

Inside

Mayor's Message	2
Adopt-A-Trail.....	4
2003 Calendar	5
Kids Page!	7

Citizen's Brief

City of Urbandale

A Quarterly Urbandale Update

Winter, 2003

Meeting Schedule

City Council

Tuesday, January 21
Tuesday, January 28
Tuesday, February 4
Tuesday, February 18
Tuesday, March 4
Tuesday, March 18

Planning & Zoning Commission

Monday, January 13
Monday, January 27
Monday, February 10
Monday, February 24
Monday, March 10
Monday, March 24

Board of Adjustment

Wednesday, February 5
Wednesday, March 5

All of the above meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, 3315 70th St.

Parks & Recreation Commission

Wednesday, January 15
Wednesday, February 19
Wednesday, March 19

Meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Urbandale Public Library, 3520 86th Street.

Library Board of Trustees

Monday, Jan. 27, 7:00 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 24, 7:00 p.m.
Monday, Mar. 24, 7:30 p.m.

Meetings are at the Urbandale Public Library, 3520 86th Street.

Water Board of Trustees

Meetings begin at 4:30 p.m. at the Water Department, 3720 86th Street. Please call 278-3940 for dates and times.

New City Web Site Is Taking Shape

Focus Will Be on On-Line Services, Communication

The City's web site is being redesigned to add new "e-government" services and to make it more valuable to residents, businesses and visitors. The new site is currently taking shape and is scheduled for roll out in the first quarter of 2003.

According to Urbandale Technology Director John Andrasko, one of the most exciting features of the new site will be the introduction of on-line "web forms" that citizens can use to conduct business with the City. For example, with the new forms, citizens will be able request a customized map, report a nuisance animal, schedule a special garbage pick-up, or report a property maintenance violation. The information submitted on the form will automatically be sent directly to the individual who is responsible for that service area. "The forms will enable citizens to communicate with us and to track the status of their requests 24 hours a day," Andrasko said. "Plus, City staff members will use the very same system on their desktops when citizens walk in or phone in a request."

At four years old, the City's current web site (www.urbandale.org) no longer meets the needs of the City or the Urbandale community. "As a platform for on-line services, the current site has a number of shortcomings," Andrasko said. It is also challenging to maintain and keep current, and it would have been difficult to retro-fit it to accommodate the newest web applications. As a result, a new web site is being

(Continued on page 3)

Citizen Survey Results Show High Satisfaction Levels Overall

Library and Senior Center Hit Home Runs with 100% Ratings

The City's most recent survey of City residents showed an overwhelmingly positive response to the services of the Library and Senior Center, high marks for the majority of City services, and three areas where some improvement is warranted. The results of the survey were presented to the City Council in November.

On the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with 21 City services, ranging from Police services to Mosquito Control. Of the respondents who expressed an opinion, 93% indicated that they are either Very Satisfied or Satisfied with City services overall.

The Library and the Senior Center both garnered a 100% satisfaction rating. The Recycling program, Fire and EMS, the Garbage Collection program, the Water Department, City Hall, Police, and Parks & Recreation all had satisfaction levels of 95% or better. Planning & Zoning, Animal Control and the Swimming Pool had satisfaction levels below 85%, which was considered the lowest acceptable satisfaction level. The staff responsible for these three activities will be taking active steps to increase their ratings.

The most recent survey was delivered to 300 randomly-selected Urbandale households in June, 2002. While only 75 households (25%) returned a completed survey, the sample was judged to be representative of the community. The 2002 survey was the fourth survey conducted by the City since 1992.

In addition to questions about overall satisfaction, survey respondents were also asked whether they would support a bond referendum for a number of potential projects. A fire training facility received the greatest support, with 85% indicating

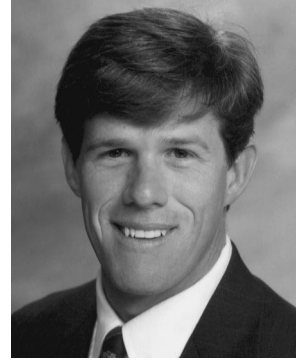
(Continued on page 6)

From the Mayor's Desk

When the City Council and I received copies of the 2002 citizen survey results, I had two immediate thoughts. The first thought was that the overwhelmingly positive results were just what I would expect.

You all know I'm a huge Urbandale fan. I sincerely believe that this community is a truly great place to live, to work and to conduct business. So when I read that 93% of the survey respondents said that they were satisfied with the City's services overall, well frankly, I wasn't surprised. It would have been a surprise to me if the satisfaction level wasn't as high.

Much of the credit for our success goes to the men and women who have represented us on the City Council over the years. Their vision of a community that values families, promotes responsible growth, and ensures a high quality of life is clearly seen in the City today.



Brad Zaun, Mayor

Also key to our success is the dedicated work of the City staff. A lot is demanded of them, and often their hard work is taken for granted, but without them Urbandale would not be the safe, vibrant, and attractive community that it is today.

The second thought I had upon reviewing the survey results was: How can we improve? What do we need to do to get better in those areas where satisfaction levels are not up to par? Again, City staff will be a large part of the solution, but we need your input as well. As you move about the City on a daily basis, what are some of the things you would like to see improved? Where are the areas where we need to do better? Your input will be critical to helping us reach even greater satisfaction levels.

As always, the City Council and I look forward to hearing from you. Please don't hesitate to contact any one of us with your thoughts and ideas.

2002 Residential Development Sets Record

Large Inventory of Vacant Lots Will Sustain Pace

The year 2002 has come to a close with a record number of single-family building permits issued in Urbandale. The only question that remains is what the final total will be.

The previous record was 340, set in 1991, and through November of this year, 405 had already been issued. With another 25 permits issued in December, the total exceeds 430. Some readers might recall that the City set a record last year for the total number of residential permits, which includes single-family and multi-family (apartments).

As in the past two years, most of the permits were for properties located west of Interstate 35/80. In 2000, 37% were west of the Interstate. Last year, the percentage rose to 77%, and through the end of November this year, 81% were in the western half of the City.

The portion of the City that is within the Waukee School District has seen the biggest number of building permits, with a total of 182 through November. This number is somewhat higher than the 142 permits that have been issued for lots west of the Interstate in the Urbandale Community School District, a reverse of last year's situation. The balance of development has occurred north of Meredith Drive in the Johnston School District.

Even with the record new single-family construction in 2002, the City's inventory of vacant lots has increased over the past 12 months. Infrastructure was constructed for 510 lots in 2002, and preliminary plans were approved for an additional 370 lots. As a result, 2003 has the potential to be another record-breaking year.

City Officials

Mayor

Brad Zaun

Mayor Pro-Tem

Bob Andeweg

City Council

Don Brush
John Forst
Susann Siebke
Shannon Waddell

Planning & Zoning Commission

Dennis Connolly
Mark Dickey
Kevin Gass
Jeff Hatfield
Jeff Payne
Mary Polson
Jodee Rogers
Wayne Van Heuvelen
Scott Weiser

Board of Adjustment

Carey Evans
Jim Goodman
Tom Muselman
David Russell

Parks & Recreation Commission

Sara Broek
Chuck Goodman
Karla Jeffries
Noel McKibbin
Dan Mueller
Greg Nepstad
Martha Raecker

Library Board of Trustees

Jose Garcia
Betty Hamilton
Julie Kroll
Steve Lytle
Marlyn McKeen
Kay Readinger
Mark Zlab

Water Board of Trustees

John McCune
Gerald Nelson
Todd Walker

Tree Board

Randy Craft
Bill Dane
Dennis Hill
Bob Kollmorgen
Rob Rice, Jr.

“Website” *Continued from Page 1*

designed and built from the ground up and will serve as a platform for future generations of the site.

In terms of the navigational structure on the new site, visitors will notice immediately that it is service-based, not department-based. "We're trying to make it easier for residents to conduct business with the City without any knowledge of the organizational structure," said City Manager Robert Layton.

To accomplish this, the web site's main menu will no longer be organized by City department. Instead, the site will be organized into subject areas—such as public safety, streets and highways, and leisure—and by audiences—such as homeowners, businesses and visitors.

Much of the content on the site will also be updated. According to Andrasko, the City has taken a full inventory of all of the services that it provides. To the extent possible, these will be available via the new web site. And even though the new site has not been rolled out, already plans are in the works for enhancements. In the not-too-distant future, residents will be able to enroll in Parks and Recreation classes on-line and pay by credit card.

"The credit card issue is a challenge," Layton said. City staff members are still working through several funding scenarios to cover the merchant surcharge. "The bottom line is that our customers want to pay by credit card, and eventually they will have that option."

Residents are encouraged to visit the existing web site to learn exactly when the new site will be rolled out. Go to www.urbandale.org and click on What's Hot? to learn more about the new web site.

Cold Weather Increases Fire Risks from Alternative Heating Sources

Use Heaters, Fire Places With Caution to Minimize Dangers

When the weather outside turns frightful, some of us turn to alternative heating sources to stay comfortable. For this reason, this time of year is one of the most dangerous for fire risk. Heating equipment is the second leading cause of residential fires (after cooking), and seniors and children are twice as likely to die in a residential fire. Here are some tips to minimize the risks associated with alternative heating sources.

Make sure your smoke alarms are properly installed and well-maintained. A working smoke alarm dramatically increases a person's chance of surviving a fire. While approximately 88 percent of U.S. homes have at least one smoke alarm, many are not maintained and might not work when you need them most. According to Urbandale Fire Chief Jerry Holt, there has been a disturbing increase over the last ten years in the number of fires that occur in homes with non-functioning smoke alarms.

If you are using a stand-alone combustion heater, always allow it to cool before re-fueling it, and always re-fuel it outdoors. Kerosene heaters should never be fueled with gasoline or camp stove fuel, both of which can explode easily.

Fireplaces are a great source of heat, and they are a joy to look at. However, it's important to always keep the fire in the fireplace by making sure you have a screen large enough to catch flying sparks and rolling logs. Always burn seasoned wood in a fireplace, not green wood, artificial logs or trash. Also, have your chimney professionally cleaned to control tar build-up. A chimney fire can spread to the roof and the rest of your home quickly and easily.

Space heaters need space. Keep combustibles, like furniture, bedding and curtains, at least three feet away from a heater. If you are buying a space heater, look for one that has a control feature that automatically shuts off the power if the heater falls over.

By using common sense and following these tips, you can greatly reduce the risk of fire in your home. And just knowing that you are safe will help you stay warm this winter.

Polk County Offers Programs for Seniors

Monthly O.W.L.S. Programs Are Free

Recently, the Polk County Conservation Board introduced a new senior adult program called O.W.L.S. (Older, Wiser, Livelier, Seniors). Many seniors in Urbandale and the Central Iowa region have attended the free monthly nature programs that have been offered.

O.W.L.S. takes place on the first Tuesday of each month at 11:00 am in the Jester Park Lodge. It is free, and an optional \$6.50 lunch follows the program (pre-registration is required for the lunch).

The 2003 O.W.L.S. programs have just been announced! The topics are as follows:

- Feb. 4: Sandhill Cranes
- Mar. 4: Pre-Historic Indians in Polk County
- April 1: Iowa County Schools: Landmarks of Learning
- May 6: Butterfly Gardening
- June 3: Going Batty
- July 1: Osprey at Saylorville Lake
- Aug. 5: Prairie Stories of the Past
- Sept. 2: Pelicans
- Oct. 7: Cosmic Connections
- Nov. 4: Mammals of Iowa
- Dec. 2: Who Gives a Hoot? (Owls)

All Urbandale senior adults are invited to attend an O.W.L.S. program. For more information on the program, check out the Polk County Conservation Board web site at www.conservationboard.org or call 515-323-5300.

Residents Reminded to Keep Sidewalks, Hydrants Clear of Snow and Ice

With the snow season upon us, it's time once again to review some of the responsibilities that homeowners have for keeping their sidewalks safe.

Property owners are required to remove all snow and ice from the sidewalks abutting their properties within 24 hours. If ice has accumulated on the sidewalk in such a way that it cannot be removed, the property owner or occupant is required to sprinkle salt, sand, ashes or other material on the sidewalk so that it is safe for pedestrians.

As a general rule, the City does not patrol the sidewalks to identify problem areas. However, in response to a complaint, the City will inspect a sidewalk and require that the property owner clear the sidewalk or face a penalty.

Please also keep in mind that it is a violation to shovel, blow, or plow snow from private property or from a sidewalk onto any public highway or street. The windrows left behind by a plow as it crosses a street can be particularly dangerous to other vehicles. Property owners should notify their snow removal contractors that leaving windrows in the street is unlawful.

Property owners who have a fire hydrant near their homes are also urged to keep the hydrant clear of snow so that it is clearly visible from the street. This simple act can save valuable time in the event of an emergency, and may even save a life.

To report an unsafe sidewalk, please contact the Department of Engineering and Public Works at 278-3950 or engpw@urbandale.org.

Adopt-A-Trail Program Seeks Partners

The Urbandale Beautification Committee is preparing a Spring 2003 launch of the new Adopt-A-Trail Program, based on the familiar Adopt-A-Highway program. In the Adopt-A-Trail program, neighborhood groups, businesses, families, and civic organizations will be able to adopt a segment of the City's 14-mile trail network.

The "adopters" will help to keep the trail clean and will work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure that maintenance work on a trail segment is completed whenever necessary. Adopters must agree to a two-year contract and will be recognized for their work.

If you are interested in learning more about the Adopt-A-Trail program, please contact Beautification Committee co-chairs Fran Faust (276-4619, fausthome@aol.com) or Mary Polson (276-6443, polson.mary@principal.com). They can give you more information on the program, including exactly what would be expected from you and your group.

If you are unable to make the time commitment to adopt a trail segment, but would still like to do your part, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to the program. The Beautification Committee needs to raise \$7,500 to purchase materials and supplies to be used by the adopters. Again, Fran or Mary can give you more information, or you may send a check directly to "Urbandale Community Action Council", c/o Fran Faust, 4506 92nd Court, Urbandale, 50322. In the memo line on your check, please write "Beautification Committee."

2003 Meeting Schedule

	City Council	Planning & Zoning Commission	Parks & Recreation Commission	Library Board of Trustees	Water Board of Trustees	Tree Board	Board of Adjustment
Place	City Hall, 3315 70th	City Hall, 3315 70th	Library, 3520 86th	Library, 3520 86th	Water Dept., 3720 86th	Library, 3520 86th	City Hall, 3315 70th
Time	7:00pm	7:00pm	5:30pm	7:00pm, unless noted	4:30pm	7:00pm	7:00pm
Day of Week	Tuesdays	Monday	Wednesdays	Monday		Thursdays	Wednesdays
January	7, 21, 28	13, 27	15	27		23	8
February	4, 18	10, 24	19	24		27	5
March	4, 18	10, 24	19	24, 7:30pm		27	5
April	1, 15, 29	7, 21	16	28	Meetings are scheduled one month in advance. Please call 278-3940 for meeting dates.	24	2
May	12 (Monday), 27	5, 19	21	19		22	7
June	10, 24	2, 16, 30	18	23, 7:30pm		26	4
July	8, 22	14, 28	16	28		24	9
August	5, 19	11, 25	20	25		28	6
September	2, 16, 30	8, 22	17	22, 7:30pm		25	3
October	14, 28	7 (Tuesday), 20	15	27		23	1
November	11, 25	3, 17	19	24		20	5
December	9, 23	1, 15, 29	17	22, 7:30pm		18	3

Additionally, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) committee will meeting at 7pm on January 22nd at City Hall to discuss the 2002-2007 CIP. Consult the City's web site at www.urbandale.org for schedule changes or additional meetings.

“Survey” Continued from Page 1

that they would support or might support such a project. A new City Hall (79%), community center (78%), outdoor aquatics center (67%), and outdoor performing arts amphitheater (62%) also were viewed positively by respondents. A 60% positive vote would be required in a future referendum on any of these projects. For comparison purposes, in 1996, 63% of respondents said they would support or might support a new Library. When put to a vote in 1998, the Library referendum passed with 76% support.

The City’s public safety services, Fire & EMS and Police, were both rated very positively by respondents. When asked how safe they feel living in Urbandale, 96% of respondents said they feel "very safe" or "somewhat safe".

In the area of snow removal—another service of great concern to residents—92% of respondents were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the condition of the City’s streets during and following a snow storm. Respondents were most satisfied with the City’s snow removal operations on the arterial streets (94%), which reflects the City Council’s commitment to keeping these important thoroughfares safe for motorists during a snowstorm.

Solid waste collection also received high marks overall, however, nearly 1 in 4 respondents said they felt that the Compost It! yard waste collection system was inconvenient.

Copies of the survey analysis are available for viewing at the Library or at City Hall. To request an electronic copy (.pdf format), please send an email message to dgloo@urbandale.org.

Keep The Thrill of Sledding Safe

It’s a great time of the year when kids are out speeding through the snow on sleds and toboggans. To ensure that the fun continues, it’s important that you and your kids follow a few safety precautions while they dash through the snow.

- Never slide near a roadway, near water, or near obstacles such as trees, rocks, buildings, fences or utility poles.
• Use extra care on icy hills. It’s easy to slip on your way up, plus you’ll go faster than you think on your way down.
• Leave your dog at home. A dog could be hit by fast-moving sled, injuring both the rider and the pet.
• Children should wear protective helmets.
• Don’t overload your toboggan or sled, and always stay seated.
• Make sure the hill is clear before you start to slide.
• Climb up the side of the hill, out of the path of other hill users.
• Don’t sled alone. Take a friend with you so you can both check for frostbite and guard against injury.
• Always ride a sled or toboggan feet first. If you fall off, you are less likely to hit your head.
• Stop if you get tired or cold. Sometimes the best part of sledding is the hot chocolate that awaits!

Don’t forget that the City of Urbandale offers one of the few sledding hills in Central Iowa. Located adjacent to the Metro Ice Sports Facility at 5100 72nd Street, the Winter Park offers a safe sledding hill with fun for all ages. The sled hill is open Saturdays and Sundays, December 14 through March 1, from noon to 5pm, when there is at least a four-inch base of snow on the hill. The adjacent ice facility offers a warming area, food concessions, and tube rentals.

Quick Linx

For Information OnCall

Agendas and Minutes, City Council278-3900
Animal Control Officer278-3911
Beer and Wine Permits.....278-3900
Building Permits and Inspections278-3935
Cemetery278-3963
City Budget.....278-3900
City Code278-3900
Demographics278-3935
Email Addresses.....278-3900
Employment (City Jobs)278-3900
Garbage Collection.....278-3950
Ice Skating278-3963
Library Room Reservations278-3945
Liquor Licenses278-3900
Maps of Urbandale278-3950
Newsletters278-3900
Parks.....278-3963
Peddler’s Permits278-3900
Pet Licenses278-3900
Playgrounds278-3963
Pool.....278-3959
Potholes278-3950
Property Maintenance278-3930
Radio Station (1210 AM)278-3900
Recreation Programs278-3963
Recycling Collection278-3950
Senior Center278-3907
Sidewalks278-3950
Sled Hill278-3963
Spring Cleanup.....278-3950
Street Maintenance278-3950
Tickets, Parking278-3900
Tickets, Speeding286-3917
Traffic Signals278-3950
Trails278-3963
Voter Information278-3900
Water Service278-3940
Web Site (www.urbandale.org).....278-3900
Weeds.....278-3930
Yard Waste Collection.....278-3950
Zoning.....278-3935

All numbers are in the 515 area code.

Kids' Page!

Spring Break at the Library

Lots of activities and crafts are being planned on Spring Break week, March 18 - 20. For more information on these or other youth services at the Library, call the Youth Services Desk at 278-3945, Option 5.

Explorer's Club

Children who are in kindergarten or older are invited to join the Explorer's Club at the Urbandale Public Library for crafts, projects, and stories. Registration opens one week in advance of each session. Explorers should bring their own scissors and glue. Each session begins at 4:15 pm, and workshops will be held on January 20, February 17 and April 21.

Hey Families and Kids! Let's Hit the Slopes!

The Department of Parks & Recreation and Community Education invite the Urbandale community to hit the slopes at Seven Oaks on Friday, February 28th. Enjoy the day with friends and family at the Seven Oaks Ski area in Boone. (February 28th is a no school day for the Urbandale Community School District.)

Children in 5th grade and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Buses will pick up the group at the Urbandale Middle School at 9:30 a.m. and return at 4:30 p.m. Each student will receive a ski lesson. Students must then demonstrate their ability to perform basic skills before they will be allowed on the slopes for independent skiing.

The fee of \$26 includes bus transportation to Seven Oaks in Boone, lift ticket, ski equipment, light lunch and ski lesson. Students may upgrade to snowboards for an additional \$8.00 after they have been passed by the instructor. Anyone wishing to bring their own snow board must call the Parks and Recreation office at 278-3963 for permission, as space on the bus is limited.

To register, please complete the registration form in the Winter/Spring Parks & Recreation and Community Education Program Guide. A special release form must also be signed for any participant under 18 years old. Upon registration, you will receive this release form to fill out and return.

P.S. Parent chaperones are needed for this trip. Call Tonya at 278-3963 if you are able to serve as a chaperone.



CITY OF URBANDALE

3315 - 70th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322

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Contact Us!

	Voice	Fax	E-Mail
Brad Zaun, Mayor	278-3900	278-3905	bzaun@urbandale.org
Bob Andeweg, Council Member	278-3900	278-3905	bandeweg@urbandale.org
Don Brush, Council Member	278-3900	278-3905	dbrush@urbandale.org
John Forst, Council Member	278-3900	278-3905	jforst@urbandale.org
Susann Siebke, Council Member	278-3900	278-3905	ssiebke@urbandale.org
Shannon Waddell, Council Member	278-3900	278-3905	swaddell@urbandale.org
Bob Layton, City Manager	278-3900	278-3905	rlayton@urbandale.org
Deb Mains, City Clerk	278-3900	278-3905	dmains@urbandale.org
City Hall	278-3900	278-3905	cityhall@urbandale.org
Building Department	278-3930	278-3927	building@urbandale.org
Community Development	278-3935	278-3927	pdekker@urbandale.org
Engineering & Public Works	278-3950	278-3927	engpw@urbandale.org
Fire & EMS	278-3970	278-3972	fire@urbandale.org
Library	278-3945	278-3918	library@urbandale.org
Parks & Recreation	278-3963	278-8356	parks-rec@urbandale.org
Police	278-3938	278-3939	police@urbandale.org
Pool	278-3959	278-8356	parks-rec@urbandale.org
Senior Center	278-3907	331-6854	parks-rec@urbandale.org
Water	278-3940	278-3944	waterdept@urbandale.org
Webmaster	278-3900	278-3905	dgloo@urbandale.org
City Web Site	http://www.urbandale.org		
Library Web Site	http://www.urbandalelibrary.org		
Urbandale Informational Radio	1210 on the AM dial		