued (Sec 22.83).

Under our ordinance a licensee is required to have the transient permit upon their person at all times while engaged in their business and must produce the license for inspection any time you ask. If you encounter a vendor that does not, or will not, produce the City permit/license, you are highly encouraged to refrain from conducting business with the person and immediately contact the Police Department to report the activity. If you call in the incident, you may remain anonymous by advising the dispatcher of the encounter as an informational "Be-on-the-lookout" for officers.

If you encounter a City-licensed merchant/vendor and they refuse to honor your request to vacate your property, contact the Police Department for immediate assistance. In this instance the police will need to obtain your information, particularly your address, to respond and provide assistance and follow up for possible license revocation of the solicitor. Your information will not be shared with the vendor and will only be utilized for follow up purposes

Any negative encounters you may have with transient merchants will also be added to the patrol officers' informational bulletins, for directive patrols and special patrol attention. Please feel free to contact the City Clerk (791-6865) or the Chief of Police (791-6800) with any questions you have regarding the Transient Merchant permits. To contact Police dispatch, please call 453-5441.

City of Walker Planning Department

CORRECTION ABOUT ROUNDABOUTS

In the last newsletter I offered a few paragraphs about modern roundabouts and their increasing use in street design and intersection improvements. Don Faber caught an error I made. In the article I said, "Modern roundabouts also require a yielding to oncoming vehicles".

What I should have said was, "modern roundabouts require those entering the circle to yield to vehicles already in the circle".

The roundabout in Coopersville seems to be working well. People are still driving too quickly through it, though. The long lines of traffic at the peak hours seem to be greatly reduced.

CABELA'S AND ORCHARD PARK UPDATE

City staff continues to spend a significant amount of time on this project. We are working on multiple road issues with MDOT and the Kent County Road Commission. We are working on water and sewer issues with the City of Grand Rapids. We are working with the developer on numerous site design details.

However, Cabela's recently decided to move the projected opening of the store from 2009 to 2010. Cabela's has been affected by the national downturn in the economy and decreased consumer spending on their products.

The Orchard Park developer states that Cabela's remains committed to the site in Walker. Let's hope we see Cabela's in 2010.

In the mean time, staff will continue to work with the developer to ensure that the site plan remains consistent with the overall City of Walker Master Plan and the concepts promised to the City for this project.

WEBSITE UPDATES

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

We have added information about the Standale Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The DDA is working with two private developers to implement the updated "Downtown Standale" master plan.

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

Frank Wash, AICP, PCP
City of Walker Planning Director

City of Walker Engineering Department

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO LAWN CARE

Using healthy lawn care practices is one step toward cleaner streams and lakes - even if you don't have waterfront property.

TIPS FOR MOWING

Taller grass means a healthier lawn, and it's easier to maintain! Set your mower blade to leave about three inches of grass. Taller grass cools the soil, needs less water, and shades out weed growth. It's also more insect and disease resistant. Vary the direction of lawn mowing periodically to prevent wear patterns and soil compaction.

TIRED OF RAKING YOUR LEAVES? MOW'EM!

Mow tree leaves in the autumn instead of raking and bagging - just raise your mower height to accommodate! After a couple of passes with the mower, leaf pieces will slowly sift down through turf. It's an excellent way to return nutrients to the soil, and you can use them as mulch in your garden too!

TIPS FOR WATERING

Excessive watering is wasteful! Conserve water by using only what your lawn needs.

- 15-20 minutes of sprinkling daily is better than a few heavy waterings throughout the week, according to research by Michigan State University.
- If daily watering is impractical, 30-40 minutes of watering every other day is sufficient.
- Make sure your sprinkler is watering your lawn - not your driveway or sidewalk!

DON'T GUESS...SOIL TEST!

Do not assume your yard needs fertilizer. Perform a soil test. You'll save money and reduce the chance of over-applying by only replacing the nutrients your soil needs. Michigan State University Extension offers soil nutrient testing for a nominal fee. To find out more, call the extension office in your area: 616-336-3265 (Kent County) or 616-846-8250 (Ottawa County).

CHOOSE THE CORRECT FERTILIZER

Over-fertilizing can contribute excessive amounts of pollutants to streams and lakes through the storm sewer. Without realizing it, many landowners are applying fertilizers and pesticides when their lawns don't even need them!

If you do choose to fertilize, use slow-release fertilizers that provide a slow, steady source of nutrients for plants. This also prevents the big spurt of growth common with synthetic fertilizers. Slow-release fertilizers come in a variety of types, including organic, time-release, and coated.

Avoid "weed-and-feed" mixtures, which contain herbicides to control weed growth and are often applied where they aren't needed. If healthy lawn care practices (correct mowing height and watering) are followed, weed control shouldn't be necessary. Be sure your mower is set to three inches to help shade out unwanted weeds.

Walker Ice & Fitness Center

2008 WALKER PUMP & RUN

The Walker Ice & Fitness Center will be holding its 3rd Annual Pump and Run competition on Saturday, March 29th. Involved in this competition is lifting a percentage of your body weight and running a 5K. Participants will bench press a percentage of their body weight (80% for men and 60% for women) as many times as possible. Each successful bench press will result in 30 seconds being subtracted from your 5K running time.

There is a \$20.00 entry fee which includes a commemorative long sleeve t-shirt. Awards will be presented to the first overall male and female winners, as well as the overall male master's division (40+) winner.

Check-in and weigh-in begins at 9:00am. The bench-press will begin after all participants have been weighed in and the 5K run will start immediately after everyone has completed the bench press portion. Participants must be 16 years or older to participate. For more information or to register please contact Megan Bozek at 735-6286 ext.16 or visit our website at www.walkericeandfitness.com. You must pre-register to participate.

EGGSTRAVAGANZA--EASTER EGG HUNT

On Saturday, March 22, 2008, the Walker Recreation Department will be having its 18th 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 for everyone!

For more info, please call the Rec Department at 791-6890.

2008 WALKER MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

The Walker Recreation Department is hosting the Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 26, 2008 at 12:00 noon. The parade route will be on Lake Michigan Dr. between Lincoln Lawns and St. Clair, N.W. Veterans, marching bands, floats, and local groups/organizations who are interested in participating in this year's parade can contact the Walker Recreation Department for an application. Deadline for registration is Thursday, May 1, 2008. For further information, call the Recreation Department at 791-6890

GOLF LESSONS

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering golf lessons for youth 7-15 years of age and adults 16 years of age and older. The following lessons will be offered at Community Park, located at Cummings and West Grand, N.W.

Mondays (beginning April 28)

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Youth

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Adult Beginners

Wednesdays (beginning April 30)

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Youth

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Adult Beginners

The cost for 4 - 1 hour lessons will be \$40.00.

To register, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers and lesson preference along with your check or money order payable to:

Walker Recreation Department 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. Walker, Michigan 49534.

The deadline for registration is Monday, April 21, 2008. For more info, please call the Rec Department at 791-6890.

ADULT SOFTBALL UMPIRES

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering umpire classes for anyone interested in becoming an umpire for Walker Adult Softball Leagues. The Adult Softball season will begin the week of June 9, 2008. Leagues are offered on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. For further information, call the Recreation Department at 791-6890.

2008 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 for an information packet.

All leagues will have an eight game schedule beginning the week of June 9, 2008. Registration will be on March 31, April 1, and April 2, 2008. Team entry fee is \$300.00 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.

GIRL'S SOFTBALL UMPIRES

The Walker Recreation Department is accepting applications for girl's softball umpires. The program is offered for girls ages 7 through 12. The season will begin on Tuesday, April 29, 2008. Games will be played on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. If needed, some games will be played on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. Softball experience is necessary.

The rate of pay is \$12.00 - \$14.00 per game. If you are interested in umpiring, please contact the Recreation Department at 791-6890 for an application.

3-ON-3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The Walker Recreation Department is hosting its 14th Annual 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday, June 14, 2008. The tournament will be held at the Walker City Hall complex, 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. The cost per team is \$90.00. Registration deadline is June 3, 2008. If you are interested in participating, call the Walker Recreation Department at 791-6890 for an entry form.

TENNIS LESSONS

The Walker Recreation Department will be offering tennis lessons for youth 7 to 15 years of age, and adults 16 years and older. The following lessons will be held at City Central Park:

Tuesdays (beginning May 6)

6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. 7-10 years of age

7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. 11-15 years of age

The cost for four 1-hour youth lessons will be \$40.00.

Thursdays (beginning May 1)

6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Adult Beginners

7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Adult Advanced Beginners

The cost for six 1-hour adult lessons will be \$50.00.

To register, send your name, address, business and home phone numbers and lesson preference along with your check or money order payable to:

Walker Recreation Department 4243 Remembrance Rd., N.W. Walker, Michigan 49534.

The deadline for registration is Thursday, April 24, 2008. For more info, please call the Rec Department at 791-6890.

City of Walker Public Library

IT'S SPRING AT THE WALKER LIBRARY!

Spring has come to the Walker Library and a fresh bouquet of spring programming is available for those with spring fever!

Let it Snow!, the popular winter reading club for adults, will culminate with a guest appearance from Ha Jin, author of this year's one county one book selection, *A Free Life*. The author will speak at Fountain Street Church on April 1.

In addition, programs on the new green Grand Rapids Art Museum, beading projects, and mystery fiction will be featured in March and April. Library programs aren't just for kids!

As always, book discussion occurs on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:00am. It's a growing group!

FOR THE YOUNGER SET...

- The library will be hosting a DDR/Guitar Hero event for anyone in grades 6-12 on Saturday, March 15 at 2pm.
- For the preschool crowd, come and enjoy a Dora & Diego program on Saturday, April 19 at 1pm.
- We will also have a Pokemon program for children ages 6 and above. Come prepared to learn about and play Pokemon Saturday, April 26 at 11am.

As always, look for Youth Story time schedules!

HERE'S SOME REALLY BIG NEWS!

The Friends of the Walker Library have purchased a wonderful Thomas the Train play table for the Youth Department. It's the hit of the library! Also, repairs are underway on the train in the program room. There are never enough trains or Friends of the Walker Library! Please consider joining this enthusiastic group as they support and fund a variety of library needs. Thanks to all who purchase books from the Friends of the Library book sales – it all makes a difference!

Additional information on programs and library services is available on the Kent District Library home page at www.kdl.org. Printed program calendars are also on supply at the Walker Library. Please don't hesitate to call 647-3975 to speak with library staff for more information.

Department of Public Works

WALKER CLEAN UP DAYS

Located behind City Hall, 4243 Remembrance. (Look for the signs).

Dates & Hours:	Thursday, May 1	8:00am to 6:00pm
	Friday, May 2	8:00am to 7:00pm
	Saturday, May 3	7:00am to 12:00pm

Proof of residency required (Driver's license, voter card, or tax bill). No commercial vehicles.

WE WILL ACCEPT:

Appliances, wood, brush, leaves, grass clippings, metal, and miscellaneous.

(refrigerators must have coolant removed with certificate, check with an appliance store)

WE WILL NOT ACCEPT:

Garbage, computers, and hazardous waste such as... rat poison, weed killers, bug sprays, mercury, oil base paint, paint thinners, lighter fluid, gasoline, acids, lye, oven and toilet bowl cleaners, propane tanks, gas tanks, CO₂ cylinders, car batteries, household batteries, & bleach mixed with ammonia.

Kent County has a household hazardous waste program to handle toxic, flammable, corrosive or reactive material.

Any questions, call the City of Walker Public Works Department at 616-791-6854.

POTHOLES

Spring has arrived! With all the thawing and freezing, our roads take a beating and potholes are inevitable. We are always on the look out for potholes. Please help us by reporting any potholes to our office at 791-6854.

DRIVEWAYS

In the past several years, the Department of Public Works has received complaints about some of the contractors that are overlaying asphalt driveways. The method these contractors are using is stopping randomly at a resident's home and telling them they have leftover asphalt from another job and will give them a good deal to overlay their driveway. Our past experience has shown that it is not always a good deal.

We encourage residents to get a quote from another contractor to compare prices. If the work performed will be in the City right of way, we recommend the resident ask if the contractor is licensed, bonded, and insured with the City of Walker and secures a permit. The permit is important because it gives us a chance to inspect underground utilities (drive culverts may need replacing) and to insure that the contractor does the work to City standards. It is required for the contractor to be licensed, bonded, insured and to obtain a permit. Please call us at 791-6854 to confirm if the contractor is licensed.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

It is that time of year, road construction. The orange color construction signs are going to start popping up. Please take into consideration that there are men and women doing their jobs in these work zones. So, please slow down. It is our goal to create a safe work zone for the workers and for the motoring public.

ROADSIDE MOWING

Usually, roadside mowing is done three times during the summer months. The first cut starts toward the end of May. This can depend on how wet of a spring and the growing season. We try to start when the vegetation is about 2 feet to 3 feet tall. We concentrate on mowing the roadside and also on drainage courses. The first cutting is completed by approximately July 4th. The second cutting usually starts in August. This cutting may be skipped if we have a dry season and the vegetation doesn't grow beyond 2 feet. The third cutting will start in September depending on the timing of the first or second cuttings.

STREET SWEEPING

Street sweeping starts in early spring. We start on the major roads first, then secondary roads, and finally residential roads. It takes an average of 4 to 6 weeks to complete a cycle. We sweep the entire City once in the spring and once in the fall. If we have a problem area, we will return, as needed.

Please note: There is a dual purpose to street sweeping. It makes our City streets look good and it helps keep our lakes and streams cleaner of pollutants. We ask your cooperation and help by not blowing leaves, grass clippings and dirt into the roads.

ADOPT-A-ROAD

The City of Walker wants to work together with your group to Adopt-A-Road. This is similar to the Michigan Department of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway Program. The purpose of Adopt-A-Road is to involve Walker citizens in keeping their local roads clean, safe and attractive. Your group can adopt as little as 1 mile and as much as 4 miles. Please call DPW 791-6854 for an information packet.

Building Department

Reminder

It is Spring time again. The City of Walker Building Department would like to remind you of Section 90-3, Noxious weeds and other prohibited vegetation Ordinance which states: "No person shall maintain or allow to be maintained the growth of grasses, weeds, brush, underbrush, or other vegetation, to a height of more than 12 inches (or the accumulation of dead grasses, weeds, brush, underbrush, or other vegetation to a height of more than 12 inches) upon any lot within the City which is owned, leased, rented or occupied or possessed by the person."

Please keep in mind the Clean Up Days May 1, 2, and 3 for any of that unwanted brush, junk, etc. you would like to get rid of in your yard.

For your spring and summer projects such as swimming pools, decks, accessory buildings, etc. building permits are required. Please contact our department at (616) 791-6858 before you start your project to check for requirements.

City of Walker Clerk's Department

PASSPORTS

For your convenience, the City Clerk's office is open from 8:00am until 4:30pm, Monday through Friday for passport services. Please note the following information:

- Effective February 1, 2008 – New passport fees and policy changes, please inquire at the City Clerk's office for details.
- We encourage you to apply for your passports well in advance of your departure to ensure adequate application processing time. We also take passport photos!

ELECTION INFORMATION

- The next school board election is May 6, 2008. The last day to register to vote in this election will be April 7, 2008.
- Effective November 2007, every Michigan voter who chooses to vote at the polls will be required to show a picture ID or sign an affidavit stating they are not in possession of picture ID.

Did you know that anyone over 60 years of age qualifies as a permanent absentee voter? If you wish to be on the permanent absentee voter list, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 791-6865.

Would you like to become an election worker? If so, we need you! We are currently seeking City of Walker residents to become election workers for 2008. If interested, please call the City Clerks office at 791-6865.

SOLICITOR LICENSE INFORMATION

If someone comes to your door to solicit, you should always ask to see his or her solicitor license issued by the City of Walker. If they do not have this type of license, they should not be at your door. If you have questions about a person or a particular company in Walker, we suggest you do the following:

- Ask the name of the individual.
- Request the name of the company and phone number.
- Contact the City Clerk's office at 791-6878 to find out more information regarding a specific company, and to verify whether or not the person or company is licensed to do business in the City of Walker.

NEXT ELECTION

Tuesday May 6, 2008 for School Board Candidates

Comstock Park Public Schools – 4 Year Term

2 to be elected

Thomas J. Egeler

* Kerry M. Lamoreaux

Christy Nowak

Grandville Public Schools – 4 Year Term

2 to be elected

* Karen Cheydleur

* Tim Grifhorst

Kenowa Hills Public Schools – 4 Year Term

2 to be elected

Duane Ambrose

Andrew Beachnau

Dorian C. Chalom

* Jeffery Miller

* Indicates an incumbent

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 tax year 2007 are due April 30, 2008.

ESTIMATED PAYMENTS

Tax Year 2007: If you owe more than \$100 with your 2007 return due April 30, 2008 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 2007 was due on January 31, 2008.

Tax Year 2008: 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 2008 return, you must make quarterly estimated payments. The 2008 Quarterly Estimated payment vouchers with instructions can be found:

- In the 2007 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 2008 Walker Income Tax is due April 30, 2008.

WHO MUST FILE

Every resident or part-year resident of Walker (this includes renters) who has taxable income in 2007 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/Departments/Assessor/StreetDirectory.htm>

EXTENSION REQUESTS

If you are unable to gather the data required to complete your 2007 tax return by the April 30, 2008 due date, you may file for a six-month extension using form WXT. This form is available for download at www.ci.walker.mi.us/incometaxforms. The extension request is due by April 30, 2008. Please note: this is an extension to file, not an extension to pay. You must estimate carefully the amount you owe, if any, and include the required payment with the extension request. Please see the form for more instructions and call 616-791-6880 if you have any questions.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

During the 2006 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/Departments/IncomeTax/DepartmentOverview.htm>

2008 EMPLOYER WITHHOLDING BOOKLETS

We are no longer mailing withholding booklets with preprinted W-501 (monthly) and W-941 (quarterly) payment vouchers. Employers must print their withholding booklets from the Walker website at www.ci.walker.mi.us. Please call 616-791-6880 if you have questions.

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 jblok@ci.walker.mi.us for more information.

Walker Firehouse Café for Seniors

New Senior Center Open for Business!

The Walker Firehouse Café for seniors was officially opened to the public on February 20, 2008. Walker City Commissioner Cyndy Stek, Kent County Commissioner Art Tanis, as well as representatives from Senior Neighbors and Senior Meals welcomed over 150 seniors to the event.

The Walker Firehouse Café offers a coffee shop, hot lunches (60 yrs. or over, \$2.00 donation, under 60 yrs. \$3.75 donation) and various programs and services every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Programs also include guest speakers every Monday morning and live music every Wednesday morning. The program is located in the AJ Stehouwer Community Room, in the upper level of Standale Fire Station #2, 4101 Lake Michigan Drive. If you are a senior citizen and would like more information about any of the programs, please contact Sherri Meines at 735-3240 Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00am until 2:00pm, or email her at smeines@seniorneighbors.org.

Walker Firehouse Café Special Events:

Monday, March 24, 2008

Guest Speaker Mike Faber

Grand Rapids Community College

“Leaving a Legacy”

Discussion begins at 11:00am

April 28, 2008

Guest Speaker Lisa Childs

Author of Harlequin Romance Novels

Discussion begins at 11:00am

Come and join the fun!

CITY OF WALKER
4243 Remembrance Road NW
Walker, MI 49534



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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: jkozmins@ci.walker.mi.us

Also let us know if we need to correct your mailing address or need to add a new resident or business 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.